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Helpful Hopefulness: The Effect of Future Positive Emotions on Consumption

KAREN PAGE WINTERICH
KELLY L. HAWS

Although positive affect may enhance self-control, some research suggests that this is not always the case. To clarify this relationship, we investigate the role of temporal focus on the effect of specific positive emotions on self-control dilemmas in snack consumption. In four studies, we demonstrate that participants experiencing a future-focused positive emotion (i.e., hopefulness) consume less unhealthy food and have lower preferences for unhealthy snacks than those in a past- or present-focused emotional state (i.e., pride, happiness). We demonstrate the role of temporal focus through its natural occurrence in emotion-induction essays (study 1), chronic temporal focus (study 2), and manipulation of anticipated versus retrospective emotional states (study 3). A fourth study demonstrates that self-control benefits do not arise from future-focused negative emotions (i.e., fear) as they do from future-focused positive emotions. These results suggest that consumers may benefit from adapting the temporal focus of positive emotions to the future.

Wendy struggles with controlling her eating and keeping her waistline in check. When Wendy has a good day at the office, she feels positive. Sometimes she feels so good about her work day that she treats herself to a candy bar from the vending machine. Other times that positivity leads her to exercise restraint by only snacking on fruit. The relationship between positive affect and consumption behavior is complicated and even perplexing—what determines when Wendy’s positive feelings lead to more unhealthy food consumption rather than restraint? Life abounds with choices that involve trading off short-term pleasure (e.g., cookies and ice cream) for longer-term gains (e.g., healthy body weight; Hoch and Loewenstein 1991). Emotions clearly play an influential role when it comes to such self-control-relevant food choices, yet this impact has been demonstrated to be either positive or negative, depending not only on valence (Andrade 2005; Garg, Wansink, and Inman 2007) but also on additional factors such as goal accessibility, emotion transience, or arousal (Fedorikhin and Patrick 2010; Fishbach and Labroo 2007; Labroo and Mukhopadhyay 2009). In considering the circumstances that influence food consumption exhibited subsequent to experiencing positive affect, we propose that future temporal focus appraisals associated with specific positive emotions (Ellsworth and Smith 1988) decrease unhealthy food consumption.

To clarify the role of temporal focus, consider whether an individual would be more likely to indulge in a candy bar or snack on fruit when imagining her future after learning that a position in her company has been wanting has just opened and she may have a chance to get it. Will her choice differ if she is thinking about all of her past accomplishments after a glowing review from her supervisor? In both situations, the consumer feels positive, but the specific positive emotion, and the corresponding appraisal tendency, differ. As evidence suggests that the obesity epidemic in the United States continues to escalate (Grady 2010), understanding how emotions may have an impact on food consumption decisions is critical.

With the blossoming of emotion research over the past sev-
eral decades, the role of specific emotions rather than valenced mood states has gained increased attention. Consumer research initially focused on the effect of specific negative emotions (Cryder et al. 2008; Lerner, Small, and Loewenstein 2004; Raghubanath and Pham 1999), with the effect of specific positive emotions (Ellsworth and Smith 1988; Roseman and Evdo-
...kas 2004) receiving relatively less attention (Cavanaugh et al. 2007). However, there is now notable research focusing on the effects of specific positive emotions (e.g., DeSteno et al. 2000; Griskevicius, Shiota, and Neufeld 2010; Griskevicius, Shiota, and Nowlis 2010), yet much remains to be understood. In the domain of self-control, research continues to explore factors affecting the role of general positive affect (Fedorikhin and Patrick 2010; Labroo and Patrick 2009), as well as factors influencing the effect of specific positive emotions (Katzir et al. 2010; Mukhopadhyay and Johar 2007; Wilcox, Kramer, and Sen 2011). We build upon this research by integrating the role of temporal focus in the relationship between incidental positive emotions and food consumption. Temporal aspects of consumers’ mind-sets can have a substantial impact on consumer deci-

As such, the present research joins three important streams of research, including (1) positive affect and self-control, (2) specific positive emotions, and (3) temporal focus, by theorizing that the temporal focus of positive emotions influences unhealthy food consumption. If consumers are feeling hopeful (positive affect accompanied by a future focus), then according to our theorizing, they will have less unhealthy food consumption and preferences than they would if experiencing other positive emotions such as pride and happiness (accompanied by a past focus or a present focus). Examining the temporal appraisal of positive emotions and demonstrating the effects of these positive emotions and their temporal appraisals in food consumption decisions makes three important contributions. First, we contribute to the growing and somewhat disparate research on the impact of positive affect on self-control dilemmas by considering effects of specific positive emotions. Second, we contribute to the emotion and appraisal literature by identifying the importance of the temporal focus of emotions in consumer decision making. Third, we build on recent literature connecting affect to construal level by examining the temporal focus of specific positive emotions. In addition, to examine the boundaries of the effect of temporal focus of emo-
tion on self-control, we contrast future-focused negative emotions with future-focused positive emotions to demonstrate the importance of the positive valence of the emotions with tem-
poral focus.

THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UNKNOWN OF POSITIVE AFFECT’S IMPACT ON SELF-CONTROL

A rich body of literature has demonstrated that affect influences self-control. Most literature on affect and consumer behavior examines the role of incidental affect, defined as affective experiences whose source is clearly unconnected to the decision at hand (Cohen, Pham, and Andrade 2008), and this incidental form of affect is the focus of the present research. In examining the role of incidental affect and self-control, much previous research has centered on valence-based mood states (i.e., negative or unhappy vs. positive or happy) rather than on specific emotions (see table 1 for an overview of key research about positive affect and self-control). Although we do not seek to present all previous research on affect and self-control, our summary in table 1 highlights that positive affect, in the form of both general mood states and specific emotions, may increase or decrease self-control, depending on the circumstances as well as the comparison (i.e., negative vs. neutral).

Although even recent research has argued that there is no consensus in the literature about the influence of positive mood on self-regulation (Fedorikhin and Patrick 2010), and some evidence exists that positive affect may decrease self-control (see Aspinwall [1998] for a brief re-
view of these perspectives), the broader theme of this liter-
ature indicates that positive affect benefits consumers’ self-control (Aspinwall 1998; Frederickson 2001; Rag-
hunathan and Trope 2002; Trope and Neter 1994) and gen-
erally leads to successful outcomes (Lyubomirsky, King, and Diener 2005). In her “broaden-and-build” theory of positive emotions, Frederickson (2001) suggests that positive affect enhances personal resources, making subse-
quent challenges (e.g., self-control trade-offs) easier to manage. In a similar stream of work, positive emotions are thought to aid in restraint due to anticipation of mood-
threatening consequences from indulgence (“mood main-
tenance theory”; Andrade 2005; Clark and Isen 1982) rel-
ative to negative emotions where indulgence might aid in mood-lifting. In a more specific example, Garg, Wansink, and Inman (2007) find that happiness increases self-control compared to sadness such that happy participants consume fewer unhealthy snacks than sad participants. Although these and other findings indicate that negative affect typically leads to less self-control (e.g., Cools, Schotte, and McNally 1992; Labroo and Patrick 2009; Tice, Bratslavsky, and Baumeister 2001), relatively less consensus exists with respect to positive affect (Fedorikhin and Patrick 2010).

Certainly, specific aspects of positive emotions may influence the effect of positive affect on self-control. The nature of the accessible goal (Fishbach and Labroo 2007), the perceived fleetingness versus enduringness of emotion (La-
broo and Mukhopadhyay 2009), and the level of arousal (Fedorikhin and Patrick 2010) have been found to moderate the positive affect and self-control relationship. Other re-
search has found that the effects of specific positive emotions may differ based on the factors associated with the experience of the specific positive emotions (i.e., pride may increase or decrease indulgence depending on achievement focus and self-awareness; Wilcox et al. 2011). In this re-
search, we propose that temporal focus influences the effect of positive emotions on self-control.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article</th>
<th>Affective states examined</th>
<th>Positive affect and self-control</th>
<th>Description of key findings</th>
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<tr>
<td>Andrade (2005)</td>
<td>Positive, negative, neutral</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Effect of positive (vs. negative) mood on consumption depends on how consumers expect their current affective state to be affected by consumption (i.e., maintenance or regulation)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bless et al. (1990)</td>
<td>Happy, sad</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>Subjects in a happy (vs. sad) mood were less likely to engage in message elaboration, suggesting that positive mood results in less self-control to focus on current tasks</td>
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<td>Cools, Schotte, and McNally (1992)</td>
<td>Positive, negative, neutral</td>
<td>–</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fedorikhin and Patrick (2010)</td>
<td>Positive, neutral</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Positive affect with low arousal enhanced self-control while positive affect with high arousal diminished self-control</td>
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<td>Fishbach and Labroo (2007)</td>
<td>Happy, unhappy, neutral</td>
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<td>Effect of happiness (vs. unhappiness) depends on goal accessibility</td>
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<td>Garg, Wansink, and Inman (2007)</td>
<td>Happy, sad, neutral</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isen and Reeve (2005)</td>
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<td>+</td>
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<td>Katzir et al. (2010)</td>
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<td>Labroo and Mukhopadhyay (2009)</td>
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<td>M</td>
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<td>Mukhopadhyay and Johar (2007)</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Patrick, Chun, and MacInnis (2009)</td>
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<td>Anticipating pride from resisting temptation enhances self-control compared to anticipating shame; studies involve integral emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raghunathan and Trope (2002)</td>
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<td>+</td>
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<td>Tice, Bratslavsky, and Baumeister (2001)</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>Incidental pride increases indulgence when pride promotes a sense of achievement but decreases indulgence when it promotes self-awareness, which is distinct from happiness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE.**—M indicates that the effect of positive affect was mixed such that other factors had an impact on the effect of positive affect on self-control-related behaviors. We also note extensive and very helpful previous research about positive affect by both Alice Isen and colleagues and Barbara Frederickson and colleagues.
Cognitive Appraisals and Appraisal Tendencies: Temporal Focus

The importance of examining specific emotions rather than general moods has been recognized (Ellsworth and Smith 1988; Griskevicius et al. 2010) as emotions that are of the same valence but distinct in cognitive appraisals have been found to attenuate and even reverse classic, robust consumer behaviors (Lerner et al. 2004). Yet, there is much left to understand, particularly with respect to positive emotions (Cavanaugh et al. 2007). We seek to provide further insights into the relationship between positive affect and self-control by examining effects of temporal focus for positive emotions such as hopefulness, happiness, and pride.

