

Self-Presentation in Everyday Interactions: Effects of Target Familiarity and Gender Composition

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This study examined people's self-presentational motives in unstructured, everyday social interaction as a function of participants' gender similarity to, and general familiarity with, the targets of their self-presentations. Participants maintained a variant of the Rochester Interaction Record for 1 week. For every interaction that lasted 10 min or more, they rated the degree to which they wanted to make each of 4 impressions (likable, competent, ethical, and attractive), how much they thought about the impressions others in the interaction formed of them, and how nervous they felt in the interaction. In general, participants' self-presentational motives were lower in interactions with highly familiar people of their own sex than they were either in interactions with less familiar people of their sex or in interactions with people of the other sex regardless of familiarity. When participants' interactions with only their 3 most familiar interactants were examined, self-presentational concerns decreased with familiarity in same-sex interactions but increased with familiarity in cross-sex interactions.

People's outcomes in life are greatly affected by the impressions others form of them. The social and material consequences of being perceived positively—as competent, friendly, ethical, and attractive, for example—differ greatly from the consequences of being regarded negatively. Because people's outcomes in life depend, in part, on others' perceptions and evaluations of them, people sometimes try to convey impressions that will help them obtain valued goals. As a result, they often monitor and attempt to control the impressions they are making, a process known as self-presentation or impression management (Goffman, 1959; Schlenker, 1980).¹

The kinds of impressions people try to create are affected by several situational and dispositional factors, including prevailing norms and roles, the characteristics and values of the people whom the person wants to impress, others' existing impressions of the person, the person's own self-concept, and his or her desired images of self (Leary, 1993, 1994; Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Although many studies during the past three decades have examined the influence of a myriad of factors on self-presentation, most previous research has involved laboratory or field experiments involving individuals who were unacquainted with one another (for reviews, see Baumeister, 1982a; Jones & Pittman, 1982; Leary, 1994; Leary & Kowalski, 1990; Schlenker, 1980; Tedeschi, 1981). At present, there is, to our knowledge, little empirical data describing self-presentational processes in everyday life.

Our purpose in conducting this study was to fill this void by examining self-presentation within the context of people's ongoing, everyday social interactions. To do this, we had participants in the present study describe their self-presentational motives and concerns in social interactions using a variant of the Rochester Interaction Record (RIR)—a self-report, social interaction diary introduced by Wheeler and Nezlek (1977). Although variants of the RIR have been used to study a variety of phenomena in everyday social interaction, including loneliness (Wheeler, Reis, & Nezlek, 1983), social support (Cutrona, 1986), and nonverbal sensitivity (Hodgins & Zuckerman, 1990), the RIR has not been used to study self-presentation (see Nezlek, Wheeler, & Reis, 1983, and Reis & Wheeler, 1991, for reviews of research using the RIR).

The primary goal of this study was to examine self-presentational motives in everyday interactions. Of the factors that might influence self-presentation, we focused on four that seemed likely to be particularly potent determinants of self-presentation. First, we were interested in how people's self-presentational motives are affected by how well they know the others who are present. Because most previous studies of self-presentation have involved interactions among strangers, little direct evidence exists regarding the effects of target familiarity on impression management. Despite this lack of evidence, there are good reasons to hypothesize that people should be less motivated to impression manage when interacting with those they know well than with those they know less well. People seem particularly motivated to make impressions in their initial interactions with a particular person and, given the inordinate weight that observers place on first impressions (Asch, 1946), this concern is not misguided. However, as others get to know

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¹ Although a distinction may be drawn between the terms *self-presentation* and *impression management* (Leary & Kowalski, 1990; Schlenker, 1980), for our purposes it will suffice to treat them as synonymous.

the individual, he or she generally has less reason to try to make a particular impression. Not only are others' perceptions less likely to be influenced by a particular self-presentational behavior as time goes on, but as people learn more about a person, their knowledge constrains the range of public identities the person can reasonably claim (Baumeister, 1982b; Baumeister & Jones, 1978; Schlenker, 1975). Second, assuming that people tend to interact most frequently with people who already accept and like them, the individual interacting with well-known others is often assured of their esteem and, thus, has less need to engage in self-presentation in order to obtain social approval (Jellison & Gentry, 1978). For these reasons, people should be less motivated to make particular impressions and should give less thought to the impressions they are making when in encounters with those they interact with frequently.

This should be particularly true for people who are well integrated into a social network, but perhaps less so for people who have fewer friends. People who have an established, long-standing network of friends and acquaintances should be less concerned with how others perceive them (and less motivated to impression manage) than people who have a smaller social network and who are more motivated to make new friends and be accepted. Thus, newcomers to a group should be more concerned about their impressions on others than people who have been in the group for some time (Moreland & Levine, 1989). On a college campus, for example, we might expect first-year students to be more concerned than upperclass students about others' impressions of them.

