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Self-Promotion as a Risk Factor for Women: The Costs and Benefits of Counterstereotypical Impression Management

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Three experiments tested and extended recent theory regarding motivational influences on impression formation (S. T. Fiske & S. L. Neuberg, 1990; J. L. Hilton & J. M. Darley, 1991) in the context of an impression management dilemma that women face: Self-promotion may be instrumental for managing a competent impression, yet women who self-promote may suffer social reprisals for violating gender prescriptions to be modest. Experiment 1 investigated the influence of perceivers' goals on processes that inhibit stereotypical thinking, and reactions to counterstereotypical behavior. Experiments 2–3 extended these findings by including male targets. For female targets, self-promotion led to higher competence ratings but incurred social attraction and hireability costs unless perceivers were outcome-dependent males. For male targets, self-effacement decreased competence and hireability ratings, though its effects on social attraction were inconsistent.

Self-promotion appears prominently in any taxonomy of impression-management (IM) strategies (e.g., Jones & Pittman, 1982). Designed to augment one's status and attractiveness, self-promotion includes pointing with pride to one's accomplishments, speaking directly about one's strengths and talents, and making internal rather than external attributions for achievements. It is especially useful in situations in which the self-enhancer is not well-known or is competing against others for scarce resources (e.g., during a job interview). Not surprisingly, self-promotional skills are positively related to hiring and promotion decisions, perhaps because they are associated with qualities considered prerequisites for many occupations (e.g., competence, confidence, and ambition; e.g., Kacmar, Delery, & Ferris, 1992; Stevens & Kristof, 1995; Wiley & Eskilson, 1985). Consequently, self-promotion is an important tactic for any competitor, male or female.

An IM Dilemma

Despite its importance, self-promotion poses special problems for women. Historically, women have been perceived as less competent and competitive than are men (e.g., Broverman, Vogel, Broverman, Clarkson, & Rosenkrantz, 1972). Therefore, when women compete against men (e.g., for employment) it may be incumbent on them to manage an atypical impression or risk losing to rivals who will be deemed better qualified (Glick, Zion, & Nelson, 1988). Because self-promotion enhances the attribution of competence (Jones & Pittman, 1982), it may provide women a means of counteracting gender stereotypes in the workplace.

Unfortunately, women who behave confidently and assertively are not as well received as men who engage in the same behaviors (Butler & Geis, 1990; Costrich, Feinstein, Kidder, Marecek, & Pascale, 1975; Heilman, Block, Martell, & Simon, 1989). For example, women managers who adopt a direct, task-oriented leadership style are evaluated more negatively and extremely than their male counterparts (Eagly, Makhijani, & Klonsky, 1992). In a series of studies, Costrich et al. (1975) found that women who asserted themselves were less popular than men who performed the same behaviors. Similarly, Powers and Zuroff (1988) found that a self-confident woman received the highest performance evaluations but was the least liked by her peers. Because social influence is a function of both competence and social attraction (e.g., Carli, LaFleur, & Loeber, 1995), women may suffer from a *backlash effect* in which self-promotion may enhance perceptions of their qualifications, but at the cost of social rejection. That is, women may be stuck in a Catch-22 in which they are damned if they do self-promote, and damned if they do not. The present research sought to examine (a) the scope of this IM dilemma and (b) factors that might moderate it.

Gender and Self-Promotion

Self-promotion is intuitively more normative and acceptable for men than for women (Miller, Cooke, Tsang, & Morgan, 1992). Traditionally, men have been socialized to speak well of themselves in order to compete intrasexually for both economic resources and romantic attention from women (Buss, 1988). In

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contrast, women have been socialized to be communally oriented rather than self-centered (Bakan, 1966; Eagly, 1987). Research on the *feminine modesty effect* has shown that women are particularly likely to be modest in public versus private situations, ostensibly in reaction to normative pressures (Daubman, Heatherington, & Ahn, 1992; Gould & Slone, 1982; Heatherington et al., 1993).

Recent efforts to acknowledge gender differences in self-presentational tactics have approached the problem intrapsychically (Kacmar & Carlson, 1994). It has been argued that women are unable to self-promote due to low self-esteem (i.e., a belief that "they have nothing about which to brag"; Kacmar & Carlson, 1994, p. 690). Alternatively, women may refrain from self-promotion for largely interpersonal reasons. Individuals who behave counternormatively risk social censure for violating the prescriptive elements of gender stereotypes (Deaux & Major, 1987; Eagly, 1987; Huston & Ashmore, 1986). Consequently, women may be reluctant to self-promote for fear of being judged unfeminine, pushy, and domineering, which in turn limits their perceived suitability for many occupations (Janoff-Bulman & Wade, 1996).

Motivational Influences on Impression Formation

But what can a woman do if she is caught between the need to project herself confidently and the cultural prescription to "be modest"? The first step is to counteract perceivers' tendencies to stereotype women (e.g., as less competent, ambitious, and qualified than men; see Fiske & Stevens, 1993, for a review). Impression formation theory posits that motivated perceivers (i.e., individuals concerned with accurate social perception) are likely to attend to evidence that counteracts social stereotypes and to thereby form individuated rather than category-based impressions of targets (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). Factors that promote individuation include giving perceivers a vested interest in targets (i.e., *outcome dependency*; Neuberg & Fiske, 1987) and exhorting participants to "be accurate" (i.e., *accuracy motivation*; Neuberg, 1989). Under these motivational conditions, perceivers' stereotypic expectancies yield to richer, more accurate assessments (Hilton & Darley, 1991).

An important mechanism underlying this tendency is different information-gathering strategies (Hilton & Darley, 1991). Nonmotivated perceivers tend to confirm negative expectancies because they concentrate on nonthreatening (i.e., nondiagnostic) information when interacting with targets. In contrast, motivated perceivers tend to investigate the truth behind an expectancy, which subsequently allows it to be dispelled (Darley, Fleming, Hilton, & Swann, 1988; Fleming & Rudman, 1990).

Motivation and Evaluation of Counterstereotypical Behavior

However, as noted above, negating expectancies can backfire on women, causing them to be rejected for violating gender role prescriptions (e.g., Eagly, 1987). Although prior research has established motivational influences on the detection of atypical targets (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990), the possibility that motivation might influence reactions to atypical targets has been underinvestigated. Nonetheless, a venerable social psychological tenet is that motivation guides the interpretation of social information (Bruner, 1957; Kunda, 1990). Thus, it seemed likely that disparate motivational sets might result in different interpretations of counterstereotypical behavior.

For example, perceivers exhorted to "be accurate"—that is, *accuracy-motivated* (AM) participants (Neuberg, 1989)—might react negatively to an atypical woman. Their motivation should lead them to seek individuating information, but they might subsequently reject the individuated target for being "unfeminine" (e.g., Costrich et al., 1975). Conversely, individuals who require that a woman be atypical (specifically, to perform well on a masculine task) because their own success depends on it might respond favorably to her. That is, *outcome-dependent* (OD) perceivers (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990) might welcome her confident assurances that she is qualified and reward her for self-promotion.[1] In effect, her forthrightness should enable perceivers to form accurate, self-serving judgments. Although previous research has treated accuracy motivation and outcome dependency as functionally equivalent (i.e., as *assessment sets*; Hilton & Darley, 1991), the current research capitalized on their differences. Thus, a primary hypothesis was that perceivers' goals might moderate the negative consequences of counterstereotypical behavior. It should be noted that support for this hypothesis would underscore the need to consider differences among motivational sets when predicting not only factors that encourage individuation but also perceivers' subsequent evaluations of individuated targets.

Overview of the Present Research

The specific gender beliefs examined in the present research were that (a) women do not (and should not) self-promote and (b) men will outperform women on a task traditionally associated with men (in this instance, a computer game). The objective was to model a real-life situation in which a woman might be overlooked for a job that required "masculine" skills unless she managed an atypical impression (Glick et al., 1988). Toward that end, a simulated job interview protocol was adopted. Experiment 1 focused on perceivers' motivation as a moderator of reactions to female self-promotion. Experiment 2 allowed for a replication and extension of the motivational and gender differences found in Experiment 1 vis-à-vis reactions to female self-promotion under conditions that (a) were more controlled and (b) allowed for comparisons between male and female targets. Experiment 3 returned to the methodology of Experiment 1 but added a male contender to examine whether female self-promotion would counteract gender stereotypes in a context in which a woman directly competed against a man.

Experiment 1

Overview and Hypotheses

Participants interviewed a female target under nonmotivated (acquaintance-goal; AG) or motivated (AM vs. OD goal) condi-

[1] As used in the present research, outcome dependency takes the specific form of individuals expecting to work interdependently on a "masculine" task with a female target to gain a successful joint outcome (Neuberg & Fiske, 1987).

tions. Participants' task was to evaluate the confederate as a potential partner for a fast-paced, competitive game (a computerized version of the television game show *Jeopardy*!). Participants expected to work interdependently on the game (i.e., to decide on the answers together); thus, a qualified partner would enhance the likelihood of a successful joint outcome. In addition, the target was randomly assigned to a self-promoting or self-effacing IM condition. To test the mechanism of different information-gathering strategies, the target self-promoted (or self-effaced) when asked stereotype-relevant (SR) questions. Control questions elicited neutral responses from the target. Thus, asking SR questions of the self-promoter enhanced the likelihood that an atypical target would be detected. In sum, a 2 (target's IM strategy: self-promoting, self-effacing) × 3 (participants' interaction goal: AG, AM, OD) × 2 (participant gender) factorial design was used. To decrease the likelihood of experimenter bias, the experimenter was blind to the confederate's IM condition and the confederate was blind to participants' goal condition.

The predictions for Experiment 1 were as follows. First, motivated perceivers with the potential to discern an atypical target were expected do so, by means of an SR information-acquisition strategy (Hilton & Darley, 1991). Second, motivated perceivers were expected to rate the self-promoter as more competent than the self-effacer but to otherwise differentially evaluate the atypical target. AM participants were expected to exhibit a backlash effect by devaluing her likability and, consequently, her hireability (Carli et al., 1995). By contrast, OD perceivers were expected to rate a self-promoting woman favorably on likability and hireability dimensions, thus affording women potential relief from their self-presentational dilemma.

