

Pride, Interest, and Online Willingness to Support Achievements across New Zealand European, Pasifika, and Korean Ethnic Groups

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To understand cyberbullying of high achievers, a willingness to support high profile individuals online was examined across cultures using the Tall Poppy scale. Three different cultural groups (226 New Zealand Europeans, 102 Pasifika, and 143 Koreans), answered an online questionnaire addressing: a preference for high achievers to be rewarded or fail; willingness to vote and support others; and offered achievement-related debrief information. Pasifika were more likely to support others online, and this seemed to be due to cultural pride. The Favour Fall scale predicted time spent viewing achievement-related information. The Korean sample did not prefer the reward of high achievers, but spent more time on a debrief page viewing successes, suggesting excessive criticism or a preference for self-enhancing information. Tall Poppy Syndrome, and a reduced pride within an ethnic group, can be associated with reduced online support for others.

Keywords: *Pakeha, Pasifika, Korean, Schadenfreude, Envy, Ingroup, Voting*

INTRODUCTION

The advent of social media (Aichner, Grünfelder, Maurer, & Jegeni, 2021) now means that the general public are not just authoring content online, but also upvoting (or downvoting) the content that others post. Such behaviour reifies the otherwise subtle mechanisms of social support and has implications for mood (Kramer, Guillory, & Hancock, 2014). Unfortunately, sustained criticism of others can contribute to suicide (Hinduja, & Patchin, 2010; Phillips, Diesfeld, & Mann, 2019), and such trends can be more dramatic in countries with higher suicide rates such as Korea (Dae-o, 2020).

There are ongoing concerns about cyberbullying (Slonje, Smith, & Frisé, 2013) and suicide rates (Kim, Jung-Choi, Jun, Kawachi, 2010; Lee, Park, Lee, Oh, Choi, & Oh, 2018). In an effort to inform possible interventions the present study sought to understand the tendency for people to criticise high profile individuals using the Tall Poppy Scale (Feather, 1989) and examined differences in willingness to support (or criticise) others across cultures that differ in their suicide rates.

People now understand and are willing to register their levels of interpersonal support not just for politicians, but also for other members of the community. Reality TV (Ouvrein, Hallam, De Backer, & Vandebosch, 2021) and the advent of social media means it is not just politicians (Akhtar & Morrison, 2019) and celebrities (Li, Lai, & Chen, 2011) but also members of the general public (e.g. Cheng, Danescu-Niculescu-Mizil, & Leskovec, 2014) that are being evaluated. Members of the general public can now support the posts of others on social media such as Facebook by clicking “like” (Hutchinson, 2020). Unfortunately people are not always positive in their reaction (Akhtar & Morrison, 2019; Massanari, 2017).

Sadly, some high-profile individuals such as Charlotte Dawson (TV star), Jake Millar (entrepreneur), Choi Jin-Sil (TV personality), and Cho Jang-mi (internet personality), or elite athletes such as Olivia Podmore (cyclist) and Kim In-hyeok (volley ball star) have received sustained criticism that has led to their suicides. This creates concerns about corporate liability (Santana, 2014) and online standards of conduct (Shieber, 2019). Cyberbullying is a serious concern in certain jurisdictions (Lee, 2016).

A desire to see high achievers humbled has been called the Tall Poppy Syndrome (Feather, 1989). This pleasure at another’s misfortune, sometimes termed “Schadenfreude”, has been described as the worst of human emotions (Smith, Powell, Combs, & Schurtz, 2009). The three putative mechanisms thought to contribute to Tall Poppy Syndrome are Envy, Rivalry, and Deservingness (Wang, Lilienfeld, & Rochat, 2019).

Envy is an emotion that arises when one person perceives another as having better circumstances (Wallace, James, & Warkentin, 2017). Notably, the media deliberately seek to attract attention (Ouvrein, Hallam, De Backer, & Vandebosch, 2021) to specific websites upselling lifestyles and merchandise, as looks and clicks thru can directly feed revenues (McLaren & McLaren, 2000). However, it seems upwards comparisons can lead to poorer mood. Studies of “Facebook Envy” report that the monitoring of the achievements of others can influence self-esteem (Appel, Gerlach, & Crusius, 2016; Glaser, Liu, Hakim, Vilar, & Zhang, 2015; Krasnova, Widjaja, Buxmann, Wenninger, & Benbasat, 2015). Indeed, passive social media use and social exclusion has been associated with lower mood (Macrynikola & Miranda, 2019).

