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High achievers, Schadenfreude and Gluckschmerz in New Zealanders and Chinese

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Abstract

The willingness to support (or denigrate) high-profile individuals online was examined across cultures using the Tall Poppy Scale. A sample of 106 Chinese and 164 New Zealand Europeans answered an online questionnaire addressing their preference for high achievers to be rewarded or fail. Participants were asked whether they would vote to support reality TV contestants, and offered further information (about success or failure) on a debrief page. The Favour Reward scale predicted willingness to vote and support others. The Favour Fall subscale tended to predict time spent viewing achievement-related information on a debrief page. The Chinese sample did not prefer reward of high achievers, instead favoring their fall, but spent less time per click on the debrief page, suggesting they disliked recognizing individual achievement.

KEYWORDS
envy, Gluckschmerz, Guanxi, Schadenfreude, tall poppies

INTRODUCTION

The German word "Schadenfreude" means *pleasure* experienced at another person's *misfortune*, whereas "Gluckschmerz" means *pain* experienced at another person's *good fortune* (R. H. Smith & van Dijk, 2018). The Internet tends to document such emotions. Anonymous bulletin boards are rife with incoherent hate speech and abuse (Martin et al., 2013; Santana, 2014). Online Schadenfreude manifests as the cyberbullying of celebrities (Ouvrein et al., 2021) and politicians (Akhtar & Morrison, 2019), whereas Gluckschmerz manifests as Facebook Envy (Wallace et al., 2017). As both Schadenfreude and Gluckschmerz are potential contributors to online incivility (Kim, 2020; Microsoft, 2021; Santana, 2014), the present paper sought methods to understand differences in levels of online support for high-profile individuals (Van Dijk et al., 2012).

Unsupportive behaviors

There are concerns that Schadenfreude and Gluckschmerz may inhibit helping behavior (Tscharaktschiew & Rudolph, 2016) or even contribute to harm (Cikara & Fiske, 2013). Indeed,

the anonymity associated with online forums contributes to disinhibited behavior (Suler, 2004) and negativity (Kwak et al., 2015; Martin et al., 2013; Santana, 2014) that can harm people online (El Asam & Katz, 2018; Hinduja & Patchin, 2010; Ortega et al., 2012). Although it is unclear whether the baiting of vulnerable individuals actually contributes to suicide *completions* (Mann, 1981; C. M. Smith et al., 2019; Zhu et al., 2022), it certainly does not help (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010; Phillips & Mann, 2019). Such negative online behaviors can transgress community standards (Kim, 2020; Shieber, 2019) and laws within specific jurisdictions (e.g. UK's Defamation Act; NZ's Harmful Digital Communications Act; Australia's Suicide Related Materials Offences Act; Phillips et al., 2019). Indeed, the corporations hosting negative and defamatory comments can be legally liable if offending comments are not removed within specific time frames (A. Wang & Co, 2022). Hence there is a pressing need to understand these antisocial emotions.

Schadenfreude

As a potential antonym of "empathy," Schadenfreude ("harm joy") is sometimes described as the worst of human emotions

(R. H. Smith et al., 2009; van de Ven, 2016). Schadenfreude is a socially undesirable emotion that is sometimes elicited when another person is harmed (R. H. Smith & van Dijk, 2018). It seems people believe in a just world to make sense of their environment (Lerner, 1980). However, there can be conditions of imbalance where some individuals are more fortunate and seem to possess more resources than others (Warren et al., 2004). Schadenfreude has been described as that pleasure that arises where a "balance" has been *restored* after a more favored person is harmed (van de Ven, 2018).

Apparently, people with lower self-esteem (Feather, 1989) who experience threat (Pietraszkiewicz, 2013), particularly threats to their self-esteem, have been found to prefer that high achievers fail (Lange et al., 2016; Van Dijk et al., 2012), whereas more positive emotions appear to inhibit such envy (Mao et al., 2021).

Gluckschmerz

Whilst negative events that discomfit advantaged individuals can cause pleasure (Schadenfreude), the opposite has been called Gluckschmerz ("luck pain"; R. H. Smith & van Dijk, 2018). Gluckschmerz is a negative emotion that arises when positive events further assist advantaged individuals (R. H. Smith & van Dijk, 2018). Although there is a preference for a just world (Lerner, 1980), a balance can be disturbed when a seemingly favored individual receives more benefits (Warren et al., 2004). Gluckschmerz has been described as the emotional distress that arises when the "balance" has been *violated* (van de Ven, 2018). For instance, Hoogland et al. (2015) found that people who expressed pleasure (Schadenfreude) at an injury suffered by a rival sporting team's player would also express dismay (Gluckschmerz) when the rival team's player recovered.

