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The Entourage Effect

BRENT MCFERRAN
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Across a series of studies conducted in both the field and the laboratory, the authors demonstrate that the presence of others (i.e., an entourage) alters a VIP's personal feelings of status. Specifically, the authors show that VIPs feel higher levels of status when they are able to experience preferential treatment with an entourage, even if this results in the rewards associated with the treatment becoming less scarce. We show that the effect is driven by an increase in feelings of connection with one's guests. Several alternative explanations for the entourage effect are ruled out, and implications for practice are discussed.

Possessing status is a fundamental human motive (Fiske and Taylor 2008; Taylor and Brown 1988). Indeed, across cultures and time, social commentators note that people engage in behaviors that allow them to signal information about their true or desired status (i.e., relative standing) within a social hierarchy (Berger and Heath 2007, 2008; Berger and Ward 2010; Erdem and Swait 1998; Goffman 1951; Griskevicius et al. 2007; Han, Nunes, and Drèze 2010; Mandel, Petrova, and Cialdini 2006; Neilssen and Meijers 2011; Nunes, Drèze, and Han 2011; Rucker and Galinsky 2008; Sundie et al. 2011; Veblen 1899/1994). In today's marketplace, such behaviors often involve acquiring luxury brands, owning large or multiple homes and automobiles, or enjoying exotic services or vacations. Further, firms seek to satisfy consumers' desires for status by rewarding their most important clientele (i.e., "VIPs") for their loyalty with special perks and services (Henderson, Beck, and Palmatier

2011). Importantly, many of these preferential treatment programs allow VIPs to share their special benefits with one or more guests (i.e., an entourage). Does the presence of an entourage affect a VIP's felt status during preferential treatment? The purpose of the current research is to empirically test for an "entourage effect," which we define as an increase in a VIP's felt status during preferential treatment due to the presence of accompanying guests. Across a series of studies, we demonstrate the existence of this effect and determine why the effect arises.

Our contributions are centered on understanding how the presence of guests alters the status a VIP experiences. In general, we find that experiencing preferential treatment along with one's entourage enhances a VIP's felt status. Further, we demonstrate that having an entourage enhances feelings of social connection, and this underlies the effect. Evidence for this process is provided by the demonstration that (1) feelings of social connection mediate the effect of possessing an entourage on felt status and (2) manipulating feelings of (dis)connectedness directly attenuates the effect. Our research also contributes to the fields of marketing, psychology, sociology, and economics by demonstrating that the well-established tenet that scarcity is positively associated with greater status does not always hold. In particular, our findings show that people experience higher status when receiving widely available preferential treatment with their entourage, as compared to receiving treatment that is extended to fewer people but is experienced alone. Finally, we refute a number of alternative explanations for the entourage effect across our studies.

The next section presents our theoretical background and conceptual development. We then report a series of studies that test our theorizing. We conclude with a general discussion of the findings and highlight implications and directions for future research.

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CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

Airlines, hotels, restaurants, casinos, and numerous other businesses commonly segment their customers according to usage and explicitly offer perks (e.g., dedicated check-in lines, unique phone numbers, special discounts, exclusive lounges or suites) to reward their most loyal customers and make them feel a sense of status. While status has been conceptualized in a variety of manners in the literature, here we operationalize it as a subjective psychological feeling on the part of the consumer (e.g., Drèze and Nunes 2009), also known as felt status. Research has shown that preferential treatment affects a recipient's felt status (Drèze and Nunes 2009), leads to stronger company-customer relationships, as well as increases customer satisfaction and purchase volume (Homburg, Droll, and Totzek 2008; Lacey, Suh, and Morgan 2007). Given that the majority of a firm's sales often come from a small fraction of consumers (often called the Pareto principle, the 80/20 rule, or the law of a vital few), deciding how to reward these loyal customers is an important business question.

While previous work speaks to the impact of receiving preferential treatment on felt status for those who receive it (i.e., a true VIP) versus those who do not, past research has not examined how personal guests of a VIP might play into the VIP's experience (i.e., comparing a VIP with a guest to a VIP without a guest). Understanding the impact of an entourage on a VIP is important, in light of the fact that many VIP passes to, for example, clubs, concerts, airline lounges, and sporting events entitle the bearer to bring a guest(s), consistent with the social nature of these activities. Thus, the primary objective of the current research is to determine whether having an entourage present when preferential treatment is received has a positive, negative, or neutral impact on the subjective feelings of status a VIP experiences.

The answer to this question is not obvious. On the one hand, the presence of an entourage might decrease the extent to which a VIP experiences status. In particular, an entourage potentially adds to the total number of consumers receiving special treatment; thus, the overall exclusivity and distinctiveness of the benefits bestowed on the VIP are reduced. This is in line with research from several fields emphasizing the general notion that the more exclusive and scarce a good, service, or reward is, the more valuable it becomes as its potential for signaling status is higher (e.g., Bourdieu 1986; Brock 1968; Cialdini 2001; Dai, Wertenbroch, and Brendl 2008; Fromkin 1970; Hirshleifer, Glazer, and Hirshleifer 2006; Lynn 1989; Podolny 2005; Sharma and Alter 2012; Verhallen 1982). For example, sociologist and status theorist Podolny (2005, 23) states, "status is . . . zero sum in character. One cannot increase his status without another losing status." Assuming this assertion is universally correct, by increasing the number of people receiving status (by permitting entourages), each VIP has less for him/herself, thus lowering how much status s/he should feel. Indeed, in the context of loyalty programs, Drèze and Nunes (2009) find

that the less exclusive a rewards program is, the lower the status people imagine feeling.

Other support for the possibility that an entourage would decrease a VIP's personal status is found by Scheepers (2009), who shows that high-status group members are threatened when group boundaries (such as those separating VIPs from non-VIPs) are perceived to be less stable. In our context, this instability should translate into a decrease in the status a VIP experiences in two ways. First, an entourage should blur the boundaries that distinguish a true VIP from his/her entourage in the eyes of others (i.e., a VIP can no longer be singled out as being the true status holder). Second, when someone receives special treatment due to simply knowing the "right" person, it denigrates the status associated with the treatment for those who rightfully earned it. In sum, several well-grounded lines of work would predict that the presence of an entourage should decrease the felt status of a VIP.

On the other hand, the presence of an entourage may actually increase a VIP's felt status. Anecdotal support for this notion dates back many centuries. Historically, accumulating a large numbers of slaves, servants, and other domestic help was a symbol of one's social stature (e.g., Chernow 2004). In the past, servants were often considered physical possessions of their owners, and although today the people we associate with are no longer considered our property, they are still extensions of our self (Belk 1988). Thus, similar to possessions, which are also extensions of our self, the people with whom we associate might confer status. Indeed, Eckert (2004, 167; see also Kenrick, Trost, and Sheets 1996) suggests, "The trophy wife and the first lady serve to enhance the images of their husbands."