Envy can arise from perceived advantage (Lange, Weidman, & Crusius, 2018), and for some this elicits a maliciously envious wish to pull the envied person down from their superior position (Van de Ven, 2016). Moreover, there are suggestions that darker impulsive behaviours are a product of a malignant *entitled* envy (Lange, Crusius, & Hagemeyer, 2016; Lange, Paulhus & Crusius, 2018).

Other factors that contribute to reduced support online could also involve feelings of *rivalry* or perceptions of *deservingness* (Wang, Lilienfeld, & Rochat, 2019). People prefer to reward members of their “in group” in preference to an “out group” (Castelli & Carraro, 2010; Yamagishi, Jin, & Miller, 1998), and negative emotions are greater against successful outgroups (Leach & Spears, 2008; Leach, Spears, Branscombe, & Doosje, 2003).

Alternatively, a high profile may appear undeserved. Hall (2014) has noted that some individuals can have more followers on social media than appears warranted in relation to their actual achievements. Indeed, people have been less supportive of people whose achievements are undeserved (Van Dijk, Ouwerkerk, & Goslinga, 2009), and less sympathetic to those who are responsible for their own misfortune (Van Dijk, Goslinga, & Ouwerkerk, 2008). For instance, lower social classes of Chinese experienced greater envy, and this was associated with greater perceived injustice (Hong, Lin, & Lian, 2020). Indeed, disadvantaged groups take more pleasure from the discomfiture of an “out group” (Leach & Spears, 2008; Leach, Spears, Branscombe, & Doosje, 2003).

Attitudes towards others’ achievements have been studied using the Tall Poppy Scale (Feather, 1989). This instrument has two scales: Favour Reward and Favour Fall. The Favour Reward scale assessed a preference for high achievers to succeed, and the Favour Fall scale assessed a preference for high achievers to fail. Studies have found lower self-esteem to be associated with a greater preference for high achievers to fail (Feather, 1989; Feather & McKee, 1993).

Feather (1989) previously found lower Global Self Esteem was associated with a preference for high achievers to fail. This might reflect the effects of envy, as lower self-esteem would lead to more upwards comparisons. However, other studies indicate that deservingness may be an important factor influencing the preference for higher achievers to fail (Berndsen & Feather, 2016). As Decisional Self-Esteem has been linked to better decision making (Ball, Mann, & Stamm, 1994), better ability and school grades (Ball, Mann, & Stamm, 1994; Phillips, & Landhuis, 2021), a Decisional Self Esteem scale could be assessing competence rather than self-esteem and thus may be addressing an understanding of deservingness rather than a sense of envy.

The Tall Poppy Scale has been used to consider cross-cultural differences in attitudes towards achievement (Feather & McKee, 1993). More independent cultures such as the USA and Canada were found to favour the reward of high achievers (Feather, 1998), whereas more interdependent Japanese samples preferred that high achievers fail (Feather & McKee, 1993). As Western and Asian cultures differ in their appreciation of individuality and achievement (Varnum, Grossmann, Kitayama, &

Nisbett, 2010), it is likely that there will be differences in their willingness to support others (Wang & Liu, 2019).

Our concern is that Schadenfreude manifests behaviourally as cyberbullying. According to the World Health Organisation (2022), South Korea has had one of the highest suicide rates in the world (<https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/themes/mental-health/suicide-rates>). Indeed, so many Korean celebrities have committed suicide (Dae-o, 2020), that petitions have been launched to curb the behaviour. By contrast New Zealand Pakeha, and in particular, Pasifika tend to have lower suicide rates (<https://mentalhealth.org.nz/suicide-prevention/statistics-on-suicide-in-new-zealand>). A comparison of these ethnic groups is liable to offer insights as to some of the mechanisms contributing to suicide.

Recently others have considered whether the Tall Poppy Scale can not just predict attitudes, but also predict online behaviours (Phillips, Landhuis, & Wood, 2021). Favour Reward scores predicted an interest in achievement, and Favour Fall scores predicted Schadenfreude - an interest in failure that manifested behaviourally as more clicks and more time spent on a debrief page (Phillips, Landhuis, & Wood, 2021).

The elicitation of votes for reality TV contestants (Ouvrein, Hallam, De Backer, & Vandebosch, 2021) via text messages (Mahatanakoon, Wen, & Lim, 2005) has been an ongoing method of garnering support and generating a revenue stream (Griffiths, 2007). Given that social media now reify interpersonal support (Godlewski, & Perse, 2010; Van Dijk, Ouwerkerk, van Koningsbruggen, & Wesseling, 2012), the present study used the previously validated Tall Poppy Scale to address cross-cultural differences not just in willingness to support high achievers but also associated online behaviours.