A common form of Gluckschmerz is "Facebook Envy." It seems that upwards comparisons and the monitoring of others' achievements can cause depression (Appel et al., 2016; Krasnova et al., 2015; Tandoc et al., 2015). However, as will be outlined, Facebook Envy is possibly a simplification of a more complex phenomenon (Meier & Johnson, 2022).

Envy versus identification

Van de Ven (2016) indicated a need to distinguish between benign and malicious envy. Malicious envy is associated with a desire to pull down an envied individual, whereas benign envy is associated with a desire to raise oneself up and emulate the envied individual (van de Ven et al., 2009). For instance, some Facebook users tend to imitate others rather than envy them during upwards comparisons (Meier & Johnson, 2022).

It appears some individuals may have a greater interest in the mechanisms and processes associated with achievement. Indeed, feelings of control seem to encourage a benign rather than a malicious envy (Crusius et al., 2020). Moreover, benign envy has been associated with thoughts about what the *self* could have done, whereas malicious envy was associated more with thoughts about what *others* could have done (Crusius & Lange, 2021). It seems a better understanding of factors contributing to individual achievement could influence attitudes to high achievers.

People with a better understanding of their own decision-making make better decisions (Ball et al., 1994). Better decision-makers are also more able, and have better school grades (Ball et al., 1994). Radford et al. (1986) also found better decision-making ability to be associated with better mood. Indeed, Phillips et al. (2021) found confidence in decision-making correlated positively with scales preferring the reward of high achievers and negatively with scales preferring their failure. Because an understanding of processes contributing to individual achievement is shown to influence the manifestation of envy (Crusius & Lange, 2021), the present study considered relationships between confidence in decision-making and attitudes towards high achievers.

Tall Poppy Scale

A variety of scales are under development to examine malicious sentiments towards others' achievements (e.g. Hornik et al., 2021a; Hornik et al., , 2021b; Marques et al., 2022). However, the present study used the Tall Poppy Scale (Feather, 1989) as it has been validated cross-culturally (Feather, 1998). In Western culture, the term "tall poppies" is sometimes used to refer to high-profile individuals. The Tall Poppy Scale has a Favour Reward subscale that measures the preference for high achievers to succeed, and a Favour Fall subscale that measures the preference for high achievers to fail. Feather (1989) found people experienced greater pleasure when a high achiever failed than if an average individual failed. People's perceived self-competence influenced their attitudes towards high achievers (Feather, 2012). Those with lower global self-esteem (Feather, 1989) and lower perceived self-competence were more likely to favor the fall of tall poppies (Feather, 1991; Feather & Nairn, 2005).

Recent studies have considered whether attitudes towards achievement can predict online interest, support, or criticism. The Tall Poppy Scale was shown to predict interest in online achievement-related information (Phillips et al., 2021). Similarly, the Schadenfreude associated with a disliked political figure's illness has been found to influence information seeking and health behavior (Myrick & Chen, 2022). Others have found that Schadenfreude contributed to the spreading of negative news online (Hornik et al., 2021a; Hornik et al., 2021b; Hornik et al., 2015; Hornik et al., 2019).

Cultural differences

Although some cultures may lack words for the emotions described as Schadenfreude and Gluckschmerz, it has been argued that these emotions themselves exist across many cultures (van Dijk & Smith, 2019). It seems some cultures (e.g., Chinese, Japanese) place greater emphasis on

interdependence and harmony than others (e.g., American, Canadian; Nisbett et al., 2001; Varnum et al., 2010), and this may influence their levels of support for each other (Lim, 2022; Markus & Kitayama, 1991) and attitudes towards high-profile individuals. These attitudes can be characterized by levelling behaviors (Lim, 2022; van de Ven et al., 2009) associated with specific cultural sayings (Weng et al., 2021). For instance, in Japan there is a saying "the nail that sticks up gets hammered down", whilst in China it is also said that "the bird that sticks its head out gets shot" (Weng et al., 2021).

Feather and McKee (1993) considered cross-cultural differences in attitudes towards achieving individuals using the Tall Poppy Scale. They considered Australia to have an individualistic and independently minded culture and compared that to Japan as a more collectivist and interdependent culture (Triandis, 1995). Surprisingly, both Australians and Japanese favored the reward of high achievers, but the Japanese were also more likely to favor the failure of high achievers. Subsequent replications considered Australian, American, and Canadian attitudes towards achievers (Feather, 1998). Americans tended to favor the reward of high achievers more than Australians and Canadians (Feather, 1998). As cultures may vary in their appreciation of individual achievement (Cai & Gries, 2013; Feather, 1998; Feather & McKee, 1993), differences in their willingness to support others online are likely (Wang & Liu, 2019).