Additional support for the possibility that an entourage might increase status is rooted in social comparison theory (e.g., Festinger 1954; Kruglanski and Mayseless 1990; Wood 1989), which suggests that the presence of an entourage may provide a VIP with a relative advantage (over those VIPs who do not possess one), and this in turn might enhance his/her felt status. For example, research on loyalty programs finds that elite-tier patrons derive their feelings of status more from social comparisons to other elites than to those below them, or in the words of Drèze and Nunes (2009, 892), "Being ranked above other elites is different from being above the masses." Relative equality among VIPs can fuel a desire for conspicuous consumption to signal superiority over one's "competition" (Ordabayeva and Chandon 2011); thus, having an entourage might make a VIP feel as if s/he has an edge over other VIPs, enhancing his or her felt status. This could happen because an entourage may make a VIP more visible to others or stand out to a greater degree. It should be noted that it need not be objectively true that an entourage enhances one's status in the eyes of others for a VIP to feel this way, but merely that a VIP believes that this may be true (see Gilovich, Kruger, and Medvec 2002; Gilovich, Medvec, and Savitsky 2000).

Cialdini (1989) provides other evidence for the possibility of an entourage increasing a VIP's felt status. In particular,

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he discusses “burnishing” and “boosting,” wherein those who are associated with an individual are motivated to enhance the favorable and minimize the unfavorable features of their sponsor (the true VIP). This is done in an effort to enhance not only the sponsor’s prestige but also their own (see also Pontari and Schlenker [2004] and Schlenker and Britt [1999, 2001] for a discussion on strategic impression management on behalf of others). Cialdini also suggests that because a sponsor knows that associates are conveying him/her in a positive light, the sponsor may feel better personally. Extending this into our context, a VIP could expect that entourage members will be motivated to present him/her in a favorable manner, and thus the VIP may experience higher felt status when surrounded by an entourage sharing the preferential treatment. A related explanation is that an entourage could enhance one’s status through perceived feelings of indebtedness (i.e., gratitude) on the part of one’s guests. A VIP who procures resources for other people presumably should feel more status than a VIP who does not because the former may feel that his or her entourage will feel indebted to him or her, thus enhancing the VIP’s felt status (Homans 1961).

Finally, having an entourage could increase a VIP’s feelings of connectedness with others, and high levels of social connection and high status have long been linked in sociology (e.g., Blau 1964; Bonacich 1987; Bourdieu 1986; Burt 1997, 2010; Granovetter 1973, 1983; Lin 1999; Podolny 2005; Putnam 1995). According to this line of work, those with high status tend to report (as well as possess and mobilize) a wider social network. For example, Smith, Menon, and Thompson (2012) find that when threatened with a job loss, high-status people imagine broader social networks than do those of low status. In the sociological conceptualization of status, social connection is rarely manipulated; thus, the causal direction between connectivity and status remains an open question. In our context, it is possible that the presence of an entourage who are all connected to a single VIP (as compared to a VIP who is either solo or part of a loose collection of other VIPs) might cause the VIP to feel more connected and, in turn, increase status.

Given that a clear prediction regarding the impact of an entourage on a VIP’s felt status is not readily apparent on the basis of previous research, we conducted an initial test. Seventy-four undergraduate students from the University of Alberta were asked to imagine that they were invited to a dinner with a political figure of their choice. They were then presented with four different possible situations, which varied in entourage size but held constant the share of the total available preferential treatment the VIP had:

- A. You have one ticket, so you go by yourself, and there are four additional attendees.
- B. You have two tickets, so you bring one guest, and there are eight additional attendees.
- C. You have six tickets, so you bring five guests, and there are 24 additional attendees.
- D. You have 20 tickets, so you bring 19 guests, and there are 80 additional attendees.

Participants were asked to take a moment and imagine going to the dinner in each situation and then to choose in which one of the four situations they would feel the most status.

Existing theory and findings from several disciplines (e.g., Bourdieu 1986; Cialdini 2001; Dai et al. 2008; Hirshleifer et al. 2006; King, Hicks, and Abdelkhalik 2009; Podolny 2005) suggest that everyone should choose option A—the choice in which the reward offered is most scarce (fewest total attendees makes it most exclusive) and also the most valuable (since presumably the political figure’s time would be divided among fewer patrons). However, given this scenario and choice set, 69% of respondents chose an option other than A, providing preliminary evidence that the presence of an entourage increases one’s felt status (the choice shares for each option were A = 31%, B = 46%, C = 12%, and D = 11%; we return to interpret these specific shares in the general discussion).

We build on this initial result in a series of studies conducted both in the field and the laboratory. The studies proceed as follows. In study 1, we demonstrate the basic entourage effect in a field setting. We then replicate the effect in a controlled laboratory setting in study 2. Study 3 identifies a boundary condition for the effect, and studies 4 and 5 test the process mechanism for the effect. Across the studies, we test several explanations for why the entourage effect arises, including an aversion to being alone, mere visibility by others, an enhanced ability to confer valuable resources, sharing, a reduction in the total amount of preferential treatment available to others, and social connectivity. We conclude with a discussion of the implications of our findings and suggest several extensions of our work.

STUDY 1

Study 1 is designed to test the basic entourage effect using a field setting. We measure whether a VIP has an entourage and, if so, the entourage’s size (i.e., the number of members). We do not make a prediction with respect to size, as the expected impact of the number of members in an entourage on felt status is not apparent.

Method

Participants and Procedure. Fifty-four patrons at a Canadian professional football (CFL) game participated in this study (30 males, 23 females, 1 not reporting). The mean age was 31.26 years ($SD = 12.56$, range = 18–69). Participants received a \$10 gift card for stadium merchandise or food services.

Data were collected in partnership with a professional football team during a single event. The authors rented a luxury suite for an evening game (maximum capacity = 15 people) and invited fans located in the regular seating area up to the luxury suite for one quarter of the football game. While in the suite, fans received preferential treatment (e.g., catered food and beverages, luxury seating). Renting a luxury suite and endowing status to “new” VIPs allowed for greater control over past experiences with the luxury

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suite that could color participants' experiences. The suite itself was surrounded by several other luxury suites not separated by formal walls. As a result, the patrons in the other suites could see the participants endowed with status in the researchers' suite. Further, there was nothing distinguishing the researchers' suite from the others; it featured similar catering orders, was identical in size, and—similar to many others—was rented on a per game (rather than seasonal) basis.

To identify participants, teams of two research assistants were placed at different locations in the stadium's concourse and approached individual patrons at random, although assistants were instructed to ensure that they did approach a broad demographic sample. Patrons were asked (at the end of the previous quarter) whether they would like to spend the following quarter watching the game in a luxury suite, as part of a research survey being sponsored jointly by the football team and a university. Patrons were told that if they accepted, they would be asked to complete a short survey on "fan experience." If a patron indicated that s/he had a friend(s) with whom s/he was attending the game, the guest(s) was admitted to the luxury suite as well. The rate of acceptance was over 90%. Participants were then escorted up to the luxury suite, where they received preferential treatment and completed a short survey. At the close of that quarter, participants were escorted down to the general concourse area, and another set of participants was brought up.

