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The psychological consequence of experiencing shame: Self-sufficiency and mood-repair

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Abstract Studies in social psychology and clinical psychology have demonstrated that shame is associated with social disengagement. We incorporated self-sufficiency with the mood-repair hypothesis from the feelings-as-information perspective to provide viable explanations for the psychological consequence of shame, suggesting that the mood-repair goal primed by shame is an inclination to behave self-sufficiently. In Study 1a and 1b, shamed participants preferred to work and play alone compared with control participants. Specifically, participants who were induced to feel ashamed were less likely to perform a task with a co-worker than were no-shame-prime participants. Furthermore, participants experiencing shame chose more individually focused leisure activities than did participants in a neutral mood. In Study 2, participants experiencing shame worked longer on an unsolvable task than control participants did before requesting help, suggesting that shame increased the tendency to be independent. Based on these results, we concluded that experiencing shame was associated with an increased tendency to behave self-sufficiently and to exhibit an inclination toward passive avoidance and active independence in social relationships as a means of amending a threatened social self.

Keywords Emotion · Feelings-as-information · Self-sufficiency · Shame · Threatened self

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Introduction

A pervasive motivational shift observed under negative affect is a heightened concern for elevating or repairing one's mood (e.g., Morris and Reilly 1987; Zillmann 1988). This perspective has been supported by recent findings on the informational value of affective states (e.g., anger, disappointment, regret, and worry; Yi and Baumgartner 2004) and the cognitive determinants of affect (Roseman et al. 1990). For example, Raghunathan and Pham (1999) conducted a series of experiments showing that anxious individuals were more risk averse, whereas sad individuals took more risks (also see Raghunathan et al. 2006, for related findings). They argued that anxiety and sadness prime different goals for mood-repair purposes and that these motivational influences seemed to operate through an active process of affect monitoring. Therefore, people experiencing negative affect tend to proactively adopt strategic actions to amend or change their negative mood states (the mood-repair hypothesis based on the feelings-as-information framework, Schwarz 1990).

The concept of shame has not been fully standardized (Tangney et al. 1996a, b). A closer review of current conceptualizations of shame (Barrett 1995; Kemeny et al. 2004; Mascolo and Fischer 1995; Tangney et al. 1996a, b; Tangney and Dearing 2002) following Lewis (1971) suggests that shame involves a global negative evaluation of self. Feelings of shame are often accompanied by a sense of shrinking or being small and by a sense of exposure in front of a real or imagined audience (Tangney et al. 1998). Hence, shame, in the present research, refers to a particular self-conscious emotion that is elicited when one's social self (i.e., one's social value or status) is threatened (Kemeny et al. 2004; Silfver et al. 2008).

How do people behave when they feel ashamed? Shame, in relation to anger and aggression, has been the focus of considerable theoretical discussion and empirical study. Shameful events may cause people to lash out aggressively against others (Tangney et al. 1996a, b; Thomaes et al. 2005) because shame-induced aggression may serve an ego-protective function (Tangney and Dearing 2002). Alternatively, feelings of shame are more likely to lead people to seek out opportunities for self-enhancement or achievement to restore their self-esteem (Frijda 1986). This reasoning is in line with a large body of empirical research indicating that shame is associated with feelings of low power and low status (e.g., Grueneward 2003; Schmidt et al. 2010; Tangney et al. 1996a, b). Additionally, individuals who feel ashamed tend to become more narcissistic, and their need for affiliation tends to decline (Gilligan 2003). Moreover, shame tends to motivate people to be egocentric (Covert et al. 2003; Duan 2000) and causes people to withdraw from and avoid social contact (Lindsay-Hartz et al. 1995). These notions seem to suggest that people experiencing shame are inclined to behave in two ways to repair their mood. People experiencing shame tend to behave in a socially insensitive and narcissistic, passive manner, and they also tend to engage in self-enhancement by acting independently. Both patterns of behavior are consistent with results of previous work that found that shame is associated with a desire to hide or escape from others (Lindsay-Hartz et al. 1995; Tangney 1995) and with socially insensitive narcissism (Covert et al. 2003; Gilbert 1997).