Support on social media is typically indicated by upvotes and downvotes (Hutchinson, 2020), but the "mainstream" media also solicits text messages to indicate support for reality TV contestants (Godlewski & Perse, 2010; Ouvrein et al., 2018) and this form of support is more concrete as it can generate a revenue stream (Griffiths, 2007). Given that social media now reify interpersonal support (Van Dijk et al., 2012), the present study used the previously validated Tall Poppy Scale to address cross-cultural differences, not just in willingness to support high achievers, but also in associated online behaviors.

There are concerns that online negativity causes harm (Twenge et al., 2020) and increases corporate liability (A. Wang & Co, 2022). Therefore, the present study considers factors influencing online support for others. The Tall Poppy Scale was used to examine a preference for the reward or fall of high achievers, and the Decisional Self-Esteem Scale was used to examine identification with high achievers. Pride associated with ethnic group membership was also examined. To gauge online support, a willingness to support high-profile individuals was examined by asking whether people voted to support reality TV stars. Interest in online achievement was determined behaviorally by asking people's preference at debrief, and tracking time and clicks devoted to a debrief page. Thus, the present study did not just examine attitudes and willingness to support high-profile individuals across Chinese and NZ samples, but also considered online interest and tracked behavior (Doliński, 2018).

The present study considered whether the Favour Reward and Favour Fall subscales (Feather, 1989) could offer some insights into people's online interest and their willingness to support others online by specifically asking their voting intentions and measuring amounts of time spent interacting with a debrief screen (Pietraszkiewicz, 2013). Given that Western cultures differ in their values (Feather, 1986; Hanel et al., 2018) and attitudes towards achievement (Falk et al., 2009; Feather & McKee, 1993) from Eastern cultures, it was expected that:

1. Tall Poppy scores would predict online support – specifically voting and interest in high achievers;
2. Schadenfreude would manifest as higher Favour Fall scores and a greater interest in failure;
3. Gluckschmerz would manifest as higher Favour Fall scores but with less interest in success;
4. A better understanding of achievement and decision-making would be indicated by higher decisional self-esteem scores and would be associated with a preference for high achievers to succeed; and
5. Cultural groups with a tradition of interdependence (e.g., Chinese) would exhibit differential levels of pride, support, and interest in high achievers than groups with a greater tradition of independence (e.g., New Zealand).

METHOD

Participants

Participants were self-identified Chinese or New Zealand (NZ) Europeans who responded to an online survey that was advertised on psychology student and public online noticeboards over the period from September 2019 to September 2020. No incentives were provided for participation, and there was a 52% questionnaire completion rate. There were 106 Chinese participants (mean age 24.22 years, $SD = 8.82$, range 14–55 years, male 36.5%, female 61.5%), who were of Chinese descent (70.2%), from Chinese mainland (19.3%), Taiwan (5.3%), or other (5.3%) sources, such as Macao. There were 164 NZ Europeans (mean age 25.41 years, $SD = 9.68$, range 15–59 years, male 28.8%, female 66.3%). Other non-European New Zealand residents, (e.g., Māori, and Pasifika) were excluded from these analyses. Power analysis using G*Power indicates that 244 participants would give an 80% chance of obtaining statistically significant differences at the .05 level for moderate effects with a Cohen's f of .20.

Materials

Self-esteem

The Decisional Self-Esteem Scale (Mann et al., 1998) is Part 1 of the Melbourne Decision Making Questionnaire. It consists of six English-language questions measuring self-esteem in decision-making processes. A sample item is "I feel confident about my ability to make decisions" (*True for me, Sometimes true for me, Not true for me*). Scores range from 0 to 12. Higher scores indicate greater confidence in decision-making, whereas patients with major depression (Radford et al., 1986) or

addictive behaviors (Phillips & Ogeil, 2011) have lower scores. Radford et al. (1993) reported a Cronbach's alpha of .79 for an Australian sample, and .73 for a Japanese sample. A Cronbach's alpha of .76 was obtained for the present Chinese sample and .77 was obtained for the present NZ sample.

Achievement preferences

The Tall Poppy Scale (Feather, 1989) has Favour Reward and Favour Fall subscales that consider preferences towards high achievers. Each subscale consists of 10 English-language items. A sample item for the Favour Reward subscale is "People who are very successful deserve all the rewards they get for their achievement" (*Disagree very much, Disagree, Slightly disagree, Slightly agree, Agree, Agree very much*). A sample item for the Favour Fall subscale is "It's good to see very successful people fail occasionally" (*Disagree very much, Disagree, Slightly disagree, Slightly agree, Agree, Agree very much*). The scores for each subscale range from 10 to 70. Favour Reward scores were found to associate with achievement-oriented values and social power (Feather, 1989), whereas the Favour Fall subscale has been linked to values of hedonism, tradition maintenance and "left wing" political preferences (Feather, 1989). Feather and McKee (1993) reported Cronbach's alphas of .79 for an Australian sample and .80 for a Japanese sample for the Favour Reward subscale, and Cronbach's alpha for the Favour Fall subscale of .80 for the Australian sample and .59 for the Japanese sample. For the current Chinese sample, the Cronbach's alpha was .80 for the Favour Reward, and .80 for the Favour Fall subscales. For the current NZ sample, the Cronbach's alpha was .74 for the Favour Reward, and .80 for the Favour Fall subscales.