Would participant gender interact with these predictions? On the one hand, both men and women have demonstrated stereotypical thinking about women (e.g., Costrich et al., 1975; Goldberg, 1968; Hagen & Kahn, 1975); therefore, one might not expect any gender differences. On the other hand, women are less likely than men to advocate traditional roles for women on direct measures of sexism (e.g., Glick & Fiske, 1996; Swim, Aikin, Hall, & Hunter, 1995; Williams & Best, 1990). Moreover, competent women (Spence & Helmreich, 1972), nontraditional women (Jackson, MacCoun, & Kerr, 1987), and powerful female speakers (Carli et al., 1995) have been evaluated more favorably by women than by men. Therefore, it seemed likely that women might be more receptive to an atypical, self-promoting woman than would men.

Method

Participants

One hundred twenty participants (60 men and 60 women) participated in the study in exchange for extra course credit. Approximately 3 weeks before the experiment, participants were pretested on individual-differences measures.[2] Participants who indicated interest in further research were subsequently recruited by telephone to participate in the "Interview Skills Project."

Procedure

Participants were met individually by the experimenter and escorted to a room equipped with office furniture and a video camera. Participants were told that their task was to interview and evaluate a project "participant" (hereafter referred to as the target) whose objective was to improve her IM skills by means of a series of practice job interviews. All participants were told that the current session marked the target's first interview. Participants' permission to videotape the interview was obtained.

Perceivers' goal manipulation. Participants were randomly assigned to one of three goal conditions. AG participants were instructed to treat the interview as a warm-up exercise for the target and to conduct a relaxed, "get acquainted" interaction. AM participants were exhorted to carefully evaluate the target to ensure the project's success. OD participants were instructed to decide whether they would "hire" the target as their partner for a computerized version of *Jeopardy*! OD participants were told that the highest scoring teams would be eligible for a $50-prize drawing as part of an experimentwide competition. Thus, they stood to win $25 provided they qualified for the drawing. Similar instructions have successfully manipulated perceivers' motivational sets in past research (Darley et al., 1988; Neuberg, 1989).

To ensure that the expected interaction was as constant as possible across all conditions, the experimenter told AG and AM participants that they would play *Jeopardy*! with the target after the interview, ostensibly to assess her performance on a task. Participants' knowledge of *Jeopardy*! was probed for (all participants claimed familiarity with the game). Participants were then advised that success at the game required a strong knowledge of facts and figures, a competitive streak, the ability to perform well under pressure, and an aptitude for computer games. In reality, no participant played the game at any time.

Question selection and interview procedure. Participants preselected eight questions from a list of 16 possibilities to ask the target during the interaction. The list consisted of eight SR questions and eight control questions (selected on the basis of pretest results). The SR questions included the following: "Are you by nature a competitive person?" "Are you a good computer games player?" "Do you like to perform in pressure situations?" Control questions included the following: "Would you describe yourself as a procrastinator?" "Do you like to travel?" "Are you introverted or extraverted? If you like to read, what types of books do you prefer?" Participants were told that the questions were predesigned in order to standardize the interviews. In fact, offering participants questions afforded a test of the information-acquisition mechanism while providing control over the target's responses, which were scripted and memorized in advance (cf. Rudman & Borgida, 1995). Once participants had selected their questions, the experimenter introduced the target and seated her opposite participants at a distance of 5.25 ft (1.6 m). After instructing participants to begin the interview, the experimenter activated the camera and left the room.

Target's IM strategy manipulation. Responses to SR questions were designed to be self-promoting or self-effacing, depending on IM condition (see Appendix). The self-promoting target spoke in a direct, self-confident manner, highlighted her past accomplishments, and made internal rather than external attributions for her success. In contrast, the self-effacing target spoke more modestly of her skills and accomplishments. Her responses included disclaimers (e.g., "I'm no expert, but") and hedges (e.g., "Don't you think?"; see Carli, 1990, for a review), whereas the self-promoter's responses were less feminine and more direct (i.e., more powerful; Lakoff, 1990). To accentuate target differ-

[2] Specifically, participants' scores on a gender stereotyping measure related to IM norms and on the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick & Fiske, 1996) were collected to investigate the possibility that individual differences would moderate the predicted effects. As expected, women scored in a more egalitarian direction than did men on these measures in Experiments 1–3. However, because these measures were unrelated to the dependent variables in Experiments 1–3, they are not discussed further.

ences, the self-promoter also used more powerful nonverbal status cues than did the self-effacer (e.g., direct eye contact; Dovidio, Ellyson, Keating, Heltman, & Brown, 1988).

Following the interview, the target was dismissed. Participants then completed a series of dependent measures (described below). Participants were subsequently debriefed, compensated, and asked to sign a video release form (all participants signed). In addition, participants were informed during the debriefing that they were automatically eligible for a random prize drawing of $25, which was conducted at the end of the project. This procedure was followed in all experiments.

Dependent Measures

Following the interview, participants responded to (a) participant goal and target IM manipulation checks, (b) multiple target ratings (e.g., task aptitude, social attraction, and hireability), and (c) a social desirability measure. The number of SR questions asked by participants during interviews was obtained from interview videotapes.

Results

Manipulation Checks

Goal manipulation checks. Participants indicated on appropriately labeled 9-point scales their concern with (a) providing a relaxed atmosphere for the target, (b) forming an accurate impression of the target, (c) selecting the right partner for a computer game, and (d) scoring high on a computer game. The last two items were combined ($r = .76$, $p < .001$). Planned contrasts (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1985) revealed that AG participants had significantly more relaxed objectives than did motivated (i.e., AM and OD) participants, $t(117) = 2.39$, $p < .02$ (Ms = 7.50 vs. 6.40). In addition, motivated participants were significantly more concerned with accuracy than were AG participants, $t(117) = 2.29$, $p < .05$ (Ms = 7.54 vs. 6.43). However, only OD participants had the objective of trying to discern the best game partner and achieving a high score, $t(117) = 2.39$, $p < .001$ (Ms = 7.00 vs. 4.69 for OD vs. AM and AG participants). Thus, participants appear to have construed the motivational set instructions as desired.

Information-acquisition strategy. A planned contrast revealed that AM and OD participants selected more SR questions than did AG participants, $t(117) = 4.77$, $p < .001$ (Ms = 4.58 vs. 2.98). Thus, the hypothesis that motivated perceivers would ask more SR questions than would relatively nonmotivated perceivers was supported.[3]

Target manipulation checks. A four-item self-promotion index ($\alpha = .76$) was submitted to a 2 (target IM) × 3 (goal condition) × 2 (gender) analysis of variance (ANOVA). The index averaged participants' ratings on the following 8-point semantic differentials: self-promoting–self-effacing, confident–not confident, assertive–meek, and powerful–weak. Analysis revealed the expected IM × Goal interaction, $F(2, 108) = 5.15$, $p < .01$. As predicted, no differences were detected between the self-promoter and the self-effacer in the AG condition ($F < 1$, $M = 4.02$). However, the self-promoter received higher ratings than the self-effacer did from both AM and OD participants, both Fs(1, 108) > 8.16, ps < .01 (Ms = 6.33 vs. 5.20). A single 8-point item assessing target atypicality showed the identical IM × Goal interaction, $F(2, 108) = 5.54$, $p < .01$. Again, the self-promoter was rated as more atypical than the self-effacer by motivated participants, both Fs(1, 108) > 6.28, ps < .02 (Ms = 4.80 vs. 3.15). In contrast, AG participants reported no differences ($F < 1$, $M = 3.12$). In sum, participants' ability to detect target differences pertaining to IM style and atypicality was dependent on goal condition and the target's characteristics, as predicted. Not surprisingly, the relationship between perceived self-promotion and atypicality was positive ($r = .40$, $p < .001$).

Social desirability concerns. A social desirability index ($\alpha = .76$) was formed from three items (e.g., "How concerned were you with managing a positive impression of yourself?"). Participants responded on a 9-point scale ranging from 1 (*not at all concerned*) to 9 (*very concerned*). ANOVA results revealed no effects (all Fs < 1.77, *ns*, $M = 4.78$). Participants were also asked to indicate on a 7-point scale how certain they were that they would perform well if they played *Jeopardy*! alone (1 = *not at all certain*, 7 = *very certain*). No significant differences emerged on this measure (all Fs < 3.02, *ns*, $M = 4.06$).[4]

Target Evaluations

Indexes corresponding to evaluations of the target's task aptitude (e.g., competence), social attraction (e.g., likability), credibility, and hireability were formed on the basis of prior conceptualization and exploratory factor analyses. Scores on each measure ranged from 1 to 8, with higher scores reflecting stronger ratings for each dimension. The results reported below are based on 2 (target IM) × 3 (participant goal) × 2 (participant gender) ANOVAs.

Task aptitude ratings. A five-item index of the target's perceived task aptitude ($\alpha = .84$) was formed by combining participants' ratings of the target's competence and intelligence with their estimates of how well the target would perform (a) under pressure, (b) in a competitive situation, and (c) on a computer game. ANOVA results revealed an IM main effect, $F(1, 108) = 36.77$, $p < .001$. Overall, the self-promoter obtained higher ratings than did the self-effacer (Ms = 6.74 vs. 5.83). No other effects emerged on this measure (all Fs < 2.81, *ns*).

Social attraction ratings. A four-item social attraction index ($\alpha = .82$) was formed from ratings of the target's likability, target's popularity, target's friendliness, and participants' desire to extend the relationship. Figure 1 (top half) shows an unexpected IM × Goal × Gender interaction for this measure, $F(2, 108) = 4.57$, $p < .05$. As can be seen, men's responses showed the predicted IM × Goal interaction, $F(2, 108) = 5.56$, $p < .01$. That is, AM men rated the self-effacer higher than the self-promoter (Ms = 6.48 vs. 5.54), whereas OD men preferred the self-promoter (Ms = 6.80 vs. 5.73), both Fs(1, 108) > 4.80, ps < .05. AG men showed no differences in their ratings ($F < 1$, $M = 6.11$). In contrast, women did not show the IM × Goal interaction ($F < 1$). Instead, women rated the self-effacer higher than the self-promoter irrespective of goal condition, $F(1, 108) = 10.56$, $p < .01$ (Ms = 6.33 vs. 5.53).