Measures. We first assessed whether participants brought guests with them to the luxury suite (yes, $N = 17$; no, $N = 37$). Those participants indicating an affirmative response were then asked to indicate how many guests had accompanied them. Participants who answered no to the first question were coded with a "0" for the second question before analysis (resulting range 0–11; $M = 1.46$, $SD = 2.95$). Felt status was assessed with a single item: "What degree of status do you feel because you are in the luxury suite?" (1 = low, 7 = high).

Results and Discussion

We examined whether having an entourage (yes vs. no) influenced participants' felt status. Results showed a difference between the groups ($t(52) = 2.21$, $p = .03$), such that those who brought an entourage experienced higher felt status ($M = 5.71$, $SD = 1.83$) than those who did not ($M = 4.51$, $SD = 1.85$). Using regression analysis, we also tested whether the size of the entourage predicted felt status. We find that the larger one's entourage, the greater the status one felt ($B = .24$, $SE = .08$, $t = 2.85$, $p < .01$). One data limitation is that some of the participants who reported bringing zero guests were in fact guests themselves, and we could not observe which group each individual belonged to. However, running the conservative and less powerful test including only those who brought one or more guests results in the same conclusion, with a nearly identical effect size ($B = .24$, $SE = .10$, $t = 2.33$, $p = .03$).

Study 1 demonstrates the entourage effect in a real field

setting. In particular, the presence of an entourage increased the extent to which a VIP felt status. In addition, we find that the size of an entourage does appear to matter, such that a larger entourage was associated with heightened felt status, a finding we return to later in the article. Still, our results are limited by their correlational nature—those who feel more status personally may simply be predisposed to have an entourage (particularly a larger one) in this setting. The remaining studies manipulate the presence of an entourage directly, to rule out this possibility.

STUDY 2

The primary objective of study 2 is to test the impact of the presence (vs. absence) of an entourage on the extent to which a VIP experiences feelings of status in a more controlled setting. In addition, we test whether any observed boost in felt status is the outcome of the need to belong being fulfilled (i.e., an aversion to being alone; Baumeister and Leary 1995), which would not require preferential treatment. Specifically, if consumers experience more status when an entourage is present, despite not receiving preferential treatment, this would support a belongingness account. However, if consumers experience more status with others only in the presence of preferential treatment, this would support an entourage account. To achieve this, we experimentally manipulate whether a consumer receives preferential treatment.

Method

Participants and Design. One hundred and fifty-four undergraduates (36% female) from the University of Michigan participated in the study in exchange for partial course credit. The study used a 2 (entourage: present vs. absent) \times 2 (preferential treatment: yes vs. no) between-subjects design.

Procedure. Participants were given a scenario entitled "A Night Out." They were instructed to read the scenario and take a few minutes to imagine themselves in the situation. Participants read a description of a situation that transpired when they were attending a professional football game. In the entourage-present condition, participants read that they personally had four tickets (one for themselves and one for each of three friends), arrived at the game as a group, and made their way up to their seats together. In the entourage-absent condition, participants had a single ticket, arrived at the game solo, and took their seat by themselves. To achieve the preferential treatment manipulation, in the yes condition, participants' seats were in a luxury box, while in the no condition, participants read that their seats were in the end zone. After reading the scenario, participants answered three questions (adapted from Drèze and Nunes 2009): "How special did you feel?" (1 = not at all special, 9 = very special), "How unique did you feel?" (1 = not at all unique, 9 = very unique), and "What degree of status did you feel?" (1 = low, 9 = high). These items were averaged together to create a felt status index ($\alpha = .93$).

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Results and Discussion

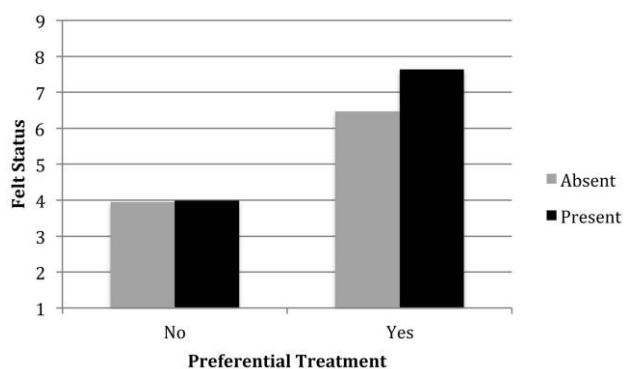
A 2 (entourage) \times 2 (preferential treatment) ANOVA with felt status included as the dependent variable was conducted. Results revealed lower-order effects for both preferential treatment ($F(1, 149) = 119.60, p < .001$) and entourage ($F(1, 149) = 4.56, p = .03$). These main effects were qualified by a significant two-way interaction between treatment and entourage ($F(1, 149) = 4.08, p < .05$). Planned contrasts revealed that, similar to the field study, when seated in the luxury box (i.e., preferential treatment), participants felt significantly higher status in the entourage ($M = 7.64, SD = 1.23$) as compared to the no-entourage ($M = 6.47, SD = 2.11; F(1, 149) = 8.63, p < .01$) condition. When seated in the end zone (i.e., no preferential treatment), felt status did not differ as a function of the presence ($M = 3.99, SD = 1.67$) or absence ($M = 3.96, SD = 1.73$) of an entourage ($F(1, 149) = .01, p > .92$). This finding is depicted in figure 1. Importantly, our interaction effect allows us to rule out an aversion to being alone (i.e., a need to belong) as an explanation for our results, as there were no differences in felt status as a function of the entourage manipulation in the no preferential treatment condition. An interaction effect also renders demand effects void as an explanation for our findings (Pelham and Blanton 2003; Wenzlaff and Bates 1998).

Another explanation for our findings is that participants may have experienced higher felt status when they had an entourage in the preferential treatment condition because the entourage itself provided the VIP with an audience. Perhaps the same effects would be realized if these people provided the VIP with an audience but were not a part of the entourage. Indeed, several studies highlight the importance of public visibility in explaining status effects (e.g., Griskevicius et al. 2007; Han et al. 2010; Veblen 1899/1994). We ran two additional preferential treatment conditions ($N = 37$) to test this possibility. In the first condition, the participant read that s/he had an entourage of three friends, and they were on their way to a luxury box (i.e., entourage condition). In the second condition, the participant (i.e., the VIP) was alone but saw (and was seen by) three friends on his/her way to the luxury box (i.e., observer condition). Both conditions made it explicit that the other three people were the participants' "close friends," to rule out the possibility that participants imagined the two groups to be different audiences. Results revealed that higher status was felt in the entourage ($M = 7.44, SD = 1.25$) as compared to the observer ($M = 6.33, SD = 1.50, t(36) = 2.43, p = .02$) condition. This suggests that it is not simply the visibility by one's peer group driving the effects but rather the added status that an entourage bestows on a VIP.