In principle, self-sufficiency refers to the state of not requiring any outside aid, support, or interaction for survival. It is therefore a type of personal or collective autonomy (Bernreuter 1993). The term self-sufficiency is often applied to sustainable living in which nothing is consumed outside of what is produced (Allaby and Bunyard 1980; Demsetz 1997). For example, self-sufficiency connotes a positive state of being free from needing others to behave independently and effectively (Bernreuter 1993). However, self-sufficiency is a complex concept, saturated with ideological meanings that condense key values associated with autonomy and dependency (Morgen 2001), and it has been widely applied in public economics, welfare, family, and rehabilitation (e.g., Greenberg and Robins 2008; Morris and Michalopoulos 2003; Sherman et al. 2004). In this research, we define self-sufficiency as an insulated state wherein people prefer to be separate from others and put forth an effort to attain personal goals, an orientation in which people prefer to be free of dependency and dependents. Self-sufficiency is used, in part, to suggest the autonomous agent who competently works toward personal goals, as well as the socially insensitive narcissist. We do not use the term to

suggest a stable trait (Bernreuter 1993; Cattell et al. 1970), but rather to signify a transitory psychological state induced by experiencing shame.

One's self-image is questioned in a state of shame (Miller 1994). Therefore, the mood-repair goal would be to seek an effective means of buttressing a threatened social self or bolstering self-esteem. Being social isolated may help shamed individuals escape from social evaluations, and acting independently like an autonomous agent may enhance self-esteem. Thus, self-sufficient behaviors seem to relate to the goal of repairing the threatened social self. It was predicted that an individual experiencing shame would be inclined to behave like an autonomous agent, being social avoidant as well as working competently toward personal goals.

Present study

In this research, we examined the effect of shame on self-sufficient behaviors. In lieu of relying on self-report measures for shame proneness, we used experimental paradigms involving affect manipulations that have been substantiated in psychological research, such as the task-failure paradigm (e.g., Lewis et al. 1992) and the emotional event-recollection technique (e.g., Leith and Baumeister 1996), to manipulate the state of shame and observe its immediate psychological consequences rather than artifacts of impression management. To further establish that the experience of shame leads directly to self-sufficient behaviors, we conducted three experiments using a diverse set of self-sufficient indicators that reflect the inclination toward acting as an autonomous agent. We explored whether participants experiencing shame would be more likely to work alone (Study 1a), more inclined to play alone (Study 1b), and less likely to request help (Study 2).

Study 1a and 1b

To demonstrate that the feeling of shame leads people toward social isolation, we tested the hypothesis in two contexts. The experiments tested the effects of experimentally induced shame on the preference for working alone and the desire to engage in leisure activities alone, both reflecting an inclination toward social avoidance.

Study 1a

In the first study, we examined the effect of experimentally induced shame on the preference for working alone. Participants were given the option of working on a task with a peer or alone.

Method

Eighty-eight undergraduates (46 females) voluntarily participated in exchange for course credit. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the two experimental conditions (shame or no-shame). Shame was manipulated between subjects. The gender ratios of the two conditions were equalized by employing the block-randomized method.

Upon arrival at the laboratory, the participants read and signed consent forms. They were told that we were investigating their motor skills. Each participant then received either shame or no-shame manipulation. We used a shame manipulation based on the easy task failure paradigm (Lewis et al. 1992; Thomaes et al. 2008), which was shown to be highly effective in a validation study (Thomaes et al. 2005). Failing an easy task is particularly likely to induce people to experience shame. We induced shame in participants by informing them that they failed a competitive reaction time task. In the shame condition, the participants were told that their opponent was one of the slowest contestants tested so far. After they clicked the "Completion" icon, which was hyperlinked to the contestant rankings posted on the Web page of the laboratory, they saw their own name at the bottom of a ranking list (below their opponent's name). The Internet rankings were used to highlight public exposure, which should enhance feelings of shame (Smith et al. 2002). In the control condition, the participants were told nothing about their opponent's performance and did not see the rankings on the Web page.

Following the affect manipulation, participants were asked to choose an affective state from six affective states that best described their current feelings (i.e., shamed, pleasurable, embarrassed, proud, humiliated, or neutral). After the affect evaluations, participants were told that their next task was an advertisement-development task on which they could work alone or with a peer. Participants were left alone to indicate their choice. The dependent variable was the proportion of participants who opted to work alone. At the end of this experiment, each participant was thoroughly debriefed to remove any lingering effects of the manipulation. Those participants whose chosen affects were not congruent with the affect manipulation were excluded from subsequent analyses.