[3] The means differed marginally for the OD and AM groups (Ms = 5.03 and 4.13, respectively, $p = .06$).

[4] The results of these two measures were similar for Experiments 1–3; hence, they are not discussed further.

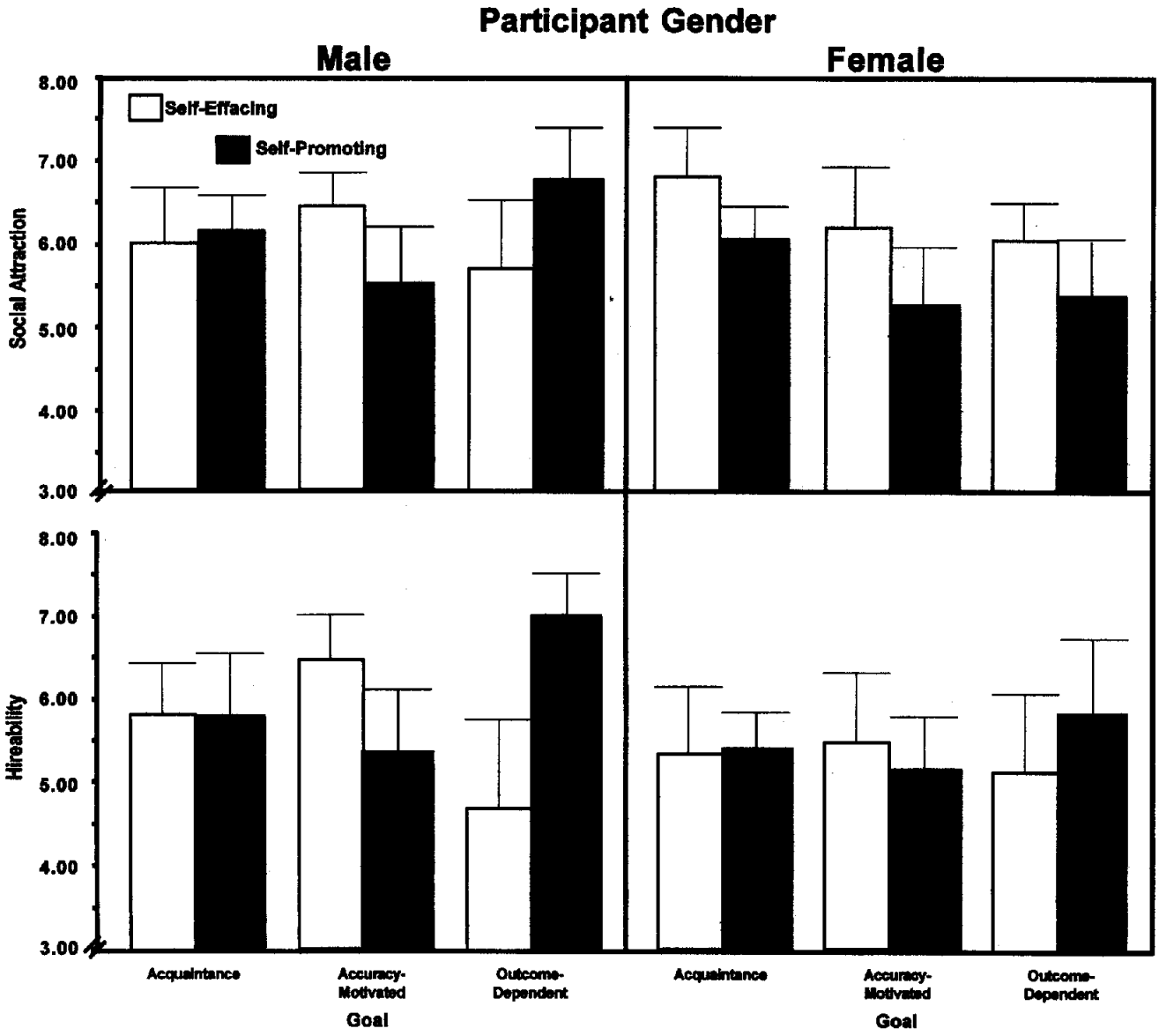

Figure 1. Social attraction and hireability ratings as a function of participant gender, the target's impression-management strategy, and participant goal (Experiment 1). Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Additional analyses examining gender differences within each goal condition were conducted. The OD condition showed an IM × Gender interaction, $F(1, 108) = 8.59, p < .01$. Men rated the self-promoter higher than women did, $F(1, 108) = 11.81$, $p < .001$ (Ms = 6.80 vs. 5.35). OD men and women did not differ significantly in their ratings of the self-effacer ($F < 1$, Ms = 5.73 vs. 6.03). The AM and AG conditions did not show this interaction (both $Fs < 2.28$, ns). Instead, the AM condition showed a main effect for IM such that the self-effacer was preferred over the self-promoter, $F(1, 108) = 9.82$, $p < .01$ (Ms = 6.33 vs. 5.39). No reliable effects emerged for AG participants (all $Fs < 2.28$, ns, Ms = 6.41 vs. 6.11 for the self-effacer and self-promoter, respectively).

Analysis of a single item assessing the target's physical attractiveness revealed no differences across conditions (all $Fs < 2.23$, ns, $M = 6.23$). In addition, analysis of a two-item credibility index (credible–not credible and honest–dishonest; $r = .72$, $p < .01$) revealed no significant differences across conditions (all $Fs < 1.55$, ns, $M = 5.77$).

Hireability ratings. The hireability index ($\alpha = .87$) averaged three items assessing the likelihood that participants would hire the target (a) for a job that required performing under pressure, (b) as a partner for a computer game, and (c) as a partner for a computerized version of *Jeopardy*! Figure 1 (bottom half) shows an unexpected three-way interaction for this measure, $F(2, 108) = 4.13$, $p < .05$. As can be seen, men showed the predicted IM × Goal interaction, $F(2, 108) = 14.03$, $p < .001$. AM men favored hiring the self-effacer over the self-

promoter (*M*s = 6.45 vs. 5.33), whereas OD men preferred the self-promoter (*M*s = 7.00 vs. 4.65), both *F*s(1, 108) > 5.65, *p*s < .02. AG men showed no differences (*F* < 1, both *M*s = 5.78). For women, no effects emerged on this measure (all *F*s < 1.25, *ns*, *M*s = 5.48 vs. 5.33 for the self-promoter and self-effacer, respectively). Thus, women did not reject the self-promoter in the AM condition but neither did they prefer hiring her in the OD condition when it would have benefited them to do so (i.e., increased their chances of winning a prize).

Again, analyses examining gender differences within each goal condition were conducted. The OD condition showed an IM × Gender interaction, $F(1, 108) = 5.95$, $p < .02$. As with social attraction ratings, OD men rated the self-promoter higher than women did, $F(1, 108) = 5.96$, $p < .02$ (*M*s = 7.00 vs. 5.85). OD men and women did not differ in their ratings of the self-effacer (*F* < 1, *M*s = 4.65 vs. 5.13). This interaction was nonsignificant in the AM and AG conditions (both *F*s < 1.45). Instead, the AM condition showed a main effect for IM, $F(1, 108) = 4.77$, $p < .05$. Overall, the self-effacer was rated higher than the self-promoter (*M*s = 5.98 vs. 5.25). No reliable effects emerged for AG participants (all *F*s < 1.36, *ns*, *M*s = 5.61 vs. 5.57 for the self-promoter and self-effacer, respectively).

Discussion

Consistent with current theoretical formulations outlining the conditions under which expectancies, including stereotypes, are likely to be disconfirmed (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990; Hilton & Darley, 1991), it was hypothesized that detecting an atypical target would depend on participants' information-acquisition strategy, which in turn would be a function of goal condition. Indeed, AG participants selected fewer SR questions to ask during the interview than did motivated participants. As a result, AG participants failed to detect target differences in IM style and atypicality (and reported no differences in social attraction and hireability), whereas motivated participants were sensitive to target disparities. Because target differentiation depended on both participants' motivational set and the target's self-presentational style, Experiment 1 supports recent theoretical advances emphasizing the influence of perceivers' goals and targets' characteristics on individuated impression formation (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990; Hilton & Darley, 1991).

In line with IM theory, self-promotion led to higher task aptitude ratings (Jones & Pittman, 1982). Indeed, this was true for both motivated and AG participants, even though participants in the latter condition asked a minimal number of SR questions. The fact that a modicum of self-promotion enhanced task aptitude ratings underscores its potential as a counteractant to gender stereotypes for women in performance settings. However, substantially more self-promotion was required to increase hireability ratings (on the part of OD men), consistent with research suggesting that women must manage a highly atypical impression to be considered suitable for male-dominated jobs (Glick et al., 1988).

But what of the backlash effect incurred by atypical women? OD participants were expected to react more favorably to the self-promoting target than were AM participants. Surprisingly, this prediction was upheld only by men (not women). OD men favored the self-promoter on both social attraction and hireability ratings, whereas AM men preferred the self-effacer. In contrast, motivated women uniformly rated the self-effacer as more socially attractive than the self-promoter. Moreover, women failed to prefer hiring the self-promoter even when they had a vested interest in her competence. Thus, the hypothesis that outcome dependency might afford women relief from their self-presentational dilemma was supported for male interviewers but not for female interviewers.

Additional analyses showed that OD men rated the self-promoter higher than women did on both the social attraction and hireability ratings. These gender differences were surprising for at least two reasons. First, although women have discriminated against atypical women in the past (Costrich et al., 1975; Hagen & Kahn, 1975), much of this research predates sociocultural changes (e.g., the Women's Movement) that should forecast a warm reception for the self-promoting target, especially on the part of other women. Second, the finding contradicts evidence suggesting that women are more receptive to powerful women speakers than are men (Carli, 1990; Carli et al., 1995). However, in that line of research, targets were speaking persuasively about topics other than themselves. The present results suggest it may still be problematic for women to speak directly and assertively about their own skills and qualifications, especially in the presence of other women, despite the fact that doing so decreases their chances of being negatively stereotyped (Mathison, 1986; Powers & Zuroff, 1988; Wiley & Eskilson, 1985).