Finally, a limitation of both studies 1 and 2 is that the participants were not "true" VIPs in the strictest sense of the word, as they did not "earn" the right to preferential treatment through an economic transaction with the firm and might not be able to fully relate to receiving status. To determine whether our effect would hold with people who have more experience receiving preferential treatment, we

FIGURE 1

STUDY 2 RESULTS: FELT STATUS AS A FUNCTION OF PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT AND ENTOURAGE



contracted an online panel firm to identify participants who had "personally received preferential treatment in the past year (e.g., a VIP pass to an event, luxury box seating, or a VIP card) from any organization." These respondents ($N = 84$) were then given the football scenario (described in study 2), which described either the entourage-present or the solo condition. Replicating our earlier results, we find that respondents in the entourage condition reported higher levels of felt status ($M = 7.80, SD = 1.40$) than those in the solo condition ($M = 7.05, SD = 1.79, t(82) = 2.11, p < .04$). Participants were also asked to name the organizations with which they continue to have VIP status, if any. Using just these respondents to present a more conservative test ($N = 26$), the effect continued to hold ($M_{ent} = 8.18, SD = .87; M_{solo} = 7.27, SD = 1.36, t(24) = 1.95, p = .06$).

We designed the third study with the aim of understanding more about when and why the effect occurs. First, an entourage provides a VIP with an opportunity to bestow special resources on others (preferential treatment) since s/he has a "gatekeeper" role. Thus, it is possible that the mere ability to confer valuable resources on others (i.e., one's entourage) might enhance a VIP's felt status. To test this possibility in study 3, we include a condition in which a VIP confers equivalent preferential treatment on others, but these people are not physically present with the VIP. If the effect persists in this instance, it would suggest that the mere ability to procure and distribute valuable resources drives the effect. If it does not, it would suggest that the entourage members must be physically present (i.e., as a true entourage) with the VIP for the effect to occur.

STUDY 3

Method

Participants and Design. Fifty-six undergraduates (63% female) from the University of Alberta participated in the study in exchange for partial course credit. The study used

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a one-factor design with three levels: entourage near, entourage far, and solo (no entourage) between-subjects design. Note that this study design originally included two additional conditions (near and far) in which, instead of being composed of close friends, the entourage was made up of coworkers who were not very well known to the VIP (total $N = 96$). Results of these cells are available on request from the authors. Analyses below will focus on the three remaining conditions.

Procedure. Participants completed a modified version of the football scenario used in study 2. In the two entourage conditions, participants read that they received several VIP passes on late notice and arrived at the stadium with an entourage of four close friends. In the near physical distance condition, participants read that they would be personally using one of the passes, and so they would be watching the game from the same luxury box as their group. In the far physical distance condition, participants read that they already had a VIP pass to the game for a “different, but identical luxury box in a different part of the stadium.” In the solo condition, participants received a single VIP pass on late notice and attended the game by themselves.

This design also allows us to test several potential alternative accounts for the entourage effect. If the effect is driven merely by the ability to confer resources, felt status should not depend on where a VIP’s group is physically located (i.e., felt status should be higher in both entourage cells as compared to the solo group). However, if the effect persists only when one’s entourage is physically present (see Fortune and Newby-Clark 2008), it would suggest that another mechanism underlies our effect. Participants read one of the three scenarios and then completed the felt status measure, which was assessed using the same items as described in study 2 ($\alpha = .85$).

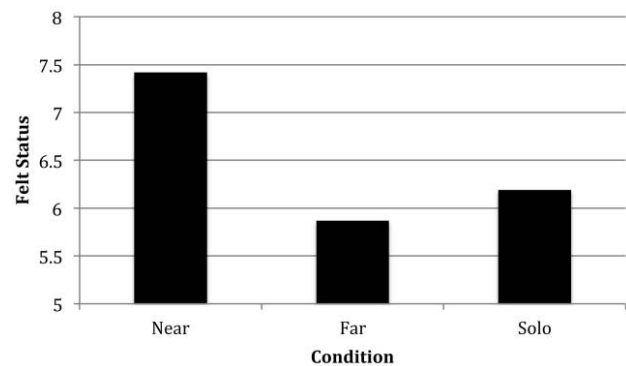
Results and Discussion

An ANOVA with felt status as the dependent variable was conducted. Results revealed an omnibus between-groups difference ($F(2, 53) = 5.22, p < .01$). Examining the simple effects, participants reported greater felt status when their entourage was located in the same luxury suite as them ($M_{\text{near}} = 7.42, SD = 1.55$) as compared to when there was no entourage present ($M_{\text{solo}} = 6.19, SD = 1.45; F(1, 53) = 5.34, p = .03$), replicating our central finding from the earlier studies. However, when the entourage was located in a different luxury suite, the effect was attenuated, as felt status was significantly lower in the far ($M_{\text{far}} = 5.87, SD = 1.72$) as compared to the near ($F(1, 53) = 9.55, p < .01$) condition (see fig. 2 for mean patterns). The solo and far conditions did not differ ($p > .34$).

The results of this study highlight several important points. The effect of physical distance rules out the possibility that the entourage effect arises merely because of the VIP’s ability to confer resources on others. Instead it suggests a boundary condition: the entourage’s preferential treatment must be bestowed in the presence of the VIP. This

FIGURE 2

STUDY 3 RESULTS: FELT STATUS AS A FUNCTION OF CONDITION



study also renders an account based on indebtedness less likely: the entourage should feel indebted for the VIP passes even if they are not seated with the VIP, and this in turn should increase the VIP’s felt status (as compared to the solo condition, in which we did not find indebtedness). However, we measure this alternative account directly in the next study.

Finally, in all of our studies to this point we compare a VIP with an entourage to a VIP without one. It is possible that receiving preferential treatment alongside other “true” VIP friends (sharing in the experience) would result in the same effects as receiving it with one’s entourage. If this were the case, this would be evidence in support of merely “sharing” (e.g., Belk 2010) as an explanation. To achieve this, we designed a study to compare the impact of receiving preferential treatment in the presence of an entourage (who depend on the VIP for their treatment) against receiving the treatment with a group of VIPs, all of whom have their own passes (and thus are not dependent on the VIP). While we showed that an audience of friends was not sufficient to produce the effect (discussion to study 2), in that scenario audience members were not VIPs themselves. Thus, we designed study 4 with this in mind. Studies 4 and 5 continue to test for the psychological mechanism underlying our phenomenon. Study 4 tests several process explanations simultaneously. First, it is possible that an entourage makes the VIP feel more visible, and public visibility and conspicuousness have long been linked to status (e.g., Veblen 1899/1994). If members of a VIP’s entourage are extensions of oneself, then it is possible that having an entourage enhances one’s own belief (erroneous or not) that one is more visible to others or that one’s social spotlight shines brighter. We measure the role of visibility in this study. Second, as mentioned earlier, one outcome of having an entourage is that a VIP can bestow preferential treatment on others. While study 3 shows that physical presence of an entourage is necessary, it cannot rule out the fact that the VIP feels like

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his/her entourage must feel indebted for being beneficiaries when physically present; thus, in study 4 we measure perceptions of gratitude. Finally, as mentioned earlier, previous research has found that social connection and status are highly correlated, although the direction of causality is not readily determined (e.g., Aral, Muchnik, and Sundararajan 2009; Aral and Van Alstyne 2011). Given this, we assess a VIP's feelings of social connectedness.