Results and discussion

Participants' desire to work alone was not affected by gender (female = 52%; male = 62%), $\chi^2(1, n = 88) = 0.85$, $p = .36$. The data from male and female participants were combined for subsequent analysis. The desire to work alone was associated with the affect that the participants experienced, $\chi^2(1) = 9.08$, $p = .003$, $\varphi = 0.32$ (Table 1). Participants in the shame condition (73%) chose to perform the task alone more frequently than participants in the no-shame condition (41%), odds ratio = 1.78.

In the context of working alone, the findings from Study 1a supported the proposition that experiencing shame primes an implicit goal of behaving self-sufficiently. Working on a task with a co-worker presumably means less work for each person, which would be an affront to self-sufficiency. The results demonstrated that shamed people tended to prefer to work alone rather than with a co-worker. In the next experiment, we tested whether shame-induced participants would place a preference on being alone even when choosing leisure activities that could be enjoyed with friends and family.

Study 1b

To increase the generalizability of the Study 1b findings, three key changes were made in this experiment: (1) a priming procedure was used to induce the state of shame by having individuals recall a shameful personal experience, (2) we replaced the no-shame control condition with a neutral-prime condition, and (3) a community sample was used. The experiments tested whether shame would affect an individual's desire to engage in leisure activities alone.

Method

Participants were 84 subjects, ranging in age from 18 to 44 years (mean age = 30.7 years, SD = 6.70; 40 females), who were recruited through online posters on the Facebook.com website. They were assigned to either the shame condition or the neutral condition with the block-randomized method.

Each session consisted of two participants seated in separate cubicles. This research was disguised as a self-

Table 1 Mean estimates and confidence intervals according to conditions in Study 1a and Study 1b

Experiment	Shame condition	Control condition	Dependent variable
Study 1a	0.73 ± 0.09	0.41 ± 0.10	Proportion of participants who opted to work alone
Study 1b	6.31 ± 0.53	4.69 ± 0.48	Number of solitary activity selections (0–11)

$n = 44$ for each experimental condition in Study 1a, whereas $n = 42$ for each experimental condition in Study 1b. Confidence intervals were set at 95%. Dependent variable units are shown in parentheses

reflection study. After participants singed the consent forms, they received a booklet describing self-reflection as the "ability to re-experience past events with significant meaning." To increase engagement with the task, participants were further told that "people with better self-reflection have been found to be better parents, lovers, couples, and managers, and they tend to learn lessons from experiences, which enables them to avoid making the same mistakes."

Next, participants were presented with instructions that allocated them to one of the two affect-manipulation conditions. The emotional-event recollection technique developed by Leith and Baumeister 1996 was adopted to manipulate affect. For the shame condition, participants were asked to recall salient and impressive events that made them feel a strong sense of shame caused by low social status or value. The instructions were designed to be semi-structured, using a directed recollection procedure, which is commonly used to investigate autobiographical memories (e.g., Bruhn 1990). Participants were asked to recall past emotional events as vividly as possible to elicit feelings of shame by addressing the following guidelines in their response: "What was the emotional event?" "Why did that happen?" "How did you feel then?" "What was the consequence of that event?" In order to induce the feeling of shame effectively, each participant in the shame condition was given sufficient time to engage in the emotional-events recollection procedure. A yoked-control method was used to control the duration of emotional recollection for each session. In the neutral-affect condition, participants read a series of commonplace events happening over the course of a day to a person named Ted.

Following the recollection process, participants were required to carefully evaluate their affective states at that moment. For this task, participants were presented with a scale consisting of six items, each phrased in the form *I am feeling* [*affective term*]. Participants were asked to rate how well each item described their present feelings on a scale from 1 (*Does not describe my current feelings at all*) to 7 (*Describes my current feelings very well*). The affective terms that were used covered a broad range of affective states (e.g., guilt, shame, relaxation, pleasure, fear, and anger) and were selected an established scale (Watson et al. 1988).

After participants evaluated their affective states, participants were told that they would then assist with the pretest of a leisure survey for future studies. The questionnaire consisted of eleven items. Within each item, one option was a solitary activity and the other option was an activity for two people or more (e.g., an individual travel or a group-package-tour for vacations; jog alone or with companions; watch videos alone or with companions; work out alone or with companions). Participants were asked to

choose between the two types of activities. Participants' preferences were scored with a dichotomous scoring (1 = personal activity, 0 = group activity). The dependent variable ranged from 0 to 11, and consisted of the summated scores across the items (KR 20 = .88). At the end of the experiment, participants were thoroughly debriefed to remove any lingering effects of the manipulations. During a probe for suspicion, no participants expressed awareness that the affect manipulation and the leisure survey were related.