In doing so, we draw upon cognitive appraisal theories of emotion (Smith and Ellsworth 1985) and the Appraisal-Tendency Framework (ATF; Lerner and Keltner 2001; Winterich, Han, and Lerner 2010). The ATF has helped elucidate effects of emotions in a variety of judgment and choice domains (for a review, see Han, Lerner, and Keltner (2007)), but it has had limited application in the realm of positive emotions (Cavanaugh et al. 2007). Although the exact number of appraisals and the precise terminology used to describe appraisal dimensions differ (see Ellsworth and Scherer 2003; Lazarus 1991; Smith and Ellsworth 1985), many researchers agree that emotions are characterized by a specific pattern of cognitive appraisals. These cognitive appraisals shape perceptions of subsequent situations and guide behaviors (Lazarus 1991; Smith and Ellsworth 1985). The ATF summarizes these processes as “appraisal tendencies,” which have been found to influence subsequent judgments for events even when the judgments are normatively unrelated to the cause of an emotion (Lerner et al. 2004; Lerner and Keltner 2001). We argue that these appraisal tendencies, which differ among positive emotions, may influence the effect of positive emotions on self-control.

Of the cognitive appraisals characterizing emotions, temporal focus, which is the extent to which an emotion results in future- versus past- or present-oriented action tendencies, is the central appraisal theme we examine. Although it is sometimes subsumed under uncertainty, temporal focus has been proposed as a cognitive appraisal dimension by numerous emotion theorists (Kemper 1978; Lazarus 1991; Roseman and Evdokas 2004; Smith and Ellsworth 1985), and it is one of the four most frequently mentioned classifications of emotions (Reisenzein and Hofmann 1990). More specifically, we examine temporal focus in investigating the relationship between positive emotion and self-control for two important reasons. First, Ellsworth and Smith (1988) note that different appraisals can be more or less important in differentiating among emotions, depending on the specific emotions. Furthermore, studying positive emotions, they state that “methods that better capture the temporal dynamics of emotion may indicate even further emotional differentiation than we have found in the present study” (Ellsworth and Smith 1988, 328). Therefore, temporal focus may be particularly important in distinguishing effects of positive emotions for which the relationship between positive affect and self-control is disparate.

Second, time and temporal perspectives are central to the trade-offs between short-term desires to enjoy and long-term goals to accomplish that are characteristic of self-control dilemmas (Hoch and Loewenstein 1991). For instance, a more distant perspective is consistent with a long-term orientation in which one feels capable of achieving higher-order goals (Fujita et al. 2006) that require the exercise of self-control or restraint in the present. Relatedly, though not specifically examining temporal focus, Labroo and Patrick (2009) demonstrate that positive moods enhance self-control relative to negative moods due to a more abstract construal. Given that a future-focus tends to be more abstract (Trope and Liberman 2003) and that abstract construals can enhance self-control (Fujita et al. 2006; Labroo and Patrick 2009), our examination of temporal focus is consistent with extensive work pertaining to construal level (see Trope and Liberman [2010] for a review). This work suggests that higher-level construals, one of which is a future temporal focus, can enhance self-control relative to lower-level construals. Taken together, we propose that the underexplored appraisal dimension of temporal focus may shed insight into the effect of positive emotions on self-control.

Temporal Focus Appraisals of Specific Positive Emotions

In proposing the role of temporal focus, we begin by considering three positive emotions, hopefulness, happiness, and pride, each of which is characterized by pleasantness but distinctly characterized by the central appraisal of temporal focus (Roseman and Evdokas 2004; Smith and Ellsworth 1985). We focus on hopefulness rather than hope as our central focus regards the expectations about future positive outcomes. Recent research suggests that hopefulness regards a strong likelihood about a future positive outcome whereas hope regards the yearning itself (Nenkov, MacHnins, and Morrin 2010). However, we note that we use the terms interchangeably in the present research given the limited extent to which these two emotions have been distinguished in extant literature we reviewed. Considering the temporal distinctions, hopefulness as an experienced emotion tends to be characterized by more future-focused temporal appraisals than either experienced happiness or pride. For instance, examining temporal focus under the appraisal of certainty, such that events that are future-oriented are characterized by uncertainty and events that have already occurred are certain, Smith and Ellsworth (1985) find that certainty is the one cognitive appraisal on which hope is most distinct from happiness and pride, with hope characterized by uncertainty and happiness and pride characterized by certainty. Consistent with this description, hope is described as a positively valenced, future-oriented emotion (Ellsworth and Smith 1988; Lazarus 1991) that is evoked in response to an uncertain but possible goal-congruent outcome (Snyder et al. 1991). Given that hope is likely to arise
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when individuals face outcomes that are goal congruent and deemed uncertain but possible to attain (Ellsworth and Smith 1988; MacInnis and de Mello 2005), hope is characterized as an anticipatory emotion and reflects the pleasure about the prospect of a desired future event (Baumgartner, Pieters, and Bagozzi 2007; Ortony, Clore, and Collins 1988).

Given these future-oriented appraisals that characterize hope and recalling that a future-focus enhances self-control (Fujita et al. 2006; Trope and Liberman 2010), we theorize that hope may prompt individuals to exhibit enhanced self-control in their present decision making. This theorizing is consistent with Baumgartner et al. (2007), who have argued that positive anticipatory emotions (i.e., hope) would encourage the formation of behaviors to bring about desired future states. Similarly, Roseman and Evdokas (2004) state that a motivational goal of hope is planning for the future, which may positively influence self-regulation by aligning present decisions with long-term goal achievement (MacInnis and de Mello 2005). Thus, evidence suggests that hope may positively influence self-control through its future-focus. But how does this compare with other positive emotions?

Contrary to the future appraisals of hopefulness, both happiness and pride, characterized by certainty, tend to be more present-oriented or past-oriented emotions. Specifically, Smith and Ellsworth (1985) state: “Subject’s experiences of happiness and pride were very similar along most of the [appraisal] dimensions. Both emotions were described as extremely pleasant states . . . [with] a high level of certainty about the situation” (831). The lone distinction between pride and happiness arose from pride eliciting stronger appraisals of responsibility and control because authentic pride (Tracy and Robins 2004) tended to involve recalling personal achievements such as receiving awards (Smith and Ellsworth 1985). Although differing in control (Katzir et al. 2010), both happiness and pride are distinct from hope to the extent that they focus on past or present experiences rather than future experiences. To what extent does this past-focus or present-focus of experienced pride and happiness influence self-control?

The present-focus of happiness can result in actions favoring immediate pleasure (MacInnis and Patrick 2006) while simultaneously reducing effort and attention to current tasks (Bless et al. 1990) and increasing confidence in current thoughts (Briñol, Petty, and Barden 2007). Recalling a happy experience, which should be characterized by a past-focus, results in indulgent choices consistent with that of a neutral state (Wilcox et al. 2011). This suggests that happiness may not have the same positive effects on self-control. In the case of pride, research has demonstrated that focusing on one’s own abilities and achievements may in turn lead one to feel worthy or deserving of present indulgence (Blaine and Crocker 1993; Mukhopadhyay and Johar 2007; Wilcox et al. 2011). This may result in an increasing tendency to indulge, which is consistent with the findings of Roseman (1984). Examining appraisals and corresponding action tendencies of emotions, Roseman (1984) found that emotions such as pride and joy, which may be similar to happiness, were experienced when the motivational state of an event was to attain reward. Thus, emotions such as pride and happiness may decrease self-control relative to more future-focused positive emotions such as hope.