STUDY 4

Method

Participants and Design. Four hundred and twenty-one (62% male) participants from the Amazon Mechanical Turk panel participated. A one-factor between-subjects design was used with three levels (entourage, solo, or VIP friends).

Procedure. As in the previous studies, participants were asked to read a scenario and imagine it happening to them. To enhance the generalizability of the findings, we altered the preferential treatment context from a football game to a dinner. In the scenario, participants read that it was a weekend night, and they had managed to receive ticket(s) to a dinner with "a political figure you admire." In the entourage condition, the participant possessed eight tickets and was attending with several guests. In the solo condition, the scenario was identical, except the participant had a single ticket. In the VIP friends condition, the scenario was again identical, except it indicated that the participant was attending with seven friends, all of whom had their own tickets. This latter scenario allows us to test the possibility that the entourage effect arises because VIPs are sharing the experience with another person. We achieve this by comparing the entourage condition to the VIP friends condition.

Measures. Felt status was measured with the same items as study 2 ($\alpha = .89$). To assess potential mediators, we included several additional items, each measured on 9-point (1 = strongly disagree, 9 = strongly agree) scales. We assess feelings of public visibility with eight items: "Right now, I feel . . . noticeable/ visible/ conspicuous/ evident/ like the center of attention/ like others are looking at me/ like I stand out/ like others have their eyes on me" ($\alpha = .93$). We assess perceptions of gratitude with three items: "Others feel grateful to me/ indebted to me/ appreciative of me" ($\alpha = .87$). Finally, we assessed feelings of connectedness with seven items: "Right now, I feel . . . connected/ part of a group/ like I belong/ like I fit in/ popular/ well-liked/ united with others" ($\alpha = .95$). Factor analyses confirmed that these items all loaded on the appropriate factors (a four-factor solution explained 76.4% of the variance).

Results and Discussion

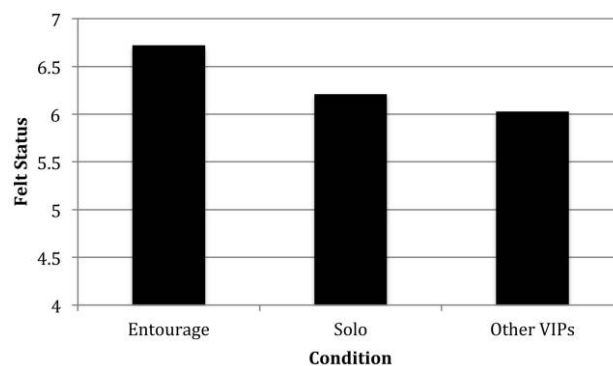
Felt Status. An ANOVA again revealed an omnibus effect of a mean difference between conditions when felt status was included as the dependent variable ($F(2, 418) = 6.25, p < .01$). Results revealed that those in the entourage con-

dition felt a higher level of status ($M = 6.72, SD = 1.58$) than those in the solo ($M = 6.22, SD = 1.69; F(1, 418) = 11.63, p = .001$) or VIP friends ($M = 6.03, SD = 1.84; F(1, 418) = 6.20, p = .01$; see fig. 3) conditions. Further, the latter conditions did not differ statistically from one another ($p > .36$). This rules out the possibility that sharing an experience underlies the entourage effect.

Mediation Model. We next ran a multiple mediation model using the INDIRECT macro that allowed us to enter all of the potential mediators in parallel and test them simultaneously to see what underlies the entourage effect and the amount of explanatory power of each pathway (Preacher and Hayes 2008). As we had three conditions, we created two dummy variables, one for the entourage condition and one for the VIP friends condition. Our central independent variable was the entourage condition coded against the other two cells, so the dummy representing the VIP friends condition was treated as a control variable in the model. Results (see fig. 4) revealed that having an entourage predicted both connectedness ($B = .97, SE = .20, t = 4.86, p < .001$) and gratitude ($B = 1.17, SE = .22, t = 5.23, p < .001$) but not visibility ($B = .21, SE = .21, t = .98, p > .32$). Examining the pathways from the mediators to the dependent measure (felt status) revealed that connectedness ($B = .39, SE = .05, t = 7.70, p < .001$) and visibility ($B = .22, SE = .05, t = 4.69, p < .001$) but not gratitude ($B = .01, SE = .04, t = .17, p > .86$) were significant. Since only connectedness had both significant "a" and "b" pathways required for mediation, we conclude that it mediates the effect of having an entourage on felt status. Bootstrapped 95% confidence intervals confirmed that indeed connectedness, rather than the other potential mediators, underlies the effect (connectedness: .21, .61; visibility $-.04, .15$; gratitude $-.10, .14$). Note that for robustness checks, we also confirmed that connectedness remains a significant mediator if we run alternate models including only the entourage condition against either of the other two conditions sepa-

FIGURE 3

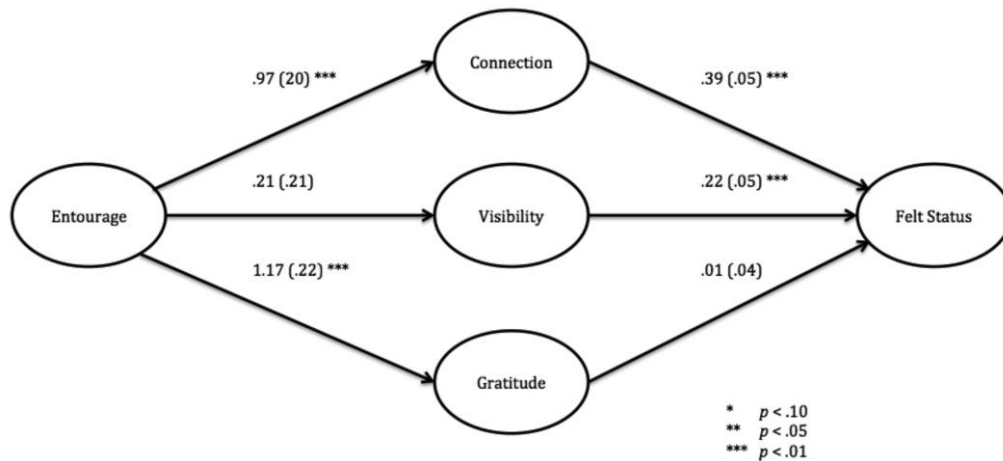
STUDY 4 RESULTS: FELT STATUS AS A FUNCTION OF CONDITION



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FIGURE 4

STUDY 4 RESULTS: FULL PATH MODEL



NOTE.—Regression weights are unstandardized; SE in parentheses.

rately or if the nonsignificant mediators are not included in the model. We also conducted a confirmatory factor analysis to ensure that the pathway between connectedness and status was not significant simply because of a correlation between the items measuring the two constructs. The results revealed that a two-factor model far outperformed a single-factor model (difference test $\chi^2(1) = 601.34, p < .001$). As a final robustness check, given the large sample size, we randomly selected approximately half of our data ($N = 210$, or a 10:1 ratio of participants to indicator variables; Chin 1998) and reran our mediational analyses. All pathways remained significant at or below $p < .01$, with both connectedness pathways remaining $p < .001$.

