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Self-presentation style in job interviews: the role of personality and culture

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Abstract

*Chronic self-promoter*s may thrive in job interviews where such behavior is encouraged. In Study 1, 72 participants were videotaped as they simulated the job applicant role. Accountability was manipulated by the expectation of expert versus nonexpert interviewers. As accountability increased, self-promotion tended to decrease among non-narcissists but increase among narcissists. Ingratiation showed no interaction or main effects. In Study 2, 222 raters evaluated applicant videos varying in narcissism (high vs. low) and ethnicity (European heritage vs. East Asian heritage). Chronic self-promoters (i.e., European-heritage narcissists) were given the most positive evaluations. Detailed behavior analyses indicated that the narcissism advantage was derived primarily from frequent self-praise and the European-heritage advantage from use of active ingratiation tactics. In sum, self-presentation styles that pay off in the (Western) interview context are highly selective.

Recent reviews of job interview research have called for a closer examination of the mechanisms by which interview success is accomplished (e.g., Marcus, 2009; Posthuma, Morgeson, & Campion, 2002; Sackett & Lievens, 2008). We answer that call with a detailed example of how the effects of self-presentation style are mediated by specific tactics and moderated by the context and type of evaluator.

We use the term *self-presentation* to subsume the full gamut of behaviors whereby people communicate an identity to an audience (for recent reviews, see Leary, 1996; Paulhus & Trapnell, 2008; Schlenker, 2012).[1] Five strategic identities were proposed by Jones and Pittman (1982): self-promotion, ingratiation, exemplification, supplication, and intimidation. Each is a unique presentation style designed to advance the actor's goals. Two of these strategies—self-promotion and ingratiation—have since been elaborated into more specific behavioral tactics (see Figure 1).

Self-promotion is designed to impress an audience with one's competence. It includes *self-enhancement* and specific *self-praise* (Ellis, West, Ryan, & DeShon, 2002; Stevens & Kristof, 1995). Self-praise involves highlighting one's positive attributes, e.g., repeatedly alluding to one's specific talents

(i.e., bragging). No embellishment is necessary to employ this tactic (Marcus, 2009). Self-enhancement, by contrast, extends further to exaggeration of one's competencies, e.g., unwarranted achievement claims and assertions of responsibility for others' accomplishments (Paulhus, Harms, Bruce, & Lysy, 2003; Robins & John, 1997).

Ingratiation is designed to draw liking from the audience (Jones, 1964). It too has been differentiated into a variety of specific behaviors. These include opinion conformity and flattery (Ellis et al., 2002), as well as humor (Cooper, 2005). Its greatest impact is on communal rather than agentic dimensions of evaluation (Paulhus & Trapnell, 2008).

Also furthering ingratiation is *tactical modesty* (Sedikides, Gregg, & Hart, 2007). It involves downplaying one's assets instead of promoting them. Rather than lack of self-promotion, we contend that tactical modesty is a deliberate alternative (Jones, Rhodewalt, Berglas, & Skelton, 1981; Tice, Butler, Muraven, & Stillwell, 1995). It works best when the audience already has positive information about the actor's competence (Pfeffer, Fong, Cialdini, & Portnoy, 2006). It can help to overcome the dislike created by self-promotion.

Application to the job interview: Among the situations highest in self-presentational demand is the job interview. Here, it seems self-evident that a positive self-presentation is advantageous, perhaps even mandatory for success.

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[1]In our framework, self-presentation subsumes impression management, self-deceptive enhancement, and need not involve dissimulation.
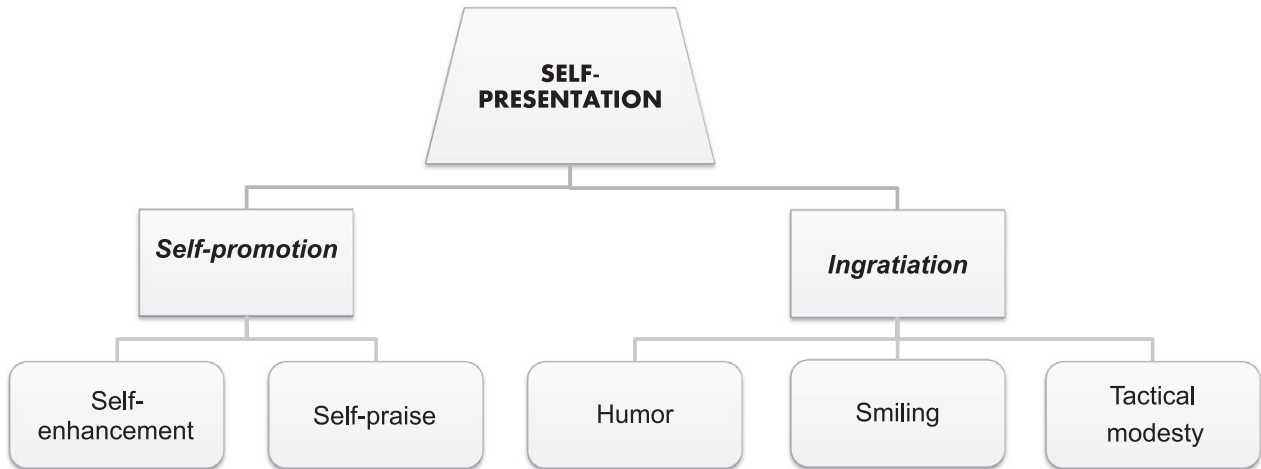
Figure 1 Hierarchy of self-presentation: strategies and tactics.

Empirical evidence confirms that greater use of self-presentation tactics fosters positive interviewer evaluations (Howard & Ferris, 1996). Indeed, those who fail to self-present are viewed in negative terms (Higgins & Judge, 2004). It is not surprising, then, that self-presentation tactics have been a central focus in the study of job interviews (e.g., Bolino & Turnley, 2003; Levashina & Campion, 2007; Marcus, 2009; Morgeson & Ryan, 2009; Rosenfeld, Giacalone, & Riordan, 2002).

The tactic of self-promotion, for example, has been shown to improve the likelihood of success in a job interview. Applicants who actively highlight their skills and abilities tend to advance impressions of their competence (Dipboye & Wiley, 1977; Higgins & Judge, 2004) but not their likability (Godfrey, Jones, & Lord, 1986). Another proven strategy is ingratiation, i.e., appearing likable (Higgins & Judge, 2004; Liden & Mitchell, 1988; Stires & Jones, 1969). This strategy creates an affective halo that brightens a wide range of other judgments (Godfrey et al., 1986; Goffin, Jelley, & Wagner, 2003).

Nonetheless, there are limits to the use of self-presentation. For example, self-promotion does not engender liking (Godfrey et al., 1986; Pfeffer et al., 2006). Conversely, although it may increase liking, tactical modesty does not necessarily benefit perceptions of competence (Giacalone & Riordan, 1999).

Moreover, research confirms that the benefits of self-promotion are delicately balanced with reactance (Ames, 2008; Baron, 1986). Obvious or excessive attempts to manipulate or influence create a defensive response and a negative evaluation (Anderson, Ames, & Gosling, 2008; Bolino & Turnley, 2003; Higgins & Judge, 2004; Murphy, 2007). Finally, the choice of self-presentation tactics must be

tailored to the context. In the job interview context, for example, strategies such as supplication and intimidation are unlikely to be effective.

In sum, orchestrating the intricacies of self-presentation can be challenging, if not overwhelming. Natural proclivities can make the task easier. Two obvious sources of self-presentation proclivities are personality factors and cultural factors. Each has a substantial literature documenting its effects.

