

Evolutionary Psychology of Impression Management: Domain Specific Strategies

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You are a different person to different people.

- Humans have specific, recurring types of relationships, such as parent-child, romantic, friendships, goal-directed groups.
- Consequences and dynamics of these relationships are different, leading to specific strategies for each relationship type.

Evolutionary Psychology

- Evolutionary Psychology
 - The use of evolutionary theory to inform and organize psychology
- Evolutionary Theory
 - Natural selection forms psychological mechanisms that are solutions to SPECIFIC adaptive problems that were faced in the Environment of Evolutionary Adaptation (EEA) in the Pleistocene (for humans)

Domain Specific Strategies

- Domain Specificity
 - Psychological mechanisms will be activated differentially, each by a limited range of relevant stimuli, i.e., a domain
- Social domains evaluated in this study
 - mating
 - friendships
 - status hierarchies

Impression Management

- Impression Management
 - Also known as self-presentation, is the conscious or unconscious attempt to appear a certain way to other people
- Strategic Impression Management
 - The elicitation of appearances tailored to the different needs of diverse social domains
- Strategies predicted by domain in this study
 - **Mating: committed, attractive**
 - **Friends: helpful, likable**
 - **Status Hierarchies: assertive, easy-going**

Mating - Being a "Good" Mate

- Parental Investment (PI) (a long-term strategy)
 - Because humans invest heavily in offspring, it is important to appear **committed** to the relationship
- Reproductive fitness and mate value
 - Appearing **attractive**, through health and youth are important for producing high quality, multiple offspring (especially for females)

Friendship - Reciprocal Altruism in Everyday Life

- Reciprocal Altruism
 - Helping another who will probably help you in the future
 - The evolutionary principle underlying friendship
- Development of Trust
 - Appearing **helpful**, by word or deed, implies intention to do the same in the future
- Avoiding conflict
 - Appearing **likable** communicates non-threatening intent

Status Hierarchies - Organization in Groups

- Because status is important for mate and resource acquisition, social status is a universal human motive
- New groups, as often form in college, require the establishment of status hierarchies, which stabilize through time (although changes can yet occur)
- Dominance
 - Appearing **assertive** is a tactic to ascend the hierarchy
- Subordination
 - Appearing **easy-going** is a tactic to accept your current location in the hierarchy

Methods

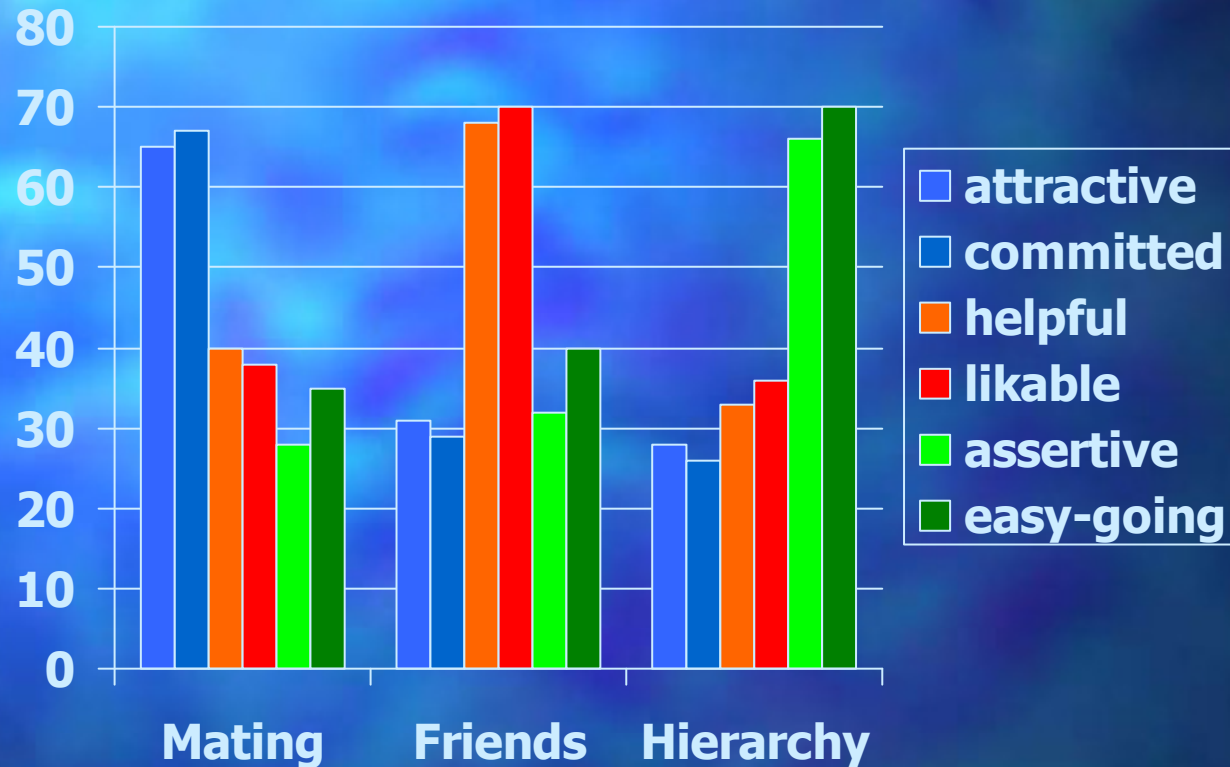
■ A Diary Study

- For two weeks participants will record details about three important or memorable social interactions per day using a variant of the Rochester Interaction Record (RIR)
- Participants will record
 - presentation strategy used, e.g., attractive or helpful
 - type of interaction, e.g., romantic, friends
 - degree of motivation and perceived success

■ Data Analysis

- Hierarchical linear modeling, capable of differentiating between-person and between-situation variance, will be used

Predicted Results



- Figure 1. Percent of each impression management strategy by domain of interaction