Study 4 shows that an entourage enhances feelings of connectedness for the VIP. Further, this sense of connection predicts the extent to which one feels status in a preferential treatment context. While we show that there are indeed other variables that are affected by having an entourage, and other variables that also predict status, only connectedness significantly mediated the effect, and this mediation holds after accounting for any portion of the effect explained by the other measures.

Why might one feel more connected to one's entourage than to other legitimate VIPs? There are several reasons for this. First, in the latter instance, there is no clear leadership role, which is presumably occupied by the true VIP in the former case. Thus, the VIP should feel an enhanced connection to his or her "subordinates" since each is truly dependent on the VIP for his or her entry. Stated differently, fundamentally the type of relationship is different between these two scenarios: one is a group of equals, the other has a clear power center (the true VIP). In network theory ter-

minology, a group with an entourage has a single person with a high degree of centrality (number of connections) within a network. This would be in stark contrast to, say, a group with low centralization and centrality (the latter being a measure of the difference between the most and the least connected people in a group) consisting of several VIPs who are each only connected to one or two others in the group. Given that the connections within a network structure are associated with status, it becomes clear both why connectedness predicts status and why the resulting network structure of an entourage situation is likely to produce heightened connectedness.

In a similar vein, social impact theory (Latané 1981) predicts that when a group of "social sources" (i.e., in our context, the entourage) focus on a specific target individual (i.e., the VIP), the amount of impact (i.e., connectedness) the target should experience increases with the number of sources. This would be different in the context of a group of VIPs in which there would be no target individual, and thus any feelings of connectedness would be diffused across the group.

Finally, another stream of literature that would support connectedness as an underlying mechanism of our process is found in research on entativity. This work would predict that an entourage group would be more cohesive and entitative (i.e., more "groupy"; see Hamilton and Sherman 1996; Hogg 2009), at least in the eyes of the VIP. A group that is more like a single entity than a sum of parts should clearly feel a greater sense of social connectedness, and identification with one's group and subjective status have also been shown to be correlated elsewhere (Hogg and Hains 1996).

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Note that the evidence for connectedness as a mediator is consistent with our previous studies as well. In study 1, for instance, a larger entourage would result in more connections for the VIP. In study 3, our finding that the entourage effect is attenuated when the guests are not physically present is also conceptually consistent with a connectivity account—being physically distant should reduce personal feelings of connectedness.

In our final study, we sought to triangulate our process findings using the experimental causal chain method, rather than mediation (Spencer, Zanna, and Fong 2005). If feelings of connectedness indeed drive the effect, manipulating these feelings directly should attenuate the effect of having an entourage on felt status.

STUDY 5

Method

Participants and Design. One hundred and ninety-three (59% male) participants from the Amazon Mechanical Turk panel participated. A one-factor between-subjects design was conducted with three levels: entourage connected, entourage disconnected, and solo.

Procedure. We again used the dinner scenario following study 4. The solo condition was identical to that study. From the entourage condition in that study, we created two new separate conditions (connected and disconnected). These two entourage conditions read a very similar scenario to the entourage scenario in study 4, but their scenario ended with the statement “For some reason, you feel connected with your group” (connected condition) or “For some reason, you don’t feel connected with your group” (disconnected condition). This served as the manipulation of feelings of connection. To make it unlikely that participants might feel less status in the disconnected condition merely because they enjoyed the dinner less, all three conditions also read at the close of the scenario: “As the night progresses, you have a great time.”

Measures. Felt status was measured with the same items as the other studies ($\alpha = .86$). We used the seven-item connectedness scale from study 4 as a manipulation check ($\alpha = .94$).

Results and Discussion

An ANOVA on the manipulation check confirmed the effectiveness of the manipulation ($F(2, 190) = 41.09, p < .001$). Participants reported feeling more socially connected in the connected condition ($M = 7.40, SD = 1.26$), as compared to the disconnected condition ($M = 5.17, SD = 1.66; F(1, 190) = 82.17, p < .001$). The mean for felt connectedness in the solo condition ($M = 6.33, SD = 1.18$) was between the means in the other two conditions, differing statistically from each (both $p < .001$), confirming the manipulation worked as planned.

An ANOVA again revealed an omnibus effect of a mean

difference between conditions ($F(2, 190) = 4.67, p = .01$). Consistent with a connectedness explanation, those in the entourage-connected condition felt a higher level of status ($M = 7.07, SD = 1.37$) than those in either the solo condition ($M = 6.41, SD = 1.49; F(1, 190) = 6.61, p = .01$) or the entourage-disconnected condition ($M = 6.40, SD = 1.38; F(1, 190) = 7.40, p < .01$; see fig. 5). Further, the latter two conditions did not differ statistically from one another ($p > .97$). As inducing feelings of a lack of connectedness attenuated the entourage effect, this final study confirms that feelings of connectedness primarily underlie our effect.

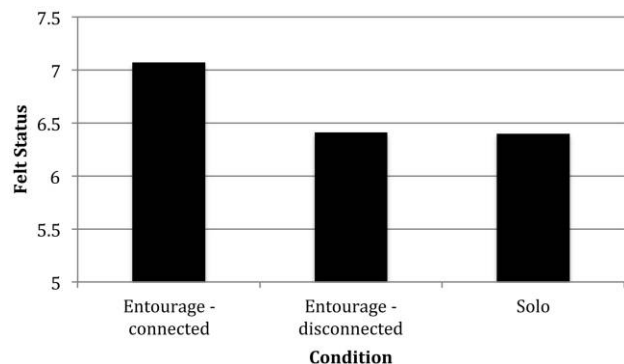
GENERAL DISCUSSION

Across a series of studies, we document in both the field and the laboratory a phenomenon we term the “entourage effect.” In particular, we find that VIPs feel more status when they experience preferential treatment with their guests (i.e., entourage), even when the exclusivity of the reward itself is compromised. Importantly, we show that the entourage effect arises due to a heightened feeling of social connection that the VIP experiences. We also demonstrate that the entourage effect does not appear to arise due to an aversion to being alone, enhanced public visibility, the mere ability to confer resources on others, sharing, or perceived indebtedness. Further, and contrary to findings from several fields, we show that the effect persists even if one’s entourage renders the treatment more widely available to others. Finally, we show several boundary conditions to the entourage effect, as it is attenuated (a) when there is a large physical distance between the VIP and members of his/her entourage, (b) if the treatment is not preferential, and (c) if one is attending with others who are also legitimate VIPs in their own right.

This research makes several contributions. First, this work adds to the understanding of how the presence of guests affects the status a VIP feels during preferential treatment.