Third, we were interested in the effects of the gender of the self-presentational target on people's self-presentational motives. Evidence suggests that people are often particularly concerned about managing their impressions when interacting with people of the other sex (Glass, Gottman, & Shmurak, 1976; Leary, 1983).² There may be several reasons for this. One is that, for heterosexuals, persons of the other sex can mediate social rewards that those of one's own sex cannot. Being perceived favorably by the other sex could result in the acquisition of dating, romantic, sexual, or marital partners. In addition, when people make appropriate impressions on those of the other sex (whatever those impressions may be in a particular context), they are likely to receive self-affirming feedback indicating that they are socially and sexually desirable—feedback that, though highly valued, cannot be obtained (at least for heterosexuals) from those of one's own sex (Leary, 1983). Furthermore, because people tend to interact less with the other sex than with their own sex (e.g., Wheeler & Nezlek, 1977), cross-sex friendships and interactions may be scarcer and thus more valuable. People are more likely to engage in tactical self-presentation when resources are scarce (Pandy, 1986). These considerations lead to the prediction that self-presentational motives should generally be greater in cross-sex than in same-sex encounters.

Not only may impression motivation be greater in cross-sex encounters, but people may also want to convey different impressions to men than to women. People's self-presentations are strongly affected by their assumptions regarding the values and preferences of the targets of their self-presentations (e.g., Carnevale, Pruitt, & Britton, 1979; Gergen, 1965; Reis & Gruen, 1976; von Baeyer, Sherk, & Zanna, 1981; Zanna & Pack, 1975). To the extent that people hold different stereotypes about what

men and women value, they may assume that men and women like different kinds of people and then manage their impressions accordingly.

Fourth, we examined how the gender of the individual was related to his or her self-presentational behavior, sometimes on its own and sometimes in connection with the gender of the other participants in the interaction. Overall, men and women are socialized to project somewhat different images, and these differences in socialization are buttressed by prevailing norms. Along these lines, Deaux and Major (1987) suggested that many sex-related differences in behavior are due to differences in men's and women's self-presentations, differences caused by socialization and gender-specific norms. Consistent with this, previous studies have found that men and women present themselves differently. For example, women tend to disclose more about themselves to others than men do (Dindia & Allen, 1992). Furthermore, men tend to present themselves more favorably than women do on attributes related to competence, whereas women tend to present themselves more positively on interpersonal, socioemotional attributes (Leary, Robertson, Barnes, & Miller, 1986; Schlenker, 1975). However, such tendencies may interact with the gender of one's interaction partner. For example, in one study, female subjects conveyed less dominance to a male than to a female partner unless explicitly instructed by the researcher to be dominant (Klein & Willerman, 1979). Snell (1989) found that men and women were willing to disclose different kinds of information about themselves depending on whether the targets were male or female.

To summarize, the goal of the present study was to investigate the individual and interactive effects of people's gender, the depth of their social integration, their familiarity with their interactional partners, and the effects of the gender of these partners on people's self-presentations in everyday social interactions.

Method

Participants

Participants were 80 male and 99 female undergraduate students at Wake Forest University, a private university with a total student body of approximately 6,000. To achieve diversity comparable to that of the university's social environment, participants were recruited from two samples—the introductory psychology research subject pool (which is composed primarily of first- and second-year students) and an upper-level psychology course (which is taken only by third- and fourth-year students).

Instructions to Participants and Procedure

Participants attended an introductory session in groups of 8 to 18. During these meetings they were told that the study concerned people's patterns of social interaction and that they would use a structured diary form to describe their social interactions. Participants were told to describe every social interaction they had that lasted 10 min or longer. An interaction was defined as any encounter with one or more other people in which the participants attended to one another and adjusted their

² This effect may be true only for heterosexuals. However, no previous research has examined this issue.

behavior in response to one another, a definition similar to Goffman's (1971) definition of a "social with." Examples were provided to clarify what was an interaction (e.g., a conversation) and what was not an interaction (e.g., sitting silently with another person watching TV). Participants were instructed to complete the RIR only for face-to-face interactions; telephone conversations were to be excluded. We felt that the self-presentational elements of phone conversations were sufficiently different from face-to-face encounters to exclude them from consideration in this study. Participants were told to maintain the diary for 7 days.

Social interactions were described using a modified version of the RIR (Wheeler & Nezlek, 1977). Similar to most studies using the RIR, participants indicated who their cointeractants were (using unique initials for each cointeractant) and the sex of each cointeractant, for up to three different cointeractants. For interactions with more than three others, they did not record individual initials; rather, they indicated how many men and women were present. The length of each interaction also was reported, and participants rated each interaction on six dimensions. These six ratings were made using 9-point scales, with the following labels: 1 = *not*, 3 = *slightly*, 5 = *somewhat*, 7 = *quite*, and 9 = *very*. Labels were chosen to represent roughly equal intervals according to research on the relative strength of modifiers (Cliff, 1959).