Individual differences

Both personality traits and cultural differences may influence self-presentation styles. Only a handful of personality traits, namely, self-monitoring (e.g., Graziano & Waschull, 1995) and Machiavellianism (Jones & Paulhus, 2009), have received sustained attention as carriers of self-presentation. Instead, a different set of traits has been linked to each of the self-presentation tactics listed above (Delery & Kacmar, 1998). In this paper, we focus on personality and cultural factors that predispose self-promotion and ingratiation.

Chronic self-promoters

As a personality variable, chronic self-promotion has been operationalized in several ways. The most popular operationalization involves trait measures of self-enhancement, e.g., the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI; e.g., Collins & Stukas, 2008) or the Self-Deceptive Enhancement scale of the Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding (e.g., Taylor, Lerner, Sherman, Sage, & McDowell, 2003).

At the subclinical level, narcissists exhibit both grandiose self-beliefs and active self-promotion (Emmons, 1984; Morf,

Horvath, & Torchetti, 2010; Raskin, Novacek, & Hogan, 1991).[2] Their unique self-presentation style can be traced to a sense of superiority accompanied by a concern that others fail to acknowledge that superiority. In contrast to self-monitoring or Machiavellianism, the self-presentation style of narcissists is especially rigid (Rhodewalt & Morf, 1995) and operates primarily on agentic as opposed to communal attributes (Campbell, Rudich, & Sedikides, 2002). The fact that narcissists seem to truly believe their claims of superiority (see Ames & Kammrath, 2004) suggests that their self-presentational style extends beyond impression management to a form of self-deception (Horvath & Morf, 2010; Paulhus, 1998). Although they may use a variety of self-promotional tactics, most prominent are their use of self-enhancement (exaggeration of their positive qualities) and self-praise (bragging).

Much of the literature on chronic self-enhancers emphasizes its maladaptive side (e.g., Colvin & Griffo, 2008; Morf, Torchetti, & Schurch, 2011; Vazire & Funder, 2006). This literature points to the fact that that they behave badly under threat (e.g., Colvin, Block, & Funder, 1995, Study 3; Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001). Any redeeming qualities are eventually undermined by their egotistical focus (Bonanno, Field, Kovacevic, & Kaltman, 2002; Paulhus, 1998; Vazire & Funder, 2006).

That negative perspective must be reconsidered in light of more recent studies indicating trade-offs in the adaptive value of chronic self-promotion (Campbell, 2001; Campbell et al., 2002; Goorin & Bonanno, 2009; Harms, Spain, & Hannah, 2011; Kwan, Kuang, & Zhao, 2008; Paunonen, Lönnqvist, Verkasalo, Leikas, & Nissinen, 2006; Taylor et al., 2003). In particular, it seems that initial reactions to self-promoters are actually positive (Back, Schmukle, & Egloff, 2010; Friedman, Oltmanns, Gleason, & Turkheimer, 2006; Paulhus, 1998). We suspect that this initial (even if temporary) advantage may be sufficient enough to promote success in short-term contexts such as job interviews.

A key element may be the persistence exhibited by chronic self-promoters. Recent studies have shown how relentless narcissists can be (Campbell, Reeder, Sedikides, & Elliot, 2000; Collins & Stukas, 2008; Wallace, Ready, & Weitenhagen, 2009). They won't back down on their exaggerations even in light of concrete contradictory evidence (Robins & John, 1997). In some cases, they may actually redouble their efforts when given the opportunity to shine (Wallace & Baumeister, 2002).

By contrast, self-promoters such as narcissists are not inclined to use ingratiation tactics. Such tactics enhance one's communal image, but creating an agentic image is far more important to the self-promoter (Collins & Stukas, 2008; Paulhus & Trapnell, 2008). Instead, ingratiation tendencies are associated with a different constellation of predispositions (Liden & Mitchell, 1988).

Role of culture

Self-promotion tendencies may also differ across cultures (Heine, Lehman, Markus, & Kitayama, 1999). It has long been known, for example, that modesty is viewed more favorably than is self-promotion in East Asian cultures (Hofstede, 1980).[3] Further investigations have suggested more complexity: Cultural differences turn on the social context (Matsumoto, 2007), the domain (Sedikides, Gaertner, & Toguchi, 2003), and may merely be a public self-presentation strategy (Yamaguchi et al., 2007). Moreover, cultural self-construals may shift with contextual cues (Lalwani & Shavitt, 2009).

Whatever the source, such cultural influences in values and behavior should play out in the job interview (Bond, Leung, & Wan, 1982). The East Asian self-presentation style would encourage deference and modesty in line with greater power distance and relationship-oriented values (Barron & Sackett, 2008). By comparison, the Western presentation style tends to encourage self-promotion, assertiveness, and independence, consistent with agentic and economic-oriented values (Elliot, Chirkov, Kim, & Sheldon, 2001; Xin & Tsui, 1996). Together, these behavior patterns are consistent with the prediction that those of European heritage are more likely than those of East Asian heritage to self-promote during interviews.

Contextual moderators

In the Western job interview situation, self-promotion is not just commonplace: It is expected. Despite this expectation, employers often rely more on the interview than on paper credentials (Stevens & Kristof, 1995). Therefore, the selection outcome will be strongly influenced by individual differences in applicants' ability to promote themselves and their credentials. Applicants face the difficult task of matching their behavior to the job profile, on criteria preferred by a specific interviewer, and at the appropriate level of self-promotion—all the while fearing they will not get a second chance.

Person–situation fit

Many authorities have argued that self-presentation success is determined less by the direct effect of personality variables than by the fit of the personality to the context (Hogan, Hogan, & Roberts, 1996; Ng, Ang, & Chan, 2008; Roberts & Hogan, 2001; Tett & Burnett, 2003). Instead of a universally

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[2]In this paper, we focus on grandiose narcissism as operationalized by the NPI (see Brown & Tamborksi, 2011) rather than vulnerable narcissism (Pincus & Ross, 2011).

[3]Mainland China (People's Republic of China) may be an exception (Barron & Sackett, 2008).

optimal personality style, the evidence suggests that specific presentation styles flourish in specific contexts (Schlenker, 2012).

The job interview is a unique context. Because the express goal is to impress the interviewer, success may rest on personality predictors (e.g., narcissism) rather different from those associated with long-term performance (e.g., conscientiousness, intelligence). Successful self-promoters should be especially reactive to the situational demand to impress.

Evaluation criteria

The interviewer's evaluation task often requires integrating multiple criteria (Sackett & Lievens, 2008). At the broadest level, people tend to be evaluated with respect to the two global axes of positivity, sometimes labeled agency and communion (Abele & Wojciszke, 2007; Horowitz, 2004) and sometimes, competence and likability (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002).

The choice of evaluation criterion will also depend on qualities of the judges. Even then, the choice may depend on what type of performance dimension is considered relevant (Goffin et al., 2003). For example, raters from one culture may not appreciate the self-presentation styles of those from other cultures (Bond, 1991; Campbell & Roberts, 2007; Norasakkunit & Kalic, 2002).

Interviewer expertise

A third contextual factor influencing choice of self-presentation tactics is *accountability*, i.e., the degree to which interviewees feel responsible for the accuracy of their claims (Paulhus et al., 2003; Schlenker, Weigold, & Doherty, 1991; Tetlock & Boettger, 1989). For example, interviewees should be more cautious about excessive self-promotion if they expect the interviewer to be an expert on the interview topic (Arkin, Appelman, & Burger, 1980; Collins & Stukas, 2008; Sedikides, Herbst, Hardin, & Dardis, 2002; Stires & Jones, 1969). Of course, this increased caution will be restricted to the specific expertise of the interviewer. Expectation of an expert interviewer is also likely to increase evaluation apprehension (Jackson & Latané, 1981).