FIGURE 5

STUDY 5 RESULTS: FELT STATUS AS A FUNCTION OF CONDITION



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Increasing the total number of individuals receiving preferential treatment can be done in two ways: either via the addition of more “true” VIPs or by the addition of VIPs’ guests. Past research has focused only on the former and comes to different conclusions than we do, suggesting that VIPs do not view all marginal recipients of preferential treatment in the same way. For example, Drèze and Nunes (2009) studied the effect of adding other (anonymous) VIPs and found that these individuals diluted the status felt by current VIPs. We find the reverse of their finding in our entourage context. In particular, regardless of whether entourage members are perceived by the self as “elites” or as “second-tier” in the terminology of Drèze and Nunes, our conclusion is the same: adding individuals associated with the VIP augments (rather than detracts from) the VIP’s felt status. Second, a tenet of status research is that scarcity generally increases how much status a reward endows; however, we find that while an entourage renders a benefit less scarce (than when one is not allowed to bring guests), the company of others actually trumps scarcity in predicting the status VIPs will experience personally. Third, we demonstrate not only a unique effect but also the mechanism that underlies it—social connection. While connectedness mediates the entourage effect, we do not expect that feeling connected will always lead to increased feelings of status. Indeed, in study 1 when an entourage was present in a nonpreferential treatment scenario VIPs did not experience an increase in status. As such, we would suggest that connectedness leads to increased status only in contexts in which there is a VIP or a scarcity of access to desirable resources. Further, there may be different facets of social connection that are not assessed by the items we used to measure the construct.

Similar to research on materialism (e.g., Richins and Dawson 1992), which suggests that consumers seek to feel status by the acquisition of an ever-increasing quantity of goods, we show that guests have implications for felt status. Although previous research has suggested that other individuals, such as a trophy wife, can be used for signaling purposes, our findings are conceptually different. Specifically, the perceived value of a trophy wife comes, at least in part, from the scarcity of her attributes, while potential entourage members would seem to be in abundant supply. While there are likely financial costs to procuring and keeping a trophy wife (Baumeister and Vohs 2004), an entourage as we have conceptualized it, costs money for the firm more than the individual.

This work also offers several novel insights. While several papers have examined the effects of experiencing preferential treatment programs, none have examined the role guests may play on a VIP’s felt status, despite the fact that many such programs make provisions for a VIP to sponsor guests. Further, these programs often also make an effort to convey scarcity and exclude most consumers. Our studies show that exclusion may have its costs as well and suggest that if a firm wishes to make a VIP feel special, it should consider permitting him/her to include guests. Of course, firms will have to determine whether the costs associated

with allowing guests outweigh the positive effect we demonstrate here.

There are several directions worthy of future research. Foremost, it would be worth examining in greater detail the role of entourage size. Recall that we found a linear relationship between size and status in study 1. However, in that study the number of guests was measured, not manipulated, and comprised a relatively small range. As well, in that study increasing the size of one’s entourage did not mean that one personally received a reward that was less scarce, unlike our pilot study. The “opportunity cost” of additional guests was virtually absent, as the size of the luxury suite was fixed and sufficient resources existed for all guests (seating, complimentary food and beverages). Further, each member of an entourage was essentially displacing another patron who could be using the suite, so in effect a VIP was consuming a larger share of the total preferential treatment with a larger entourage (vs. a smaller one), so a bigger entourage came at no cost to the VIP personally. As a preliminary test of the more nuanced role size may play, we conducted a test. We asked participants ($N = 108$) to complete a VIP scenario involving a nightclub, and we manipulated between subjects five entourage size levels (zero, one, five, 12, and 20) by increasing the number of passes the participant had to distribute, while holding constant the percentage of the total number of passes that the nightclub printed (1 of 5, 2 of 10, 6 of 30, etc.). Results for participants’ felt status revealed a nonsignificant linear effect ($p > .17$), but a marginally significant quadratic term ($B = -.14$, $SE = .08$, $t = 1.67$, $p < .10$). We replicated this finding using a within-subjects design from the same sample ($N = 26$; linear trend $F < 1$; quadratic $F(1, 23) = 14.08$, $p = .001$). Note that these studies dovetail with the findings of study 1, which showed a linear effect but had a maximum size of 11 in the sample, as well as with the preliminary study we report in the introduction, in which the largest proportion of people reported feeling the highest status with a small entourage (option B).

What might cause the inverted-U-shaped relationship between size and status? Three possibilities come to mind. First, perhaps individuals are willing to trade off scarcity for size but only to a certain point. In the designs reported above, a large entourage necessarily meant that the reward itself was becoming much more common, something that could not be true in the field setting in study 1. So, perhaps consumers are willing to forgo some, but not all, of this exclusivity for the privilege of having an entourage. Second, perhaps connectivity declines as size increases. While centrality increases with a larger entourage, perhaps mean tie strength (or the perceived increase in connectedness) declines. Third, it is possible that participants had trouble imagining themselves with a very large entourage. This difficulty in imagining could explain the decline in felt status over larger entourage sizes (Schwarz et al. 1991). Finally, individual differences likely play a role. The fact that participants selected all of the options in our opening demonstration highlights that there are likely individual differences in pref-

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erence for entourage size, even if it is abundantly clear that it comes at a substantial cost to the scarcity of the actual reward being offered. Interestingly, in our between-subjects nightclub study, while the scores for felt status when the entourage size was one ranged from 6.00 to 9.00 on a 9-point scale, the scores ranged from 2.33 to 9.00 for the largest entourage size (20), and 1.00 to 9.00 for the solo condition, suggesting that not everyone experiences a status decline as his or her entourage size increases. Narcissism and extraversion are two individual difference variables that might affect these size preferences. Future research should examine these possibilities in more detail.

This article illuminates several other directions ripe for future research. First, we examine only self-perceptions of felt status, but how might others view a VIP as a function of the presence of an entourage? Might it depend on whether these outsiders are also VIPs or whether they have their own entourages? Further, these answers may depend on characteristics related to the VIP or the entourage. For instance, would the entourage effect occur if the focal VIP is a celebrity (such as Bill Clinton) versus an unknown and for the same reason (i.e., social connection)? Further, does it matter whether the celebrity is someone who elicits more positive (e.g., the Pope) versus negative reactions (e.g., O. J. Simpson)? Finally, what if the entourage is composed of a true out-group (vs. in-group) relative to the focal VIP (e.g., the entourage is composed of people with a different ethnicity than the VIP)?

Another important future research avenue is to determine how the structure and composition of a VIP's entourage affects felt status. We note earlier that the network structure of an entourage network (vs. a network of true VIPs) is likely to be quite different. Although we did not do so, this could be empirically tested and the resultant networks modeled. Further, future work could extend our analysis by exogenously altering the structure between entourage networks. An entourage network could, for example, consist of a VIP who knows his or her entourage, but entourage members are (vs. are not) meaningfully connected to one another (for examples, see Wasserman and Faust 1994; Watts and Strogatz 1998). Given that we did not measure or manipulate network structure, there are several different sizes and types of networks that may exist between a VIP and his or her entourage, and these likely affect the extent to which a VIP experiences feelings of status.