Four of the ratings provided information regarding the kinds of impressions that participants wanted to make on the other people who were present. Participants indicated the degree to which they wanted the other interactants to perceive them as: (a) likable, friendly, and socially desirable (ingratiation); (b) competent, skilled, and intelligent (self-promotion); (c) ethical, moral, and principled (exemplification); and (d) physically attractive, handsome, or pretty (adonization). The first three of these dimensions (ingratiation, self-promotion, and exemplification) were based on Jones and Pittman's (1982) taxonomy of self-presentational strategies. The fourth, adonization, was added because we thought that self-presentational motives involving physical appearance would be strong in this sample. (The term *adonization* comes from Adonis, a young man whom the goddess Aphrodite loved for his beauty.)³

Two other scales were included to measure how concerned participants were about others' impressions. Participants were asked to rate (a) how much they had thought about how their cointeractants were perceiving or evaluating them during the interaction and (b) how nervous or tense they had felt in the encounter. This second rating was included because anxiety in social encounters often reflects people's concerns with others' impressions of them (Schlenker & Leary, 1982).⁴

The various response categories on the RIR were discussed until participants understood their definitions and felt comfortable with the forms and procedure. Participants were instructed to complete an interaction record as soon as possible after each interaction occurred (or at the least, to update their diaries twice each day), and they received a bound pad of forms sufficient for the duration of the study. Confidentiality of participants' responses was emphasized and carefully guarded throughout the study. The instructions closely followed those used by Wheeler and Nezlek (1977) and others (see Nezlek & Wheeler, 1984, for detailed descriptions of the methods for using the RIR). After signing a statement of informed consent, participants completed a background questionnaire that provided demographic information, including gender, age, academic class, the amount of time they had been at college, the number of friends they had on campus, whether they had a steady dating partner on campus, and phone number.

To increase participants' compliance with the instructions during the study, the research assistants who had met with the participants in the initial sessions called each participant every other day during the week of the project. During this contact, they reminded the participant to complete the interaction record regularly and gave participants the opportunity to ask questions if needed. When direct contact was not possible, reminder messages were left on answering machines or with room-

mates. During the assistant's last call of the week, he or she reminded the participant of the date and time of the follow-up session.

At the follow-up session, participants completed a questionnaire that indicated (a) how difficult it had been to maintain the diary, (b) how accurate they thought the diary was, (c) their estimate of the percentage of interactions over 10 min they had remembered to record, (d) the number of times they had updated the diary each day, (e) the amount of time they had spent completing the diary each day, (f) the degree to which participating in the study had interfered with their daily lives, and (g) the degree to which participating in the study had affected what they thought and did during the week. Questions were answered on 7-point scales. They also described the problems they had maintaining the diaries. Finally, after the participants had completed the questionnaires, we answered any questions they had and then dismissed them.

Measures of Social Interaction

Participants' social interactions were quantified by calculating summary measures that described each participant's social interactions during the period of the study; we analyzed the individual participant (rather than the individual interaction). Because the primary focus of this study was the extent to which self-presentation in social interaction varied as a function of how familiar people were with their cointeractants, we calculated summary measures for each participant, in order to describe their interactions with less versus more familiar cointeractants. In addition, to test hypotheses regarding differences between same- and other-sex interactions, the gender composition of the interaction (i.e., whether other interactants were of the same vs. other sex as the participant) was also taken into account in the construction of summary measures. Thus, four summary indices were calculated for each of the six dependent variables; these indices reflected each participant's average ratings in interactions with same-sex and other-sex cointeractants who were either low or high in familiarity.

The distinction between low- and high-familiarity interactants was operationalized quantitatively. High-familiarity interactants were defined as the three people with whom a participant interacted most frequently during the study, whereas low-familiarity interactants were the people who were not among a participant's three most frequent cointeractants.

Familiarity was operationalized through frequency of contact because it provided an unambiguous definition that was consistent across participants. In addition, considerable research has shown that frequency of contact is a reliable indicator of the closeness of friendships (Hays, 1989; Nezlek, 1993a, 1993b; Nezlek, Wheeler, & Reis, 1983; Reis & Wheeler, 1991; Wheeler & Nezlek, 1977). The decision to classify the three most frequently mentioned cointeractants as *familiar* was based on research by Wheeler and Nezlek (1977) that showed that trends in the quantity of interaction and in affective reactions to interac-

³ In their discussion of self-presentation strategies, Jones and Pittman (1982) described five primary strategies: ingratiation, self-promotion, exemplification, intimidation, and supplication. We opted to measure only three of these self-presentational motives because we hesitated to ask participants to make too many ratings of each interaction (which might have reduced their willingness to maintain the diaries), and we believed that intimidation and supplication would be relatively uncommon among our participants.

⁴ Similar to previous studies using the RIR, participants also rated their interactions on scales assessing intimacy, enjoyment, and influence. However, because these ratings mostly replicated previous studies (e.g., women's same-sex interactions were more intimate than men's; interactions with highly familiar cointeractants were viewed as more enjoyable) and were irrelevant to our interest in self-presentation, they are not discussed.

tions leveled off past the three most frequent cointeractants (see Reis and Wheeler, 1991, for a detailed discussion of the use of frequency of contact as an operationalization of degree of acquaintance).

To account for gender similarity, the distinction between low and high familiarity was made separately for same- and other-sex cointeractants. To make this distinction, each participant's same- and other-sex social networks (all the different people with whom the participant interacted during the study) were examined. Same- and other-sex high-frequency (or familiar) interactants were designated as the three most frequently mentioned same- and other-sex cointeractants, respectively, and same- and other-sex low-familiarity interactants were designated as cointeractants that were not among the three most frequently mentioned same- or other-sex cointeractants.

