

Public Abstract

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Title: The debt of heroism: an initial test of the legacy attained by social transaction (LAST) model

Rhetoric surrounding heroes suggests their contributions create a sense of indebtedness and that they deserve to be awarded a legacy for such contributions. Utilizing a novel theoretical framework, coined the legacy attainment by social transaction (LAST) model, the psychological reality of these claims are submitted to empirical scrutiny. The question concerning heroes' potential to elicit indebtedness and efforts to clear such debt are explored via three studies. Study 1 examines whether heroic contributions that are unrepaid result in greater tolerance of a transgression. Study 2 examines whether thinking about a hero and being led to feel indebted to them prompts repayment via a legacy, and whether such indebtedness has negative consequences for self-esteem and negative affect. Finally, Study 3 examines whether heroic contributions that are unrepaid promote a greater recall of information pertaining to the hero, potentially facilitating their legacy.