The entourage composition may also matter; for example, an entourage composed of a VIP's staff might elicit different degrees of felt status as compared to if the entourage is a group of friends. We should note that both slaves (usually low status) and trophy wives (relatively higher status) potentially serve to augment the status of an individual. Further, we do not examine how one achieves status, as it can be attained via achieved means (such as education) or ascriptive factors (such as one's family wealth; Blau and Duncan 1967). Given that achieving status from ascriptive factors is conceptually similar to receiving status because of being a member of an entourage (since in neither case was

it earned per se), this might serve as an interesting moderator. Furthermore, VIP programs vary in how difficult it is to obtain preferential treatment. In our studies, participants never had to truly undertake the effort sometimes required to receive preferential treatment. This is not dissociated from reality; for example, many airlines allow anyone to gain lounge access with a small onetime payment. However, perhaps our results would be different if a high degree of effort on the part of the sponsor (e.g., substantial repeat purchases) was necessary to attain VIP status.

While the current research explores the impact of the presence of an entourage on a VIP's felt status, it would be interesting to explore the downstream consequences of the entourage effect. For example, does the presence of an entourage influence a VIP's satisfaction or enjoyment of the preferential treatment received? What about customer loyalty, brand affiliation with the service provider, or willingness to spread positive word of mouth about the experience? Similarly, do bonds form between the firm and entourage members as a result of the benefits they receive?

In all of our scenarios, participants in the alone conditions were never told that they could bring a guest but did not. We believed that explicitly stating this would bias the effects in favor of finding the effect, as participants might feel inadequate if they did not have something that was clearly permitted. Even in the field study, participants' guests were exogenous—they were the people they happened to be with in the concourse of the stadium that day. Thus, our tests were conservative. This method allowed us to examine the mere difference guests add, rather than having the solo conditions confounded with feelings of failure. In reality, however, most VIP programs clearly state whether guests are allowed. Although many promising avenues for future research exist, the current research represents an important first step toward demonstrating how experiencing status with others present alters the experience.

DATA COLLECTION INFORMATION

Pilot Study data were collected by a research assistant under the guidance of the second author at the University of Alberta School of Business Behavioural Research Lab (winter 2012). Study 1 data were collected by both authors with the assistance of the Calgary Stampeders staff and several research assistants on site during a game night (summer 2009). Study 2 data were collected by a research assistant under the guidance of the first author at the University of Michigan Ross School Behavioral Research Lab (winter 2011). The data for the studies reported in the discussion to study 2 were collected by a research assistant under the guidance of the second author at the University of Alberta School of Business Behavioural Research Lab (winter 2011) and a Clearvoice Panels staff member arranged through the first author (winter 2013), respectively. Study 3 data were collected by a research assistant under the guidance of the second author at the University of Alberta School of Business Behavioural Research Lab (fall 2011). The data for studies 4 (fall 2012) and 5 (winter 2013) were collected via

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Amazon Mechanical Turk by the first author. The data for the studies reported in the general discussion were collected by a research assistant under the guidance of the first author at the University of Michigan Ross School Behavioral Research Lab (winter 2012). All data were analyzed by the first author.

APPENDIX

SAMPLE SCENARIOS

Football

A Night Out

We would like you to imagine the following situation as if it is happening to you—after reading each sentence, CLOSE YOUR EYES AND TRY TO VISUALLY IMAGINE AND EXPERIENCE THE EVENTS IDENTIFIED:

It's a weekend night and you've managed to get a single VIP access pass to a professional football game luxury suite. You received the pass on late notice and are going to the game by yourself.

You arrive at the gate of the stadium and give the ticket taker your ticket. He checks over your ticket and lets you into the stadium. You enter the stadium alone and make your way up to the luxury box. The game is just about to start.

It's a weekend night and you've managed to get VIP access passes for you and four guests to a professional football game luxury suite. You received the passes on late notice and are taking four close friends to the game.

Your group arrives at the gate of the stadium, and you give your ticket, as well as the tickets for your four guests, to the ticket taker. He checks over your tickets and lets the five of you into the stadium.

You enter the stadium with your group and all of you make your way up to the luxury box to watch the game together. The game is just about to start.

Dinner

A Night Out

We would like you to imagine the following situation as if it is happening to you—after reading each sentence, CLOSE YOUR EYES AND TRY TO VISUALLY IMAGINE AND EXPERIENCE THE EVENTS IDENTIFIED:

It's a weekend night and you've managed to get EIGHT tickets to a dinner involving a political figure you admire. You are bringing seven other people to the dinner along with you.

You arrive at the dinner holding your EIGHT tickets. You give your ticket, as well as the tickets for your group, to the ticket taker. He checks over your tickets and lets you into the dinner. Your group enters with you as well.

You make your way over to your table and wait for the other dinner guests to arrive.

It's a weekend night and you've managed to get a SINGLE ticket to a dinner involving the political figure you admire. You are going by yourself.

You arrive at the dinner holding your ONE ticket. You give your single ticket to the ticket taker. He checks over your ticket and lets you into the dinner.

You make your way over to your table and wait for the other dinner guests to arrive.

It's a weekend night and you've managed to get a SINGLE ticket to a dinner involving the political figure you admire. You are attending with seven other people who also have their own tickets.

You arrive at the dinner holding your ONE ticket. You give your single ticket to the ticket taker. He checks over your ticket and lets you into the dinner. The others you are attending with enter with you as well.

You make your way over to your table and wait for the other dinner guests to arrive.

Nightclub

A Night Out

We would like you to imagine the following situations as if it is happening to you—after reading each sentence, CLOSE YOUR EYES AND TRY TO VISUALLY IMAGINE AND EXPERIENCE EACH OF THE EVENTS IDENTIFIED:

It's a weekend night and you've managed to get one VIP access pass to a popular nightclub in town. The VIP pass has today's date and says "Limited edition—only 5 printed." Because you have been given one ticket, you will be attending by yourself.

You arrive at the VIP entrance of the club and give the bouncer your pass. He checks over your VIP pass and lets you into the club. You enter the nightclub by yourself and make your way over to the bar.

It's a weekend night and you've managed to get two VIP access passes to a popular nightclub in town. The VIP pass has today's date and says "Limited edition—only 10 printed." Because you have been given two tickets you will be able to bring one guest.

You arrive at the VIP entrance of the club with your guest and give the bouncer your pass and the pass for your guest. He checks over your VIP passes and lets the two of you into the club and you make your way over to the bar.

It's a weekend night and you've managed to get six VIP access passes to a popular nightclub in town. The VIP pass has today's date and says "Limited edition—only 30 printed." Because you have been given six tickets you will be able to bring five guests.

You arrive at the VIP entrance of the club with your guests and give the bouncer your pass and the passes for your group. He checks over your VIP passes and lets the six of you into the club and you make your way over to the bar.

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