Overview of present studies

To investigate these issues, we conducted two interview studies that incorporate all three factors highlighted above: They address the effects of applicants' personality and culture on their behavior under high versus low accountability. Both studies drew on an archive of videotapes of simulated job interviews. In Study 1, we examined the effect of accountability on the amount of self-presentation displayed by individuals varying in chronic self-presentation, namely, those scoring high (narcissists and those of European heritage)

versus low (non-narcissists and those of East Asian heritage). In Study 2, we examined whether self-promotion benefited or hindered interview performance, as judged by objective raters. Of special interest were possible behavioral mediators of the personality and culture effects on performance.

Study 1: applicant personality and accountability effects on self-presentation

Most applicants seek to make the best possible impression during a job interview. But what determines the strategies they use? For example, do job applicants increase or reduce their self-enhancement behavior when faced with an expert interviewer?

As noted above, successful applicants must strike a balance between promoting their assets and being caught in exaggerations (Baron, 1986; Bolino & Turnley, 2003; Crant, 1996). The key moderator may be the expertise of the interviewer. If they perceive the interviewer to be expert on the job topic, then applicants should reduce their level of self-enhancement. After all, experts should be more able to evaluate whether applicants are being candid or embellishing their credentials. By contrast, if the interviewer is seen as lacking expertise, then applicants may feel free to exaggerate.

This pattern may not hold for chronic self-promoters such as narcissists. As noted earlier, there is evidence to suggest that such individuals rise to the occasion when they see an opportunity to impress (Horvath & Morf, 2010; Wallace & Baumeister, 2002). That opportunity would increase to the extent that the interviewer is believed to be an expert in the field. Accordingly, narcissists may sustain or even increase their self-enhancing behaviors when they expect to be interviewed by an expert (Collins & Stukas, 2008).

To evaluate these hypotheses, we studied applicants in simulated job interviews. We measured candidates' narcissism and manipulated the apparent expertise of the interviewer to determine its impact on self-promotion (both self-enhancement and self-praise) and ingratiation. To measure these outcomes, we asked two sets of trained judges to code videotapes of the interviews. One set of judges rated the applicant's exaggeration. A second set of judges counted the instances of self-praise and ingratiation behaviors.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1.1. Overall, narcissists should self-promote more than non-narcissists.

Hypothesis 1.2. As accountability increases, non-narcissists should decrease their self-promotion.

Hypothesis 1.3. As accountability increases, narcissists should increase their self-promotion.

Hypothesis 1.4. Narcissism should be unrelated to ingratiation.

Method

Participants

A total of 94 students from a large northwestern university (56% females) volunteered to participate for extra course credits. Two participants were removed from the analyses: One declined to be videotaped and another turned out to be an acquaintance of the interviewer. Another 12 were set aside for Study 2.

Participants' self-reported ethnic heritage was coded into one of three categories: (1) primarily European (e.g., British, German, French, Scandinavian); (2) primarily East Asian (e.g., Chinese, Japanese, Filipino); and (3) other. To simplify our analyses, we included only the 72 participants in the first two groups: Roughly half of them reported European heritage and half reported East Asian heritage.

Participants were informed that the experiment required completing several questionnaires and participating as an applicant in a simulated job interview for a research assistant position. They also agreed to have their interview performance rated by laboratory personnel.

Questionnaire materials

The questionnaire package included the NPI (Raskin & Hall, 1979). The NPI consists of 40 forced-choice items. Objective intelligence (IQ) was measured with the University of British Columbia (UBC) Word test, a measure of verbal ability (Nathanson & Paulhus, 2007). Applicants were given 8 minutes to complete correctly as many as possible of the 100 multiple-choice vocabulary items.

Participants' actual knowledge of psychological research was obtained via the Psychology Knowledge Test (PKT): It comprised 50 multiple-choice questions. We assembled this test by selecting some items from a GRE preparation guide and writing others at a lower level of difficulty.

Procedures

Upon arrival at the laboratory, participants were greeted and led to a testing room. There they completed the NPI, the PKT, and the UBC Word test.

Next, they were given instructions about the simulated job interview for a research assistant position. Their task was to "Impress the interviewer with your competence in the field of psychology." Although not specifically told so, the participants may have inferred the need for two skill sets: competence and social skills.

Participants were then randomly assigned to one of two interview conditions. Those in the *low accountability* condition were informed that the interviewer was a "second-year English major," who "doesn't know much about psychology." In the *high accountability* condition, the participant was informed that the interviewer was a "graduate student in psychology," who is an "expert in the field."

The interview was conducted in a formal office with the interviewer behind a desk and the applicant in a facing chair. A video camera was positioned to record the participant in a relatively unobtrusive fashion. The participants were asked for permission to have the interview recorded and all but one agreed.

The interview procedure was standardized across participants by requiring that the interviewer follow a script. A buzzer sounded after 10 minutes but time was extended, if necessary, to allow the participant to complete the current question. Topics covered basic issues in introductory psychology. To provoke self-enhancement, some of the questions referred to nonexistent topics—a methodology similar to the overclaiming technique recently applied to survey research (Paulhus et al., 2003).

Interviewer training covered various contingencies (e.g., repeating the question if the interviewee did not seem to understand). They were trained not to give any indication of agreement or disagreement with the responses. If asked whether an answer was correct or not, the interviewer said that the correct answers would be provided at the end of the study.

To provide a check on the accountability manipulation, we asked participants to rate the expertise of the interviewer on a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all*; 7 = *very much*). Finally, participants were debriefed about the true nature of the experiment, asked if they had any questions, and were advised that they were free to go.

Expert-coded self-promotion and ingratiation

Although self-reports have their place, research is accumulating on the value of observer ratings (Connelly & Ones, 2010; Oh, Wang, & Mount, 2011; Vazire, 2006). Most relevant here is the research showing that self-enhancement behaviors are best evaluated by outside observers (Gosling, John, Craik, & Robins, 1998).

Accordingly, we arranged for the 72 videotapes to be evaluated by two sets of trained judges. Both sets were balanced with respect to gender and ethnicity. The judges were research assistants trained (by the faculty member D.L.P. and graduate students) to evaluate responses to the interview questions. Judges were told that the interviewees were applying for a job as a research assistant in a psychology laboratory but were unaware of the accountability manipulation.

The first set of (eight) judges provided 7-point ratings of the degree to which the applicants were self-enhancing, i.e., exaggerating their knowledge of psychology. This set of

judges was made aware of which interview questions referred to nonexistent people and theories: Claims to recognize and/or describe such items were to be assigned high ratings. Accurate answers or admissions to lack of knowledge were to be assigned low ratings. In short, the judges were trained to rate self-enhancement in terms of knowledge exaggeration.

The second set of (four) judges evaluated (1) frequency of self-praise by counting the number of positive self-references (e.g., "I know that one") and (2) frequency of ingratiation behaviors (e.g., smiling, humor, flattering the interviewer).

Results

Preliminary analyses were conducted separately for males and females. The few differences in interviewer and applicant gender (and their interactions) were small and uninterpretable. Therefore, to simplify the presentation, we pooled all the analyses across gender. Except for predicted effects, all significance tests were two tailed.