Results and discussion

In terms of shame felt, a planned contrast showed that shame felt under the shame-induced condition ($M = 5.48$, $SD = 1.71$) was significantly higher than that experienced under the neutral condition ($M = 2.11$, $SD = 1.37$), $t(82) = 15.31$, $p < .001$, Cohen's $d = 3.34$. To rule out possible confounding effects of other affective states, we examined whether any significant differences in positive (relaxation, pleasure) and negative moods (fear, anger, guilt) existed between the shame and the neutral conditions. Analyses revealed no significant differences between the two conditions, for relaxation, $t(82) = -1.17$, for pleasure, $t(82) = -1.56$, for fear, $t(82) = 1.35$, for anger, $t(82) = 1.56$, and for guilt, respectively, $t(82) = 1.66$ (all $ps > .05$).

A regression analysis indicated no differences between males ($M = 5.78$, $SD = 1.71$) and females on number of solitary activity chosen ($M = 5.19$, $SD = 1.67$), $\beta = -0.11$, $t = -1.01$, $p = .32$. The number of solitary activity selections was not associated with age, $\beta = 0.17$, $t = -1.54$, $p = .13$. Because no interaction was observed for gender and age, $\beta = 0.50$, $t = 0.94$, $p = .35$, the male and female data at different ages were combined for subsequent analysis. Participants in the shame group ($M = 6.31$, $SD = 1.57$) chose more individually focused leisure activities than did participants in the neutral group ($M = 4.69$, $SD = 1.44$), $t(82) = 4.92$, $p < .001$, Cohen's $d = 1.07$ (Table 1). Additionally, after controlling for other felt affects, felt shame was positively correlated with the number of solitary activities chosen, $sr = .73$, $p < .001$. This robust correlation indicated that shame is likely the emotion that explains the effect of the shame manipulation on the dependent variable.

In terms of desire to engage in leisure activities alone, the Study 1b findings also revealed a relationship between experiencing shame and behaving self-sufficiently. The results of Study 1a and Study 1b consistently suggested that experiencing shame led people to be less social related. This link between experiencing shame and social isolation may help explain why shame is usually associated with a decline in the need for affiliation (Gilligan 2003), a

tendency toward egocentrism (Covert et al. 2003), or social avoidance (Lindsay-Hartz et al. 1995).

Study 2

The first two studies demonstrated that participants primed with shame preferred to play alone and work alone, suggesting an inclination to be socially insensitive. To convincingly demonstrate that experiencing shame increases the tendency for behaving self-sufficiently, we tested the proposition in a new context. If shame brings about the pursuit of self-sufficiency, then a person in shame would want to act like an autonomous agent by competently working toward personal goals. We predicted that people experiencing shame would prefer to work independently when solving an unsolvable task, compared with those in a neutral mood.

Method

Participants and design

The participants were 72 Taiwanese undergraduates (38 females) who voluntarily participated in this experiment in exchange for course credit. Previous research in social psychology suggests that the decision to seek or not seek help reflects the tension between instrumental benefits (i.e., overcoming difficulty) and the psychological costs associated with seeking help (i.e., the threat to self that is associated with dependency on others; Nadler 1991; Wills and DePaulo 1993). The relative status of the help seeker and the helper affects the importance of maintaining and accruing power, which affects help-seeking behaviors (Lee 1997). Specifically, the motivation to maintain and accrue power is more important in unequal-status relationships than in equal-status relationships. For example, Newman and Goldin (1990) found that students are more likely to seek help from other students than from their teachers or parents. Similarly, Morrison (1993) found that organizational newcomers prefer equal-status peers as sources of normative and social information to higher-status supervisors or lower-status subordinates. Taiwanese culture is characterized by high power distance, whereas Western cultures tend to be characterized by a smaller power distance (Chiou 2001; Hofstede 1980). Therefore, vertical relationships might be overtly recognized in Taiwanese culture, and the motivation for requesting help between members of a vertical relationship might be different from that between two parties of equal status (Han et al. 2005). Hence, we included relative status as a factor in the analyses to rule out the possibility that the effect of experiencing shame on resistance to requesting help would be dependent on relative status. Participants were randomly assigned to a 2 (affect: shame or neutral) × 2 (relative status: superior or equivalent) between-subjects design.

Procedure

Upon arrival, participants were led to a cubicle and told that the experiment was a self-reflection study. They were randomly assigned to receiving the affect manipulation. The emotional-events recollection procedure was identical to that in Study 1b. Participants in the shame condition recalled and wrote down emotional events that had a significant impact on their lives and induced shame. Participants in the neutral condition read a series of commonplace events from a day in the life of a person named Sean.