Identification and ethnicity

Parallel forms of the questionnaire were administered on the basis of self-reported ethnicity. The NZ Europeans were sampled on the basis of nationality, whereas the other sample was ethnically Chinese. New Zealand participants were asked whether they were "proud of being a New Zealander", and Chinese participants were asked whether they were "proud of being Chinese" on five-point Likert scales (*Extremely, Very, Moderately, A little, Not proud*).

Given claims of greater interdependence for the Chinese cohort (Chen & Rau, 2016), and as a check of the validity of the Tall Poppy Scales, two additional Asian sayings were included for the Chinese sample that expressed disapproval for high achievers (Weng et al., 2021). Chinese participants were asked as to the extent they agreed with the sayings: (1) "the nail that sticks up gets hammered down"; and (2) "the bird that sticks its head out gets shot." The "nail that sticks…" is a Japanese saying, whereas "the bird that sticks…" is a Chinese saying. As may be seen in Table 1, the Japanese saying ("the nail that sticks…") correlated with the Favour Fall subscale, whilst the Chinese saying ("the bird that sticks…") correlated with pride in Chinese ethnic identity.

Voting and interest in achievers

After the Tall Poppy Scale, participants were asked whether they actually voted for reality TV contestants of their ethnic group. Participants were also asked whether they would like further details of achievements (successes, failures, or neither) associated with their self-identified ethnicity on the next page.

Indices of interest

There was a debrief page at the end of the questionnaire providing links to successes or failures associated with each ethnic group. The links were selected to provide comparable amounts of content (approximately 3,000 words). Interest at debrief was indicated behaviorally by the amount of time participants spent viewing this information (Pietraszkiewicz, 2013) and from a count of the number of clicks as recorded by Qualtrics. The time per click was then subjected to analyses to provide an indication of depth of search on the debrief page.

Procedure

The study and protocols were approved by Auckland University of Technology's ethics committee (18/238). Participants were solicited from public noticeboards online and gave informed consent. The anonymous participants viewed an explanatory statement, followed by questions soliciting demographic information. Participants then saw the Decisional Self-Esteem and the Tall Poppy Scale. Further questions examined ethnic pride, willingness to vote to support reality TV contestants, and asked about the sorts of further information participants might be interested in. A debrief page then provided links to achievement and failure information.

TABLE 1 Agreement with Traditional Sayings and Correlations with Pride, Decisional Self-Esteem, and Achievement Preferences (Chinese Sample, $N = 113$)

Saying	Decisional Self-Esteem	Favour Reward	Favour Fall	How proud are you of being Chinese?
"The nail that sticks up, gets hammered down"	−0.114	0.067	0.267**	0.159
"The bird that sticks its head out gets shot"	−0.104	0.129	0.142	0.254**

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

Analysis

To control experiment-wise error rate, omnibus multivariate tests were initially conducted. Where a significant multivariate effect was detected, univariate tests were performed to determine the source of the effect. As response rates influenced statistical power, attitudes, voting, and debrief behaviors were analyzed separately: approximately half of participants expressed no interest in the debrief page and were omitted from further analyses. Analysis was conducted using SPSS, which engages in list-wise deletion of missing variables. The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author (J. G. P.) upon reasonable request.

RESULTS

Attitudes towards achievers

A one-way between groups multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to consider overall group differences between Chinese and NZ European samples across the measures of self-esteem and achievement attitudes. The multivariate test indicated significant overall differences between the two groups (Pillai's Trace = .08, $F[3,266] = 8.175$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .08$). As will be outlined by the univariate tests, the two groups differed in their decisional self-esteem and attitudes towards achieving individuals.

As may be seen in Table 2, the Chinese sample ($M = 7.28$, $SE = 0.26$) had significantly lower confidence in their decisions ($F[1,268] = 9.851$, $p = .002$, $\eta^2 = .04$), than the NZ European sample ($M = 8.34$, $SE = 0.21$). The Chinese sample was significantly less likely to favor the reward of high achievers ($M = 41.73$, $SE = 0.87$) ($F[1,268] = 18.294$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .06$) than the NZ European sample ($M = 46.52$,

$SE = 0.70$); the Chinese sample was significantly more likely to favor the fall of high achievers ($M = 39.53$, $SE = 0.92$) ($F[1,268] = 11.014$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .04$) than the NZ European sample ($M = 35.62$, $SE = 0.74$). These differences are in accord with the expectation that the culturally more interdependent Chinese cohort would prefer the failure of high achievers.