Further supporting the role of temporal focus on the effect of positive emotions on self-control, some research has demonstrated that pride can, under certain conditions, increase self-control. For instance, pride experienced through achievements can have a motivational influence on subsequent goal-relevant behavior (Williams and DeSteno 2008), and when pride is experienced with self-awareness it decreases indulgence (Wilcox et al. 2011). These outcomes of pride are consistent with effects found when pride shifts from being more past-focused to being more future-focused, as in anticipated pride for a future accomplishment (Katzir et al. 2010; Patrick, Chun, and MacInnis 2009; Williams and DeSteno 2008). As such, specific emotions such as pride may have differential effects on self-control, depending on the temporal focus of the emotion experience. Therefore, we propose that the temporal focus of positive emotions will differentially motivate consumers in regard to self-control-related behaviors such that hopefulness or anticipated positive emotions will enhance self-control beyond past-focused emotions such as happiness, pride, or retrospective hopefulness. That is, the future-focused temporal appraisal that occurs naturally with hopefulness or when elicited with other positive emotions results in enhanced self-control relative to less future-focused positive emotions or neutral states.

In the studies that follow, we test our basic hypotheses regarding the differential impact of incidental hopefulness and other future-focused emotions compared to past-focused positive emotions such as happiness and pride on food consumption behaviors. Overall, we theorize that the future-focus of positive emotions will result in greater self-control through less unhealthy consumption than past-focused positive emotions. In addition to showing differences in specific positive emotions and self-control-related consumption, each of our four studies distinctly examines the role of temporal focus with respect to positive affect and self-control. In study 1, we examine temporal focus as expressed in emotion-elicitation essays and demonstrate the positive impact of hopefulness as compared to happiness on consumption of an indulgent snack. Study 2 examines the moderating role of individual differences in temporal focus. In study 3, we manipulate the temporal focus of hopefulness and pride, eliciting these emotions with an inconsistent temporal focus (i.e., retrospective hope and anticipated pride). As such, this study clearly addresses the importance of the underlying temporal focus associated with the positive emotion in affecting self-control related outcomes. In study 4, we directly compare future-focused positive emotions to future-focused negative emotions to demonstrate that the beneficial influence of future-focus is restricted to positive emotions where the enhanced resources and mood maintenance accounts suggest greater likelihood of self-control (Andrade 2005; Clark and Isen 1982; Frederickson 2001). These results help to bring clarity to some
of the previous mixed results regarding the impact of positive affect on self-control.

**STUDY 1**

We proposed that incidental hopefulness results in greater self-control relative to happiness based on the future temporal focus appraisal of hopefulness. We focus specifically on comparing happiness and hopefulness in study 1 because much of the research on positive affect and self-control examines positive affect as a general state of happiness (e.g., Garg et al. 2007; Labroo and Patrick 2009). We acknowledge that happiness is often a general positive affective state and that it is more difficult to distinguish as a specific emotion (Ellsworth and Smith 1988), but we believe that it is an important starting point given its presence in the extant literature.

When considering how emotions influence consumers’ food consumption, and particularly the role that temporal focus of emotions may play, self-control is particularly relevant. Failing to resist temptations can hinder the accomplishment of future-oriented, long-term goals. However, healthier foods do not tend to hinder long-term goals to the same extent as do more indulgent foods (Giner-Sorolla 2001). Therefore, we focus on consumption of more unhealthy products such that less consumption indicates greater self-control and may arise from a more future-oriented focus. Since healthier foods are less likely to hinder progress toward long-term goals, and therefore do not require a more future-oriented focus to prevent consumption, we do not expect emotions differing in temporal focus to lead to differences in the consumption of healthier foods.

**Procedure**

Participants were 59 undergraduate students who received course credit for their participation. The study was a 2 (emotion: hopeful vs. happy) × 2 (product: unhealthy vs. healthy) mixed design, with emotion condition a between-subjects factor and product type a within-subjects factor. Participants were randomly assigned to a hopeful- or happy-emotion induction, with emotion induced using the writing task from the pretest described below. Participants received both a more unhealthy (M&Ms) and a less unhealthy (raisins) snack to consume during the study. We chose these snacks based on their use in prior relevant research (Fedorikhin and Patrick 2010; Garg et al. 2007). At the end of the session, study administrators weighed the remaining grams of M&Ms and raisins for each participant. The number of grams consumed served as the dependent variable (results were consistent when using the proportion of grams consumed). Overall, participants had approximately 25 minutes during which they had an opportunity to consume the snacks.

**Temporal Focus.** The temporal focus of participants’ essays was examined to test the underlying mechanism through which positive emotions influence self-control. Coding participants’ essays to assess appraisals has been used in past research (Cryder et al. 2008). Two independent coders rated participants’ emotion essays for temporal focus on the following 5-point scale (0 = distant past, 1 = immediate past, 2 = present, 3 = immediate future, 4 = distant future; 92% agreement). We conducted a repeated-measures ANOVA with emotion condition (happy or hopeful), product type (M&Ms and raisins), and their interaction as the independent variables. We note that we conducted additional analysis that examined hunger and gender as covariates but that they did not affect our results and thus are not included as covariates in the analysis reported here. Results revealed that the effect of emotion condition was not significant but that the effect of product type was significant \(F(1, 57) = 31.23, p < .01\). Importantly, as hypothesized, the interaction of emotion condition and product type was significant \(F(1, 57) = 5.00, p\)
Temporal Focus. We examined the temporal focus of the participants’ expressed emotion. We conducted an ANOVA with the emotion condition (happy or hopeful) predicting temporal focus. Results revealed that the effect of emotion condition was significant ($F(1, 58) = 10.99, p < .01$). Essays of hopeful participants were significantly more future-focused than those of happy participants ($M = 2.14$ [SD = 1.52] vs. 1.07 [SD = 0.78]). Although we note that the average focus of hopeful participants is closer to a present-focus (score = 2) than immediate-future-focus (score = 3), there is higher variability in the temporal focus of hopeful participants, indicating that while some hopeful participants did have a present-focus or even past-focus, the average temporal focus of hopeful participants is more future-focused than that of happy participants. These results support our hypothesis that hopefulness is characterized by greater future-focus than happiness.

Mediating Role of Temporal Focus. We examined the mediating role of temporal focus on the relationship between positive emotion (happy vs. hopeful) and self-control (consumption of unhealthy food). Using the three-regression approach recommended by Baron and Kenny (1986), we found support for partial mediation. Specifically, emotion condition predicted unhealthy snack consumption ($b = -5.95$; $t = -2.45, p < .05$), and emotion condition predicted temporal focus ($b = .52$; $t = 3.40, p < .05$). In the third equation, temporal focus predicted unhealthy snack consumption ($b = -4.03$; $t = -2.02, p < .05$), and the effect of emotion condition on consumption was attenuated ($t = -3.87; t = -1.50, p = .14$). A Sobel test indicated that the mediation was marginally significant ($Z = 1.74, p = .08$), providing evidence of partial mediation. These results provide the first evidence that the future-oriented focus of hopefulness may underlie the greater self-control exhibited by hopeful participants relative to those who are happy.

In addition to demonstrating that hopefulness leads to less consumption of unhealthy foods relative to happiness, we provide insight into the temporal focus mechanism through which hopefulness enhances self-control. Specifically, the temporal focus inherent in the participants’ thoughts as they wrote emotion essays helped to explain the differences in consumption of the unhealthy snack such that those who were hopeful had a more long-term temporal focus that led them to eat less compared to those who were experiencing the emotion of happiness. We note that consumption of a healthier snack did not differ between hopefulness and happiness, as expected, since consumption of a healthier snack should not be influenced by temporal focus as it does not represent a trade-off of short-term gratification versus achievement of long-term goals (Zhang, Winterich, and Mittal 2010).

One question may be whether anxiety or involvement, which may also differ between hopefulness and happiness, underlies these results. To consider these alternative accounts, we conducted a posttest ($N = 99$). Participants were randomly assigned to one of three emotion-elicitation writing essays: hopeful, happy, and neutral. Although neutral was not included in study 1, we examine neutral in subsequent studies and included it in this posttest as a comparison condition. After completing the emotion-elicitation essay, participants responded to a series of self-report measures for anxiety among other filler items and also indicated their task involvement. Anxiety was measured with four items: anxious, tense, stressed, and nervous ($\alpha = .89$). Posttest results indicated that hopeful participants reported greater anxiety than happy participants ($M = 3.81$ vs. 2.07; $t = 4.18, p < .05$), as was expected. Given the difference in anxiety between hopeful and happy participants, it seems plausible that the effect of hopefulness versus happiness on unhealthy snack consumption was a result of anxiety. However, anxiety for neutral participants was only marginally less than that for hopeful participants ($M_{\text{neutral}} = 3.10$; $t = 1.70, p = .09$), although neutral was significantly greater than happiness ($t = 2.42, p < .05$). While there was a marginal difference in anxiety between hopefulness and neutral participants, we believe that the anxiety in the neutral state being closer to that of hopeful participants suggests that anxiety may not account for the results entirely. We consider anxiety as well as the more general state of arousal as an alternative explanation of our results in subsequent studies that include a neutral comparison condition. Furthermore, we believe that anxiety is inherent with a future-focus as the future is never certain, and this uncertainty gives
rise to anxiety (McGregor et al. 2010). Consistent with this notion, uncertainty was also greater for hopeful participants than for happy participants ($M = 4.03$ vs. $M = 2.15$; $t = 3.45, p < .05$) and was positively correlated with anxiety ($r = .79, p < .01$). We discuss the need for future research on the role of anxiety and uncertainty in the general discussion.