As Koreans have had higher suicide rates and NZ Europeans and Pasifika have had lower suicide rates, it is hoped that differences across ethnic groups will provide insights into levels of support for high achievers and mechanisms contributing to cyberbullying and differences in suicides across cultures. As New Zealand Europeans have been found to differ in their outlook from Asian and Pasifika groups (Webber, McKinley, & Hattie, 2013), it was expected that:

1. People from cultures with a tradition of independence (e.g. New Zealand Europeans) would differ in their levels of pride, and would be more likely to prefer high achievers to succeed than peoples from more interdependently oriented cultures (e.g. Koreans, Pasifika).
2. Lower Decisional Self Esteem would predict a preference for high achievers to fail.
3. The Tall Poppy Scale would predict online support as indicated behaviourally as voting and interest in achievement.

METHOD

Participants

Participants were self-identified Koreans, Pasifika or New Zealand Europeans who responded to an online survey that was advertised on first year psychology online noticeboards, Reddit and specific ethnic newsgroups (e.g.

Korean church groups, Pasifika Law Students Society). Due to insufficient sample sizes Māori and other non-European New Zealand residents were excluded from analyses. There were 143 Korean participants (mean age 29.4 years, *SD*=11.5; 38% male, 62% female) and 102 Pasifika participants (mean age 24.1, *SD*=7.7; 11% male, 89%, female). The NZ Europeans (*N*=226) had a mean of 26.0 years (*SD*=10.6; 26% male, 70% female).

Materials

The Decisional Self Esteem scale (Mann et al, 1998) consists of six English language questions measuring confidence in decision making. Items are answered using a three-point scale (2 = True for Me, 1 = Sometimes True for Me, 0 = Not True for Me). Scores range from 0 to 12. The scale has been used cross-culturally previously (Mann et al, 1998), and has been validated upon gifted individuals (Ball, Mann, & Stamm, 1994) and populations with Major Depressive illness (Radford, Mann, & Kalucy, 1986). Higher scores indicate greater confidence in decision making, whereas lower scores have been associated with maladaptive decisional styles (Phillips & Ogeil, 2011; Radford, Mann, & Kalucy, 1986). The Cronbach’s alpha over a six country sample was .74 (Mann et al, 1998).

The Tall Poppy Scale (Feather, 1989) has Favour Reward and Favour Fall subscales that consider preferences towards high achievers. Each subscale consists of 10 items. Participants respond to each item on a 6 point Likert scale. The scores for each subscale range from 10 to 70. The Tall Poppy scale has been used across a range of cultures (Feather, 1998; Feather & McKee, 1993) and has been validated against other measures of values and social power (Feather, 1989). Cronbach’s alphas for the Favour Reward and Favour Fall scales were .80 and .86 respectively.

To assess pride in one’s national/ethnic identity, participants were asked whether they were a NZ Pakeha, a Pasifika or a Korean. The questionnaire then branched and they were asked whether they were proud of their ethnic identity, namely “how proud are you to be a [label]” on a 5 point Likert scale, with items varying from “extremely proud” to “not proud”.

Achievement: Online Support and Interest. On the penultimate page of the survey participants were asked whether they voted for contestants of their ethnic group on reality TV. Participants were also told there would be a debrief screen at the end of the survey listing links for

further information. Participants were asked whether they would be interested in details of achievements (successes, failures, or neither) associated with their self-identified ethnicity.

Behavioural Indices. There was a debrief page at the end of the questionnaire providing links to Successes or Failures associated with each ethnic group. As behavioural indicators of interest, Qualtrics enabled us to measure the amount of time participants spent on the debrief page at the end of the survey. Interest was determined from the time spent on the page and by counting the number of clicks.

Procedure

All procedures were conducted in accordance with requirements of the institutional ethics committee. Participants were recruited through an anonymous online survey, advertised on public online noticeboards. After an explanatory statement, questions assessed demographic details, Decisional Self-Esteem, followed by the Tall Poppy Scale. Questions then assessed national pride, willingness to vote and support others, and elicited interest in a debrief page. Qualtrics measured the amount of time and the number of clicks devoted to the debrief page.