Questionnaire measures

First, we evaluated the reliabilities and intercorrelations among the three individual difference measures: NPI, the verbal IQ test, and PKT. Their alpha reliabilities were .84, .89, and .77, respectively. Most important, narcissism was uncorrelated with both IQ ($r = .12$, $p = $ not statistically significant [ns]) and psychology knowledge ($r = .05$, $p = ns$). IQ correlated significantly with scores on the knowledge test ($r = .39$, $p < .01$).

Predicting self-promotion and ingratiation

Aggregating the eight ratings of self-enhancement yielded an alpha of .90. Similarly, the aggregations of four ratings of self-praise, self-enhancement, and ingratiation yielded alphas of .73, .63, and .70, respectively. Because the correlation between aggregated self-praise and aggregated self-enhancement was substantial ($r = .73$, $p < .01$), we standardized and combined the two variables to create an overall measure of self-promotion. IQ failed to correlate with either self-promotion, ingratiation, or narcissism (no $p < .30$). Finally, the manipulation check (rated expertise of the interviewer) was significantly higher in the high versus the low accountability condition, $t(70) = 3.30$, $p < .01$, one tailed.

To evaluate the joint effects of narcissism and the accountability manipulation, a moderated regression was performed on the self-promotion composite. The beta value was significant for narcissism ($t = 2.52$, $p < .01$), but not for accountability. The narcissism × accountability interaction was also significant ($t = 2.75$, $p < .01$).

For display purposes, we plotted the high and low narcissism groups at ±1 standard deviation: see Figure 2. Analysis of simple effects showed the expected pattern: Narcissists
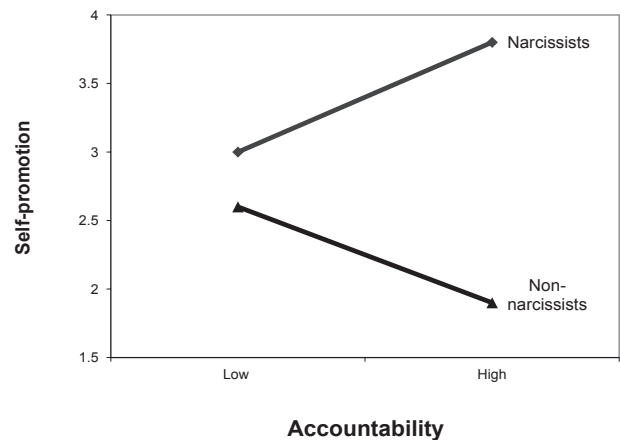

Figure 2 Study 1: self-promotion based on applicant's narcissism and accountability.

self-promoted more in the high than in the low accountability condition ($t = 1.95$, $p < .05$), but the reverse was true for non-narcissists ($t = 2.45$, $p < .01$, one tailed). We also evaluated the separate effects of the NPI adaptive and maladaptive facets (Emmons, 1984). In all cases, the results were similar to, but weaker than, those of the total NPI score.

A similar moderated regression was performed on the ingratiation frequency. Neither the interaction nor the main effects were significant (each $p > .22$).

Controlling for ethnicity

It was fortunate that our archive of job interviews contained a significant proportion of Asian-heritage students (roughly half). Given the research indicating that Europeans are more likely than Asians to be narcissists (Foster, Campbell, & Twenge, 2003), we were concerned that this confound may have been responsible for the narcissism effect. In short, our narcissists may have self-enhanced because they were of European ancestry.

To evaluate that possible confound, we began by coding applicants by ethnicity: those of Asian heritage were assigned a "2" and those of European heritage subjects a "1." Ethnicity was then entered along with narcissism in a regression equation predicting self-promotion. Results indicated that ethnicity ($\beta = .27$, $p < .02$) and narcissism ($\beta = .29$, $p < .02$) were independent predictors. A similar regression equation predicting ingratiation indicated only a main effect for ethnicity ($\beta = .20$, $p < .05$). In neither regression equation were the interactions significant.

Discussion

It is clear that reactions to accountability demands are not uniform. The reaction of those low in self-promotion seems

rational and appropriate: Don't try to fool an authority who has special expertise on the interview topic. The reaction of self-promoters, although predictable from the literature, seems less rational: They chose to augment their self-enhancement when faced with an expert interviewer.

The behavior we observed among self-promoters is consistent with Wallace and Baumeister's (2002) study showing that narcissists are more motivated in situations where they can garner admiration. The more expert the interviewer, the more admiration there is to be garnered. Of course, their increased in self-enhancement did not guarantee that self-promoters would receive better evaluations from interviewers or objective observers.

A follow-up regression analysis suggested that narcissism and ethnicity contributed independently to self-promotion. However, only ethnicity predicted overall use of ingratiation tactics: Compared with those of East Asian heritage, those of European heritage were higher in ingratiation. This pattern suggests that both narcissism and ethnicity effects should be investigated further, especially in the context of high accountability that is typical of job interviews.

Study 2: effectiveness of self-promotion

How does this pattern of self-promotion behavior translate into success or failure in interviews? Would objective observers be persuaded that self-promoters are the best job candidates? As noted earlier, previous work indicates that, although a modicum of exaggeration may be appropriate for the interview situation, an excess can be counterproductive (Baron, 1986; Bolino & Turnley, 2003). In short, there is no guarantee that engaging in self-promotion will result in success. Similarly, ingratiation is a tricky tactic to carry out successfully. Humor, for example, can backfire (Kuiper, Grimshaw, Leite, & Kirsh, 2004).

To examine these issues in Study 2, we asked nonexpert (undergraduate subject pool) judges to evaluate the interview performance of a subset of job applicants. Here, we expanded the number of performance ratings beyond those of Study 1. To make this rating task feasible, we had to limit the number of videos rated by each judge. The most efficient experimental design, we concluded, was to have each student judge rate four applicants who varied in terms of ethnicity and narcissism. Hence, our basic experimental design was a 2×2 within-subjects analysis.

We also asked a smaller number of eight expert judges to perform the same ratings. They also provided a more detailed analysis of actual applicant behavior (see details under Analyses of behavioral mediators section).

Potential mediating variables

Using both experimental and correlational methods, we also examined potential mediators of the relation between self-promotion tendencies and perceived performance. We ran a series of three conditions with gradually decreasing amounts of information presented to student raters: video, full transcript, and equal-length transcript. Within each condition, judges were randomly assigned to one of the three sets of applicants and the order in which they would rate the applicants.

Cultural issues

As explored in the introduction, the use of face-to-face interviews for hiring or promotions introduces the potential for cultural bias. Our nonexpert pool of judges—roughly half of European heritage and half of East Asian heritage—permitted a detailed analysis of possible cultural bias.

The relevant literature is limited, but some observers have suggested that the cultural style of East Asian job applicants may trigger unfavorable biases among Western evaluators (Takaki, 1989). This possibility may result from a simple in-group bias: Individuals belonging to the same in-group tend to demonstrate a greater appreciation and acceptance of each other (Lin, Dobbins, & Farh, 1992; Yamagishi, Mifune, Liu, & Pauling, 2008). Or, it may ensue from a complex stereotype developed by Westerners to acknowledge the competence of Asians while derogating their sociability (Lin, Kwan, Cheung, & Fiske, 2005).

In the limited relevant research literature, Xin's (2004) examination of self-presentation in supervisor–subordinate relationships is most relevant. She found that Asian Americans had difficulty impressing their supervisors, and therefore, they did not receive appropriate promotions. Compared with the blatant bias notion, however, Xin's explanation was more nuanced. She concluded that Asian Americans fail to use self-presentation tactics that are valued by their supervisors. A similar argument has been offered by other researchers (Campbell & Roberts, 2007; Cesare, 1996).