In brief, four summary measures were calculated for each participant (Low or High Familiarity \times Same or Other Sex) on each dependent variable. Each of these summary measures consisted of the participant's mean rating across all interactions of a particular type. This system allowed us to compare the relative effects on self-presentational motives of the presence or absence of same- and other-sex interactants who differed in familiarity to the participant. When missing data occurred because a participant failed to complete a rating for a particular interaction, the summary measures for that participant were simply based on the ratings that were available for that participant; missing data occurred on less than 1% of the interactions. These summary measures were calculated using a version of the RIR analysis package (Nezlek & Wheeler, 1984).⁵

Results

As planned, the subject-selection procedure produced two groups that differed in terms of how well they were integrated into campus social life. At the time of the study, 79 of the participants were first-year students who had been on campus an average of 1.5 months ($SD = .55$), and 100 were non-first-year students who had been on campus an average of 23.4 months ($SD = 9.66$). First-year students reported that they had fewer friends on campus ($M = 12.3$) than students beyond their first year ($M = 16.5$), $F(1, 170) = 3.31$, $p < .07$. However, the groups did not differ in whether they had steady dating partners (45% vs. 42% for freshmen and nonfreshmen, respectively), $p > .10$.

Not surprisingly, participants differed in the number of interactions they had during the week. Given that the reliability of a measure increases with the number of observations that go into it, it is possible that some participants' summary data were more reliable than others' (because their summary measures were based on a greater number of interactions). We explored the possible effects of the number of interactions on the summary measures by computing correlations between the number of interactions subjects reported in a particular category and their ratings on the six dependent measures. Similar to earlier RIR studies, no notable relationships were found between the quantity of interactions and other responses. Thus, we found no evidence that the number of interactions per participant compromised any of the summary measures.

As in previous studies of everyday interaction, participants spent more time each day in interactions that involved one of their three most frequent same-sex cointeractants ($M = 88$ min per day) than in interactions with their three most frequent other-sex interactants ($M = 66$ min per day). Furthermore, they spent twice as much time interacting with low-familiarity same-sex interactants ($M = 36$ min per day) than low-familiarity other-sex interactants ($M = 18$ min per day).

Maintenance of the Diary

Participants' responses on the poststudy questionnaire suggested that they maintained the diary in accordance with instructions and that maintaining the diary did not interfere with their lives. Overall, participants indicated that it was only "mildly" difficult to maintain the diary ($M = 3.6$ on a 7-point scale) and that they considered their record-keeping to be "very" accurate ($M = 5.4$). Participants estimated that they had recorded approximately 90% of their interactions during the week, and they reported updating their diaries an average of 2.1 times each day and spending an average of 18 min per day doing this. Most participants reported completing their diaries once in the late afternoon and again in the late evening.

As noted, participants reported that recording their interactions did not interfere with their lives ($M = 2.3$ on a 7-point scale), nor did it affect what they did, thought, or felt ($M = 2.5$ on a 7-point scale). Although such self-reports cannot be regarded as objective measures of participants' compliance with instructions, participants' responses suggest that they had experienced few difficulties maintaining the diaries. Moreover, the means for these responses are similar to those obtained in previous RIR studies (Nezlek, Wheeler, & Reis, 1983; Reis & Wheeler, 1991).

Analytic Strategy

Self-presentational motives were analyzed with two types of analyses, both of which compared participants' responses in interactions as a function of their familiarity with their interaction partners. The first type of analysis compared reactions to interactions that included one of the participant's three most frequent interaction partners (high familiarity) to reactions to interactions in which none of the three most frequent others were present (low familiarity). Crossing familiarity with gender similarity of partner produced a four-category system: same-sex, low familiarity; other-sex, low familiarity; same-sex, high familiarity; and other-sex, high familiarity interactions. The second type of analysis examined differences in interactions among the three most familiar interaction partners. When crossed with gender similarity of partner, this produced a six-category system: same-sex, most familiar, second most, and third most familiar, and other-sex, most familiar, second most, and third most familiar.

Following the rationale for the inclusion of the specific ratings on the diary form, we analyzed the six ratings of interactions with two separate multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVAs). The four self-presentational motives (ingratia-

⁵ Group interactions were not included for two reasons. First, when more than three people were present, individual cointeractants were not recorded, making it impossible to determine whether close friends or acquaintances were present. Second, because of the nature of the personal contact that characterizes them, self-presentational dynamics in group interactions are likely to be different from self-presentational dynamics in smaller interactions. In any case, on average, participants indicated that only 14% of their interactions were group interactions, and so the analyses reported in this article describe the vast majority of participants' social interactions.

Table 1
Effects of Partner Gender and Familiarity on Self-Presentation Motives

Measure	<i>F</i> (1, 120)*	Low familiarity				High familiarity			
		Same sex		Other sex		Same sex		Other sex	
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Ingratiation	6.48	6.1	1.49	6.5 _a	1.41	5.7	1.65	6.5 _a	1.52
Self-promotion	15.45	5.8 _a	1.64	5.9 _a	1.70	5.2	1.68	6.0 _a	1.64
Exemplification	7.70	4.9 _a	1.91	5.2 _a	2.03	4.5	1.92	5.2 _a	1.99
Adonization	8.77	3.4 _a	1.87	4.9	1.84	3.1 _a	1.76	5.1	1.87
Impression monitoring	11.18	3.3	1.58	3.8 _a	1.77	2.7	1.32	3.8 _a	1.70

Note. Means in a single row that share a common subscript do not differ significantly ($p < .01$).