The same posttest ($N = 99$) found that happy- and hope- ful-condition participants did not differ in task involvement ($M = 5.08$ vs. $M = 4.76$; $t = –.86, NS$). Involvement of neutral-condition participants also did not differ from that of happy or hopeful participants ($M = 4.70$; $p’s > .30$). Involvement was measured with two items: “How involved were you with the previous writing task?” and “How much effort did you put into completing the writing task as instructed?” ($\alpha = .81$). Thus, involvement does not appear to be an alternative explanation for our results.

Having established baseline differences in exhibited self-control for incidental hopefulness and happiness, we next seek to examine another positive emotion, pride. We also use a different method to examine the role of temporal focus.

**STUDY 2**

To provide further inquiry into the process through which hopefulness enhances self-control-related consumption relative to other past-focused positive emotions, we examine the moderating effect of chronic temporal focus on the effect of emotion on self-control. Additionally, we note that happiness has been described as the least differentiated of all positive emotions (Cavanaugh et al. 2007; Ellsworth and Smith 1988). Although having found that hopefulness enhances self-control relative to happiness (in study 1) may provide a more conservative test of our hypothesis, we incorporate a third positive emotion, pride, to examine a more distinct positive emotion that differs from hope in terms of temporal focus. Further, we include a neutral condition to examine how the relative effects of future- and past-focused positive emotions compare to a neutral state. Finally, we also seek to address the potential for arousal, that is, a heightened level of physical or psychological activity, to explain our results.

Although in study 1 we examined the temporal frame of participants’ thoughts while writing the emotion induction, another way to examine differences in temporal focus is to consider how individuals differ in their tendencies to focus on various time periods. Shipp, Edwards, and Lambert (2009) show that individuals differ in the extent of the attention they devote to considering the past, present, and future and that these differences influence current attitudes and behaviors. While some people tend to be more past-, present-, or future-focused, it is possible to be higher or lower in one’s focus on all three temporal periods or to focus on multiple time perspectives (Shipp et al. 2009). Given our theorizing regarding the role of future temporal focus in enhancing self-control for hopeful individuals, we are most interested in the extent to which one is chronically more future-focused relative to past-focused.

We theorize that chronic temporal focus may influence the effect of emotion on self-control given that dispositional tendencies have been found to moderate the effect of emotion by providing a schema for interpretation of events (Gasper and Clore 1998). When individuals are characterized by a low level of chronic relative future temporal focus (i.e., greater past-focus than future-focus), we expect that they naturally have less self-control, even when experiencing a positive emotion typically characterized by more future-focused appraisal tendencies. This is similar to the manner in which chronic self-control or impulsiveness may alter responses to indulgent opportunities (Haws, Bearden, and Nenkov 2011; Ramanathan and Williams 2007) for those who are impulsive. In contrast, individuals who tend to have a high relative future-focus (i.e., greater future-focus than past-focus) should be more influenced by the temporal focus of the emotion such that the past-focus of happy or proud individuals will result in less self-control than hopeful individuals. That is, individuals with a chronic relative future-focus should be more open to being influenced by the past-focus of incidental emotion.

**Procedure**

Participants were 191 undergraduate students who reported English as their primary language; they received course credit for their participation. The study was a 4 (emotion: hopeful, happy, pride, and neutral) $\times$ 2 (relative future temporal focus: high vs. low) with relative temporal focus measured as a continuous individual difference variable. Participants were randomly assigned to read one of three emotion-induction stories or a neutral story, based upon Griskevicius et al. (2010). Then participants responded to an emotion-manipulation check and arousal items. After completing these items, participants competed an ostensibly unrelated questionnaire regarding what snacks they would like to receive for their participation in research studies. Participants then responded to a series of personality questionnaires, which included the temporal focus measure. At the end of the session, participants provided demographic information and were given a snack of their choice.

**Emotion Induction.** Emotion was induced by having participants read a short story describing an emotion-eliciting situation (Griskevicius et al. 2010; Keltner, Ellsworth, and Edwards 1993). The use of short stories controls the focus of the participants in the emotion induction, likely resulting in more similar emotion experiences than writing tasks. Using stories also allowed us to induce specific emotions of similar arousal levels, as Fedorikhin and Patrick (2010) state that arousal level in positive states may depend on the particular situation. Of the several cognitive appraisals on which emotions differ, arousal is of particular relevance when individuals are facing temptation or indulgence (Cools et al. 1992; Russell 1980). Given that high arousal tends to diminish cognitive capacity to regulate behavior (Fedorikhin and Patrick 2010) and that happiness and pride tend to be higher in arousal (Cohen et al. 2008; Frederickson 2001; Russell 1980), it is possible that differences in self-control arise due to arousal rather than temporal focus.
The happy story described receiving a phone call informing the participant that they had won a $100 gift card. The pride story described receiving an A in a difficult class after working hard throughout the semester. The hope story described finding a job posting for an ideal position and remaining optimistic that they would obtain a fitting job for themselves in the future. Note that while the hope story focuses on the future, the pride story focused on past accomplishments, thereby differing in temporal focus. However, unlike the typical differences in arousal among pride and hope, both receiving an A after a semester of hard work and finding a fitting job are likely to be exciting and thereby characterized by high levels of arousal. The neutral story described doing the laundry (Griskevicius et al. 2010). All stories were developed to be the same length.

Immediately following the stories, participants indicated the extent to which they were experiencing each of four emotion words (happy, proud, hopeful, sad), which were randomly ordered (1 = Do not feel the emotion the slightest bit; 9 = Feel the emotion more strongly than ever). Following this, participants indicated their level of arousal (1 = Do not feel the slightest bit aroused; 9 = Feel aroused more strongly than ever) to examine arousal as a potential alternative explanation.

Unhealthy Snack Preference. Several times during each semester, participants in research studies receive snacks for participation. In this study, participants were asked to think about snacks they would like to get for participation in research sessions. They could list up to 15 snack foods they would like to get. A coder unaware of the hypotheses coded each snack listed to determine the number of unhealthy snacks out of the total number of snacks listed. This score was the dependent measure and was coded such that higher scores indicate greater preference for unhealthy snacks. The average number of snacks listed was 7.23 (SD = 4.30, range = 1 to 15). Examples of unhealthy snacks listed by participants include cookies, potato chips, and candy bars. The total number of snacks listed did not differ by emotion condition (p’s > .20).

Chronic Relative Future Focus. We measured temporal focus using the 12-item temporal focus scale developed by Shipp et al. (2009). This temporal focus scale is composed of three dimensions: past, current, and future. Our theorizing pertains specifically to the future-focus of emotions such as hopefulness relative to the past-focus of positive emotions such as pride and happiness. Therefore, we were primarily concerned with chronic future-focus and past-focus. The four items for future were: “I think about what my future has in store,” “I think about times to come,” “I focus on my future,” and “I imagine what tomorrow will bring for me” (α = .88). The four items for past focus were: “I replay memories of the past in my mind,” “I reflect on what has happened in my life,” “I think about things from my past,” and “I think back to my earlier days” (α = .91). We created a score for relative future-focus versus past-focus by subtracting scores on the past-focus index from those on the future-focus index (M = .91, SD = 1.29). We note that we also measured current-focus. We conducted additional analysis with current-focus as a covariate, but it was not significant nor did it interact with any of the emotions, and so we excluded it from subsequent analysis.

Results and Discussion

Emotion-Manipulation Check. We examined participants’ self-reported emotion experience following the story. We anticipated that participants in the hopeful condition would experience more hope than in any other condition, whereas participants in the pride condition would experience more pride. However, given that happiness is one of the least differentiated positive emotions and that it is frequently used as a generic description of positive affect (Cavanaugh et al. 2007; Ellsworth and Smith 1988), it is possible that reported happiness might not differ significantly from other self-reported positive emotions. Results indicated that self-reported hopefulness was greater for those in the hopeful condition than in any other emotion condition (Mhopeful = 6.64 vs. Mhappy = 5.39, Mpride = 5.71, and Mneutral = 2.76; t’s > 2.64, p’s < .05). Self-reported happiness was greater than the hopeful or neutral condition (Mhappy = 6.13 vs. Mhopeful = 5.39, Mneutral = 2.67; t’s > 2.13, p’s < .05), but, perhaps not surprisingly, self-reported happiness was equal to that of the pride condition (Mpride = 6.40; t = .76, p = .45). Finally, the pride measure demonstrated that the pride condition indeed created the most pride (Mpride = 6.53 vs. Mhopeful = 4.72, Mhappy = 4.48, and Mneutral = 2.55; t’s > 2.55, p’s < .05). As such, the short stories successfully induced the intended emotions.