Analysis

To control experiment-wise error rate, omnibus multivariate tests were initially conducted. Where a significant multivariate effect was detected, univariate tests and simple contrasts were performed to determine the source of the effect. As response rates influenced statistical power, voting and debrief behaviours were analysed separately: approximately half of participants expressed no interest in the debrief page and were omitted from further analyses. As measured activity on the debrief page was significantly positively skewed, the log transformed data (+1) was analysed, but untransformed means are reported for purposes of interpretability.

RESULTS

Tall Poppy Scores

Means and intercorrelations across the three groups for the Tall Poppy scale are presented in Table 1. Means will be considered further in the section on Group Differences. The size of correlations between Decisional Self Esteem and Favour Reward did not vary significantly between the 3 groups. However, correlations between Decisional Self Esteem and Favour Fall scores were

Table 1. Means scores and correlations between Decisional Self-Esteem and Tall Poppy subscales for NZ European, Pasifika and Korean samples

	NZ Euro Sample	Pasifika Sample	Korean Sample	Correlations: NZ Euro		Correlations: Pasifika		Correlations: Korean	
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Favour Reward	Favour Fall	Favour Reward	Favour Fall	Favour Reward	Favour Fall
Decisional Self-Esteem	8.32 (2.58)	7.44 (2.12)	7.79 (2.58)	.141*	-.434**	-.066	-.332***	.072	-.186*
Favour Reward	46.34 (8.13)	46.54 (7.69)	44.66 (8.09)		-.358**		-.081		-.129
Favour Fall	35.71 (8.83)	34.97 (8.95)	37.86 (8.38)						

N for the Korean sample was 119. N for the Pasifika sample was 97. N for the New Zealand European sample was 222. Tests of significance are two-tailed. *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

Table 2. Willingness to vote to support reality TV contestants, and interest in a debrief page (Percentages in brackets).

Group	Voting			Debrief			
	Yes	No	Total	Success	Failure	Neither	Total
NZ Pakeha	46 (21.2)	171 (78.8)	217 (100)	87 (38.7)	26 (11.6)	112 (49.8)	225 (100)
Pasifika	53 (51.0)	51 (49.0)	104 (100)	48 (46.2)	18 (17.3)	38 (36.5)	104 (100)
Korean	18 (14.9)	103 (85.1)	121 (100)	66 (54.5)	10 (8.3)	45 (37.2)	121 (100)
Total	117 (26.5)	325 (73.5)	442 (100)	201 (44.7)	54 (12.0)	195 (43.3)	450 (100)

stronger for the NZ European group than the Korean group ($z=2.409, p=.016$). As may be seen in Table 1, correlations between Favour Reward and Favour Fall scores were also stronger for the NZ European group than both the Korean ($z=2.132, p=.033$) and Pasifika groups ($z=2.380, p=.017$).

Voting behaviour

There was a significant relationship between Group and willingness to Vote for reality TV contestants ($\chi^2=43.506$ (2df, $N=443$) $p<.001$). As may be seen in Table 2, a greater proportion of Pasifika, and smaller proportion of Koreans were prepared to vote to support their peers. Tests breaking down the table indicated that Pasifika were significantly more supportive than NZ Europeans ($\chi^2=29.199$ (1df, $n=321$) $p<.001$) or Koreans ($\chi^2=33.720$ (1df, $n=225$) $p<.001$).

A 2x2 Group by Voting Willingness MANOVA was conducted to explore factors contributing to voting behaviours. Given the potential importance of group membership, a measure of ethnic pride (Yamagishi, Jin, & Miller, 1998) was included as well as attitudes to achievement and self-esteem. This would determine whether any observed effects resulted from national/ethnic pride. There were significant Group differences (Pillai's Trace=.349, $F(8,818)=21.598, p<.001, \eta^2=.17$), but these were mainly due to univariate differences in cultural pride ($F(2,411)=103.570, p<.001, \eta^2=.34$). Pasifika had greater cultural pride ($M=4.63, SE=0.10$) than NZ Europeans ($M=3.21, SE=0.08$) or Koreans ($M=2.34, SE=0.14$). There was also a significant multivariate interaction between Group and Voting intent (Pillai's Trace=.349, $F(8,818)=2.858, p=.004, \eta^2=.03$). Again the effects were associated with univariate differences in cultural pride ($F(2,411)=9.238, p<.001, \eta^2=.04$) and can be seen in Figure 1. Simple main effects indicated that pride was greater for voting than non-voting NZ Europeans ($F(2,411)=28.804, p<.001$). Pride did not appreciably vary with voting intent for Pasifika ($F(2,411)=0.155, p>.05$) or Koreans ($F(2,411)=0.299, p>.05$).