Means and intercorrelations are presented in Table 2. The correlations in Table 2 indicate that better decision-makers (i.e., those with higher decisional self-esteem) preferred the reward of high achievers for both samples. Better decision-makers did not favor the fall of high achievers. The marginal means suggest that the preference for high achievers to fall is stronger overall in the Chinese sample, but the relationship between quality of decision-making and preference for the fall of high achievers was stronger in the NZ sample ($r = -.438$) than the Chinese sample ($r = -.187$) ($z = 2.666$, $p = .008$).

Voting

Given the observed cross-cultural differences in the preferences for high achievers to be rewarded, it is interesting to consider whether these groups differ in their willingness to support and "vote" for reality television contestants. As willingness to vote was a dichotomous (yes/no) variable, group differences were analyzed using chi square. The relationship between Group and Willingness to vote was not significant ($\chi^2 = 1.138$ [1 df, $N = 264$] $p = .286$) (see Table 3).

A 2×2 Group by Voting Willingness MANOVA was conducted. Given the importance ascribed to interdependence in Chinese society (Chen & Rau, 2016), a measure of ethnic pride (Yamagishi et al., 1998) was included as well as attitudes to achievement and self-esteem. This would check whether any observed effects resulted from pride in ethnic identity (Cai & Gries, 2013). There was a significant main effect of Group

TABLE 2 Mean Scores and Correlations Between Decisional Self-Esteem and Tall Poppy Subscales for Chinese and New Zealand European Samples

	Chinese sample Mean	SD	Decisional Self-Esteem	Correlations Favour Reward	Favour Fall
Decisional Self-Esteem	7.26	2.90	—	0.263**	−0.187
Favour Reward	41.83	10.39	.221**	—	−0.289**
Favour Fall	39.77	9.97	−.482***	−0.438***	—
	NZ Sample	Mean	8.34	46.52	35.62
		SD	2.59	8.04	9.20

Notes: N for the Chinese sample was 106. N for the New Zealand sample was 164. Correlations for the Chinese sample are above the diagonal; correlations for the New Zealand sample are below the diagonal. Tests of significance are two-tailed.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

TABLE 3 Willingness to Vote for Reality TV Contestants, and Interest in Further Information on a Debrief Page

Group	Voting? Yes	No	Total	Debrief? Success	Failures	Neither	Total
Chinese	27	78	105	45	6	55	106
NZ European	32	127	159	54	21	87	162
Total	59	205	264	99	27	142	264

(Pillai's Trace = .038, $F_{[4,257]}$ = 2.505, p = .043, η^2 = .04), but this was the result of univariate differences in Decisional Self-Esteem ($F_{[1,260]}$ = 3.099, p = .08, η^2 = .01), Favour Reward ($F_{[1,260]}$ = 7.960, $p < .005$, η^2 = .03) and Favour Fall ($F_{[1,260]}$ = 4.334, p = .038, η^2 = .02). There were no univariate differences in pride in ethnic identity ($F_{[1,260]}$ = 0.062, p = .803, η^2 = .00).

There was a significant multivariate effect of Voting Willingness, indicating significant overall differences between those that voted and those that did not vote for reality TV contestants (Pillai's Trace = .108, $F_{[4,257]}$ = 7.777, $p < .001$, η^2 = .11). As will be outlined by univariate tests, the voters differed in their achievement-oriented attitudes and ethnic pride from non-voters. Univariate tests indicate that Favour Reward scores ($F_{[1,260]}$ = 7.781, p = .006, η^2 = .03) were significantly higher for people who voted to support contestants (M = 46.91, SE = 1.16) than those that did not vote (M = 43.21, SE = 0.64). A significant univariate test also indicated differences in ethnic pride ($F_{[1,260]}$ = 27.878, $p < .001$, η^2 = .10). People who voted to support contestants (M = 3.58, SE = 0.15) were prouder of their ethnicity than those who did not vote (M = 2.65, SE = 0.08). The Group by Voting Willingness interaction was not significant (Pillai's Trace = .019, $F_{[4,257]}$ = 1.277, p = .279, η^2 = .02).

Online interest

Interest in the debrief page was scored as "Success," "Failure" or "Neither." As cross-cultural preferences and interest in achievement were a primary focus, participants expressing no interest in the debrief page were dropped from further analysis. There was a significant relationship between group and expressed interest in the debrief page (χ^2 = 4.753, 1 df, n = 126; p = .029). As seen in Table 3, the Chinese participants requested information on *success* at debrief, whereas the NZ participants exhibited a greater interest in *failure*.