Unhealthy Snack Preferences. We conducted a regression analysis to examine the relationship between specific positive emotions and chronic temporal focus on self-control assessed through unhealthy snack preferences. Because we had four levels of emotion condition, we created three variables, one each for happiness, pride, and neutral. Hope was the baseline variable because we believe self-control should be significantly greater for hopeful individuals than for other less future-focused positive emotion states or for a neutral state (Aiken and West 1991). Relative future temporal focus (mean-centered) was included in the model along with the interaction of relative future temporal focus and each variable for emotion condition. The dependent variable is unhealthy snack preferences. Because we expected happy, proud, and neutral participants to have greater unhealthy snack preferences than hopeful participants. We note that we examined hunger and gender as covariates but that they did not affect our results, and so they are not included as covariates in the reported analysis.

Results revealed that the effect of neutral and pride differed significantly from that of the baseline emotion of hope (bneutral = .11; t(1, 183) = 2.70, p < .05; bpride = .08; t(1, 183) = 2.20, p < .05), with a marginal effect for happiness (bhappy = .07; t(1, 183) = 1.82, p = .07). Relative future temporal focus negatively predicted unhealthy

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snack preferences \( (b = -0.05; t(1, 183) = -2.39, p < .05) \), as expected, such that those with a more chronic future focus had lower preferences for unhealthy snacks. More importantly, the interaction of relative future-focus with happiness, pride, and neutral significantly predicted snack preferences \( (b_{\text{happy}} = 0.07; t(1, 183) = 2.38, p < .05; b_{\text{pride}} = 0.07; t(1, 183) = 2.12, p < .05; b_{\text{neutral}} = 0.06; t(1, 183) = 2.05, p < .05) \). To explore the pattern of this interaction with each emotion and relative future-focus, we examined the effect of each emotion condition at one standard deviation above and below the mean (Fitzsimons 2008). For high levels of relative future-focus, we find that the snack preferences of happy individuals \( (b = .15; t(1, 183) = 2.77, p < .05) \) and proud individuals \( (b = .16; t(1, 183) = 2.79, p < .05) \) are significantly more unhealthy than those of hopeful individuals. Similarly, snack preferences of neutral individuals are significantly more unhealthy than those of hopeful individuals \( (b = .18; t(1, 183) = 3.13, p < .05) \). These results indicate that hopefulness results in greater self-control through lower preference for unhealthy snacks than happiness, pride, or neutral. Importantly, the comparison of hopefulness not only to happiness and pride but also to neutral allows us to conclude that it is not that happiness and pride decrease self-control relative to a neutral state; rather, hopefulness increases self-control.

In contrast to the effect of hopefulness on self-control among those with high relative future-focus, for consumers with low levels of relative future-focus, snack preferences of happy individuals \( (b = -.02; t(1, 183) = -3.40, p < .001; M_{\text{neutral}} = 2.12 \text{ vs. } M_{\text{hopeful}} = 3.79) \). Although arousal for proud participants was marginally greater than that for hopeful participants, \( (b_{\text{pride}} = .77; t(1, 187) = 1.87, p = .08; M_{\text{pride}} = 4.50) \), arousal for happy participants did not differ from that of hopeful participants \( (b_{\text{happy}} = -.55; t(1, 187) = -1.36, p = .17; M_{\text{happy}} = 2.97) \). If arousal explained the increased self-control of hopefulness, then including arousal as a predictor in the model estimating unhealthy snack preferences should attenuate the effect of emotions and relative future focus on snack preferences and arousal itself should be significant. We conducted this regression analysis. First, arousal did not significantly predict unhealthy snack preferences \( (b = -.01; t(1, 181) = -2.26, p = .79) \). Additionally, the interactions of emotion condition and relative future focus remained significant \( (p^{'s} < .05) \). These results indicate that the increase in self-control for hopefulness is not accounted for by differences in arousal.

This study demonstrates that relative future temporal focus moderates the effect of positive emotion on self-control, measured via unhealthy snack preferences. When individuals have a relative future-focus, experiencing future-focused hopefulness results in greater self-control than experiencing past-focused pride and happiness. On the contrary, for individuals with a low relative future-focus, the effect of the temporal focus of the emotion is attenuated by their chronically low future-focus (i.e., past-focus). Further support for these results was found in a posttest \( (N = 99) \), in which the correlation between self-control (Tangney, Baumeister, and Boone 2004) and temporal focus was significantly stronger for past-focus \( (r = -.33, p < .01) \) than for future-focus \( (r = .18, p < .05) \). These results are consistent with our findings suggesting that it would be more difficult to improve the self-control of those with less relative future-focus through a temporary future-focused emotion state (hopeful) than to decrease the self-control of those with more relative future-focus through a temporary past-focused emotion state (happy, proud). Additionally, we do not find arousal to attenuate the effect of temporal focus and emotion on self-control; this demonstrates that the theorized role of temporal focus is not explained by arousal.

Although this study provides support for the role of temporal focus in the effect of positive emotions on self-control by examining chronic temporal focus, the question remains whether it is specifically hopefulness or rather the future temporal focus of any positive emotion that results in en-

\[ \text{FIGURE 2} \]

**STUDY 2: UNHEALTHY SNACK PREFERENCES (BY MEDIAN SPLIT)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Temporal Focus</th>
<th>Relative low future focus</th>
<th>Relative high future focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proud</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Proportion of unhealthy snacks
- **Note:** Median split used to compare high and low future-focus.
The purpose of the third study was to extend our examination of the temporal focus account to other positive emotions, providing additional support for our theorizing that positive emotions affect self-control differently because of temporal focus appraisals. We address this objective by manipulating the temporal focus of hopefulness and pride, consistent with procedures recommended by Spencer, Zanna, and Fong (2005) for examining psychological processes. Although specific emotions are characterized by distinct cognitive appraisals (Ellsworth and Scherer 2003), it is possible to elicit specific emotions with contrasting appraisals to examine the effect of the cognitive appraisal on decision making (Tiedens and Linton 2001). In addition, since our focus is on self-control in food preferences, we wanted to account for current weight management goals since these goals may also influence unhealthy snack preferences.

The focus of this study is our manipulation of temporal focus through the emotion elicitation. Specifically, we prime pride and hope with both consistent (i.e., past goal progress for pride and anticipated goal achievement for hope) and inconsistent temporal focus (i.e., anticipated pride and retrospective hope) to test the impact of temporal focus on the relationship between specific positive emotions and self-control. We propose that when the temporal focus is inconsistent with the emotion (i.e., anticipated pride and retrospective hope), the effect will be consistent with the primed temporal focus rather than the specific emotion. That is, and similar to the findings of Patrick et al. (2009), we expect future-focused (anticipated) pride, which is inconsistent with the past-focus that typically characterizes pride, to enhance self-control similar to hopefulness. In contrast, we expect retrospective hope, which is past-focused and inconsistent with the typical future orientation of hope, to influence self-control similar to pride.

Procedure

A total of 239 participants who reported English as their primary language completed the online study. The study was a 2 (emotion: hopeful vs. proud) × 2 (temporal focus: consistent vs. inconsistent) between-subjects design with a neutral condition included as a control for both temporal focus and emotion. Participants were randomly assigned to read one of the four emotion stories or the neutral story; this was presented as a memory task. After reading the story, participants filled out an ostensibly unrelated questionnaire regarding what snacks they would like to eat at that moment. Then participants responded to manipulation check items for emotion and temporal focus, a task consistent with the memory task cover story. At the end of the session, participants provided demographic information.

Emotion Induction. Similar to study 2, emotion was induced by having participants read a short story describing an emotion-eliciting situation (Griskevicius et al. 2010; Keltner et al. 1993). The nature of the situation was held constant in each emotion-induction story such that the story described searching for a job with the specific descriptions of the situation differing depending on the emotion condition. The hopefulness story was the same as that used in study 2 such that the story described finding a job posting for an ideal job and remaining optimistic about obtaining a fitting job in the future. The pride story adapted the job search story to emphasize the pride of obtaining the ideal job after much hard work. The inconsistent stories were similar to their respective emotion stories, with an emphasis on the inconsistent temporal focus (i.e., anticipating pride from obtaining an ideal job or recalling hope experienced when searching for a job). See appendix B for the text of the hopefulness story and appendix C in the online version of the article for the other stories. All of the stories were developed to be of approximately the same length. Although the temporal focus manipulations were designed to be either future-focused or past-focused, we code these manipulations as either consistent or inconsistent with the emotion in its typical usage. So hopefulness is consistent with the future but inconsistent with the past. On the contrary, pride is consistent with the past but inconsistent with the future.

Covariates. To assess dieting status, we asked participants to indicate their current weight management goal with four options: (1) lose weight, (2) gain weight, (3) maintain current weight, and (4) do not do anything about weight. This measure is adapted from Galuska et al. (1999). We examined this variable as a moderator, but it was not significant. We include this measure as a covariate for dieting status. We removed eight outliers who indicated that they wanted to lose more than 100 pounds since their current weight suggests that they may have extreme difficulty with self-control that would not be influenced by subtle situational factors such as affect. We also include gender and hunger as covariates in our analysis.

Unhealthy Snack Preference. We followed the procedure of study 2 such that participants were asked to think about snacks they would like to eat at the moment. They could list up to seven snacks. A coder unaware of the hypotheses coded each snack listed to determine the number of unhealthy snacks out of the total number of snacks listed. This score was the dependent measure and was coded such that higher scores indicated greater preference for unhealthy snacks. The average number of snacks listed was 6.00 (SD = 1.49, range = 1 to 7), and this did not differ by emotion or temporal focus condition.