Debrief

There was a significant association between Group and stated Interest in achievement on the debrief page ($\chi^2=12.713$ (4df, $N=450$) $p=.013$) (see Table 3). Tests breaking down the proportions of Success and Failure in the table indicated that Koreans were more interested in success than

Pasifika ($\chi^2=4.446$ (1df, $n=142$) $p=.035$) or NZ Europeans ($\chi^2=2.860$ (1df, $n=189$) $p=.091$).

To distinguish between those that specifically expressed interest in success or failure, analyses omitted participants that indicated no interest in achievement related information at debrief. A Group by Debrief MANOVA was performed upon Tall Poppy scores, Pride, and activity spent on the debrief page. There were significant differences as a function of expressed Interest (Pillai's Trace=.104, $F(6,226)=4.395, p<.001, \eta^2=.10$) and Group (Pillai's Trace=.576, $F(12,454)=15.302, p<.001, \eta^2=.29$).

Interest in Achievement. An interest in achievement was associated with significant differences in Favour Reward ($F(1,231)=15.363, p<.001, \eta^2=.06$), and Favour Fall ($F(1,231)=4.565, p=.034, \eta^2=.02$) scores. Participants expressing an interest in Success had higher Favour Reward ($M=47.10, SE=0.51$) and lower Favour Fall ($M=35.89, SE=0.65$) scores than participants expressing an interest in Failure (Favour Reward $M=42.59, SE=1.03$; Favour Fall $M=39.04, SE=1.32$). Stated interest significantly influenced amounts of time spent on the debrief page ($F(1,231)=7.586, p=.006, \eta^2=.03$). People expressing an interest in Failure ($M=26.40s, SE=8.06$) spent longer on the debrief page than people expressing an interest in Success ($M=7.06s, SE=3.96$).

Group Differences. Differences between groups were associated with significant univariate differences in Favour Reward ($F(2,231)=5.373, p<.005, \eta^2=.04$) and

Figure 1. Group differences in willingness to support others online varies with pride.

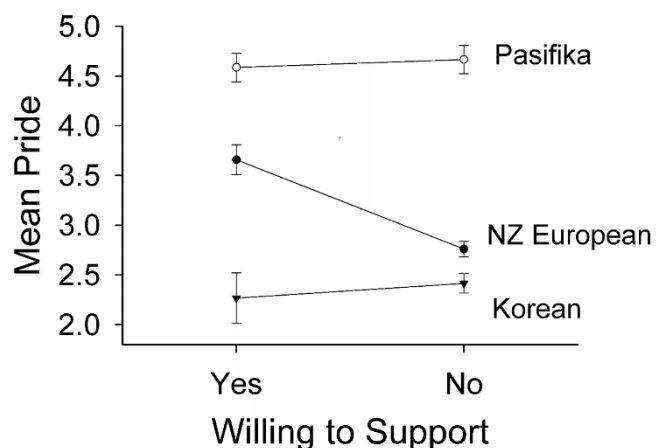


Table 3: Korean participants and their identification towards Cultural sayings on social etiquette around showing achievement or failure.

	Favour Reward	Favour Failure	Proud of being Korean
<u>모난 돌이 정 맞는다.</u> A spiked stone gets hammered.	-.007	.260**	-.081
<u>자랑 끝에 불붙는다.</u> Fire catches at the end of boasting.	-.008	.205*	.068
<u>자식 자랑 팔뚝춤.</u> If you boast about your child, you're immature	-.180*	.215*	-.254**

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

Favour Fall ($F(2,231)=4.249, p=.015, \eta^2=.04$) scores. Simple contrasts indicated that Koreans had lower Favour Reward ($M=42.22, SE=1.20$) and higher Favour Fall ($M=40.71, SE=1.54$) scores than NZ Europeans (Favour Reward $M=46.87, SE=0.76$; Favour Fall $M=36.68, SE=0.98$) or Pasifika (Favour Reward $M=45.44, SE=0.98$; Favour Fall $M=34.99, SE=1.26$). The groups differed in levels of cultural pride ($F(2,231)=61.508, p<.001, \eta^2=.35$). Simple contrasts indicated that Koreans ($M=2.21, SE=0.17$) had lower levels of pride than NZ Europeans ($M=3.19, SE=0.11$) or Pasifika ($M=4.53, SE=0.14$).