Unlike Study 1b, participants' affective states were not measured, given that Study 1b demonstrated that the shame-inducing manipulation was effective. In addition, the impact of the induced affective state would be more potent without manipulation checks (Gorn et al. 1993; Keltner et al. 1993). Participants were then asked to complete a task, which was introduced as a pretest of materials for future studies on insightful thinking. The participant's job was to outline all segments of a geometric figure once and only once without lifting the pencil or retracing any segments. Unbeknownst to participants, the figure was unsolvable.

The relative-status manipulation was then introduced. In the superior status condition, the experimenter entered the room after the participants had worked alone for 2 min and informed the participants that he was available to offer assistance if they wanted help. In the equivalent status condition, the experimenter and a confederate (who was blind to the participant's condition) entered the room after the participants had worked alone for 2 min and informed the participants that the confederate was another participant who had just completed the experiment and could offer assistance if needed. Then, the experimenter left the room, and only the confederate stayed with the participant. Persistence in the unsolvable task before requesting help was the indicator of self-sufficiency.

Results and discussion

There was no difference between males ($M = 793.82$ s, $SD = 293.80$) and females ($M = 686.05$ s, $SD = 301.59$) regarding the amount of time spent working alone before asking for help, $F(1, 68) = 2.38$, $p = .13$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.033$. Because there was also no interaction involving gender and relative status, $F(1, 68) = 0.97$, $p = .33$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.014$, the data from both sexes were then combined for subsequent analyses (see Table 2).

Table 2 Resistance to requesting help in relation to the task in Study 2

| Relative status | Experienced affect | | | |
| | Induced shame | | Neutral affect | |
	M	SD	M	SD
Superior (Experimenter)	787.78	278.35	584.99	229.83
Equivalent (Peer)	956.11	289.10	618.89	266.65

$n = 18$ for each experimental condition. Cell means (seconds) were participants' persistence on the problem before requesting help. The helper was the experimenter in the superior condition, whereas the helper was a confederate (in the role of another participant) in the equivalent condition

A two-way ANOVA only showed a main effect of experienced affect, indicating that participants in the shame condition ($M = 971.94$ s, SD $= 292.43$) worked significantly longer than participants in the neutral condition ($M = 601.94$ s, SD $= 245.95$) before requesting help, $F(1, 68) = 18.42$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.213$. The effects of affect on time spent working alone was not dependent on differences in relative status between the participant and the helper, $F(1, 68) = 1.14$, $p = .29$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.016$. Participants' persistence in relation to the task, before requesting help, was not affected by relative status (Superior: $M = 686.39$ s, SD $= 271.78$; Equivalent: $M = 787.50$ s, SD $= 323.07$), $F(1, 68) = 2.58$, $p = .11$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.039$.

This experiment showed that resistance to requesting help, an indicator of self-sufficiency, was more pronounced for participants experiencing shame. The effect of experiencing shame was independent of relative status differences between the participant and the helper, suggesting that the tendency to work independently increased when people were in a state of shame.

General discussion

Across three experiments, we found that experimentally induced shame led to changes in behavior that represent an inclination to self-sufficiency. Experiencing shame was associated with more self-sufficient behaviors than was observed for control participants. The relationship between experiencing shame and behaving self-sufficiently emerged across multiple forms of self-sufficiency, regardless of whether participants' desire to work with a peer (Study 1a), their preferences for solitary leisure activities (Study 1b) or their resistance to ask for help (Study 2). The findings across the three experiments provided support for the hypothesis that experiencing shame evokes a state of self-sufficiency. Relative to control participants, those participants experiencing shame reliably performed independent, but socially insensitive actions. The magnitude of these

effects was notable given the subtle nature of the shame manipulations.

Our results are consistent with previous research that examined the feelings-as-information perspective (e.g., Raghunathan and Pham 1999; Roseman et al. 1990; Yi and Baumgartner 2004). A negative affect may convey distinct types of information and prime different goals. A pervasive motivational shift observed under negative affect is heightened concern for elevating or repairing one's mood (e.g., Morris and Reilly 1987; Zillmann 1988). When experiencing shame, self-image is brought into question (Miller 1994). Being free from dependency or acting independently becomes a primary goal for individuals. Therefore, being self-sufficient may serve as an effective means of buttressing a threatened social self or bolstering self-esteem (also see Modell 1975, for a similar idea).