To provide indices of online interest, the time spent on the debrief page was divided by the number of clicks for those expressing an interest and spent time on the debrief page (n = 60). The time per click was subjected to a 2 × 2 Group by Debrief preference analysis of variance (ANOVA). There was a significant main effect of Group ($F_{[1, 56]}$ = 5.661, $p < .021$, η^2 = .09). The Chinese sample (M = 2.88 s/c, SE = 3.39) spent less time per click on the debrief page than the NZ European sample (M = 13.52s/c, SE = 2.92). There was no main effect of Debrief preference ($F_{[1, 56]}$ = 2.876, p = .095, η^2 = .05). Although not significant, there was a trend for people interested in failure (M = 12.00s/c, SE = 3.91) to spend more time per click on the debrief page than people interested in success (M = 4.41s/c, SE = 2.17). The interaction between Group and Debrief preference was not significant ($F_{[1, 56]}$ = 2.197, p = .144, η^2 = .04).

DISCUSSION

As technologies now allow support to be solicited or denied for high-profile individuals (Denham, 2021; Godlewski &

Perse, 2010), the present paper considered the willingness to support high-profile individuals across cultural groups. The Chinese sample had lower decisional self-esteem and a preference for high achievers to fail rather than being rewarded. However, we were specifically interested in the effects of such attitudes upon online support. Although there were no overall differences between NZ Europeans and Chinese in reported willingness to vote for reality TV contestants, ethnic pride was a predictor of online support. Greater ethnic pride was associated with greater willingness to support others of the same ethnic group. We were also interested in the relationships between attitudes and subsequent online behaviors. The Chinese sample exhibited Gluckschmerz, expressing an interest in success, but spent less time looking at achievements during debrief. This is in contrast with the NZ sample, which was more interested in failure, exhibiting Schadenfreude instead.

Differences in online support can be interpreted in terms of cultural orientations towards individual achievement. As a more interdependent society (Markus & Kitayama, 1991), the Chinese sample was prepared to support their ethnic group and was interested in their successes, but was uncomfortable with individual achievement. The Chinese sample did not approve of high achievers, and their depth of online search for achievement-oriented information was less than that of the New Zealand sample.

It seems that the Chinese participants, with a more interdependent outlook (Markus & Kitayama, 1991), considered that high-profile individuals were disturbing a "balance" (van de Ven, 2018; Warren et al., 2004). There is evidence that an expectation of mutuality and reciprocity emerges at an early age (Wang & Henderson, 2018a; Wang & Henderson, 2018b). Even children will reject advantageous inequity options during economic games (Mann et al., 1985), and there is an expectation of reciprocity in Chinese culture (Guanxi; Chen & Rau, 2016). Thus, a preference for the fall of high achievers could be linked to resentment (Exline & Lobel, 2001; Feather & McKee, 2014; Feather & Sherman, 2002; Hong et al., 2020; Lange et al., 2016) and entrenched disadvantage enhances perceived injustice (Hong et al., 2020). Disadvantaged groups are more likely to take pleasure from the fall of an "out group" (Leach et al., 2003; Leach & Spears, 2008). The preference of the Chinese participants was for the high-profile individual to fail, restoring the balance (Lim, 2022).

Nevertheless, levels of support were similar between Chinese and NZ Europeans. Both Chinese (25.7%) participants and New Zealanders (20.1%) were prepared to support others. Indeed, Chinese (88.2%) participants tended to be more interested in the successes of their ethnic group than the New Zealanders (72.0%). However, these successes seemed to disturb a balance (Warren et al., 2004), eliciting Gluckschmerz, because the Chinese spent less time viewing an achievement-related debrief page than the New Zealanders. Levels of support within each ethnic group were comparable, but the success of others violates a "balance" for the Chinese, and as a consequence they did not dwell on achievement-related information (van de Ven, 2018).

NZ Europeans exhibited Schadenfreude, preferring the failure of high achievers, and dwelled on the debrief page (Pietraszkiewicz, 2013). The concept of Schadenfreude does exist in Chinese culture (as Xìng zāi lè huò 幸災樂禍). However, Chinese participants behaved as if they experienced Gluckschmerz. Our Chinese sample preferred the failure of high achievers. Though the Chinese participants expressed an interest in success, they seemed to demonstrate Gluckschmerz as they were less interested in the debrief page. This is in keeping with observations that Asian samples are more concerned about preserving harmony within the collective (Lun & Bond, 2006; Nisbett et al., 2001; Stoeber et al., 2013). Chinese participants preferred not to expose themselves to disharmonious information (S. M. Smith et al., 2008; Zhang & Cao, 2021; Zhang et al., 2012). The present Chinese sample spent only 21% of the time per click on the debrief page in comparison to the New Zealand sample. The Chinese cohort's scores on the Tall Poppy Scale imply that they preferred the failure of high achievers, but the actual amounts of time spent on the debrief page indicate a lack of interest in behaviors that disrupt a status quo (Lun & Bond, 2006; Zhang et al., 2012) or reflect the failure of the collective (Kwan & Chiu, 2014).

