

Women Who Tell and Men Who Ask: Perceptions of Men and Women Departing from Gender Stereotypes During Initial Interaction¹

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An experiment was conducted to determine if behavior that deviated from gender stereotypes during initial interaction produced less positive perceptions of a target than did behavior conforming to stereotype. Thirty-seven males and 38 females (targets) were randomly assigned to conditions where they either enacted a behavior stereotypical to their gender or engaged in a behavior departing from the stereotype during initial interaction with a randomly assigned different-gender stranger (perceiver). All of the participants were raised in the United States. The majority of participants were Caucasian, approximately 30% of the participants were Hispanic. The participants were predominantly middle class. The gender stereotypical condition required the female target to ask questions and the male target to talk about himself during the interaction. A second condition required male and female targets to do the reverse (female tell and male ask). Following the interaction perceivers completed measures of positive affect and social attractiveness. The results indicated that perceptions of targets engaging in behavior opposite of gender stereotypes depend on the perceiver's level of gender-schematicity. The level of gender schematicity indicates a person's tendency to depend on traditional gender stereotypes. While schematics tended to feel less positively or no differently during interactions with gender opposite versus gender norm targets, they tended to evaluate the gender opposite target as more or no differently

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socially attractive than gender norm targets. Results also suggest that men may have more latitude to engage in gender opposite behaviors than do women.

According to McCloskey (1987), "Stereotypes intrude on our judgments of male and female speech, whether we are engaged in conversation or research" (p. 146). While gender stereotypes should be purged from the process of forming research hypotheses (Canary & Hause, 1993), and indeed, may not be entirely accurate reflections of behavior (e.g., Martin, 1987 and Allen's, 1995 replication of Martin), there is little doubt that they still influence the perceptions of everyday interactants (e.g., Burgoon, Birk & Hall, 1991; Martin, 1987; McCloskey, 1987). That is, researchers may believe that there are few differences between men and women (e.g., Canary & Hause, 1993), but the interactants themselves may still conduct their social encounters on the basis of gender stereotypes.

Gender stereotypes exaggerate the actual differences between men and women (Allen, 1995; Martin, 1987), but they are still likely to be employed for the interpretation of male and female behavior during different-gender interactions (Deaux, 1977; Deaux & Major, 1987; Smith-Lovin & Robinson, 1992) and in situations where social roles are filled predominantly by one gender (Eagly, 1987). Because they may exaggerate gender characteristics, stereotypes may also be a compelling way to characterize men and women when they are encountered in relatively ambiguous circumstances such as initial encounters. As noted by Deaux and Major (1987), gender stereotypes are particularly likely to be influential in perception during initial interaction. To the extent that initial interactions, different-gender interactions and other situations emphasizing gender-related social roles constitute a significant proportion of everyday social encounters, we can agree with Deaux and Major's (1987) observation that "the influence of stereotypical categories may not be quite so ephemeral" (p. 381).

Both the frequency of use and the consequences arising from use suggest an impetus for the continued investigation of gender stereotypes and perception. According to both Deaux and Major's (1987) interactive model of gender-related behavior and Eagly's (1987) social-role analysis of gender differences, there are two consequences arising from the use of gender stereotypes in social interaction: the cognitive confirmation and behavioral confirmation of the stereotypes, by both the perceiver who uses them and the target who is being perceived (see also Skrypnek & Snyder, 1982; Smith-Lovin & Robinson, 1992). Both types of confirmation may be initially brought about when the perceiver conveys expectations for gender stereotypical behavior to the target through his or her own behavior, often in an attempt to confirm his/her own gender identity (Bierhoff, 1989; Deaux &

Major, 1987; Smith-Lovin & Robinson, 1992). A third potential consequence may arise when the target displays behavior counter to or deviating from the perceiver's expectancies for a given gender (Burgoon et al., 1991; Costrich, Feinstein, Kidder, Marecek & Pascale, 1975; Sadalla, Kenrick & Vershure, 1987; Smith-Lovin & Robinson, 1992). Unexpected behavior will promote different perceptions and evaluations than will behavior confirming expectancies (e.g., Burgoon & Hale, 1988; Burgoon & Miller, 1985; Cappella & Greene, 1982; Goffman, 1963; Jussim, Coleman & Lerch, 1987), and it is the purpose of the current study to examine those perceptions and evaluations. Specifically, we want to determine if persons displaying behavior deviating from gender stereotypes will elicit less positive feelings and be perceived as less socially attractive than persons displaying behavior conforming to those stereotypes during initial interaction.