* $p < .01$.

tion, self-promotion, exemplification, and adonization) were analyzed in one MANOVA, and the two measures of concerns about impressions (nervousness about making a good impression and monitoring of what type of impression was made) were analyzed in another MANOVA. Participant sex and class were between-subjects factors, and gender similarity of interaction partners was a within-subjects factor, in each of these analyses. Significant multivariate effects were followed by univariate ANOVAs and post hoc tests when appropriate.

Interactions With Familiar Versus Unfamiliar Partners

For participants to be included in the analyses that examined the combined effects of familiarity and gender similarity of interaction partners, they must have interacted with at least four different same-sex and four other-sex persons over the course of the study. Forty-five participants did not interact with more than three other-sex partners over the course of the study, and 9 participants did not interact with more than three different same-sex partners. These participants could not be included in analyses that required measures describing interactions with unfamiliar persons. Parallel sets of analyses that compared these participants with those who were included in the analyses described below revealed no differences between the two groups on any of the quantitative measures of interaction (i.e., number and length), nor on their mean ratings on any of the six dependent variables. Results of previous research using the RIR also showed that participants who interacted with more than three persons of the opposite sex had similar interactions as participants who did not have at least three other-sex interactants (Nezlek, 1993b).

Self-presentations. The four self-presentational motives were analyzed with a 2 (participant sex) \times 2 (class: first-year student vs. others) \times 2 (gender similarity of partner: same vs. other) \times 2 (familiarity: low vs. high) MANOVA, with partner's familiarity and gender similarity as within-subjects factors. The MANOVA revealed a significant main effect of gender similarity, $F(4, 117) = 41.9$, $p < .01$, which was qualified by an interaction of familiarity and gender similarity, $F(4, 117) = 4.54$, $p < .01$. Significant interactions of familiarity and gender similarity occurred in the univariate analyses of all four measures; F values and means are presented in Table 1. Moreover,

in no instance was this interaction qualified by a higher order interaction involving participant sex and class.

Three of the four measures showed similar patterns. As shown in Table 1, interactions that included highly familiar, same-sex others involved lower motivation to ingratiate, self-promote, and exemplify than either interactions with low-familiarity, same-sex persons or interactions with highly familiar, other-sex persons ($ps < .05$). Participants were clearly less concerned with how they were perceived by members of their sex whom they knew well than by other types of cointeractants. In addition, although participants in same-sex interactions were less interested in presenting certain images of themselves if they knew the others well ($ps < .05$), self-presentational motives in interactions with the other sex did not vary as a function of familiarity ($ps > .20$).

The interaction of familiarity and gender similarity in the analysis of adonization (wanting to be perceived as attractive) resulted from a different pattern of means than the interactions for the other three variables. As shown in Table 1, the motivation to be perceived as attractive was lower in same-sex encounters than in other-sex encounters, regardless of familiarity. The interaction occurred because the difference between same- and other-sex interactions in the motivation to be perceived as attractive was greater when the interactants were familiar than when they were not.

The only other significant multivariate effect in this analysis was the two-way interaction of participant sex and gender similarity, $F(4, 117) = 2.52$, $p < .05$. Univariate analyses of variance (ANOVAs) showed that this effect was caused primarily by the ratings of the importance of self-presentations of competence (self-promotion), $F(1, 123) = 3.73$, $p < .06$. Tests of simple main effects showed that women interacting with other women ($M = 5.3$) were less motivated to be perceived as competent, skilled, or intelligent than were women interacting with men ($M = 5.9$) or men interacting with men ($M = 5.7$, $ps < .05$). Neither of the latter conditions differed from each other nor from male participants interacting with women ($M = 5.9$, $ps > .05$).

In general, then, participants seemed less motivated to impression manage in social interactions that included same-sex others with whom they were more familiar than in interactions that involved same-sex others who were less familiar or persons

of the other sex regardless of how familiar they were. Contrary to expectation, there were few significant effects for participant gender and none for academic class in these analyses of motivation to impression manage.

Impression monitoring and nervousness. The two measures that assessed the degree to which participants were concerned about others' impressions of them—impression monitoring ("How much did you think about how other people were perceiving and evaluating you?") and self-reported nervousness in the interaction—were analyzed with a 2 (participant sex) \times 2 (class: first-year student vs. others) \times 2 (partner gender similarity: same vs. other) \times 2 (familiarity: low vs. high) MANOVA. The MANOVA revealed significant main effects of familiarity, $F(2, 120) = 8.54$, and gender similarity, $F(2, 120) = 46.3$, $ps < .01$, that were qualified by a significant interaction of familiarity and gender similarity, $F(2, 120) = 6.10$, $p < .01$.

Univariate ANOVAs revealed that the interaction was significant for the measure of impression monitoring, $F(1, 121) = 11.4$, $p < .01$, but not for nervousness, $F(1, 121) = 1.41$, $p > .20$. As can be seen in the last line of Table 1, impression monitoring was lower in interactions with highly familiar, same-sex others than in any other type of interaction ($ps < .05$). Furthermore, although participants interacting with members of their own sex thought less about how others perceived them if they interacted with them frequently ($p < .05$), impression monitoring was equally high in encounters with the other sex regardless of familiarity ($p > .20$).