Experiment 2 was conducted to replicate and extend the motivational and gender differences found in Experiment 1 vis-à-vis reactions to female self-promotion. A second aim was to investigate whether a self-effacing man would suffer a backlash effect for counterstereotypical behavior. The primary differences between Experiments 1 and 2 were as follows. First, Experiment 2 added a male target to allow for comparisons between self-promoting and self-effacing male and female targets. Second, Experiment 2 used videotaped targets to ensure that all participants received the same information. Third, Experiment 2 used a different female target to enhance the generalizability of the findings. It was predicted that the self-effacing male target would suffer decreased task aptitude and hireability ratings compared with self-promoters (as did the self-effacing female target in Experiment 1). In addition, because both men and women may be socially censured for engaging in counternormative behavior, it seemed likely that the male target might suffer lower social attraction ratings, compared with normative targets (e.g., Costrich et al., 1975; Miller et al., 1992).

Experiment 2

Method

Participants

One hundred sixty-three participants (82 men, 81 women) were recruited in exchange for extra credit in an introductory psychology course.

Procedure

The cover story was identical to that of Experiment 1, with the exception that participants were told they would view a videotape of a participant in the "Interview Skills Project" (again, ostensibly to establish

baseline evaluations) rather than perform the interview themselves. Participants were scheduled in groups of 5–8 in a room equipped with an overhead CRT monitor and a VCR. Groups were randomly assigned to either an AM or OD goal condition.[5] The AM and OD goal manipulations were identical to those of Experiment 1, with the exception that participants expected to return to the lab to play the game. Finally, participants were assigned to view a male or female target who was either self-promoting or self-effacing. Thus, a 2 (participant gender) × 2 (participant goal: AM, OD) × 2 (target gender) × 2 (target IM strategy: self-promoting, self-effacing) between-subjects factorial design was used.

Stimulus materials. Each videotape consisted of the five SR questions most commonly asked by participants in Experiment 1 and three neutral questions (so as to avoid "heavy-handed" presentations).[6] Both the male and female targets used the female target's scripted responses from Experiment 1. Each question appeared on a blue screen for 10 s and was followed by a full-body view of the target, who responded to the question in either a self-promoting, self-effacing, or neutral manner. Targets were seated in an office environment and wore clothing suitable for a job interview. The average length of the videotapes was 6 min.

Dependent measures. The primary dependent measures were the task aptitude, social attraction, and hireability scales used in Experiment 1 (αs = .89, .82, and .88, respectively). Participants also responded to the target and goal manipulation checks used in Experiment 1.[7] After completing the dependent measures, participants were debriefed and compensated.

Results and Discussion

Results are based on 2 (participant gender) × 2 (participant goal: AM, OD) × 2 (target gender) × 2 (target IM strategy: self-promoting, self-effacing) ANOVAs with appropriate contrasts.

Task Aptitude Ratings

As in Experiment 1, self-promoters were perceived as more qualified than were self-effacers, $F(1, 147) = 112.65, p < .001$ (Ms = 6.39 vs. 4.21). Figure 2 shows an IM × Target Gender × Goal interaction for this measure, $F(1, 147) = 9.65, p < .01$. As can be seen, the OD condition showed an IM × Target Gender interaction, $F(1, 147) = 8.35, p < .01$, whereas the AM condition did not, $F(1, 147) = 2.76, ns$. In the AM condition, self-promoters were rated higher than self-effacers, $F(1, 147) = 109.98, p < .001$ (Ms = 6.28 vs. 3.89). In the OD condition, the self-effacing man was rated higher than the self-effacing woman, $F(1, 147) = 21.09, p < .001$ (Ms = 5.30 vs. 3.82). In contrast, the self-promoting man and woman were rated similarly ($F < 1$, Ms = 6.59 vs. 6.39). This finding underscores the importance of self-promotion for women who compete with men for "masculine" jobs. By virtue of his gender, the male target was perceived by OD participants as better qualified than the woman unless she explicitly counteracted this perception (Glick et al., 1988; Heilman, Martell, & Simon, 1988).

Social Attraction Ratings

Two 3-way interactions emerged: an IM × Goal × Participant Gender effect, $F(1, 147) = 7.59, p < .01$, and an IM × Participant Gender × Target Gender effect, $F(1, 147) = 13.35, p < .001$. To assess whether Experiment 1's findings were replicated, I first conducted analyses within the female target condition. Figure 3 (bottom half) illustrates these results. As in Experiment 1, an IM × Goal × Participant Gender interaction emerged, $F(1, 147) = 8.08, p < .01$. Again, men's responses showed an IM × Goal interaction, $F(1, 147) = 13.34, p < .001$. In line with Experiment 1, AM men rated the self-effacer higher than the self-promoter (Ms = 4.47 vs. 3.48), whereas OD men rated the self-promoter higher than the self-effacer (Ms = 4.83 vs. 3.37), both Fs$(1, 147) > 4.35$, ps $< .04$. In contrast, women rated the self-effacer higher than the self-promoter across both goal conditions, $F(1, 147) = 8.58, p < .01$ (Ms = 4.12 vs. 3.07). No other effects emerged for women (all Fs < 1). Thus, female self-promotion was particularly costly when evaluators were female or outcome-independent. These findings replicate the pattern of Experiment 1's results.

The top half of Figure 3 illustrates the results for the male target condition. First, an IM × Participant Gender interaction was revealed, $F(1, 147) = 6.59, p < .02$. Simple effects showed that women preferred the self-promoting male target to the self-effacer, $F(1, 147) = 21.32, p < .001$ (Ms = 5.42 vs. 3.97). In contrast, men showed no significant preferences (Ms = 4.55 vs. 4.31 for the self-promoter and self-effacer, respectively). Second, an IM × Goal interaction was revealed, $F(1, 147) = 9.12$, $p < .01$. Simple effects showed that OD participants preferred the self-promoter to the self-effacer, $F(1, 147) = 21.32, p < .001$ (Ms = 5.42 vs. 3.97). In contrast, AM participants did not differ in their ratings of the male target ($F < 1$, Ms = 4.56 vs. 4.45 for the self-promoter and self-effacer, respectively). Thus, male self-effacement was particularly costly when evaluators were female or OD participants.

Analyses examining whether Experiment 1's gender differences were replicated were also conducted. Again, the IM × Participant Gender interaction was tested within the female target condition in both the OD and AM goal conditions. As in Experiment 1, this interaction was significant only in the OD condition, $F(1, 147) = 16.58, p < .001$ (not the AM condition, $F < 1$). Simple effects showed that, as in Experiment 1, OD men liked the self-promoting female target more than women

[5] The videotape methodology precluded the AG condition, which was primarily included in Experiment 1 to assess the effect of motivational set on information acquisition and, subsequently, on the ability to detect a counterstereotypical target. The present experiment was more concerned with the effects of participant gender and goal on reactions to atypical targets, while controlling for differential information acquisition.

[6] The five SR questions were (a) "Are you by nature a competitive person?" (b) "Do you like having to perform in a pressure situation?" (c) "Are you a good computer games player?" (d) "Have you ever blown an exam because you panicked when you realized you were running out of time?" and (e) "Do you like to play knowledge games that test your skill and memory under time pressure (e.g., *Trivial Pursuit*)?" The three neutral questions were (a) "Have you traveled much?" (b) "Are you introverted or extraverted; and if you like to read, what kinds of books do you prefer?" and (c) "What are your goals after college?"

[7] These results followed those of Experiment 1 and need not be presented in detail here (i.e., self-promoting targets were perceived as more self-promoting than self-effacing targets; OD participants were more concerned with finding a suitable partner and scoring well on the game than were AM participants).

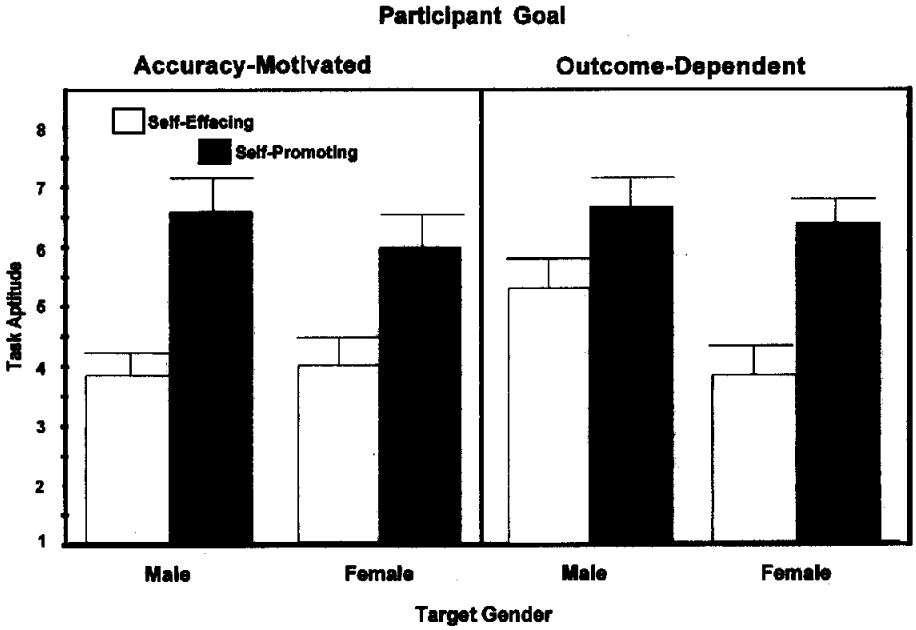

Figure 2. Task aptitude ratings as a function of participant goal, targets' impression-management strategy, and target gender (Experiment 2). Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

did, $F(1, 147) = 13.47$, $p < .001$ (Ms = 4.83 vs. 3.18). By contrast, OD women liked the self-effacing female target more than men did, $F(1, 147) = 4.47$, $p < .05$ (Ms = 4.36 vs. 3.37). This latter result differs from Experiment 1's finding and underscores the possibility that men and women may prefer different female IM styles. In the AM condition, only a main effect for IM emerged, $F(1, 147) = 6.43$, $p < .02$. As in Experiment 1, the female self-effacer was liked more than the self-promoter (Ms = 4.17 vs. 3.23).