DEPARTURES FROM SEX STEREOTYPES

According to both Deaux and Major (1987) and Eagly (1987), gender stereotypes often determine expectancies for the behavior of men and women. That is, gender stereotypes are prescriptive as well as descriptive, and function as category-based expectancies in social interaction (Jones & McGillis, 1976). Eagly (1987) suggests that these expectancies, shared by communities, form social norms. To the extent that gender stereotypes do form social norms, departures from stereotype may be perceived and evaluated negatively. Goffman (1963), for example, proposes that people who deviate from social norms will be denied the respect accorded to people who conform to societal expectations. Theoretical models examining the violation of stereotypes (Jussim et al., 1987) and expectations for verbal and nonverbal behavior (e.g., Burgoon & Hale, 1988; Burgoon & Miller, 1985; Cappella & Greene, 1982) suggest that perceptions of persons departing from expectancies may be either positive or negative. According to Cappella and Greene (1982), the intensity and direction of response (positive versus negative) depends on the extent to which the deviation will be tolerated. Tolerance for deviations will be determined by (1) characteristics of the target, (2) characteristics of the perceiver, and/or (3) characteristics of the relationship between the target and perceiver.

One target characteristic affecting a tolerance for deviations from gender stereotypes is the biological sex of the target. The biological sex of the target determines which gender stereotype is to be applied in the situation, thus also determining departures from the stereotype. When the target of perception is a woman, we expect her to act like a woman and not like a man. When the target is a man, we expect him to act like a man and not

like a woman. Eagly (1987) notes that gender stereotypes have changed little over time, still emphasizing the communal nature of women and the agentic nature of men. Women are expected to be affiliative, warm and concerned with the welfare of others. Men are expected to be assertive, dominant, and controlling (Allen, 1995; Deaux, 1977; Eagly, 1987; Martin, 1987).

Previous research indicates that men and women are likely to be evaluated less positively when they display characteristics departing from gender stereotype. Three studies by Costrich et al. (1975), for example, have demonstrated that popularity ratings of men and women were adversely affected when women acted in an aggressive manner and men displayed passive behaviors. Sadalla et al. (1987) found in three studies that men engaging in less dominant behaviors were rated as significantly less heterosexually attractive than men acting in a highly dominant manner. More recently, Burgoon et al. (1991) demonstrated that female physicians communicating in an aggressive manner were rated less positively than female physicians who were more affiliative in their style of communication.

Gender schematicity is a characteristic of the perceiver relevant to perceptions of behavior departing from gender stereotypes (Deaux & Major, 1987). Gender-schematics hold traditional notions of male and female behavior (Deaux & Major, 1987; Martin, 1987), tend to apply gender stereotypes to themselves (e.g., Frable, 1989), and tend to readily apply gender stereotypes to others (Martin, 1987). In comparison to gender-aschematics, gender-schematics have gender-schemata or gender stereotypes chronically high in their hierarchy for perception and interpretation, and their gender-schemata are easily triggered by situations potentially eliciting the use of gender stereotypes (Deaux & Major, 1987; Martin, 1987; McKenzie-Mohr & Zanna, 1990). As a result, gender-schematics are more likely to see a situation in terms of gender stereotypes, are probably more likely to be aware of departures from the stereotype, and are more likely to be less tolerant of departures (Frable, 1989). Both Frable (1989) and Spence (1993) have found that gender-schematic individuals who view themselves as highly masculine or feminine show a preference toward gender stereotypical norms for behavior. Frable (1989) found that individuals tending to gender stereotype themselves were more likely to see gender rules as fair and dislike gender rule-violations than were androgynous, undifferentiated, or cross-sex-typed individuals.

The final characteristics affecting evaluations of behavior departing from gender stereotypes are the level of intimacy in the relationship and the gender composition of the interactants. These are characteristics of the relationship between the target and the perceiver. Cappella and Greene (1982) state that, generally, tolerance for deviations from expectations will be lower in initial interactions than in developed relationships, and Deaux and Major (1987) note that gender stereotypes are more likely to be ap-

plied in initial interactions than in long-term relationships. Gender stereotypes are also more likely to serve as a basis of perception during different-gender interactions or interactions with predominantly "heterosexual overtones" (Deaux & Major, 1987). Gender-schematics are particularly likely to apply gender stereotypes when perceiving members of the different-gender (e.g., Anderson & Bem, 1981; Park & Hahn, 1988).