Do constraints on East Asian interview success derive purely from interviewer bias? Or do they derive from non-Western interview behavior? To investigate these issues in Study 2, we included a comparison of the judgments made by European- versus Asian-heritage judges.

Hypotheses

Each judge rated a set of four applicants varying in terms of ethnicity and narcissism. Hence, our basic experimental design was a 2×2 within-subjects analysis.

> *Hypothesis 2.1.* We predicted that the pattern of self-enhancement differences in our four-applicant subset would replicate the pattern in Study 1.

Hypothesis 2.2. We predicted that nonexpert judges would assign more positive evaluations to self-promoters than to non-self-promoters. Specifically, European-heritage narcissists should receive the most positive hirability ratings.

Hypothesis 2.3. We predicted that the impact of ethnicity would be reduced by degrading the video information in systematic fashion from full videos to transcripts alone to equal-length transcripts.

Hypothesis 2.4. We predicted that the hirability ratings of expert judges would not be influenced by either narcissism or ethnicity.

Method

Participant raters

Nonexpert raters were 226 students from the human subject pool at a large northwestern university. Sixty-one percent were women. Fifty percent were of East Asian heritage.[4] Forty-four percent were of European heritage, and the remainder came from other ethnic heritages. Each participant received one course credit for his or her participation in the study.

The eight expert raters consisted of three PhD researchers and five graduate students. All were trained in personality assessment.

Applicant videos

Applicant materials were videotapes of interviews selected from the same archive of 94 mentioned in Study 1. Twelve applicant videos—none of them overlapping with those used in Study 1—were preselected from the archive. All 12 had been interviewed under high accountability: That is, they expected to be interviewed by an expert. Recall that, prior to the simulated interview, each applicant in the archive had completed an IQ test, a package of self-reports, and a questionnaire test of their psychology knowledge.

This demographic and pretest information was used to form three sets of four applicants. Two sets were all female and one set was all male. Each set contained a European and an Asian student who scored (equally) high on narcissism, and a European and an Asian student who had scored (equally) low on narcissism. The four applicants within a set were also matched on IQ and their overall knowledge of psychology. Matching is critical because actual competence differences tend to dominate observer judgments (e.g., Huffcutt & Roth, 1998; Mullins, 1982).

[4]As in Study 1, East Asians formed the largest non-European category. The third largest category (South Asian heritage) was not large enough to analyze separately.

Procedure

The 214 nonexpert judges provided their ratings in small groups ranging from one to eight. When the scheduled group had all arrived at the laboratory, they were provided with verbal instructions on how to do their ratings and were walked through a standardized example. Judges were then asked to watch and rate one set of four applicants on four dimensions: knowledge, intelligence, social skills, and overall hirability. No communication was permitted among judges.

We ran a sequence of three conditions with gradually decreasing amounts of information presented to student raters: full video ($n = 44$), full transcript ($n = 82$), and equal-length transcript ($n = 88$). Within each condition, nonexpert judges were randomly assigned to one of the three sets of applicants and the order in which they would rate the applicants.

Condition 1 (video plus audio)

In the full-video condition, raters watched 5 minute clips of four simulated interviews. Raters were told the video was that of a real interview for a research assistant position.

After watching each video, judges were asked to rate the applicant on three 10-point scales: intelligence, knowledge of psychology, and overall social skills. If they wished, judges were allowed to adjust their ratings of previous applicants. After completing ratings of the four-applicant set, the rater was then asked to provide an overall hirability score for each applicant.

As well as the 44 nonexpert judges, a set of 8 expert judges was asked to rate the applicants. Because the results in this condition did not differ from those of nonexperts (see below), we only used (the more available) nonexpert judges in the remaining two conditions.

Condition 2 (full transcripts)

In this condition, we attempted to control for visual factors (appearance, age, gender, ethnicity, vocal tone, etc.) that may have influenced ratings in the first condition (DeGroot & Motowidlo, 1999). To this end, we transcribed each of the 5 minute videos from the first condition. Although we did not indicate pauses in the applicant's speech, we did indicate all other idiosyncrasies including laughing, repetition of words, run-on sentences, and slang terminologies in order to minimize speech content differences from the video interviews. Rating instructions were identical to those in the video condition.

Condition 3 (equal-length transcripts)

In this condition, we attempted to control for the applicant's word volume by truncating all transcripts to the same total word length. Within each applicant set, all verbiage (to the

nearest sentence) beyond the volume of the shortest transcript was removed from the end of the other three transcripts. The interviewer's verbiage was controlled in this equating process. Instructions to the raters were identical to those in the video condition.

Results

Recall that our basic experimental design was a 2 × 2 within-subjects comparison of narcissism (high; low) and ethnicity (Asian heritage; European heritage). All our analyses were conducted with the SPSS (SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL) multivariate analysis of variance procedure.

Overall, the intercorrelations among our three specific outcomes ranged from .70 to .83. For simplicity, we present the results for the ultimate outcome—hirability ratings. Similar but weaker results were found for the more specific variables. See footnote 5 for the only exception.

Effects of applicant's narcissism and ethnicity on hirability

Recall that Condition 1 (video) included 44 nonexpert and 8 expert judges. Hirability ratings were analyzed as a function of rater expertise (between subjects), applicant ethnicity, and personality (both within subjects). Analysis of variance results showed no significance for expertise as a main effect or in interaction with ethnicity or personality: To simplify further analyses, expertise was dropped as a factor. Nor was it used in the other experimental conditions.

The simplified design showed a main effect for ethnicity, $F(1, 48) = 119.9$, $p < .001$, as well as a main effect for narcissism, $F(1, 48) = 45.5$, $p < .001$. The pattern in Figure 3 shows that European applicants were rated as more hirable than their Asian counterparts. Furthermore, narcissists were rated as more hirable than non-narcissists. The interaction was not a significant effect, $F(1, 48) = 3.5$, $p = .38$.

Figure 4 displays the corresponding results for Condition 2 ($n = 82$ raters) and Condition 3 ($n = 88$ raters). In Condition 2 (full transcript of interview), we again found a main effect for ethnicity, $F(1, 81) = 78.1$, $p < .001$, as well as a main effect for narcissism, $F(1, 81) = 78.1$, $p < .001$. Although the visual cues had been eliminated, the pattern remained the same. The European applicants received higher ratings, as did narcissists. Again, there was no interaction between ethnicity and narcissism, $F(1, 81) = .01$, $p = .91$.

In Condition 3, the four transcripts (within each applicant group) were equated on word volume. Note from the figure that the narcissism advantage vanishes, $F(1, 86) = .68$, $p = .41$. Thus, controlling for word volume made non-narcissists as appealing as narcissists. However, European applicants still received higher ratings than did their Asian counterparts, $F(1, 86) = 20.1$, $p < .001$. Again, there was no interaction between narcissism and ethnicity, $F(1, 86) = 1.60$, $p = .20$.
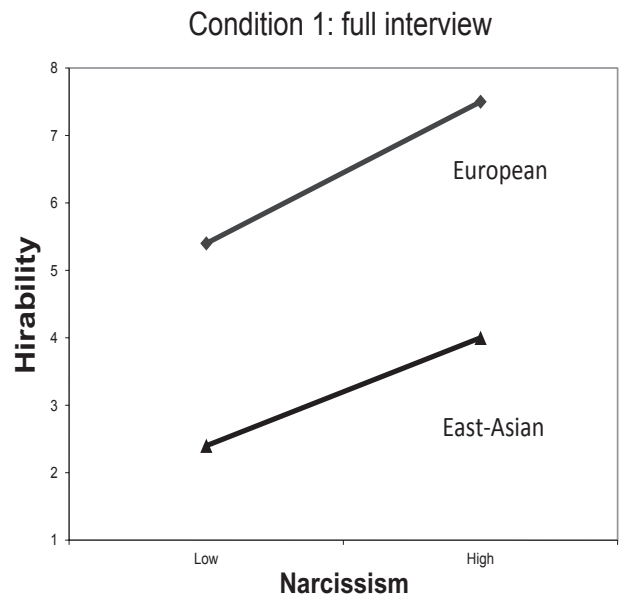

Figure 3 Study 2: hirability ratings based on applicant's narcissism and ethnicity.

