

# Rose-colored glasses have many shades: Shopping decisions and emotions

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A proud consumer won't necessarily make the same purchase as a contented one, according to a new study in the *Journal of Consumer Research*.

"Previous research shows that positive feelings produce a 'rose-colored glasses effect,' leading products to appear more desirable," write authors Vidas Griskevicius (University of Minnesota), Michelle N. Shiota, and Stephen M. Nowlis (both Arizona State University). "But we find that rose-colored glasses come in different shades."

Although [positive feelings](#) of all sorts have often been lumped together into general categories such as "happiness" or "good mood," the researchers found that different positive emotions had drastically different effects, including making some products somewhat less appealing. Since participants in the authors' studies were not aware that emotions were affecting their preferences, the effects were largely unconscious.

The authors studied how product preferences changed depending on whether a person was feeling pride, contentment, or a neutral [emotional](#) state. Some participants read a short story in which they imagined doing well on an exam, which is known to elicit pride. "We found that pride enhanced desire for public display products," the authors write. "Feeling pride led people to want nice watches, shoes, and clothing for going out. However, pride did not enhance desire for home products."

In contrast, the emotion of contentment led people to want products for their homes. "When people felt contentment, they were more attracted to products such as beds, dishwashers, and clothing for lounging around the house," the authors write. They were less enthusiastic about public display products.

"Our findings suggest that shoppers are likely to want to buy different products depending on the specific emotions that they are feeling," the authors write. "If a retailer is selling products that allow the consumer to 'show off' to other people, this retailer may want to induce feelings of pride through store atmospherics or advertising. In contrast, a retailer selling primarily home furnishings might want to try to induce feelings of contentment."

**More information:** *Journal of Consumer Research*: August 2010. A preprint of this article can be found at [journals.uchicago.edu/jcr](https://journals.uchicago.edu/jcr)

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