The groups also significantly differed in the amounts of time ($F(2,231)=12.241, p<.001, \eta^2=.10$) and the number of clicks ($F(2,231)=24.162, p<.001, \eta^2=.17$) they devoted to the debrief page. Simple contrasts indicated that Koreans tended to spend more time ($M=10.52s, SE=2.04$) and devoted more clicks ($M=2.90, SE=0.40$) to the debrief page than NZ Europeans (Time $M=5.17s, SE=1.29$; Clicks $M=1.51, SE=0.26$) or Pasifika (Time $M=9.36s, SE=1.71$, Clicks $M=0.63, SE=0.34$).

The Korean sample were also asked to indicate their agreement with some culturally appropriate sayings (see Table 3). Favour Fall scores were significantly correlated with the cultural sayings “a spiked stone” ($r=.260, N=143, p<.001$), “fire catches” ($r=.205, N=143, p<.001$), and “boast your child” ($r=.215, N=143, p<.001$). However, the saying that “boasting about your child was immature” was negatively correlated with cultural pride ($r=-.254, N=143, p<.001$). People that were proud of being Korean disagreed that boasting was immature.

DISCUSSION

The suicides of high-profile individuals in response to cyberbullying requires an understanding of factors contributing to the criticism of high-achievers. A comparison of ethnic groups with different suicide rates is liable to offer insights as to mechanisms contributing to suicide in NZ. Hopefully this will then inform organisations such as E Tū Tāngata (<https://www.etutangata.nz/>) that are seeking to address suicides and reduce Tall Poppy Syndrome.

To gauge levels of online interest and support, the present study used the Tall Poppy scale to examine stated willingness to vote for reality TV contestants and tracked interest in achievement related information. High levels of support were found within the Pasifika sample. Greater levels of pride seemed to predict online support for others. And while the Korean sample exhibited the least pride and

online support, it demonstrated the greatest interest in achievement related information.

Feather (1989) found the Tall Poppy scale could predict Schadenfreude, an interest in the misfortune of others (Feather, 2012). However, such tendencies appear to vary across cultures (Feather & McKee, 1993; Feather, 1998). Feather and McKee (1993) found self-esteem correlated $-.31$ with a preference for high achievers to fail in an Australian sample, and found weaker relationships in a Japanese sample ($r=-.15$). Similar trends can be observed Table 1, where correlations between measures of esteem and preference for high achievers to fail were stronger in an independently-minded NZ European sample ($-.43$) and weaker in a more interdependent Korean sample ($-.19$). Presumably additional factors such as pride and connection influence attitudes towards achievers across these ethnic groups (Webber, McKinley, & Hattie, 2013).

Feather and McKee (1993) found a moderate relationship ($r=-.24$) between Global Self Esteem and a preference for the fall of Tall Poppies that is suggestive of “envy”. However the present study considered Decisional Self Esteem. As higher Decisional Self-Esteem has been linked to better school grades (Phillips, & Landhuis, 2021), and better Psychological Quality of Life (Kim, Phillips, & Ogeil, 2022) this measure is possibly a better indicator of competence. The stronger relationships between Decisional Self Esteem and Tall Poppy scales ($r=-.43$) observed in the present study, may in part indicate that competence and a better understanding of the mechanisms contributing to achievement (Barber, 2002; Kruger & Dunning, 1999) might lead people to consider that high achievers are more likely to deserve their success.

However, if the negative correlation between Decisional Self-Esteem and Favour Fall scores reflects a better understanding of competence and deservingness with respect to achievement, then this tendency may be weaker in Koreans. As similar weak relationships between self-esteem and attitudes towards achievement were also observed by Feather and McKee (1993) in Japanese, this may reflect the overarching emphasis upon interdependence in Asian societies (Varnum, Grossmann, Kitayama, & Nisbett, 2010). Given the higher suicide rates in some Asian societies (Bertolote & Fleischmann, 2002), this interdependence may come at the cost of the individual if levels of support are low.

Feather (1989) found the Favour Fall scale was more sensitive to the disapproval of high achievers. The present

study found these Favour Reward and Favour Fall scores could predict interest in the debrief page, but not willingness to vote for peers. Instead, online support seemed to reflect pride and group membership that pointed to a role of rivalry (Wang, Lilienfeld, & Rochat, 2019). Higher levels of pride in the Pasifika sample were associated with the highest levels of support. The lower levels of pride seen in the Korean sample was associated with the lowest levels of support. And levels of support specifically varied with degree of pride within the NZ European sample, clearly indicating that pride determined online support and voting behaviour.