The present research contributes to the literature in several ways. To our knowledge, it is the first study to offer an alternative explanation of the link between shame and social disengagement by incorporating self-sufficiency with the mood-repair hypothesis. According to the feelings-as-information perspective, a particular negative affect may trigger a distinct type of implicit goal (Schwarz 1990). Our findings suggest that shame tends to prime a self-sufficiency goal to amend a devalued social self, and these findings are consistent with those of previous work that found that shame was associated with wanting to hide from or avoid interpersonal interaction or to disappear (Lindsay-Hartz et al. 1995; Tangney 1995) and with social narcissism (Covert et al. 2003; Gilbert 1997). The findings about shame participants' persistence before requesting help are also in accordance with the threat-to-self-esteem perspective on recipient reactions to aid (Fisher et al. 1982), which suggests that receiving help may make people feel threatened by their own perceived incompetence. Moreover, self-sufficiency may serve as an ego-protective function, as does shame-induced aggression. In agreement with the perspective of threatened egotism (Baumeister et al. 1996), it has consistently been argued that feelings of shame are more likely to lead people to seek self-enhancement to amend their self-esteem (Frijda 1986; Gilligan 2003). The self-sufficiency inclination, induced by a mood-repair goal, may account for the link between shame and aggression (Tangney and Dearing 2002; Thomaes et al. 2005; Thomaes et al. 2008) given that shame-induced aggression is considered a common expression of ego defensiveness (Baumeister et al. 1996). By directing blame and anger toward others, the individual can prevent further damage to his or her self-esteem. People can also reaffirm the self and ''save face'' by asserting a dominant aggressive stance. The mood-repair hypothesis linked with the threatened self demonstrates the value of integrating different forms of shame-induced

behaviors and highlights the role shame-induced self-sufficiency plays in explaining why people experiencing shame tend to hide from social contact and behave in an independent and solitary manner.

Although current studies support our hypothesized positive relationship between the experience of shame and the inclination toward behaving self-sufficiently, we acknowledge that each of our designs was limited to a dichotomized independent variable, and our findings were dependent on a difference between two conditions. The use of multilevel manipulations to induce shame in the future would allow greater precision in interpreting the effect of experiencing shame on self-sufficient behaviors. As the present research was conducted in Taiwan, it is appropriate to consider the findings from the perspective of cultural relativism. Shame-induced self-sufficiency may differ in Western and Confucian cultures (Bear et al. 2009). For example, Chinese culture is considered a shame-prone culture in which an individual is more likely to be concerned with other people's evaluations of the self (i.e., the idea of face, Bedford and Hwang 2003). Future studies should investigate whether the favor-request condition is "face-threatening" and whether it could moderate the effect of experiencing shame on resistance to asking for help. Specifically, when the condition was face-threatening (i.e., the helper is a potential subject for social comparison), Chinese individuals' decision to ask for help from strangers would be more significant for face-saving reasons. Additionally, the concept of self-sufficiency involves ideological meanings associated with autonomy and dependency (Morgen 2001). The present research primarily focused on interpersonal relations and help seeking. Our dependent measures (e.g., desirability of working and playing alone, help seeking) provided a very limited test of self sufficiency. It remains unanswered that experiencing shame leads to a desire for greater autonomy. Future research may examine whether the effect of shame on self-sufficient behaviors would extend to economic independence, welfare aid, or autonomy in a rehabilitation process.

Conclusions

This research showed that shame leads to an increased tendency to behave self-sufficiently in an attempt to repair mood. This inclination should be noted for its ego-protective and ego-defensive facets. Behaving self-sufficiently provides immediate relief from the pain of shame, which allows people to repair this particular self-conscious emotion in the short run. However, the self-sufficiency-boost strategy is both interesting and ironic. Although this strategy repairs the ego and manifest an autonomous agent via competently working toward personal goals, it may

lead people experiencing shame to lose touch with their social selves due to exaggerated self-sufficiency. Furthermore, as the twenty first century becomes more socially competitive, shame, stemming from one's threatened social value or status, may be more pervasively experienced in daily life. Consequently, shame-induced self-sufficiency may diminish one's reliance on friends and family. Thus, individualism is enhanced but communal motivation is weakened. As the tendency to experiencing shame positively related to all types of self-discrepancies (Tangney et al. 1998), predispositions to behave self-sufficiently when shamed may incur serious individual and social costs in the long run.

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