Schadenfreude was greater in participants with poorer decisional self-esteem. Those with lower decisional self-esteem more strongly preferred that high achievers failed, whereas better decision-makers preferred that high achievers succeeded. This may be because better decision-makers may have a more rational appreciation of the benefits of a merit-oriented system (Steinmayr et al., 2012). For instance, poorer decision-makers may not understand *deservingness* (Wang et al., 2019) and the potential benefits of skill and expertise (Kruger & Dunning, 1999), or investment (Barber, 2002; Noble et al., 2017).

Voting tendencies had several determinants. The Favour Reward subscale certainly predicted voting behaviors. This is promising and suggests the Favour Fall subscale could help predict less socially desirable behaviors (Horniket al., 2021a, Hornik et al., 2021b). Van de Ven (2016) indicated a need to distinguish benign from malicious envy. Malicious envy is associated with tendencies aimed to pull down the envied person from their superior position. Indeed, there are suggestions that darker impulsive behaviors are a product of such malignant entitled envy (Lange et al., 2016; Lange et al., 2018).

There was also a tendency for "like" to support "like" as might be expected from balance theory (Heider, 1958). Indeed, the Decisional Self-Esteem Scale may have been measuring identification, a better understanding of achievement, and benign envy (Crusius et al., 2020). Self-interest or ethnic pride seemed to have stronger effects upon voting behaviors. Conceivably the tendency for better decision-makers to reward and vote for high achievers also arises from a preference to support an "in group" (Cai & Gries, 2013; Leach & Spears, 2008; Leach et al., 2003). There is a preference for people to reward the "in group" (Castelli & Carraro, 2010; Yamagishi et al., 1998). Indeed, social media and viral marketing depend upon such mechanisms (Perugini et al., 2004).

Search engines tend to filter information that people are offered (Pariser, 2011). The recommendations made by personalized search engines on the Internet rely upon homophily,

the tendency for "like" to support "like" (Perugini et al., 2004), in an attempt to show people what they want to see. Hence these search engines allow people to filter information as a means of maintaining harmony (Zhang & Cao, 2021; Zhang et al., 2012) or protecting their self-esteem (S. M. Smith et al., 2008). However, as a consequence of such tendencies, it seems that individuals who do not conform (e.g., to a discussion board's rules) tend to be ostracized and excluded (Cheng et al., 2015). Indeed, members of deviant websites (Biddle et al., 2008; Rodgers et al., 2016) are known to exclude individuals with conflicting interests (such as clinicians seeking to offer help).

The German word "Schadenfreude" has been used to describe the interest in the failure of others (Pietraszkiewicz, 2013). The present study showed an interest in failures online during debrief, demonstrating that failures could serve as a source of "clickbait" for some cultures (Ortiz et al., 2019). The most serious instances of online failures occur when people webcast their suicides (Phillips & Mann, 2019). Such incidents can create considerable publicity, but also create liability by violating laws controlling suicide-related content (Phillips et al., 2019; Pirkis et al., 2009). Typically, commentators, websites, and Internet service providers take this suicide-related content down (Westerlund et al., 2015). Nevertheless, the concern generated by webcast suicides has caused at least one Asian website (i.e., Thailand's Camifrog) to be taken down (F. Smith, 2010), indicating the potential seriousness of Schadenfreude online and its implications for digital civility (Kim, 2020; Microsoft, 2021).

Implications

The present study has relevance for the online behaviors of Chinese cohorts. An increased interest in success, but reduced time spent viewing such information, has implications for online celebrities. The present data imply that ethnic Chinese would prefer not to have an Internet celebrity culture (Goh & Stanway, 2021). There are certainly indications that the Cyberspace Administration of China has been taking steps to address this issue (Goh & Stanway, 2021). In addition, the greater attitudinal preference for high-profile individuals to fall implies a greater risk in Chinese cohorts for behaviors such as cyberbullying (Leung et al., 2017). This is a potential concern as a celebrity culture and cyberbullying has led to high suicide rates in some countries (Dae-o, 2020).

Recommendations

A variety of explanations (envy, rivalry, injustice) have been offered for emotions such as Schadenfreude and Gluckschmerz (Wang et al., 2019; Warren et al., 2004). As such, these emotions would seem to be an inevitable consequence of the pressures to cooperate and compete during the distribution of resources (Baumard et al., 2013).