Analogous tests for the male target showed no IM × Participant Gender interaction in the OD condition, $F(1, 147) = 1.15$, *ns*. Instead, OD participants uniformly preferred the self-promoter to the self-effacer, $F(1, 147) = 21.16$, $p < .001$ (Ms = 5.37 vs. 3.80). By contrast, the AM condition did show this interaction, $F(1, 147) = 6.52$, $p < .02$. Simple effects showed that AM women liked the self-promoting male target more than men did, $F(1, 147) = 4.76$, $p < .04$ (Ms = 5.15 vs. 4.11). However, male and female AM participants did not differ in their ratings of the self-effacing male target, $F(1, 147) = 2.13$, *ns* (Ms = 4.87 vs. 4.17).

Taken together, these findings suggest that women's social attraction ratings may have been based more on "interpersonal rules" than men's were (i.e., self-promotion and self-effacement were viewed most favorably when they were gender normative). In contrast, men's ratings appear to have depended more on motivational set (i.e., self-promotion was viewed most favorably when targets were instrumental for obtaining a successful outcome).

Additional analyses compared overall social attraction ratings for male and female targets. As expected, the man was liked more when he self-promoted versus self-effaced, $F(1, 147) = 11.91$, $p < .001$ (Ms = 4.95 vs. 4.13). In addition, the self-promoting man was liked more than the self-promoting woman, $F(1, 147) = 26.57$, $p < .001$ (Ms = 3.71 vs. 4.95). Thus, a normative male target was more socially attractive than male or female targets who deviated from gender role prescriptions. However, the modest man was liked more than the self-assured woman, $F(1, 147) = 7.29$, $p < .01$ (Ms = 4.13 vs. 3.71). Finally, the self-promoting woman and the self-effacing man were rated similarly to the self-effacing woman, both Fs < 2.18, *ns* (Ms = 3.71, 4.13, and 4.06, respectively).

Hireability Ratings

Overall, self-promoters received higher ratings than did self-effacers, $F(1, 147) = 43.21$, $p < .001$ (Ms = 5.33 vs. 3.81). Figure 4 shows the results of a four-way interaction on this measure, $F(1, 147) = 5.83$, $p < .02$. To assess whether Experiment 1's findings were replicated, I first conducted analyses within the female target condition. Figure 4 (bottom half) illustrates these results. As in Experiment 1, an IM × Goal × Participant Gender interaction emerged, $F(1, 147) = 9.72$, $p < .01$. Again, men's responses showed an IM × Goal interaction such that AM men rated the self-effacer higher than the self-promoter (Ms = 4.94 vs. 3.15), whereas OD men rated the self-promoter higher than the self-effacer (Ms = 6.22 vs. 3.67), both Fs(1, 147) > 5.35, ps < .04; interaction $F(1, 147) = 24.46$, $p < .001$. In contrast, women showed no effects (all Fs < 1, Ms = 3.93 vs. 3.62 for the self-promoter and self-effacer). Thus, men favored the female self-promoter when they were in the OD condition, whereas women showed no preferences—a pattern that replicates the findings from Experiment 1.

The top half of Figure 4 illustrates the results for the male target condition. Analysis showed only main effects for target IM and participants' goal condition. Overall, the male self-promoter received higher ratings than did the self-effacer, $F(1, 147)$

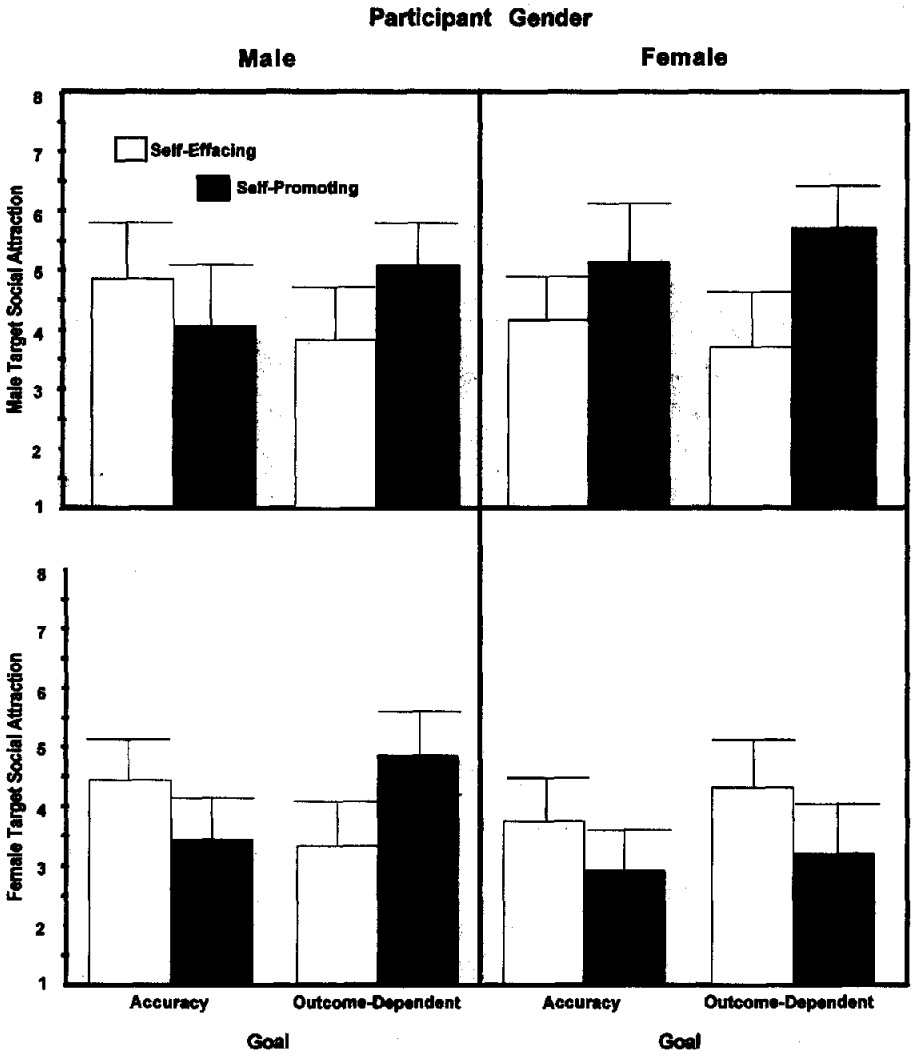

Figure 3. Social attraction ratings as a function of participant gender, target's impression-management strategy, target gender, and participant gender (Experiment 2). Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

= 55.17, $p < .001$ (Ms = 6.05 vs. 3.73). In addition, OD participants were more likely to hire the male target than were AM participants, $F(1, 147) = 14.57$, $p < .001$ (Ms = 5.50 vs. 4.32). No other effects emerged (all $Fs < 1$). Thus, self-promotion and outcome dependency benefited the male target irrespective of participant gender.

Analyses examining a replication of Experiment 1's gender differences were also conducted. Again, the IM × Participant Gender interaction was tested within the female target condition in both the OD and AM goal conditions. As in Experiment 1, this interaction was significant in the OD condition, $F(1, 147) = 9.46$, $p < .01$. Simple effects showed that OD men rated the self-promoting female target higher than women did, $F(1, 147) = 14.24$, $p = .001$ (Ms = 6.22 vs. 4.00). By contrast, OD men and women did not differ in their ratings of the self-effacing female target ($F < 1$, Ms = 3.15 vs. 3.54). These results replicate those of Experiment 1. However, no significant effects showed in the AM condition (all $Fs < 2.03$; the IM × Participant interaction F). Overall, the self-effacer was not rated higher than the self-promoter, as she was in Experiment 1 (Ms = 4.43 vs. 3.73). Analogous tests for the male target showed no interactions in the OD or AM condition (both $Fs < 1$). Instead, OD participants uniformly preferred the self-promoter to the self-effacer (Ms = 6.67 vs. 4.33) as did AM participants (Ms = 5.46 vs. 3.12), both $Fs(1, 147) > 27.34$, $ps < .001$.

Additional analyses compared overall hireability ratings for male and female targets. As expected, the man was more hireable when he self-promoted versus self-effaced, $F(1, 147) = 4.76$, $p < .05$ (Ms = 4.57 vs. 3.89). In addition, the self-promoting man was favored over the self-promoting woman, $F(1, 147) = 8.85$, $p < .01$ (Ms = 6.05 vs. 4.57). Thus, a normative male target was more hireable than male or female targets who deviated from gender role prescriptions. However, the self-promoting woman was rated as more hireable than the self-effacing man and woman, both $Fs(1, 147) > 4.78$, $ps < .05$ (Ms = 4.57, 3.73, and 3.89, respectively). Interestingly, this