Individualism and achievement often meet with resistance from group members (Carr, Purcell, Bolitho, Moss, & Brew, 1999), and the associated ostracism appears to be motivated by an attempt to control them (Nezlek, Wesselmann, Wheeler, & Williams, 2015). Moreover, Cheng, Danescu-Niculescu-Mizil, and Leskovec (2015) examined voting behaviours within discussion boards, and noted that those individuals that would eventually be excluded were those that least appeared to conform to the group identity. The present study finds that pride in a group identity can be a predictor of online support (Ioane, 2017). Whereas those groups with lower levels of pride were less likely to support other group members, and this would potentially influence overall well-being in these cohorts (Keyes, 2007; Nakashima, Isobe, & Ura, 2013).

As expected, Tall Poppy scores predicted greater interest in the failure of high achievers. People expressing an interest in the failure of high achievers had higher Favour Fall and lower Favour Reward scores, and spent longer on the debrief page, indicating a level of Schadenfreude in the sample overall. However, Koreans deviated from such tendencies. Koreans most preferred the failure of high achievers, and were least willing to provide online support, but expressed an interest in achievement and spent more time looking at the debrief page than the other ethnic groups. This possibly could reflect historic trauma, higher levels of criticality and greater scrutiny of achievement (Dae-0, 2020). Potentially the cultural sayings of this group offer some insight into such behaviour (Ye, Ng, Lu, & Ma, 2018). Confucian values of humility discourage individualism, and this is indicated by correlations with the Favour Fall scale. However, cultural pride also correlated with such cultural sayings. Possibly the greater amounts of time Koreans spent on the debrief page reflects pride in collective Korean achievement. And this is supported by correlations that indicated that participants felt boasting was not immature.

The present data clearly indicate a preference to support the “in group” (Leach & Spears, 2008; Leach, Spears, Branscombe, & Doosje, 2013). Indeed social media and viral marketing depend upon such mechanisms (Leskovec, Adamic, & Huberman, 2007). Homophily and a tendency for “like” to support “like” is in keeping with balance theory (Heider, 1958). Social media allow people to connect with others with similar interests (Perugini, Gonçalves, & Fox, 2004), and can have a self-serving role as these sites allow people to filter information as a means of maintaining harmony (Zhang, Merolla, Sun, & Lin, 2012). The Korean sample’s stated interest in successes

presumably reflects a need for mechanisms bolstering the esteem of this group.

South Korea has had the highest suicide rate in the world, and Pasifika have lower reported suicide rates than Pakeha in NZ. A comparison of these ethnic groups is liable to offer insights as to mechanisms contributing to suicide in NZ. In the present study, Korea as the country with the higher suicide rate also had the lowest national pride, preferred that high achievers fail and not be rewarded, and seemed to be most interested in achievement related information. Unfortunately based on the present data, such interest in achievement could also reflect a form of censure. By contrast, Pasifika with the lower suicide rates had higher ethnic pride, were the most supportive, and least likely to favour the failure of high achievers.

Given that levels of support in NZ Pakeha reflect differences in national pride, it would seem that instilling greater levels of pride in New Zealand and its achievements is a useful method of increasing support and lowering suicide rates in this population. However, attempts to simply increase self-esteem to the neglect of other factors such as self-efficacy might be self-defeating (Baumeister, Smart, & Boden, 1996) as it could encourage “entitlement” (Lange, Crusius, & Hagemeyer, 2016; Lange, Paulhus & Crusius, 2018). Given concerns about the potential contribution of deservingness, there might also be a need for greater education and an emphasis on skills to address effective decision making (Kim, Phillips, & Ogeil, 2022) or levels of competence (Feather, 2012) and perhaps reduce perceived inequity and entitlement (Marques, Feather, Austin, & Sibley, 2022).

The present data suggest that a greater willingness to support others is linked to pride in ethnic identity. This is in keeping with previous comparable findings for Māori (Williams, Clark, & Lewycka, 2018), but the present study specifically points to the potential role of social support. This is most clearly demonstrated in the Pakeha data, where pride and support covary, and we feel is likely to contribute to the differential suicide rates. Koreans were unlikely to support others and have higher suicide rates, whereas Pasifika were more willing to support others and have lower suicide rates in NZ.