This interaction did not occur in the analysis of self-reported nervousness. Rather, two significant main effects occurred; participants were less nervous when interacting with familiar than unfamiliar people ($Ms = 1.9$ and 2.3), $F(1, 121) = 16.4$, and when interacting with their own sex rather than with the other sex ($Ms = 1.8$ and 2.4), $F(1, 121) = 55.4$, $ps < .01$.

Interactions With Familiar Persons

The analyses above focused on global differences between participants' self-presentations to those they knew well (i.e., their three most frequent interactants) and those they knew less well (everyone else). A second set of analyses was conducted to examine differences in participants' interactions among their most frequent (more familiar) partners. As with the analyses described above, participant sex and academic class were between-subject factors, and partner gender similarity and familiarity were within-subject factors; however, familiarity had three levels, and this factor was decomposed into linear and quadratic trends. To be included in these analyses, participants had to have interacted with at least three same-sex and three other-sex partners. Thirty-two participants were excluded from these analyses because they did not interact with at least three other-sex persons, and five were excluded because they did not interact with at least three same-sex persons.

Self-presentations. The only significant multivariate effect from the MANOVA of the four self-presentational motives was an interaction of the linear trend for familiarity and gender similarity, $F(4, 137) = 3.26$, $p < .01$. In addition, significant interactions of the linear trend of familiarity and gender similarity occurred in the univariate analyses of all four measures; F val-

Table 2
Self-Presentations to High-Familiarity Interactants

Measure	$F(2, 336)^*$	Familiarity					
		Highest		Second		Third	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Ingratiation	6.48						
Same sex		5.7	1.74	5.9	1.86	5.9	1.73
Other sex		6.6	1.77	6.4	1.87	6.2	1.98
Self-promotion	9.40						
Same sex		5.1	1.80	5.3	1.84	5.4	1.94
Other sex		6.1	1.75	6.0	1.81	5.8	2.05
Exemplification	10.03						
Same sex		4.4	2.03	4.5	2.11	4.6	2.15
Other sex		5.4	2.24	5.0	2.24	4.9	2.37
Adonization	7.09						
Same sex		3.2	1.85	3.2	1.97	3.3	2.14
Other sex		5.4	2.28	4.8	2.39	4.7	2.41

Note. F values are for the Familiarity (linear) \times Gender Similarity interaction.

* $p < .01$.

ues and means are presented in Table 2. Moreover, in no instance was this interaction qualified by a higher order interaction involving participant sex and class.

The means in Table 2 show that this interaction was caused by the fact that in interactions involving other-sex partners, self-presentational motives decreased as familiarity decreased, whereas in interactions with same-sex partners, self-presentational motives increased slightly or remained unchanged as familiarity decreased. Also, self-presentational motives were consistently stronger in interactions with other-sex than with same-sex partners (see the previous set of analyses comparing highly familiar same- and other-sex partners for the statistical tests of these comparisons).

Impression monitoring and nervousness. A similar MANOVA performed on self-reported impression monitoring and nervousness revealed a significant interaction of gender similarity and the quadratic trend of familiarity, $F(2, 137) = 4.67$, $p < .01$, which was qualified by a significant interaction of participant sex, gender similarity, and the quadratic trend, $F(2, 137) = 4.07$, $p < .05$. This triple interaction did not lend itself to a straightforward interpretation other than to note that it was caused largely by differences in men's and women's reactions to their second most familiar same- and other-sex partners.

Additional analyses. As mentioned previously, 32 participants were excluded from the above analyses because they did not interact with three different other-sex persons (although they did interact with three different same-sex persons). A series of analyses was done to compare the same-sex interactions of those who were included in these analyses with the interactions of those who were excluded. The results of these analyses suggested that the interactions of those who were included were very similar to the interactions of those who were excluded; however, these analyses of only same-sex familiar partners produced some effects for academic class that were not present in the analyses that included both same- and other-sex familiar partners.

Table 3
*Self-Presentations to High-Frequency Interactants
 of the Same Sex*

Measure	<i>F</i> (2, 336)	Frequency of interaction					
		Highest		Second		Third	
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Ingratiation	6.83**						
Freshmen		5.7	1.84	6.0	1.74	6.3	1.74
Nonfreshmen		5.6	1.67	5.7	1.97	5.7	1.69
Self-promotion	6.26**						
Freshmen		5.2	1.78	5.3	1.74	5.8	1.90
Nonfreshmen		5.2	1.82	5.2	1.94	5.2	1.94
Exemplification	4.42*						
Freshmen		4.5	2.12	4.6	2.08	5.0	2.04
Nonfreshmen		4.1	1.97	4.2	2.14	4.2	2.18
Adonization	2.01						
Freshmen		2.9	1.96	2.9	2.05	3.3	2.35
Nonfreshmen		3.2	1.77	3.1	1.92	3.1	1.95

Note. The *F* values are for the Familiarity \times Class interaction.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

In addition to a multivariate main effect of familiarity (which was reflected as a simple main effect of familiarity in Table 2), $F(4, 164) = 2.39, p < .05$, a significant multivariate two-way interaction of the linear trend for familiarity and class was obtained, $F(4, 165) = 2.55, p < .05$. Univariate ANOVAs revealed that the two-way interaction was significant for ingratiation, self-promotion, and exemplification, but not adonization (*F* values and condition means are shown in Table 3.) The pattern of means was identical for ingratiation, self-promotion, and exemplification. Freshmen were more motivated to convey impressions of being likable, competent, and attractive to same-sex people they knew less well ($ps < .05$). In contrast, the self-presentational motivations of participants beyond their freshman year did not differ as a function of how much they interacted with each of their three most familiar interactants ($ps > .10$).