Analyses of behavioral mediators

Still requiring explanation is the ethnic difference in hirability ratings. To pursue possible mediators of the European advantage, we asked our eight expert judges to evaluate the 12 Condition 3 (equal length) transcripts on a number of interview behaviors pertaining to social interaction: laughing, verbal sophistication, humor, modesty, confidence, and engagement with interviewer. Inter-rater reliabilities across the 12 transcripts ranged between .71 and .82, thereby justifying the aggregation of judges.

A series of mediation analyses were conducted to evaluate each behavior as a potential mediator of the narcissism–hirability and ethnicity–hirability links. We used the SPSS syntax developed by Preacher and Hayes (2004), which follows the recommendations of Shrout and Bolger (2002). In each case, the indirect effect was tested for statistical significance based on the drawing of 5,000 bootstrap samples.

Of the six potential mediators, only laughing, humor use, and engagement showed significant indirect effects on the association between ethnicity and hirability ($p < .05$). Given their positive intercorrelations (mean = .52), we combined these three behaviors into a single composite, labeled *active ingratiation*. Its alpha reliability was .76. As a composite variable, active ingratiation exhibited a full mediation effect ($p < .01$) by reducing the ethnicity–hirability effect to nonsignificance.[5]

[5]In this case, the choice of specific rating outcome did make a difference. The mediation effect of ingratiation was clearest on the link between ethnicity and social skills.
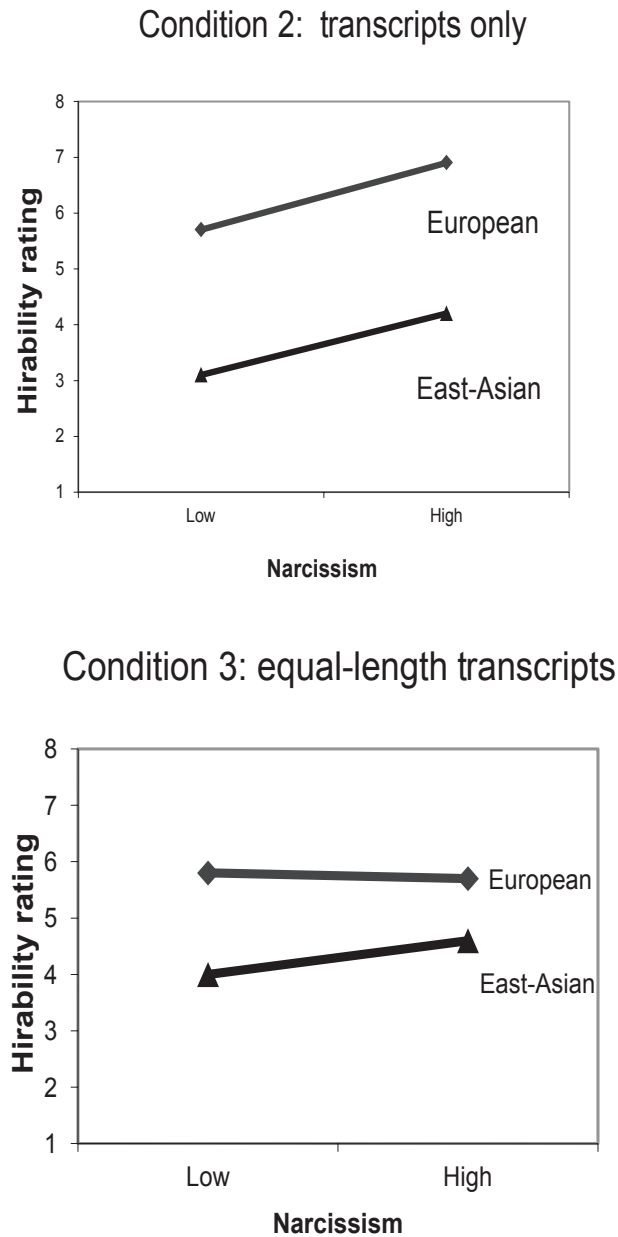
Condition 2: transcripts only

Condition 3: equal-length transcripts

Figure 4   Study 2: effects of applicant factors separated by transcript length.

A. European raters

B. East-Asian raters

Figure 5   Study 2: effects of applicant factors separated by rater ethnicity.

references (self-derogation). Across the 12 transcript means, self-praise yielded partial mediation ($p < .01$), whereas self-derogation and self-enhancement were not successful mediators ($p > .10$).

European versus Asian raters

In addition to differences in overall rating means, we also wondered whether the two ethnicities showed distinct rating patterns: In particular, did raters favor their own ethnicities? When averaged across all three conditions, direct comparisons of European with Asian raters indicated no difference in the pattern of hirability ratings (see Figure 5). Both

Also left unanswered was the reason why the extra verbiage of narcissists in the full transcripts attracted higher ratings. To clarify the benefits of word quantity, we investigated the mediation effects of several key variables on the narcissism–hirability effect in the full transcripts. For each of the 12 transcripts, self-enhancement behavior (knowledge exaggeration) was coded by four expert judges as in Study 1. Another group of four judges coded the number of positive self-references (self-praise) and negative self-
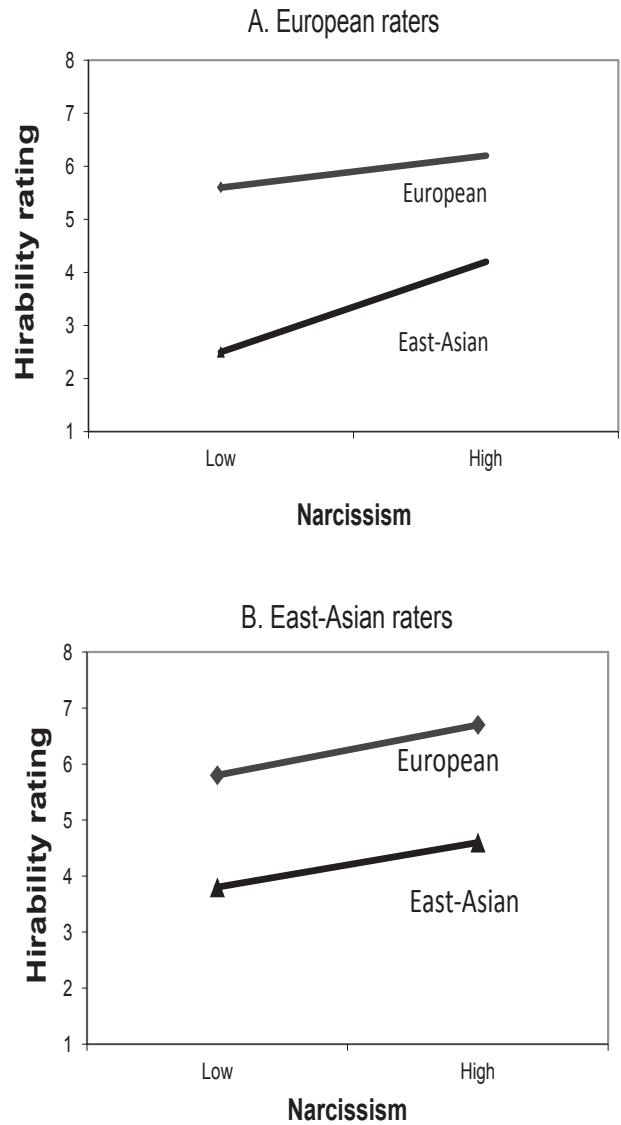
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ethnicities ranked applicants in the order of European narcissist, European non-narcissist, Asian narcissist, and Asian non-narcissist. The three-factor interaction was not significant ($p = .60$).