In particular, the need to create a more supportive and civil internet is illustrated dramatically by the high rates at which very vulnerable people are apparently baited (51%, Smith, Dzik, & Fornicola, 2019) and the high fatality rates associated with webcam suicides (77%, Phillips & Mann, 2019) compared to attempts from tall buildings (33%, Mann, 1981) and indicates an urgent need for contingent forms of online support (Barak, 2007). Given the deplorable tendency for groups to bait rather than support vulnerable people, the present data provides cause for concern in those groups (i.e. Koreans) with a higher preference for achievers to fail and reduced tendency to reward high achievers (Marks, 2020), and may in part to contribute to higher suicide rates in these countries (Lee, 2016; Lee, Park, Lee, Oh, Choi, & Oh, 2018).

Limitations

For ethical reasons the present study considered “support” and willingness to upvote others. Indeed, not all websites allow downvotes. Although it is expected that

the Favour Fall scale would predict levels of online abuse, this is not guaranteed. Groups with lower levels of pride exhibited lower levels of support and seemed to spend more time bolstering their esteem online (Miller & Ross, 1975; Smith, Fabrigar, & Norris, 2008), but it is likely that such behaviours are situationally dependent, and may also vary in response to challenges to the “in group” (Leach & Spears, 2008; Leach, Spears, Branscombe, & Doosje, 2003).

In addition, our Pasifika sample were a heterogeneous group based in NZ, and the observed patterns are liable to differ from those from specific Pacific island populations. For instance, levels of suicide in Samoa can be appreciably higher (World Health Organisation, 2022). Indeed, given the differences in suicide rates across specific countries and jurisdictions, it is likely that cultural differences (Varnum, Grossmann, Kitayama, & Nisbett, 2010) and pressures upon the individual to “approach” achievements are typically balanced against regional levels of support and the group’s tendency to censure individual effort.

It is also important to acknowledge the multiple determinants of behaviours such as suicide. Social support, pride and perhaps competence may be important factors contributing to resilience, but any consideration of suicide will need to acknowledge that multiple factors contribute to the behaviour, such as substance abuse, impulse control, religious admonishments and legal constraints (Bertolote & Fleischmann, 2002).

Future Research

The present study did also consider Māori, inviting them to indicate their agreement with the Whakatauki - Kāore te kumara e kōrero mō tōna ake reka. However response rates were low, and Harrington and Liu (2002) have previously considered this ethnic group. Harrington and Liu (2002) used a shortened Tall Poppy scale on a sample of 88 Māori and found higher Global Self Esteem, but no differences on Favour Reward or Favour Fall scales. Conceivably, given higher suicide rates in Māori (<https://mentalhealth.org.nz/suicide-prevention/statistics-on-suicide-in-new-zealand>), the present methodologies could be extended to a larger Māori sample, but with specific emphasis upon the willingness to support others online.

The present study touched upon the issue of deservingness by using a Decisional Self Esteem scale. As a component of the Melbourne Decision Making

Questionnaire (Mann, et al., 1998) it begs the question as to whether people with inferior decision-making styles would prefer that high achievers fail. Certainly there are indications that the less able have little idea as to the mechanisms and context required to produce correct answers to problems (Ball, Mann, & Stamm, 1994; Kruger & Dunning, 1999), and Major Depressives have an impaired ability to weigh the expectancies and values required for some decisions (Radford, Mann, & Kalucy, 1986). However, the use of correlational methods sacrifices a degree of control and prevents a systematic analysis of phenomena.

Previously participants have been presented with vignettes (Feather, 1989), to allow better manipulation of contributing factors. For instance, to tease apart the roles of rivalry and deservingness future research could consider different cultural groups and assess levels of support for individuals belonging to an in-group or out-group, perhaps signified by linguistic ability (e.g. fluent or non-speaker). Alternatively, groups with different levels of expertise could be examined. One wonders whether high achievers would themselves be more (or less) forgiving of a transgression when they have an understanding of the pressures and other factors contributing to success.

Conclusions

As South Korea has had the highest suicide rate in the world, and Pasifika have had lower suicide rates than Pakeha in NZ, a comparison of these ethnic groups was undertaken to offer insights as to mechanisms contributing to suicide in NZ. Differences in the willingness of ethnic groups to support others online were examined.

The present data suggest that a greater willingness to support others is linked to pride in ethnic identity. This is most clearly demonstrated in the Pakeha data, where pride and willingness to support others covaried. We feel this likely to contribute to the different suicide rates. Koreans were unlikely to support others and have higher suicide rates, whereas Pasifika were more willing to support others and have lower suicide rates.

The Tall Poppy scale was used to examine attitudes towards high achievers. The Tall Poppy scale could possibly indicate the degree of censure of high achievers, and predict interest in achievement related information online, but levels of online support also seem to reflect perceived group membership.

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