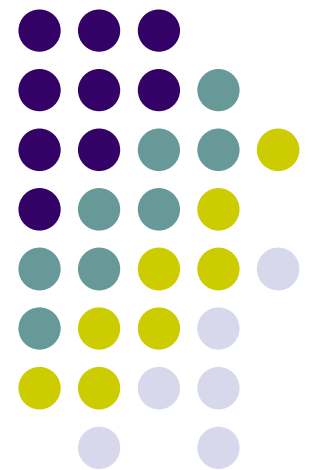


Evolutionary Psychology of Impression Management: Mating Strategies in Everyday Interactions

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Impression Management



- **Leary and Kowalski (1990)**

- “*Impression management* (also called *self-presentation*) refers to the process by which individuals attempt to control the impressions others form of them.”

- **Jones and Pittman (1982)**

- Theoretical development of impression management has suffered from a lack of a broader framework within which to conceptualize impression management.

- **Haselton and Buss (2000)**

- Error Management Theory asserts that the human cognitive system has been designed to prevent costly mistakes of action or inaction in romantic interactions.
- Therefore humans should attempt to manage their impressions so as to appear to have or not to have or to emphasize or minimize specific traits or characteristics. This impression management should occur within specific strategic contexts and may be in response to the cognitive biases of audiences.

Appearances Desirable in a Mate



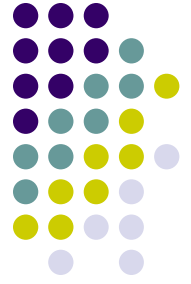
- **Simpson and Gangestad (1991)**
 - Individuals using different sociosexual strategies have different preferences in mate characteristics. This study looked only at long-term mating.
- **Kenrick, Groth, Trost, and Sadalla (1993)**
 - Both sexes looking for a long-term mate are concerned about a potential partner's willingness to commit to the relationship, females to avoid loss of paternal investment in offspring, males to avoid cuckoldry.
- **Buss and Schmitt (1993)**
 - Males are more concerned about the physical attractiveness of potential long-term mates than females because fertility and reproductive value are more important for a male than a female when selecting a mate.
- Therefore both sexes should have psychological mechanisms that attempt to emphasize or produce the appearance of commitment, and more so for females the appearance of physical attractiveness, during interactions with long-term romantic partners.

Friendship: A Point of Comparison



- By comparing impression motivation during interactions with friends and romantic partners, the relative importance of appearing committed and physically attractive during interactions with romantic partners is discernable.
- **Tooby and Cosmides (1996)**
 - Traits valued in a friend include:
 - **Positive Externalities**, i.e., behaviors that have side-effects that are beneficial to others
 - **“Mind Reading” Ability**, i.e., easy communication and intuitive understanding
 - **Irreplaceability**
 - **Shared Values and Desires**
- Individuals should be less motivated to appear physically attractive and committed during interactions with friends than romantic partners because these appearances are less valued in a friend than in a romantic partner.

Hypotheses



Sex Differences

- 1) Females and males will be equally concerned about appearing committed during interactions with romantic partners.
- 2) Females will be more concerned about appearing physically attractive than males during interactions with romantic partners, but not with friends.

Romantic Partners vs Friends

- 3) Appearing attractive will be more important during interactions with romantic partners than with friends.
- 4) Appearing committed to the relationship will be more important during interactions with romantic partners than with friends.

Methodology



- Participants: 24 male and 31 female students (N=55)
- Data Collection: Diary Study
 - For two weeks participants recorded, on the Internet, details about social interactions lasting 10 minutes or more that they had each day using a variant of the Rochester Interaction Record (RIR) (Wheeler and Nezlek, 1977).
 - **Participants recorded, on a 1-9 scale, how motivated they were to appear physically attractive and committed to the relationship.** Also recorded was their relationship with the interactant, choosing between roommate, acquaintance, friend, romantic partner, and other. (Note: only interactions with friends and romantic partners were analyzed in this study).
- Data Analysis: Multilevel Random Coefficient Modeling
 - Because interactions can have more than two people and we are concerned with the most salient interactant, analysis was limited to the first interactant described by participants for each interaction.
 - Multilevel random coefficient modeling (specifically, HLM) was used to test the four hypotheses because uneven numbers of interactions were recorded by each participant in this repeated measures design.

Results: Analysis of Sex Differences in Impression Motivation during Interactions with Romantic Partners



- Both sexes are equally concerned about appearing attractive during interactions with romantic partners.

Means for Impression Motivations by Sex during Interactions with Romantic Partners

- Both sexes are equally concerned about appearing committed during interactions with romantic partners.

<u>Impression</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>p-value</u>
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Attractive	7.106	7.266	0.709
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- No sex differences were found for impression motivation during interactions with romantic partners.

Committed	7.536	7.564	0.946
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Results: Analysis of Sex Differences in Impression Motivation during Interactions with Friends

- Both sexes are equally concerned about appearing attractive during interactions with friends.
- No sex differences were found for impression motivation during interactions with friends.

Means for Impression Motivations by Sex during Interactions with Friends

Impression	Male	Female	p-value
Attractive	2.413	2.579	0.701
Committed	6.099	5.416	0.182



Results: Analysis of Impression Motivation by Relationship

- Appearing attractive is more important during interactions with romantic partners than with friends.

Means for Impression Motivations by Relationship with Interactant

- Appearing committed is more important during interactions with romantic partners than with friends.

- Relationship with interactant was an important determinant of impression motivation.

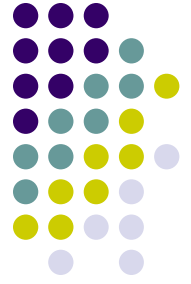
		Romantic	
Impression	Friend	Partner	p-value
Attractive	2.496	7.186	0.000
Committed	5.757	7.550	0.000

Conclusions



- Hypothesis 1 is supported.
 - Females and males are equally concerned about appearing committed during interactions with romantic partners.
- Hypothesis 2 is not supported.
 - Females are NOT more concerned about appearing physically attractive than males during interactions with romantic partners (or with friends).
- Hypothesis 3 is supported.
 - Appearing attractive is more important during interactions with romantic partners than with friends.
- Hypothesis 4 is supported.
 - Appearing committed to the relationship is more important during interactions with romantic partners than with friends.

Conclusions



- This study evaluated humans in daily social interaction and replicated results found from other methodologies for 3 of the 4 hypotheses tested.
- The lack of a sex difference in motivation to appear physically attractive during interactions with romantic partners is surprising as it is a common finding. Possible explanations for the current results include:
 - **A ceiling effect:** both males and females rated their motivation to appear physically attractive (and committed, perhaps) during interactions with romantic partners very high on the given 1-9 scale, 7.106 for males and 7.266 for females.
 - **Cultural values:** perhaps contemporary American culture places more value on male physical attractiveness than in the past (when other research was done), or the sample had a cultural milieu unusual for college students.
 - **Ipsative reference:** because participants were not asked to compare their motivations with those of the opposite sex, both sexes may have expressed their equally strong subjective experience of concern for appearing physically attractive to romantic partners.

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