Personal beliefs about appropriate interview behavior

We showed that the lower ratings received by Asian applicants were due to their lesser use of active ingratiation. Is it that Asians are incapable of such tactics or do they avoid them on purpose? They might perceive modesty as a more effective strategy than self-enhancement or self-promotion.

We pursued this question by conducting an ancillary survey regarding appropriate interview behaviors. We asked 38 European and 35 Asian students to rank order seven behaviors with respect to their importance in job interviews. Based on t tests, modesty was ranked as more important by Asians ($p < .05$), whereas asking questions was ranked higher by Europeans ($p < .05$).

General discussion

Our introduction pointed to the job interview as a possible exception to the rule that chronic self-promoters make bad impressions. Our two studies supported that proposition. A full elucidation required that we distinguish among several self-presentation tactics used by chronic self-promoters: self-enhancement (exaggeration of knowledge), self-promotion (calling attention to assets), and ingratiation (appearing likable to the interviewer). Although typically lumped together and used interchangeably, these three tactics operated independently and yielded different outcomes.

Our elucidation of the success of chronic self-promoters required the combined results of our two studies. In Study 1, chronic self-promoters (i.e., European-heritage narcissists) unleashed their most forceful self-presentation efforts when they expected to confront a challenging audience (i.e., an expert interviewer). In Study 2, this forceful self-presentation proved successful in impressing the judges.

By contrast, the abilities of non-promoters (i.e., Asian-heritage non-narcissists) were not as evident to the judges. In Study 2, these applicants were rated poorly even though they had been matched to the other applicants with respect to relevant abilities.

Although chronic self-promoters were successful, it was not their self-enhancement (knowledge exaggeration) that appealed to the judges. According to our analyses, that specific tactic did not play a direct role in overall impressions of their performance. Isolation of other behaviors was necessary to clarify both the personality and culture effects.

Self-enhancing personalities: mechanisms for their success

Our choice of narcissism to represent self-enhancing personalities appears to be justified. The details of our results help explain why narcissists are more successful in the job interview context than in some previous research contexts. In Study 1, it was clear that they maximized their self-promotion (but not their ingratiation) in confronting an expert interviewer[6]: High expertise is what candidates expect in typical job interviews. However, we could not tell from Study 1 whether such behavior would pay off in generating more positive observer evaluations.

In Study 2, it became evident that narcissists were doing something right. Unlike findings from other contexts, the interview behavior of narcissists did not undermine their appeal. In fact, compared with their non-narcissist counterparts, they were perceived as the superior applicants. This advantage held for evaluations by expert as well as nonexpert judges.

To determine the mediator of these positive evaluations, we gradually degraded the information available to judges. Eventually we isolated self-promotion activity as the key: The greater word volume of narcissists led to higher performance evaluations. This finding is consistent with previous work showing that greater competence is attributed to those who talk more (Paulhus & Morgan, 1997) or at a faster rate (Ross, Amabile, & Steinmetz, 1977).

But was it pure volume that impressed the judges? After all, some of their verbiage could have been neutral or even negative. Indeed, it turned out to be the rate of positive self-comments that gave narcissists the advantage.

In short, their increased self-enhancement did not pay off, but their self-praise did. Overall, the self-presentational style of narcissists helped more than it hindered their performance, at least in this context.

Cultural differences in self-promotion and ingratiation

Why do Asian applicants, although matched against Europeans on abilities, receive poorer evaluations? Is it a bias against Asians or some aspect of their interview behavior? Following Johnson and Hogan (2006), we argue that all cultural groups are engaging in self-presentation, but that the Asian tactics are less effective in this context.

Previous work raised the possibility of an anti-Asian bias (Cargile, 2000; Lin et al., 2005; cf. Young & Fox, 2002). It

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[6]An alternative explanation to the pattern observed in Figure 1 is the facilitation of dominant responses by increased arousal. The stress of dealing with an expert interviewer may have exaggerated the initial self-presentation levels observed with nonexpert interviewer (Jackson & Latané, 1981).

is not obvious, however, that a uniform Western bias against Asians could explain our results. First, the Asian applicants received poorer evaluations even when all visual and vocal cues to ethnicity were removed. Instead, some aspect of their written transcripts, valid or not, was judged as diagnostic of poorer performance. Second, it was not just (potentially biased) European-heritage judges who gave Asian-heritage applicants poor evaluations; so did Asian-heritage judges.

We conducted a series of analyses to determine what interview behaviors led to these poor evaluations. Independent sets of expert judges rated the transcripts for specific interview behaviors. It turned out that active ingratiation behaviors (engagement, humor, laughing) were more common among European-heritage applicants, a difference that culminated in better performance evaluations. These behaviors may have led judges to attribute more congeniality to European applicants. The resulting halo effect then generalized to inflate overall hirability ratings (Goffin et al., 2003). Alternatively, judges may have seen engagement and humor as qualities to be sought in a research assistant. From that perspective, judges are simply making a rational deduction.

We do not mean to convey that East Asians eschew self-presentation. Undoubtedly, they seek success in the job interview situation: Like any applicant, they, too, want to be seen as likable and competent (Marcus, 2009). To induce that impression, however, individuals of Asian heritage use modesty (Bond et al., 1982; Herrmann & Werbal, 2007). Even in the West, tactical modesty is often included in taxonomies of self-presentation (e.g., Bolino & Turnley, 1999; Jones & Pittman, 1982; Sedikides et al., 2007; Tice et al., 1995). But this self-presentational behavior does not appear to be effective in the job interview context.

Our culture-specific interpretation is consistent with work by Sedikides et al. (2003): They argue that this cultural difference in self-presentation is matter of kind, not degree. Those of European heritage emphasize individualistic values, whereas those of Asian heritage emphasize collectivistic values.

Our data house a curious paradox in the discrepancy between East Asians' own behavior and their evaluation of other East Asians. Recall that, compared with those of European heritage, East Asian applicants exhibited less self-promotion and, when surveyed, reported modesty as preferable to self-promotion. Yet as judges, East Asians did not favor such behavior: In fact, they used the same evaluative criteria as the European observers. This behavior–attitude paradox may reflect reluctance among East Asian immigrants to self-promote, even when they know what is expected in Western settings. Such dualistic thinking may be a manifestation of the code switching seen in bicultural individuals (Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Benet-Martinez, 2000). As actors,

they behave like East Asians; as observers, they behave like Westerners.[7]

Integration and distinctions

We have confirmed that personality and culture operate as distinct sources of self-presentation tendencies with different underlying processes. There are a number of ways of contrasting the two processes. In one framing, the personality effect is accounted for by a stylistic predisposition and the cultural effect, by a socialized tactical preference. Alternatively, the former involves an unconscious self-superiority, and the latter, a conscious coping strategy. Nonetheless, both the personality and cultural tendencies may be viewed as adaptations to environmental challenges.