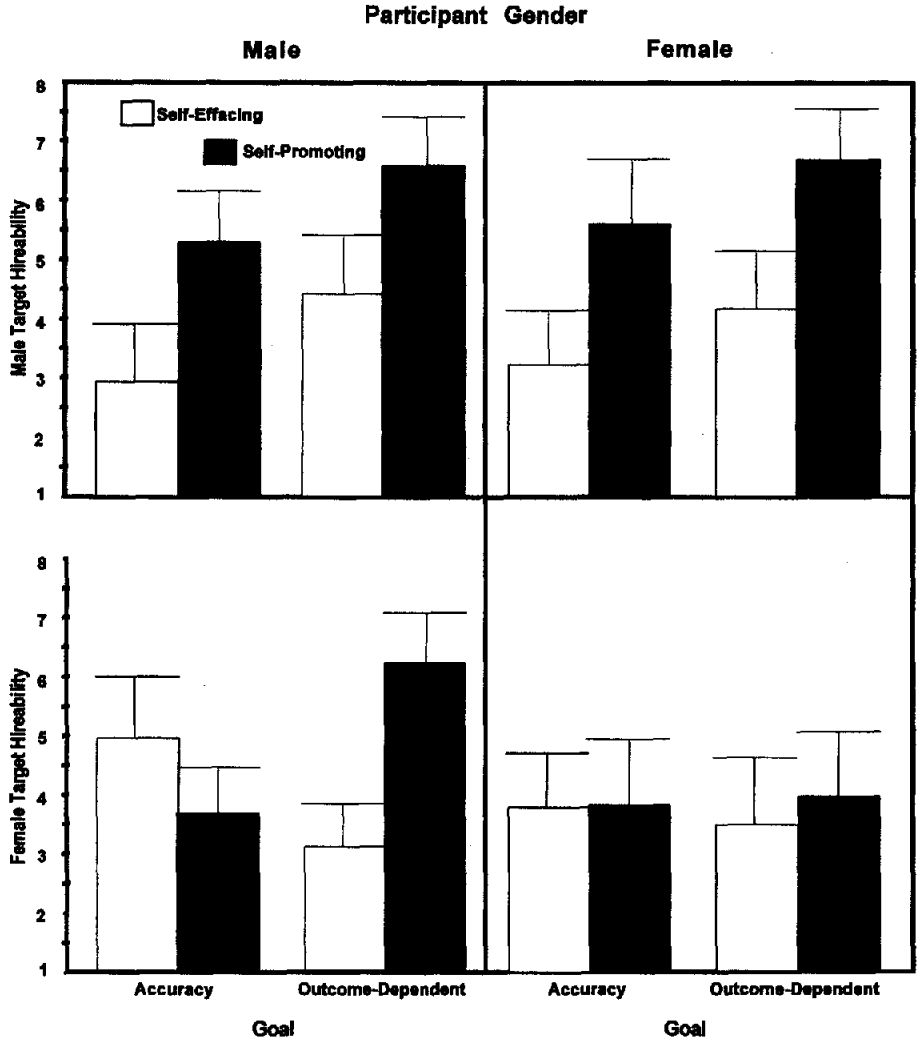

Figure 4. Hireability ratings as a function of participant gender, target's impression-management strategy, target gender, and participant gender (Experiment 2). Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

was true despite the fact that the modest man was liked more than the self-confident woman. Finally, hireability ratings for the self-effacing male and female targets were not significantly different ($F < 1$, Ms = 3.73 vs. 3.89). Thus, the modest man was devalued in comparison to self-promoting targets but not in comparison to a modest woman.

In sum, the focal findings of Experiment 1 were replicated in Experiment 2. As in Experiment 1, OD men found the self-promoting woman more likable and hireable than the self-effacing woman. In addition, they responded more favorably to her than did AM men. In general, women were less receptive to female self-promotion—finding the strong, self-confident woman less socially attractive than the self-effacer in both goal conditions, and less hireable than did men in the OD condition. Together, these findings suggest that reactions to female self-promotion may be moderated by motivation for male (but not female) evaluators. Because evaluators are often OD and composed of a mixed-sex audience, female competitors in male-dominated fields may be faced with the difficult task of having to convince men (and women) of their qualifications without "turning off" women. The task aptitude results stress the utility of female self-promotion for leveling the playing field when women compete against self-assured men. However, the negative reactions to "masterful" women show that engaging in self-promotion incurs the risk of social censure—without countervailing gains in hireability ratings—unless evaluators are OD men.

In general, motivation is an important key to forming individuated impressions (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). However, as the findings of Experiments 1 and 2 demonstrate, motivational sets are not interchangeable. Although accuracy motivation and outcome dependency both encouraged individuation, they resulted in distinct consequences for an atypical target. The same behaviors were viewed positively or negatively, depending on perceivers' goals (and gender). Thus, the results of Experiments 1 and 2 underscore the necessity of delineating the factors likely

to moderate reactions to an individuated target, as well as those likely to lead to individuation (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990).

Moreover, motivational influences may be necessary but insufficient predictors of an atypical target's outcomes. An equally important factor is the social context surrounding the interaction (e.g., Higgins & McCann, 1984; Taylor, Fiske, Etcoff, & Ruderman, 1978). Because women do not compete for rewards in a vacuum, and given the double standard inherent in IM tactics, it was important to investigate the risks and benefits of self-promotion in a context in which a self-promoting woman directly competed against a self-promoting man.

Experiment 3 was designed to fulfill this objective. It also allowed for further replication of Experiment 1 and 2's gender differences found in reactions to a self-promoting woman. It seemed likely that, given a choice between two self-promoters, participants might select the man over the woman as a game partner. The hypothesized mechanisms underlying this prediction were straightforward. First, men tend to be perceived as more competent than women, despite objectively equal qualifications, especially if the task is considered masculine (Berger, Webster, Ridgeway, & Rosenholtz, 1986; Heilman, 1983; Porter & Geis, 1981). Second, the self-promoting woman might be viewed as less normative (i.e., "masculine") and hence less socially attractive than the self-promoting man (Eagly et al., 1992; Fiske, Bersoff, Borgida, Deaux, & Heilman, 1991). The results of Experiments 1 and 2 suggested that this might be particularly true for female interviewers. Finally, the experiment allowed for a second look at the backlash effect for a self-effacing man. As in Experiment 2, it was predicted that he would be viewed as less qualified and hireable than the self-promoting targets, and less socially attractive than his self-promoting male counterpart. Thus, it seemed likely that he would not be chosen as a game partner when paired with either self-promoting male or female targets.

Experiment 3

Overview

Experiment 3's method conformed to Experiment 1's, with the following exceptions. First, participants interviewed two candidates (a male and a female target) prior to selecting one as their computer game partner. Experiment 3's male target differed from Experiment 2's; the female target was the same as Experiment 1's. Second, participants' goal condition was restricted to outcome dependency because this condition evoked the most interesting gender differences in Experiments 1 and 2. Third, the male target was assigned to self-promote or self-efface, whereas the female target always self-promoted. Thus, participants' comparisons were between (a) a self-promoting woman versus a self-promoting man or (b) a self-promoting woman versus a self-effacing man. In sum, Experiment 3 constituted a 2 (male target's IM strategy: self-promoting, self-effacing) × 2 (participant gender) × 2 (target gender) mixed design, with repeated measures on the last factor.

Method

Participants

Forty volunteers (19 men and 21 women) were recruited to participate individually in the "Interview Skills Project" in exchange for course credit.

Procedure

Participants conducted inaugural interviews of 2 hypothetical participants in the "Interview Skills Project" under OD instructions. That is, participants expected to select one candidate as their *Jeopardy*! partner, with whom they would attempt to qualify for a cash prize drawing. Participants interviewed a self-promoting woman and a man who was randomly assigned to self-promote or self-efface. The order of the interviews was counterbalanced. As in Experiment 1, participants preselected eight interview questions from 16 alternatives. To control for potentially different information-acquisition strategies (Fleming & Rudman, 1990), the experimenter instructed participants to use the same question set for both interviews (all participants complied). The number of SR questions asked by participants was again recorded from interview videotapes, which were obtained with participants' permission.

Following Experiment 1, the male target's responses to SR questions were designed to be self-promoting or self-effacing, depending on IM condition (see Appendix). Responses to control questions were designed to be neutral. The male target also used nonverbal status cues to enhance disparities between IM conditions. The female target used Experiment 1 and 2's script.[8]

Following each interview, participants completed dependent measures identical to Experiment 1 and 2's, except where noted. When both interviews were completed, participants awarded the male or female target with the game partnership. They were then debriefed and compensated.

Results

Dependent measures were submitted to 2 (male target's IM strategy: self-promoting, self-effacing) × 2 (participant gender) × 2 (target gender) ANOVAs, with repeated measures on the last factor. Interview order was counterbalanced across experimental conditions to control for order effects. Order was not expected to be a significant factor or to interact with other variables. A preliminary analysis upheld this expectation (all Fs < 2.26, ns). Interview order was therefore excluded from subsequent analyses.

Manipulation Checks

Target manipulation checks. Separate 8-point self-promotion indexes were formed for the male and female targets (αs = .77 and .82, respectively). ANOVA results revealed an IM × Target Gender interaction, $F(1, 36) = 28.34$, $p < .001$. As expected, the self-promoting male target was perceived as more self-promoting than was the self-effacer, $F(1, 64) = 23.77$, $p < .01$ (Ms = 6.25 vs. 4.98). In contrast, the female target's

[8] A postexperiment check on the equivalence of the male and female targets' scripts was conducted. Respondents ($N = 180$) rated either the male or the female responses to SR questions on ten 7-point semantic differential scales. Factor analyses revealed two factors. The positive index consisted of good, strong, confident, intelligent, and self-promoting ratings ($\alpha = .89$). The negative index consisted of conceited, intimidating, insincere, dishonest, and arrogant ratings ($\alpha = .83$). The indexes were submitted to 2 (IM) × 2 (target gender) × 2 (participant gender) ANOVAs. Analyses revealed higher positive *and* negative ratings for self-promoting versus self-effacing responses, both Fs$(1, 172) > 79.54$, ps $< .001$. In addition, the female script received higher positive ratings than did the male script, $F(1, 172) = 22.41$, $p < .001$ (Ms = 4.50 vs. 3.99). The negative index showed no significant differences for the male and female target, $F(1, 172) = 2.07$, $p = .15$ (Ms = 3.53 vs. 3.47).

ratings did not differ as a function of the male target's IM condition, $F(1, 64) = 1.51$, *ns* ($M = 6.24$).

In addition, 9-point atypicality indexes were formed from three items assessing how atypical, unusual, and surprising the targets were, combined with a rating of masculinity (femininity) for the female (male) targets (male and female target αs = .74 and .76, respectively). Planned contrasts revealed that the self-effacing man was perceived as more atypical than the self-promoting man, $t(38) = 2.24$, $p < .05$ (Ms = 4.28 vs. 3.41). In addition, the self-promoting woman was perceived as more atypical when she was paired with the self-effacing versus the self-promoting man, $t(38) = 2.97$, $p < .01$ (Ms = 4.34 vs. 2.69). Thus, it appears that the man was the standard to which the woman was compared in that she was assimilated (i.e., viewed as typical) or contrasted (i.e., viewed as atypical), depending on his self-presentational style.