Given the observed relationships between Decisional Self-Esteem Scale and Favour Fall subscale scores, it seems that

educating the envious as to "what they could have done" could be one method of converting a malicious envy to something more benign (Crusius & Lange, 2021). Other methods might involve the reduction of visible privilege and injustice. The promotion of common goals and common group identities would also seem to be methods of reducing such emotions (R. H. Smith & van Dijk, 2018).

Indeed, whilst political solutions are beyond the scope of this paper, it seems that negative attitudes towards tall poppies tend to revolve around the suppression of competing groups (Marques et al., 2022). As the Internet works on mechanisms such as homophily, it tends to promote extremism by showing like-minded people what they want to see, rather than what they need to know (Pariser, 2011). Again, a solution seems to involve education.

Limitations

In the present study, Chinese participants were predominantly of Chinese descent. Differences in behavior were observed as a function of identification and involvement in Chinese culture. It is likely that the observed effects would be greater in more homogenous groups from Taiwan or Chinese mainland. In addition, our samples consisted of younger individuals who make a greater use of social media (Matanda et al., 2004). Younger cohorts may be more likely to engage with social media (Hu & Cheong, 2021), whereas older cohorts are likely to have more traditional values that would tend to potentiate cultural differences in attitudes towards achievement (Fung, 2013).

The Decisional Self-Esteem Scale was employed as it was likely to address an understanding of the mechanisms associated with achievement. Indeed, given the significant correlations between self-esteem and reward, the Decisional Self-Esteem Scale could be assessing benign envy rather than malicious envy (Crusius et al., 2020). Nevertheless, as the present study considered correlations between decision-making and achievement-oriented attitudes, ascriptions of causality can be problematic. In particular, the observed effects could reflect mood effects in these cohorts (Mao et al., 2021) rather than specific differences in quality of decision-making. The Decisional Self-Esteem Scale strongly correlates with measures of depression (Beck Depression Inventory $r = -.61$; Radford et al., 1986), and distress (K10 $r = -.58$; Phillips & Ogeil, 2015). In particular, the suggestion that a Chinese cohort would be poorer decision-makers needs to be viewed with caution. It is more likely that this population approaches conflict and decision-making differently (Nisbett et al., 2001; Varnum et al., 2010).

For ethical reasons, the present study considered factors influencing online "support" rather than negativity. Even though *attitudes* towards achievement were examined, there are situational factors that influence their *behavioral* manifestation. For instance, Schadenfreude and Gluckschmerz are antisocial emotions that are less likely to be aired publicly (R. H. Smith & van Dijk, 2018) and more likely to occur in communication media with reduced fidelity (Bos et al., 2002)

or greater anonymity (Santana, 2014; Suler, 2004) towards competitors (Kwak et al., 2015), members of out-groups, or non-conformists (Cheng et al., 2015).

In the present study, there were indications that attitudes influenced preferences and information seeking, but possibly not levels of online support. Instead, the present data imply that such behaviors may depend upon culture. Indeed, the present data imply that levels of online support would reflect group membership. However, other studies have clearly demonstrated relationships between Schadenfreude and online negativity (Hornik et al., 2021a, Hornik et al., 2021b; Hornik et al., 2015; Hornik et al., 2019).

Although the present study considered a reluctance to view information on success as Gluckschmerz and a form of pain, it may reflect some other emotion and process. For instance, avoiding information on success may be an attempt to avoid self-criticism (R. H. Smith & van Dijk, 2018). Alternatively, the reduced depth of search on the debrief page may reflect superior reading comprehension in the Chinese sample (Stevenson et al., 1985).

CONCLUSIONS

To understand factors contributing to online incivility, we used the Tall Poppy Scale to examine cross-cultural differences in attitudes and the willingness to support (or denigrate) high-profile individuals online. People with poor confidence in their decision-making preferred that high achievers fail, possibly because they did not identify with high achievers. The Tall Poppy Scale predicted online interest and willingness to support others. Voting preferences were examined and reflected specific achievement-oriented values (and pride in ethnic identity).

The NZ European sample disapproved of high achievers and exhibited Schadenfreude. The New Zealanders preferred and spent more time viewing information on the failure of high achievers, seemingly dwelling on their misfortune. The Chinese sample disapproved of high achievers more than the New Zealand sample, but their levels of online support were comparable. Indeed, the Chinese sample was interested in success, but exhibited Gluckschmerz. They preferred to see Chinese achievement, but spent less time viewing this information. This is likely to reflect a greater mutuality and interdependence in Chinese cohorts. The present Chinese sample's disinterest in achievement-related information online indicated a dislike of individual distinction in this cohort.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST
The authors report no conflict of interest.

ETHICAL STATEMENT
All human studies have been reviewed by the appropriate ethics committee and have been performed in accordance with appropriate ethical standards.

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