In Study 1, for example, we see both narcissists and non-narcissists as adapting to an authoritative audience, albeit in contrasting fashions. In fact, all four combinations of narcissism and culture may be reacting in a style that proved to be personally rewarding in the past. Using Elliot's (1999) terminology, narcissists employ an approach strategy (increasing their self-promotion) whereas non-narcissists use an avoidance strategy (decreasing their self-promotion). Independently, Europeans use active ingratiation whereas Asians use modesty. Using Arkin's (1981) terms, narcissists and Europeans favor acquisitive strategies whereas Asians favor defensive strategies. Note that the personality and cultural factors tend to be correlated in mixed samples: Europeans score higher on narcissism than do East Asians (Foster et al., 2003).

Recommendations to interviewers and applicants

Interviewers

Our results justify previous warnings to interviewers to be wary of strategic self-presentation in the course of evaluating applicants for employment or promotion (Delery & Kacmar, 1998). Although it does play a role in applicant cover letters and resumes (Knouse, Giacalone, & Pollard, 1988), self-presentation can totally engulf judgments made in the interview context. Interviewers need to be reminded that applicants differ not only in actual competence but also in self-presentation style. The effects of style are especially powerful because they can operate without awareness on the part of an actor or an audience (Schlenker & Leary, 1982).

If interviewers fail to attend to and counteract these biases in some fashion, they may fail to make the best hiring choices for their organization. For example, an individual's stylistic

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[7]One possibility is that temperamental tendency toward shyness is easier to overcome in judging others than in controlling one's own behavior (Paulhus, Duncan, & Yik, 2002).

tendency to self-promote or self-deprecate during interviews should not be allowed to override paper credentials unless the job description favors one style over the other. Unfortunately, the deterrent effects of accountability are not effective with stylistic self-promoters.

Along with Maurer (2002), our results also question the value of interviewer expertise.[8] To our expert judges in Study 1, the self-enhancement of narcissists was apparent. Yet both experts and nonexperts in Study 2 were taken in by the claims of self-promoters. If evaluators believe the individual to be truly competent, then they tend to overlook their narcissistic behavior (Kwan et al., 2008). This tendency is especially unfortunate given that the positive first impressions of narcissists are known to wane and even reverse (Paulhus, 1998).

Continuing research on these interview dynamics will help increase the knowledge of self-presentation and its effects on employment opportunities. Based on our research, we suggest studying the possible benefit of having interviewers rate the candidate's self-promotion before rating their hirability. By drawing attention to a candidate's self-presentation style, its impact may be mitigated.

Applicants

One lesson for applicants is that the job interview is a special situation in which active self-presentation is expected. An applicant who fails to do so will be at a distinct disadvantage (Barron & Sackett, 2008; Campbell & Roberts, 2007). However, neither self-promotion nor ingratiation can be used indiscriminately. Based on our research, applicants should emulate narcissists and repeatedly call attention to the best of their credentials; they should also do their best to use active ingratiation tactics (e.g., Caldwell & Burger, 1998). By contrast, exaggeration of one's credentials is not helpful, neither is tactical modesty. In sum, it behooves applicants to understand the special circumstances of an interview and its unique demand for self-presentation.

Our research has increasing relevance as immigration to the West from East Asian countries increases. Rather than employment discrimination *per se*, the issues confronting East Asian immigrants are more complex. Fortunately, workshops for both employers and applicants are becoming more available (Sue & Sue, 1999; Woo, 2000).

Future research

Understanding the Asian paradox issue noted above requires research replicating our findings in collectivist societies. Our results may well be unique to interviews in countries dominated by those of European heritage. Cultures where modesty is valued may well reverse the advantage enjoyed by chronic self-promoters. Such research may benefit from the fact that psychological constructs that differentiate cultures can often be measured as individual differences within culture (Ames, 2008; Hamamura, Heine, & Paulhus, 2008; Matsumoto & Kupperbusch, 2001).

Detailed analyses of the acculturation process would allow us to examine its impact on evaluation of job applicants. Many of our East Asian judges came from second-, third-, or fourth-generation Asian Canadian families (McCrae, Yik, Trapnell, Bond, & Paulhus, 1998). We did examine recent immigrants and found the same pattern, but even those individuals may have interpreted the judgment task as requiring Western standards. One prominent issue is whether such a change in perspective is influenced more by the loss of heritage values or the acquisition of new values (Ryder, Alden, & Paulhus, 2000).

The cultural advantage in ingratiation tactics may not apply to interviews for technical positions such as computer programming, for example, where interpersonal skills are less important. Our results are more relevant to upper management positions, where qualifications emphasize an individual's ability to establish positive interactions with colleagues and personnel. We made a point of studying an occupational role involving both global categories of evaluation, sometimes labeled agency and communion (Abele & Wojciszke, 2007; Horowitz, 2004), and sometimes, competence and social appeal (Fiske et al., 2002). More generally, the relative weightings of these two components will differ dramatically across job descriptions.

Some readers may be surprised that we found no gender effects. In Study 1, there was no effect of interviewer gender on outcome ratings. In Study 2, results were similar across the all-male and all-female applicant groups. Of course, that design reveals nothing about possible gender differences within groups. Future research on mixed-gender groups is required to investigate possible gender main effects as well as interactions with narcissism and ethnicity.

Finally, we hope that our confirmation of the distinction between self-praise (calling attention to one's assets) and self-enhancement (exaggerating one's assets) will inspire further research. Direct manipulations of these two factors would provide more assurance of their causal status. Otherwise, our correlational analyses are subject to speculation about confounding factors. The separation of self-praise and enhancement might be applied to the tactics used by other self-promoting personalities, e.g., Machiavellianism and self-monitoring.

Conclusions

The job interview context provides an ideal context for exploring conceptual issues regarding self-presentation. Although not as authentic as actual interviews, the

[8]Of course, expertise will be critical at other stages of the job application, especially resume evaluation.

video-recorded simulation approach used here permits a more rich analysis of interview behavior as well as a comparison of varying types of judges.

On the theoretical side, our research should help shift the notion that personality traits are uniformly adaptive or maladaptive more toward a tradeoff perspective. To date, the literature on chronic self-promoters has emphasized the maladaptive side. Already qualifying that generalization are a few recent studies uncovering advantages enjoyed by self-promoters in the context of brief interactions. Our two studies advance that research in at least two respects. First is our demonstration that the ability to create positive first impressions translates into a major life skill, namely, the ability to impress job interviewers. Second is our elaboration of the process through which the self-promoter succeeds in this context. In some respects, we have challenged the assumption that expert interviews yield more accurate information than do zero acquaintance interactions.

In particular, our findings raise several key issues in the applied literature. One is the impact of interviewer expertise: Although expert raters can detect bragging and exaggeration, these behaviors may be overlooked in global evaluations.

Of course, our academically trained experts may not have the experience of real-world interviewers.

Our research also highlights the notion of person–situation fit in applied contexts. Individuals who fall short on one type of job application (e.g., an objective performance test) may succeed in an interview where their self-presentation skills pay off. We also answered the call to distinguish various elements of self-presentation. These distinctions allowed us to conclude that, in the job interview, exaggeration has no direct benefits, whereas self-praise and active ingratiation do.

Practical implications included recommendations for interviewers as well as applicants. The changing workforce requires a reconsideration of a number of job interview assumptions.

Acknowledgment

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