Information-acquisition strategy. The number of SR questions asked during the interviews was submitted to a 2 (male target) × 2 (participant gender) ANOVA. No significant differences emerged on this measure (all Fs < 2.76). Overall, participants asked an average of 5.46 SR questions of each target.

Target Evaluations

Dependent measures were formed separately for the male and female targets and submitted to 2 (male target) × 2 (participant gender) × 2 (target gender) ANOVAs. The primary indexes were (with male target and female target αs in parentheses): task aptitude (.85, .86), social attraction (.82, .76), and hireability (.94, .90). Scores on each index ranged from 1 to 8, with higher scores reflecting higher ratings for each dimension. The results of these indexes are shown in Figure 5.

Task aptitude ratings. Figure 5 (black bars) depicts a three-way interaction on this measure, $F(1, 36) = 5.35$, $p < .05$. Simple effects revealed a Participant Gender × Target Gender interaction when the male target self-promoted, $F(1, 17) = 4.75$, $p < .05$. Women rated the self-promoting man higher than the self-promoting woman, $t(9) = 2.21$, $p < .05$ (Ms = 7.20 vs. 6.30), whereas men rated the self-promoters similarly, $t(8) < 1$ ($M = 6.41$). Thus, the self-promoting man was predictably rated as more competent than the woman, but only by female interviewers. When the male target self-effaced, there was no comparable interaction, $F(1, 19) = 1.13$, $p = .30$. As expected, participants rated the self-promoting woman higher than the self-effacing man, $F(1, 19) = 29.95$, $p < .001$ (Ms = 6.53 vs. 4.33).

Social attraction ratings. Figure 5 (white bars) shows a Participant Gender × Target Gender interaction on this measure, $F(1, 36) = 5.09$, $p < .05$. Simple effects revealed that women preferred the male target over the female target, $t(20) = 2.97$, $p < .05$ (Ms = 6.70 vs. 6.08). For men, no differences emerged, $t(19) < 1$ ($M = 6.09$). Thus, the female target received predictably lower social attraction ratings than did the man, but only from female evaluators. A planned contrast revealed no differences between the self-promoting and the self-effacing man, $t(38) < 1$ (Ms = 6.53 and 6.34, respectively).[9]

Unique to Experiment 3, a four-item index of dominance was constructed from 8-point semantic differential scales (dominant–submissive, threatening–nonthreatening, warm–cold, arrogant–not arrogant; mean $\alpha = .81$). Results revealed a Male Target × Target Gender interaction, $F(1, 36) = 8.86$, $p < .01$. Simple effects showed that the female target was rated higher than the self-effacing man, $t(20) = 3.04$, $p < .01$ (Ms = 5.15 vs. 4.92). In contrast, the male and female self-promoters were rated similarly, $t(18) < 1$ ($M = 5.13$).

Hireability ratings. Figure 5 (hatched bars) shows a three-way interaction for this measure, $F(1, 36) = 4.41$, $p < .05$. Simple effects showed a Participant Gender × Target Gender interaction when the man self-promoted, $F(1, 17) = 5.32$, $p < .05$. Women favored hiring the self-promoting man over the woman, $t(9) = 5.64$, $p < .001$ (Ms = 6.94 vs. 5.08). In contrast, men rated the self-promoters similarly, $t(8) = 1.38$, *ns* (Ms = 6.31 vs. 5.64 for the man and woman). When the male target self-effaced, the Participant Gender × Target Gender interaction was nonsignificant ($F < 1$). Instead, the woman was rated predictably higher than the man $F(1, 19) = 21.45$, $p < .001$ (Ms = 6.42 vs. 5.02).

Game partner selection. When choosing between the self-effacing man and the self-promoting woman, participants predictably favored the woman, selecting her 9 times out of 10 (men) or 9 times out of 11 (women). When choosing between two self-promoters, men selected evenly across target gender, choosing a man 4 times and a woman 5 times out of 9. In contrast, women uniformly awarded the self-promoting man the partnership, choosing him 10 times out of 10. Nonparametric tests analyzing partner choice as a function of the male target's IM tactic and participant gender revealed significant discrepancies from expected cell frequencies for both men, $\chi^2(1, N = 19) = 4.55$, $p < .05$, and women, $\chi^2(1, N = 21) = 14.63$, $p < .01$.

Discussion

Results showed that women (but not men) found the self-promoting woman less competent, less socially attractive, and subsequently less hireable than the self-promoting man. Moreover, women uniformly selected the self-promoting man as their partner over the self-promoting woman, whereas men selected approximately equally between them. Thus, diminished competence and diminished social attraction played predictable roles in the rejection of the self-promoting woman, but only when women were the evaluators. Although the self-promoting woman was not perceived as more dominant, credible, or atypical than the self-promoting man, women reacted more favorably to male versus female positive self-statements.

Overall, atypicality and dominance ratings proved to be unrelated to partner selection for the self-promoting woman. Although it was conceivable that a self-promoting woman would be perceived as particularly "masculine" when competing against a man, this was not the case. Instead, she was perceived as particularly atypical and dominant when the male target self-effaced, which was precisely when she was likely to be hired (Glick et al., 1988).

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[9] A single-item measure of physical attractiveness revealed no significant differences across experimental conditions (all Fs < 2.02, M = 5.24). In addition, no significant differences were found for an index ascertaining target credibility (all Fs < 2.10, M = 6.04).

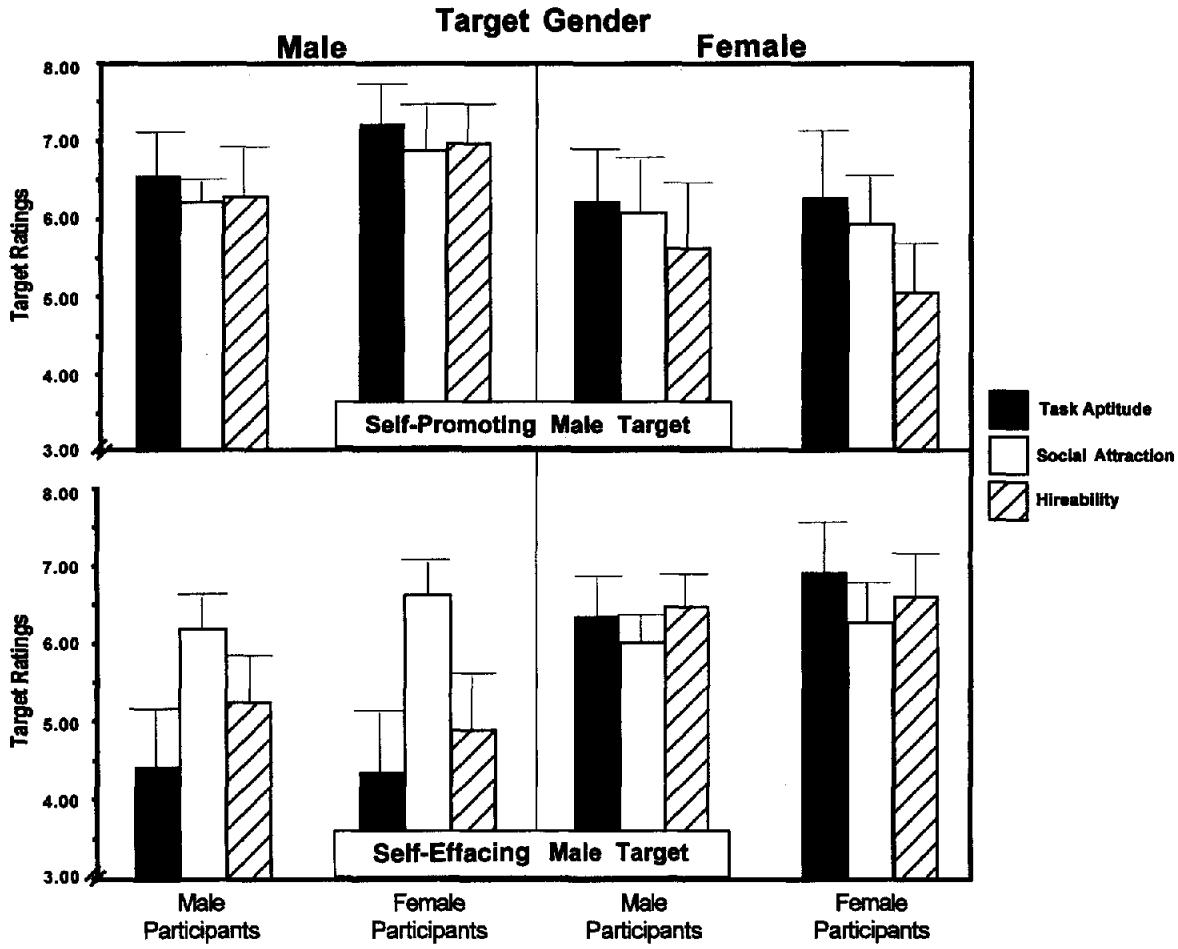

Figure 5. Task aptitude, social attraction, and hireability ratings as a function of target gender, the male target's impression-management strategy, and participant gender (Experiment 3). Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

As in Experiment 2, the self-effacing man suffered competence and hireability losses compared to the self-promoters. However, although he was viewed as more atypical (and less dominant) than the self-promoting man, he was not viewed as less socially attractive (cf. Jensen-Campbell, Graziano, & West, 1995). This result differs from Experiment 2's and may have been due to participants' interacting with him (vs. viewing videotapes) or to a difference between the two male targets. Nonetheless, the majority of participants rejected the self-effacing man as a game partner. This fact may have constituted a backlash effect in and of itself for behaving "out of role" (Goffman, 1959).

In sum, self-promotion almost universally led to a hiring decision for the female target when she competed against a self-effacing man. Given a choice between a "masterful woman" and a relatively weak man, the majority of participants selected her. In contrast, when she brought her qualifications onto a playing field that included a strong male contender, she was more likely to lose the contest, particularly if women were in control.