Results and Discussion

Manipulation Checks. After reporting their snack preferences, participants were asked to recall the story they had read during the memory task (i.e., emotion-induction story) and to respond to questions regarding how they felt while reading the story. We conducted ANCOVAs with emotion
condition, temporal focus, and their interaction to examine whether our manipulations were successful. To assess emotion, participants responded to one item regarding the extent to which they felt hopeful versus proud using a 7-point scale (1 = mostly proud, 4 = equally proud and hopeful, and 7 = mostly hopeful). Participants in the hopeful conditions reported experiencing more hopefulness relative to pride compared to proud participants ($M = 5.18$ vs. $M = 4.70$; $t = 2.22$, $p < .05$). Neutral participants reported equal hopefulness and pride ($M = 4.11$), as expected given the scale. The main effect of emotion was significant, suggesting that the emotion inductions elicited the intended emotion. We note that the interaction of emotion and consistency of the temporal focus was also significant, indicating that as the temporal focus of the emotion was altered, so too was the extent to which the emotion was experienced. This result was expected given research indicating that the appraisals elicit emotion experience (Ellsworth and Scherer 2003; Roseman and Evdokas 2004). We also assessed valence on one item ranging from 1 = negative to 7 = positive. Hopeful and proud participants did not differ in positive valence ($M_{\text{hope}} = 5.46$ vs. $M_{\text{pride}} = 5.72$; $t = 1.30$, NS). Neutral participants were significantly less positive than either hopeful or proud participants ($M = 4.75$; $p's > .01$).

To assess temporal focus, participants responded to one item on a 7-point scale (1 = past-focused; 7 = future-focused). For this manipulation check, we coded temporal focus conditions as either past-focused (i.e., pride and retrospective hope) or future-focused (i.e., hope and anticipated pride), as well as neutral for the neutral condition. Participants in the future-focused conditions reported having a marginally greater future-focus than did participants in the past-focused conditions ($M_{\text{future}} = 5.81$ vs. $M_{\text{past}} = 5.46$; $t = 1.72$, $p = .08$). Neutral-condition participants were significantly more past-focused than either temporal condition ($M = 4.54$; $p's > .01$). Similar to the results for the emotion-manipulation check, the main effect of temporal focus was significant, suggesting that our inductions manipulated temporal focus as intended. We note that the interaction of emotion and temporal focus was also significant, indicating that depending on the emotion elicited, so too is the extent to which one is future-focused.

Unhealthy Snack Preferences. We conducted an ANCOVA to examine the relationship between emotion and temporal focus on self-control assessed through unhealthy snack preferences. The temporal focus conditions were coded as consistent or inconsistent with the emotion, as described previously. Emotion and temporal focus as well as their interaction were included as independent variables, and weight management goal, hunger, and gender were included as covariates. The interaction between emotion and temporal focus significantly predicted unhealthy snack preferences ($F(1, 221) = 9.25$, $p < .01$). Neither main effects of temporal focus ($F(1, 221) = .70$, NS) nor emotion ($F(2, 220) = .81$, NS) were significant. Hunger ($F(1, 221) = 5.18$, $p < .05$) and gender ($F(1, 221) = 3.73$, $p = .05$) were both significant covariates, and weight management goal ($F(3, 221) = 2.19$, $p = .09$) was marginally significant.

To examine the pattern of the interaction, we conducted planned contrasts (see fig. 3 for details and means for each condition). When the temporal focus manipulation was consistent with the temporal appraisal tendency of the emotion (i.e., future for hope and past for pride), hope resulted in a marginally lower preference for unhealthy snacks than did pride ($M = .45$ vs. $M = .55$; $t = -1.68$, $p < .10$). In contrast, when temporal focus was inconsistent with emotion condition (i.e., past/retrospective hope and future/anticipated pride), proud participants had a lower preference for unhealthy snacks than did hopeful participants ($M = .45$ vs. $M = .59$; $t = -2.51$, $p < .05$). Within the hope condition, temporal consistency (future) resulted in lower preferences for unhealthy snacks than did the inconsistent past-focus ($M = .45$ vs. $M = .55$; $t = -1.78$, $p < .10$). Neutral ($M = .54$) was marginally higher than both (temporally consistent) hope ($M = .45$; $p < .10$) and anticipated (temporally inconsistent) pride ($M = .45$; $p = .10$), demonstrating a marginal “boost” towards healthier eating in the case of these future-focused emotions. Neutral did not differ from past (inconsistent) hope or past (consistent) pride, ($M = .54$; $p's > .30$).

These results support those of studies 1 and 2, demonstrating that hopefulness increases self-control through less unhealthy consumption relative to other positive emotions such as pride. This study also extends prior results by demonstrating that when the emotion is primed with an opposing (i.e., inconsistent) temporal focus, the effect of the emotion is reversed, providing strong support for temporal focus as the underlying mechanism. We note that the positive effect of anticipating pride on self-control relative to neutral and experienced pride is consistent with the results of Patrick et al. (2009). Demonstrating the increase in self-control not only for hopefulness but also for future-focused (anticipated) pride provides additional support for the importance of future-focus for the impact of positive emotions on self-control.

Similar as with the previous studies, we considered the role of anxiety as an alternative explanation for our results. Anxiety was measured with one item measured on a 7-point scale (1 = calm; 7 = anxious). We conducted the ANCOVA reported in the main results including anxiety as a covariate. Anxiety was not significant ($F(1, 220) = .13$, NS), and the emotion and temporal focus interaction remained significant ($F(1, 220) = 9.34$, $p < .01$), which suggests that anxiety does not account for the interactive effect of temporal focus and emotion on unhealthy snack preferences.

Although these results demonstrate the role of temporal focus in the effect of specific positive emotions on self-control, we have so far restricted our investigation to positively valenced emotions. While research generally suggests that positive affect is more beneficial to self-control than...
negative affect (Aspinwall 1998; Frederickson 2001; Raghubathan and Trope 2002; Trope and Neter 1994), does a future-focused affective state enhance self-control regardless of valence, which may be suggested by construal level theory (Trope and Liberman 2010)? We examine this question in the next study by extending our research to examine the effect of a temporal focus of negative emotions.

**STUDY 4**

The previous studies focused on understanding the relationship between positive emotions and temporal focus as they together affect self-control. In our final study, we examine whether or not the positive impact of future-focus on self-control arose from temporal focus alone (Fujita et al. 2006) or if a combination of positive affect and future-focus drove the results. Past research generally affirms the benefits of positive affect (Andrade 2005; Frederickson 2001; Lyubomirsky et al. 2005) and the detrimental influence of negative emotions (Garg et al. 2007; Labroo and Patrick 2009). However, is this always the case? Is it possible that negative emotions that are more future-focused (e.g., fear) may show self-control-enhancing effects similar to such positive emotions?

Contrasting the effects of a series of both positive and negative emotions that all share a similar future-focus will provide additional insights into the role that the valence of the emotion plays in determining the resulting effects of temporal focus on unhealthy consumption. Examining future-focused negative emotions also provides the opportunity to determine whether anxiety, associated with future-focused emotions such as hope and fear, may be driving our results. If the positive effect of hopefulness and other future-focused positive emotions on self-control arises from anxiety, then both fear and hopefulness should have less unhealthy consumption. Additionally, examining the role of future-focus on self-control for both positive and negative emotions allows us to provide a clearer understanding of the effects presented in this work in regard to work by Patrick and colleagues (Labroo and Patrick 2009; Patrick et al. 2009).

**Procedure**

A total of 326 participants completed the study. The study was a 2 (valence: positive vs. negative) × 2 (temporal focus: consistent vs. inconsistent) between-subjects design, with a neutral condition and two emotions with inconsistent temporal focus for both positive and negative valence, resulting in a total of seven emotion conditions: hopeful, anticipated happiness, anticipated pride, anticipated shame, anticipated sadness, and neutral. Although we were testing the
effect of valence, we also coded each condition for consistency with the temporal focus of the emotion, similar to what was done in study 3. After the emotion induction, participants responded to manipulation check items for valence and temporal focus and then completed an ostensibly unrelated questionnaire regarding what snacks they would like to receive for their participation in research studies. At the end of the session, participants provided demographic information, and randomly selected participants received a snack of their choice.

**Emotion Induction.** As in studies 2 and 3, emotion was induced by having participants read a short story describing an emotion-eliciting situation pertaining to job search. The helpfulness story was the same as that used in the two previous studies. In contrast to the three positively valenced stories, the three negatively valenced stories focused on the negative aspect of not being able to find an ideal job after diligent search. Again, the neutral story described doing the laundry (Griskevicius et al. 2010). See appendix C in the online version of the article for the emotion-induction stories. Immediately following the stories, participants responded to the manipulation checks. To assess valence, participants responded to two items: (1 = negative/bad; 7 = positive/good; $r = .82$). To assess temporal focus, participants responded to one item: (1 = past-focused; 7 = future-focused).