We conducted a similar analysis on other-sex interactions for all subjects who listed at least three other-sex interactants during the week (regardless of whether they listed three same-sex cointeractants); this revealed a significant multivariate main effect of familiarity (which was reflected in the interaction shown in Table 2), $F(4, 142) = 3.12, p < .05$, and an interaction of the linear trend of class by subject sex, $F(4, 142) = 2.67, p < .05$. ANOVAs showed that the interaction was significant at the univariate level only for self-presentations of attractiveness, $F(1, 142) = 7.12, p < .01$. Freshmen women ($M = 5.9$) expressed more interest in appearing attractive than freshmen men ($M = 4.6, p < .05$), but the difference in adonization was not significant for upper-class women ($M = 4.6$) and men ($M = 4.9, p > .05$).

Discussion

The present study was the first to investigate self-presentational processes in ongoing, everyday interactions. Most previous research on self-presentation has involved laboratory-based

encounters involving participants who were not previously acquainted with one another. To the extent that our data are comparable to those obtained in previous research, there are both differences and similarities between our findings and those of previous laboratory studies.

Familiarity and Gender Similarity

As predicted, target familiarity had a pronounced effect on participants' self-presentational motives. However, the prediction that people would be less motivated to impression manage when interacting with familiar targets was supported only in encounters with those of their own sex. Participants thought less about how others perceived them and were less motivated to be perceived as friendly, competent, and ethical when interacting with people of their own sex with whom they interacted frequently than they were with same-sex others whom they knew less well or with people of the other sex regardless of familiarity. The same trend occurred when we compared encounters with participants' three most familiar interactants: self-presentational motives were lower when people dealt with their most frequent rather than third most frequent interactant of the same sex.

However, we had not expected to find that the effects of familiarity were qualified by the gender of the interaction partner. Whereas self-presentational motives were lower in interactions with familiar than less familiar same-sex cointeractants, participants were just as motivated to impression manage in encounters with highly familiar as with less familiar persons of the other sex. Furthermore, when only cross-sex interactions were examined, participants were more motivated to impression manage to their most frequent interactant than to their third most frequent interactant of the other sex.

Why does familiarity not attenuate impression monitoring and motivation in cross-sex interactions as it does in same-sex encounters? One possibility is that familiarity has two distinct and opposite effects on impression motivation. On one hand, as discussed earlier, self-presentational concerns may be lower when interacting with those one knows well for several reasons: (a) Others' perceptions of a person are less likely to change the better they know him or her, making any particular self-presentational possibility less important; (b) as others learn more about a person, their knowledge constrains the range of impressions the person can convey, thereby lowering his or her motivation to try (Baumeister, 1982b; Baumeister & Jones, 1978; Leary & Kowalski, 1990; Schlenker, 1975); and (c) others who interact most frequently with a person tend to be friends, family, and others who already accept him or her, rendering concerns with social approval, and thus self-presentation, less salient (Jelison & Gentry, 1978).

On the other hand, familiarity may be associated with the subjective importance of one's relationships: familiar and frequent interactants tend to be more important and valued than less frequent interactants. As a result, people may be more concerned with the impressions that highly familiar cointeractants have of them. Furthermore, this is particularly likely to be true the less stable, committed, or certain a relationship is. Presumably, the more consciously concerned people are about their relationship with another person (because the other person's com-

mitment to the relationship is uncertain, for example), the more motivated they should be to convey desired images that will increase their social attractiveness and enhance the other's desire to maintain the relationship.

Thus, whether familiarity leads to increased or decreased impression motivation may depend on the relative strength of factors that render self-presentation unnecessary versus factors that heighten its usefulness as a way of enhancing one's social desirability. Familiar same-sex relationships may be characterized by more of the factors that lower self-presentation motives, whereas familiar other-sex relationships may be characterized by factors that increase it.

For example, highly familiar interactants of the other sex often do not know the person as well as one's same-sex frequent interactants. Among university students, for example, one's same-sex friends may tend to know more about the individual than one's other-sex friends. Not only are people often more self-disclosing to friends of their sex (Barbee, Gulley, & Cunningham, 1990; Derlega, Metts, Petronio, & Margulis, 1993), but one's same-sex friends are often roommates, fraternity brothers, sorority sisters, and others who have more regular and direct contact with the person throughout the day. Consistent with this, our data showed that participants spent less time interacting with persons of the other sex than with persons of their own sex. And, as noted, self-presentational motives often decline the better other people know the individual.