Nonetheless, there were important differences between Experiment 3 and Experiments 1 and 2, both methodologically and with respect to the findings. Although women preferred the self-promoting man to the self-promoting woman, there were no gender differences in the absolute ratings of the self-promoting woman (see Figure 5, right panels). Evaluating the woman in a context in which she competed against a man may have underscored her need to counteract gender stereotypes, which in turn may have enhanced women's ratings of her. However, with respect to choosing a partner, women nonetheless rejected the self-promoting woman when she competed against a self-promoting man, whereas men chose more equally between them. Thus, Experiment 3 extended Experiment 1 and 2's unexpected gender differences in reactions to female self-promotion in an important way—namely, by observing discrepancies in partner selection behavior.

General Discussion

Three experiments examined the scope of an IM dilemma that women face. The nature of the dilemma is that women may be forced to choose between femininity and an image of professionalism—their gender identity versus their career

(Fiske & Stevens, 1993; Riordan, Gross, & Maloney, 1994). Self-promotion invariably enhanced task aptitude ratings but incurred social attraction costs when perceivers were women (Experiments 1–3) or outcome-independent men (Experiments 1 and 2). In addition, it incurred hireability costs when perceivers were women (Experiment 2–3) or outcome-independent men (Experiments 1–2). Taken together, the results suggest that women pay a price for counterstereotypical behavior, even though it may be required for a successful career (Eagly et al., 1992; Fiske et al., 1991; McIlwee & Robinson, 1992).

It is not that women inherently lack the ability to promote themselves, as some researchers have suggested (Kacmar & Carlson, 1994), but rather that they are obliged to make decisions every day regarding how to present themselves (e.g., Gould & Slone, 1982). Not surprisingly, these decisions are often based on the expectations of others (Eagly, 1987; Geis, 1993; Skrypnek & Snyder, 1982; vonBaeyer, Sherk, & Zanna, 1981; Zanna & Pack, 1975). In fact, women may be particularly prone to perpetuating gender stereotypes (Jussim, Eccles, & Madon, 1996), either through behavioral confirmation (Snyder, 1984) or by failing to actively disconfirm them, perhaps because low-status individuals are more likely than high-status individuals to capitulate to perceivers' expectancies (Neuberg, 1994; Snyder & Haugen, 1995). Yet women will no doubt be reluctant to challenge gender-related expectancies if the costs of disconfirmation outweigh the benefits (Miller & Turnbull, 1986). The present research suggests that the risks of counteracting gender stereotypes in favor of managing a strong, self-confident impression can be high for women, depending on perceivers' goals and gender.

Gender as a Moderator of Reactions to Female Self-Promotion

Across three experiments, female self-promotion was a more effective IM strategy when evaluators were OD men versus women. These findings suggest that the cultural prescription for women to be modest may be more strongly defended by women than by men. "Women cooperate, men compete" is a powerful dictum and one that women are socialized to accept from the earliest age onward (Nelson, 1978). Throughout their lives, women are oriented toward emphasizing similarities and connections (i.e., communality), whereas men develop with the stress on individuality, leadership, and hierarchy (i.e., agency; Bakan, 1966; Eagly, 1987). Women are also encouraged to advocate for others, not themselves (Janoff-Bulman & Wade, 1996). Therefore, it may be that self-promotion is less acceptable for women because independence and self-focus are less acceptable for women, although they may not be conscious of the double standard. As a result, women may be disquieted when another woman breaks the self-presentational rules, perhaps without knowing why (Heim, 1990; Mathison, 1986; Powers & Zuroff, 1988).

Moreover, one way in which disenfranchised group members protect their self-worth is by selectively overvaluing the attributes associated with (and devaluing attributes not associated with) their group (Crocker & Major, 1989). Thus, women's self-esteem may be linked to their "selflessness" and communal values (whereas men's may be linked to mastery and independence; Josephs, Markus, & Tafarodi, 1992). A woman who violates women's positive, central self-conceptions may subsequently be subtyped as a "black sheep" and rejected by her ingroup more than a comparable (in this case, self-promoting) out-group member (Marques, 1990).

Finally, perceived similarity during social interactions is a robust predictor of social attraction (Byrne, 1971). If men are more likely to be self-promoting than women, it is therefore possible that men's and women's reactions were based on similarity differences. Yet, if similarity disparities were primarily responsible for the findings, men should have reacted positively to self-promoting targets irrespective of goal conditions in Experiments 1 and 2, and women's atypicality ratings should have predicted female partner rejection in Experiment 3. Instead, men responded positively under specific conditions (when OD), and women selected the female self-promoter as a partner when she was viewed as particularly atypical and dominant (in the self-effacing male target condition of Experiment 3). Nonetheless, it is left to future research to explore similarity–attraction, socialization, and self-esteem explanations as possible mechanisms underlying women's negative reactions to the self-promoting woman.

The observed aversion on the part of women to another woman's strong self-presentational style would be less significant if self-promotion were unassociated with perceptions of competence. But taken together, the results of three experiments provide persuasive evidence that self-promotion, at least in a normative context (e.g., a job interview) effectively augments a woman's perceived capabilities. Correspondence bias (Gilbert & Malone, 1995) suggests that positive self-statements are likely to be attributed to internal rather than external causes. As a result, self-promoters should be accredited with genuine confidence and worth, at least until proven otherwise (Jones & Pittman, 1982; Wiley & Crittenden, 1992). This may be especially true for Western cultures (Crittenden & Bae, 1994). After all, in America, "The squeaky wheel gets the grease" (e.g., DuBrin, 1993). Shouldn't women "squeak" louder, then? Yet the rules for women appear to be more on a par with the Japanese maxim "The nail that stands out gets pounded down" (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). If women themselves are wielding the hammers, then ironically, women may be partially responsible for perpetuating gender stereotypes that impede their own socioeconomic progress.

Limitations of the Research

The research relied on highly trained confederates who were introduced without supporting materials. This was intentional and done to avoid the possibility that such materials might be evaluated differently for the male and female targets (e.g., Goldberg, 1968). However, to increase confidence in the generalizability of the findings, future research should both expand on perceivers' contextual information and employ naive targets.

Moreover, the reality that corporate America continues to be dominated by a masculine model of success (Hardesty & Jacobs, 1987) suggests that female supervisors may themselves be self-promoting. As noted above, similarity often leads to attraction (Byrne, 1971); thus, powerful women may be inclined to reward rather than reject strong female subordinates

(but see Mathison, 1986). However, even if a strong female candidate is hired and eventually promoted, she will nonetheless have coworkers, including female subordinates, whose attitudes she will have to contend with (Ely, 1994; Heim, 1990; Madden, 1987). Thus, the fact that women failed to reward a self-promoting woman remains an important finding, and one that directly impinges on the welfare of women who strive to counteract gender stereotypes in performance settings. Moreover, women often have to present themselves to mixed audiences, composed of men (who may prefer an agentic style) and women (who may prefer a communal style; Miller et al., 1992). In such circumstances, women may be forced to manage a "bilingual" impression, which may be costly for them both psychologically and economically (Baumeister, 1989).

Finally, the results of Experiments 1–3 were remarkably similar with respect to gender differences in the hireability ratings (or partner selection choice) of a female self-promoter when perceivers were OD participants. Yet, in each case, the "job requirements" were linked to masculine characteristics. The possibility that women were reacting more to the masculine attributes of the job when they considered hiring a female candidate and less to her self-promoting IM style per se should be examined. It may be that women were more likely to hire a strong male candidate precisely because he was male and they were female. That is, women may have felt that the best way to augment their chances of success would be to hire a man. Men may not have felt this demand, given that they are themselves male. Perhaps women would have responded more favorably to female self-promotion if the task was feminine-linked. However, the present research targeted the real-world situation that is more dilemmatic for women—attempting to overcome gender stereotypes when being considered for a masculine-linked position.

Conclusion

Self-promotion appears to represent a double-edged sword for women. On the one hand, it substantially increased perceptions of competence (for all participants) and hireability (for OD men). On the other hand, it decreased social attraction ratings, especially when perceivers were women or outcome-independent men. The situation represents a Catch-22 in which women may be discriminated against for failing to counteract gender stereotypes (i.e., for acting "as a woman") and discriminated against for counteracting gender stereotypes (i.e., for not acting "as a woman should"). Self-presentation strategies undoubtedly influence both career and interpersonal success (Kacmar et al., 1992; Eagly et al., 1992; Sonnert & Holton, 1996; Wiley & Crittenden, 1992). To the extent that women continue to present a self-effacing "face" to the world, they may jeopardize professional success in order to avoid social rejection (Riordan et al., 1994). It is therefore important to investigate the sociocultural and psychological barriers that prevent women from fully engaging in equal opportunities for career advancement and success. The present research highlights the interpersonal barriers women face vis-à-vis their ability to engage in a diverse repertoire of IM tactics and underscores the normative pressures that may discomfit women when they consider using self-promotion as a means to social efficacy.

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Appendix

Sample Female and Male Target Responses to Interview Questions

Stereotype-relevant question: Are you a good computer games player?

Self-promoting female target response: Yes. In fact, I would say that I've totally figured out the games that I own on my system at home. At different times I've been interested in different types of games, such as strategy games and adventure games. Eventually, I figured out the "tricks" in all of them so that scoring high was easy. Yes, I would say that I am a good computer games player.

Self-effacing female target response: Well, I'm no expert, but I do have several games at home that I play quite a lot. I can reach the advanced levels on those—most of the time, I mean. It's fun to try and do better than I did the last time.

Self-promoting male target response: Yes. I don't put many games on my computer because it takes up too much valuable memory, but the ones that I have I have definitely mastered. I've played some Nintendo and Sega also, and I do extremely well at those kinds of games, too.

Self-effacing male target response: I'm no expert, but I used to play all the time—games like Nintendo and Super Mario Brothers. I eventually was able to get all the way through Super Mario Brothers.

Control question: Are you introverted or extraverted? If you like to read, what types of books do you prefer?

Female target response: Well, I enjoy people in general, and especially meeting new people. So I suppose that makes me extraverted. Also, I like to read very much. My favorites are science fiction novels. I read at least one sci-fi book a week.

Male target response: I'm about in the middle on that one. Depends on the situation and on my mood. I suppose I am more extraverted around people I know. I do like to read, yes. What types of books do I prefer? I read a lot of Vonnegut books and I read a lot of books about film.

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