**Covariates.** We assessed dieting status with the same measure used in study 3, adapted from Galuska et al. (1999). Three outliers who indicated that they wanted to lose more than 100 pounds were removed for the same reason stated in study 3. We examined dieting status as a moderator, but it was not significant. We include this measure as a covariate for dieting status. Similar to the procedure of study 3, gender and hunger are also included as covariates.

**Unhealthy Snack Preference.** We followed the procedure of study 2 such that participants were asked to think about snacks they would like to get for participation in research sessions. They could list up to seven snack foods they would like to get. A coder unaware of the hypotheses coded each snack listed to determine the number of unhealthy snacks out of the total number of snacks listed. This score was the dependent measure and was coded such that higher scores indicated greater preference for unhealthy snacks. The average number of snacks listed was 5.83 (SD = 1.60, range = 1 to 7).

**Results and Discussion**

**Manipulation Checks.** Participants in the positively valenced conditions reported greater positive versus negative affect than those in the negatively valenced conditions ($M = 5.43$ vs. $M = 3.70; t = 9.31, p < .01$). Neutral participants reported less positive affect than those in the positively valenced conditions ($M = 4.96; t = 1.94, p = .05$) and more positive affect than those in the negatively valenced conditions ($t = 5.19, p < .01$). For temporal focus, participants in the positively valenced and negatively valenced conditions did not differ in future-focus ($M = 5.62$ vs. $M = 5.51; t = .55, NS$) regardless of whether the emotion was consistent or inconsistent with the typical temporal focus ($M_{consistent} = 5.68$ vs. $M_{inconsistent} = 5.49; t = .92, NS$). However, participants in the neutral condition were significantly less future-focused ($M = 4.68, p < .05$). We excluded 17 participants who reported experiencing valence opposing that of the condition to which they were assigned. This left 306 participants for analysis.

**Unhealthy Snack Preferences.** We conducted an ANCOVA to examine the relationship between valence and temporal focus on self-control assessed through unhealthy snack preferences. Valence and temporal focus were included as independent variables, and weight management goal, gender, and hunger were included as covariates. The analysis was initially conducted with the interaction between valence and temporal focus, but it was not significant ($F(1, 297) = .71, NS$); therefore, this interaction was not included in the analysis reported here. Valence significantly predicted unhealthy snack preferences ($F(2, 297) = 5.05, p < .01$). Temporal focus ($F(1, 297) = .78, NS$) was not significant nor were any of the covariates (weight management goal: $F(1, 297) = .53, NS$; hunger: $F(1, 297) = .04, NS$; gender: $F(1, 297) = .31, NS$).

To explore the effect of valence, we examined unhealthy snack preferences by valence. Participants in a positively valenced emotion condition reported lower unhealthy snack preferences than those in the negatively valenced emotion conditions ($M = .69$ vs. $M = .80; t = 3.05, p < .01$). The unhealthy snack preferences of those in the positively valenced emotion conditions are also less than those in the neutral condition ($M = .76; t = 1.94, p = .05$). We present these means (fig. 4, panel A) as well as the means by each emotion condition (fig. 4, panel B).

This study demonstrates that when considering the role of temporal focus of emotions on self-control, it is not future temporal focus alone that positively affects self-control. Rather, it is the combination of positive affect and future temporal focus that results in a positive effect on self-control. We find that although negative emotions such as fear and anticipated negative emotions such as shame and sadness are characterized by anxiety, participants experiencing these future-focused negative emotions preferred a greater proportion of unhealthy snacks than did those experiencing future-focused positive emotions. Further, participants in the future-focused negative emotion conditions reported greater anxiety than did those in the future-focused positive emotion conditions ($M = 5.14$ vs. $M = 4.64; t = 2.30, p = .05$). Even when controlling for anxiety ($F(1, 296) = .01, NS$), the effect of valence remains significant ($F(2, 296) = 5.10, p < .05$). Thus, anxiety does not account for the effect of emotions on self-control nor does future temporal focus alone explain this effect. It is the future temporal focus of positively valenced emotions that results in enhanced self-control relative to neutral-, negative-, or less future-focused positive emotion states.
GENERAL DISCUSSION

Enhancing understanding of the relationships among emotions, temporal focus, and self-control addresses important issues regarding the decision making and well-being of consumers. The results of four studies lend support to a growing body of research that suggests that specific emotions and their corresponding characteristics may have differential effects on evaluations and behavior (Griskevicius et al. 2010; Kim, Park, and Schwarz 2010; Mukhopadhyay and Johar 2007; Patrick et al. 2009; Wilcox et al. 2011). Specifically, study 1 demonstrates the benefit of hopefulness relative to happiness as evidenced by the decreased consumption of an unhealthy snack food. Further, study 1 provides evidence of the underlying role of temporal focus. Study 2 found that a chronically low relative future-focus (i.e., past-focus) attenuates the positive impact of a future-focused positive emotion (i.e., hopeful) on unhealthy food preferences.

In study 3, we manipulated the temporal focus of positive emotions and demonstrated that when a temporal focus inconsistent with the emotion was elicited, the effect of the emotion on self-control reversed such that self-control was greater for anticipated pride (future temporal focus) than retrospective hope (past temporal focus). Finally, in study 4, we compared future-focused positive emotions to future-focused negative emotions, demonstrating that it is the combination of positive valence and future-focus that enhances self-control through less unhealthy food preferences and consumption. We note that when examining the effect of future-focused positive emotions on self-control, we provide comparisons to a neutral state that indicate that these future-focused positive emotions such as hopefulness and anticipated pride increase self-control relative to past-focused states such as happiness and pride, which result in self-control more similar to a neutral state. Additionally, throughout the series of studies, we ruled out alternative explanations of anxiety as well as arousal, which is particularly important given the role that arousal can play in the effect of positive affect on self-control (Fedorikhin and Patrick 2010).

Contributions and Implications

Addressing the temporal distinctions in positive emotions and demonstrating the effects of these distinctions empirically makes important contributions to existing research investigating ways in which positive affect influences self-control (Aspinwall 1998; Fedorikhin and Patrick 2010; Fishbach and Labroo 2007; Frederickson 2001; Isen and Labroo 2003; Labroo and Mukhopadhyay 2009). Below we detail our three central contributions, which include (1) enhancing understanding of differential effects of positive emotions on self-control, specifically demonstrating the positive impact of hopefulness or other future-focused positively valenced emotions such as anticipated pride on self-control; (2) revealing the importance of temporal appraisals in the influence of emotions on consumer decisions; and (3) building on literature connecting affect to construal level.

First, we show that emotions of the same positive valence can differentially affect self-control such that hopefulness enhances self-control relative to other positive emotions of happiness and pride. Understanding the distinctions between positive emotions and their behavioral implications is important given the fairly limited understanding of specific positive emotions relative to negative emotions (Agrawal, Menon, and
Aaker 2007; Cavanaugh et al. 2007; Ellsworth and Smith 1988), particularly in regard to self-control.

Second, our research contributes to the growing literature about the role of positive emotions in cognitive processing and consumption behavior (Frederickson 2001; Griskevicius et al. 2010; Kim et al. 2010; Patrick et al. 2009) by identifying the role of temporal focus of emotions on goal-related behaviors. Although much emotion research has been guided by consideration of the cognitive appraisals associated with specific emotions (Cavanaugh et al. 2007; Ellsworth and Scherer 2003), the temporal focus of emotions has received limited consideration as a factor influencing the effect of emotions on decisions (Ellsworth and Smith 1988). We bring clarity to the research on positive affect and self-control by demonstrating that future-focused positive emotions result in greater self-control than other past-focused emotions or neutral states. In identifying the importance of temporal focus, we demonstrate in study 4 that rather than temporal focus alone, it is the combination of positive valence and future-focus, which characterize hopefulness as well as other positive emotions that are anticipated, that creates a beneficial effect on snack consumption preferences. While positive emotions may indeed provide a boost to a baseline level of self-control, as is suggested by past research, our research suggests that this effect is stronger when the positive emotion is future-focused.

Finally, despite the recent surge in research related to the role of temporal perspectives in decision making (Fujita et al. 2006; Hoch and Loewenstein 1991; Trope and Liberman 2003), few papers have directly linked emotions and temporal focus (see Ramanathan and Williams [2007] for a notable exception). We demonstrate that temporal focus underlies the extent to which positive emotions have an impact on self-control, suggesting that individuals experiencing positive affect can forgo short-term rewards to achieve long-term goals if their affective experience includes appraisals characterized by future-oriented cognitions. This finding is consistent with research on temporal construal and self-control (Fujita et al. 2006), as well as the recent findings of Labroo and Patrick (2009), which demonstrated that positive mood, associated with more abstract construal relative to negative moods, enhances self-control. Given that a future-focus tends to be more abstract (Trope and Liberman 2003) and abstract construal can enhance self-control (Fujita et al. 2006; Labroo and Patrick 2009), our results are theoretically consistent. In connecting affect, construal level, and self-control research, we demonstrate negative valence as a boundary condition of the effect of future-focus on self-control. Together, these findings raise interesting questions for future research, such as whether specific emotions result in distinct construal levels similar to that of positive versus negative moods and whether all negative emotions result in less self-control.