In contrast, among young unmarried adults, close cross-sex relationships may be perceived as both more important, yet less certain and stable than close same-sex relationships. If the cross-sex relationship is a romantic one, the possibility of a break-up always exists, and many people are quite aware of the presence of potential threats to the relationship. If the cross-sex relationship is currently nonromantic, one or both individuals may regard it as a potentially romantic one and, thus, try to convey impressions of themselves that will increase the other's interest and deepen the relationship. Furthermore, even in the case of a purely platonic friendship, people may worry that the romantic involvements of their friend with other people will pose a threat to the friendship.

People are unlikely to have these kinds of concerns about their same-sex best friends, however. People are unlikely to desire to move to a deeper level of intimacy with their same-sex friends or to worry inordinately about external threats to their relationships. Nor are same-sex friends as likely to experience sudden changes in their relationships as cross-sex friends. As a result, people's close relationships with those of the other sex may be less certain and stable than one's close same-sex relationships. This pattern was documented by Nezlek (1993b), who found that same-sex friendships were more stable over time than other-sex friendships. Together, these considerations may explain why our participants were more concerned about the impressions they made on familiar interactants of the other sex than on familiar interactants of their own sex.

Whatever the explanation, the self-presentational concerns of participants in the present study clearly varied as a function of their familiarity with those with whom they were interacting. These results call into question the generalizability of the results of laboratory experiments involving strangers. Given the present results and the previous research demonstrating that peo-

ple's self-presentations change when strangers have even a modicum of information about them (Baumeister & Jones, 1978; Schlenker, 1975), researchers need to devote additional attention to the effects of familiarity on self-presentation in both laboratory and field settings, as well as to the self-presentations of people who are intimately acquainted with one another.

Gender Differences

Overall, few gender differences in self-presentation were found; in general, male and female participants reported that they desired to make the same sorts of impressions on other people. Nonetheless, the self-presentational concerns of women and men did vary as a function of the gender similarity of their cointeractants and of their academic year. For example, women interacting with women were less concerned with appearing competent than was any other combination of male and female interactants. This finding concurs with previous research showing that all-female encounters tend to be characterized by a greater emphasis on interpersonal topics and lesser emphasis on tasks and activities than all-male interactions (Derlega et al., 1993).

Academic Class

The hypothesis that self-presentational motives would be greater among first-year students than among students who had been at college longer was partially supported. When interactions with the three familiar persons of one's own sex were examined, first-year students were more motivated to be perceived as likable, competent, and ethical by people they knew less well than by their most frequent interactant. In contrast, the self-presentational motives of participants beyond their freshmen year did not differ as a function of familiarity.

One explanation of this difference is that people who have been in a social milieu long enough to acquire an adequate supply of good friends may be less concerned about the impressions of those outside their friendship network and, thus, less motivated to impression manage. Furthermore, Nezlek (1993b) found that friendship networks among first-year college students were less stable earlier in the academic year than they were later in the year. We can extrapolate that not only did our first-year students have fewer friends than the students beyond their first year, but that their friendship circles during the first couple months of the academic year (when our study was conducted) were less stable than those of older students.

Of course, academic class is, at best, only a rough index of participants' integration into university social life. Some first-year students may have arrived with existing social networks (friends from home) or formed them quickly on arriving at college, whereas some students beyond their first year may have had few friends. However, our data showed clearly that our freshmen participants differed reliably from nonfreshmen in terms of the sizes of their social networks. Furthermore, simple situational novelty or ambiguity is associated with increased self-presentational concerns (Schlenker & Leary, 1982). Thus, people (such as freshmen) who are newly arrived, who are less familiar with a particular social setting, and who have a smaller network of even superficial acquaintances should be more concerned with

their self-presentations than "oldtimers" (Leary, 1983; Moreland & Levine, 1989).

Limitations and Conclusions

Two limitations of this research should be noted. First, by their nature, studies of everyday interaction lack the control of laboratory experiments. Not only were participants' responses based on a wide range of encounters with many different people, but the use of a diary methodology is likely to introduce a variety of sources of variability into participants' responses. Although we attempted to reduce sources of error variance (by ensuring uniformity in participants' record-keeping and by aggregating data across many interactions for each participant, for example), studies of unstructured interactions generally do not eliminate or control undetectable sources of error variance as well as laboratory experiments do. However, we believe that the greater error inherent in these types of studies is more than compensated for by the wealth of information that they provide regarding social psychological processes in real-life interaction.

The second limitation of this and most similar studies involves the nature of the sample and whether the patterns obtained here would generalize to other contexts. Unlike most other studies that have used the RIR, we sampled from different academic classes, and we believe that we have a broader, more diverse sample of students than most of the previous studies that have used a single class. Even so, we suspect that daily interactions among university students involve greater concerns with being perceived as likeable and attractive than the interactions of older persons, for example. In particular, young unmarried participants may be more motivated to impression manage to those of the other sex than older, married persons might be. If so, our finding that familiarity was related differently to self-presentation motives in other-sex interactions than in same-sex encounters may be attenuated on other samples. The relationship of self-presentation to age and relationship status is a ripe topic for investigation, as are the self-presentational motives of nonstudent populations.

Overall, as predicted, self-presentational motives in everyday social interactions were affected by social context and by participant variables. Encouragingly, the data were generally consistent with previous findings, but the results suggest that greater attention should be paid to the effects of familiarity on self-presentation.

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