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Beyond Norms: The Roles of Anticipated Moral Emotions and Peer Approval in Intentions to Steal

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ABSTRACT

Moral commitment problems, conflicts between self-interest and moral norms, are central to understanding antisocial decision-making. Although negative moral emotions such as anticipated guilt are well-established deterrents of deviance, positive moral emotions such as anticipated pride and their interaction with guilt and normative influences have received less attention. This study uses a visual scenario-based survey to investigate how anticipated pride influences intentions to steal among a large sample of adolescents and young adults. The results indicate that anticipated pride is associated with *higher* intentions to steal, particularly when personal moral norms are permissive or when peer approval is perceived as high. Furthermore, anticipated pride weakens the deterrent effect of anticipated guilt, revealing complex competing influences of moral emotions. These findings suggest that anticipated pride can function as a »double-edged sword«, potentially undermining moral self-regulation when stealing confers social rewards. This highlights the nuanced and context-dependent role of anticipated moral emotions in antisocial decision-making.