Considering the societal issues arising from lack of self-control and increasing rates of obesity (Grady 2010), the practical implications of this research are of considerable importance. Both consumers and health professionals have recognized that consumption, particularly eating, is influenced by emotions. However, current perspectives suggest that consumers may only need to consider the impact of valenced mood states on consumption self-control (Frederickson 2001; Labroo and Patrick 2009) or valence and other corresponding factors such as arousal (Fedorikhin and Patrick 2010). Building upon extant research, our results suggest that consumers should consider not only the valence but also the temporal focus of their emotion experiences to improve consequences of affect on consumption. Specifically, in addition to trying to counter overeating when in a sad or unhappy state or a positive, aroused state, consumers should also attempt to minimize “emotional eating” when in positive states that tend to be more past-focused or present-focused (i.e., happiness and pride). Individuals experiencing these past-focused positive emotions may be well served to anticipate the experience of such emotions in the future when achieving a goal (Fishbach and Dhar 2005).

Toward Understanding Positive Emotions and Their Appraisal Tendencies

Although examining the effects of distinct positive emotions is quite challenging due to their limited differentiation relative to negative emotions (Cavanaugh et al. 2007; Ellsworth and Smith 1988), we develop a richer understanding of the effects of discrete positive emotions on consumer behavior by identifying temporal focus to be a particularly important appraisal in self-control dilemmas. Perhaps temporal focus has been left largely unexamined due to being subsumed under certainty (Reisenzein and Hofmann 1990), yet we propose that temporal focus deserves further research as some appraisals may be more important in distinguishing emotions from one another (Ellsworth and Smith 1988).

We focused on positive emotions and corresponding temporal focus in self-control dilemmas because the temporal appraisal (past vs. future) maps onto self-control dilemmas between short- and long-term goals (Fujita et al. 2006; Hoch and Loewenstein 1991). Despite our efforts to address other related appraisals that may underlie our effects (e.g., by manipulating temporal focus in study 3 and controlling for arousal and anxiety in several studies), future research should examine the relationship between future temporal focus and affective components such as anxiety and uncertainty, as a future-focus is likely to elicit feelings of anxiety and thoughts of uncertainty (Ellsworth and Smith 1988; McGregor et al. 2010).

In addition, future research should seek to identify those appraisal dimensions that can best distinguish the often co-occurring positive emotions, the interplay among them, and how these appraisals lead to different behavioral outcomes. For instance, though hopefulness may be the most forward-looking emotion, making it distinct from pride and happiness on the temporal appraisal, the specific appraisals that distinguish other positive emotions such as contentment, joy, excitement, and amusement should also be examined. Although we do not believe that control appraisals explain our
we believe that this research provides an important foun-
temporal focus in the influence of emotions on decisions,
itive emotions on consumption self-control and the role of
much to be understood about the influence of specific pos-
as fear and anticipated shame or sadness. While there is still
emotions of happiness and pride or negative emotions such
duce unhealthy consumption and preferences due to its
fulness (as well as anticipated pride and happiness) can re-
of specific emotions in consumer decision making.
consider also the potential for positive emotions to lead one to
become more complacent with respect to one’s goals. This
complacency may not result from the temporal focus of the
emotion but from an appraisal of situational control. If this
is the case, what positive emotions are distinct in situational
control appraisals, and how do the corresponding appraisal
tendencies influence consumer behavior?

Another important avenue for future research is to ex-
amine potential differences in self-control resulting from
outline how factors influencing the effect of emotions on
decisions may be similar for both incidental and integral
emotion. Although much emotion research tends to focus
on the effect of incidental emotion on subsequent judgments
and decisions (e.g., Cryder et al. 2008; Fedorikhin and Pat-
rick 2010; Kim et al. 2010; Pochepstova and Novemsky
2010), it is also important to understand whether integral
emotions have the same influence on self-control, as emo-
tions relevant to self-control goals (and particularly food
consumption) may play a critical role in a cycle of unhealthy
(or healthy) eating, and this may depend more upon how
relevant the consumption domain is to the consumer. Results
from a study not reported here suggest that when consumers
are less concerned about weight loss goals, integral emotions
do not influence preferences for unhealthy snacks as they
do when consumers have weight loss goals. Future research
could more directly examine this issue and test whether or
not the positive affect is less informative or representative
for those without weight management goals (Pham 2004).
Because the source of integral emotions is known, the af-
fective information may be less influential in subsequent
decisions than when the affect is incidental and unknown
(Raghunathan, Pham, and Corfman 2006). Research that
jointly considers the integral or incidental role of affect and
how it varies when the decision at hand pertains to con-
sumers’ goals can lead to further understanding of the role
of specific emotions in consumer decision making.

Overall, the research presented here suggests that hope-
fulness (as well as anticipated pride and happiness) can
reduce unhealthy consumption and preferences due to its
greater future-focus relative to the past-focused positive
emotions of happiness and pride or negative emotions such
as fear and anticipated shame or sadness. While there is still
much to be understood about the influence of specific pos-
tive emotions on consumption self-control and the role of
temporal focus in the influence of emotions on decisions,
we believe that this research provides an important foun-
dation for differentiating the effects of positive emotion with
contrast appraisals on consumption behaviors. To suc-
cessfully address current self-control issues, adequate atten-
tion must be given to the role of emotions on consumers’
everyday consumption.

APPENDIX A

STUDY 1: EMOTION-MANIPULATION
WRITING TASKS

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS: Please answer the following
two questions as truthfully as possible. Provide as much
detail as you can and take your time. Once you’ve finished
both questions, then go on to the next task.

Question 1. What are the 3–5 things that make you most
hopeful (happiest)? Please write two-three sentences about
each thing that makes you hopeful (happy).

(Hopefulness often arises when you believe that your
goals will be met and things will work out in a positive
way. Examples of things you might write about include:
graduating and getting a job, getting married and starting
a family, or a loved one recovering from an illness, res-
solving a conflict with a friend, etc.)

(Happiness often arises when you experience something
you really enjoy or take pleasure in everyday events. Ex-
amples of things you might write about include: receiving
a gift from a loved one unexpectedly, enjoying the sunshine
on a beautiful day, spending time with your family or
friends, reading a good book or playing a game you enjoy,
etc.)

Now we’d like you to take a few minutes to think about
each of the situations described above and determine the
one situation that makes you (or has made you) most hopeful
(happiest). Once you have carefully considered this situa-
tion, please continue to the next page.

Question 2. Thinking about the one situation that makes
you (or has made you) the most hopeful (happiest), please
begin by writing down what you remember of the hope-
(happiness)-inducing event, and continue by writing as de-
tailed a description of the event(s) as is possible. If you can,
please write your description so that someone reading this
might feel hopeful (happy) on your behalf just from learning
about the situation. What is it like to be in this situation?
Why does it make you so hopeful (happy)?

APPENDIX B

HOPEFULNESS EMOTION-
MANIPULATION STORIES FOR
STUDIES 2–4

Imagine that you are looking for a job. You have been
hoping to find something that offers a nice salary with a
good schedule. But the job market has been tough. The
current economy has not been doing well and unemployment
rates have been high for some time. Every day you search
online for job opportunities, but each listing you see requires
skills or experience you don’t have or doesn’t pay enough to cover your expenses and school loans. You know that the right job will be there for you soon, you just have to remain optimistic and hope for the best. After all, if you give up looking, you’ll never find a great new job!

After lunch you log onto your computer and hope to see some new listings. Maybe today you will find a job listing that will provide you with the opportunities you dreamed of! You put in your search criteria, press “Search” and you wait. The wait always seems endless, but you spend the time thinking about how your life could change if the right job opportunity came along. When the search is finished you see that there are six pages of listings. Wow, six pages. That is more than you have seen in weeks. Surely, this must be a good sign.

You grab a glass of ice water and start your daily search process. Already, you see that today’s listings are full of opportunity. There are several jobs for which you have the necessary experience and are qualified. You review the listings and feel very hopeful. You work on the applications for over an hour and just as you are about to finish for the day, you see that a new listing has just been posted. You are tired, but feel that since the day has been full of promise, you should check out this last listing.

You open the job posting. Here is a description of a job that you are not only qualified for, but a job for which you are a perfect match. The job is with a highly-regarded company that is known for treating their employees well. Wow. This would be a great opportunity for you. You work on this last application for the day and then press SEND. It is now out of your hands. You wonder about the people who will read your applications you’ve submitted. Will they understand how well you match the position? Will you get an interview, and if so, which suit will you wear?

From the moment you saw the listing you have been optimistic that this job will be The One. Even if this job is not The One, you feel optimistic that your job search is going to start getting much better and provide you with great opportunities and options.

Every day you apply for more jobs, but you always start by checking your computer to see if you’ve received an e-mail from the company. You know this process takes time. You feel that there is a good chance for you to get this job, but you are uncertain if the company feels the same. You feel that there is a good chance for you to get this job, but you are uncertain if the company feels the same. You hope they will call for an interview. Until then, you remain optimistic imagining the future opportunities that this job might lead to for you.

REFERENCES

- Fishbach, Ayelet and Ravi Dhar (2005), “Goals as Excuses or


→ Pochepstsova, Anastasiya and Nathan Novemsky (2010), “When