TWO GENDER STEREOTYPICAL NORMS FOR INITIAL INTERACTION

The characteristics of affiliativeness and control prescribed by gender stereotypes may be reflected in the ways in which men and women reduce uncertainty during initial interaction. A commonplace occurrence in initial interaction, uncertainty reduction can be accomplished through the use of two strategies: the asking of questions and the use of self-disclosure, or talking about the self (Berger, 1979; Berger & Bradac, 1982; Douglas, 1990). A review of relevant literature suggests that question-asking is more likely the norm for women while talking about the self is a norm for men.

Question-asking is viewed as a gender stereotypical female behavior (e.g., Deaux, 1977; Harding, 1975; Lakoff, 1975; Spender, 1980; but see McKinney & Donaghy, 1993). Fishman's (1978) qualitative analysis of male and female dyads found that women in the dyads asked two and a half times more questions than males. McCloskey's (1987) replication of Fishman's work showed that third grade girls in both different-gender and same-gender interactions asked two times more questions than boys in both different- and same-gender interaction. Women's question-asking may hold two functions in interaction. Deaux (1977) suggests, first, that the asking of questions is as a self-presentational strategy, aimed toward bonding or affiliation in interaction. Question asking also serves to facilitate conversation (Fishman, 1978; McCloskey, 1987; Spender, 1980). Both of these functions are consistent with the female's communal stereotype. Fishman (1978) refers to the task of developing and maintaining a conversation as "shit-work," stating that women not only work harder to make a conversation happen than do men, but that they are expected to do so.

Men, apparently, are more interested in talking about themselves during initial interaction. While generally women engage in higher levels of disclosure than men (e.g., Dindia & Allen, 1992), research has shown consistently that men will self-disclose more to strangers and acquaintances than will women (Davis, 1978; Derlega, Winstead, Wong & Hunter, 1985; Lockheed & Hall, 1976; Stokes, Fuehre & Childs, 1981). There are two explanations for this behavior. First, talking about themselves to strangers

may, in part, be due to requiring fewer prerequisites for self-disclosure than women (Petronio, Martin & Littlefield, 1984), but Davis (1978) proposes that men talk about themselves primarily in order to be the principle architects of the interaction. Second, men may talk about themselves to present themselves favorably. Derlega, Metts, Petronio and Margolis (1993) indicate that men are selective in their disclosure. Aries (1987) indicates that men talk more about their success than their vulnerabilities. Both of these explanations are consistent with the agentic male stereotype.

SUMMARY AND HYPOTHESES

The purpose of this study is to determine when individuals deviating from gender stereotypes will be perceived less positively than individuals conforming to the stereotype. We maintain that individuals will be perceived less positively when (1) they engage in a behavior atypical for the stereotype held toward their given biological sex, (2) the perceiver is gender-schematic rather than gender-aschematic, and (3) the interaction is an initial and different-gender social encounter. Positive perceptions in this study are the degree of positive affect felt by the perceiver during the interaction and the perceived social attractiveness of the target. Positive affect is a measure of the degree of pleasurable engagement and interest experienced in the immediate interaction (Watson, Clark & Tellegen, 1988). Social attractiveness is an indication of the extent to which the perceiver would like to be friends with the target.

Hypotheses 1 and 2 summarize the differences expected in gender-schematics' ratings of positive affect experienced during interactions where the target uses either stereotypical or non-stereotypical gender behaviors, and the differences expected in the ratings between gender-schematics and aschematics:

- H1:** Gender-schematic perceivers will experience less positive affect when women talk about themselves and men ask questions (behaviors departing from stereotype) than they will when women ask questions and men talk about themselves (stereotypical behaviors).
- H2:** Gender-schematic perceivers will experience less positive affect than gender-aschematic perceivers when targets perform behaviors departing from stereotype.

Ratings of social attractiveness are expected to demonstrate a pattern of results similar to those held for positive affect:

- H3:** Gender-schematics will perceive targets departing from stereotype to be less socially attractive than targets performing stereotypical behaviors.
- H4:** Gender-schematics will perceive targets departing from stereotype as less socially attractive than will gender-aschematics.

METHODS

Participants and Composition of Dyads

Seventy-eight male and 78 female undergraduate students attending a Southwestern University participated in the study for course extra credit.³ The majority of participants were Caucasian. Approximately 30% of the participants were Hispanic. Most participants were middle-class and all participants were raised in the United States. Several participants were non-traditional students.

Participants were signed up for experimental sessions during class sessions, two classes at a time. Members of one class volunteered for time slots available, then, where possible, members of a second class were signed up so that they were paired with a different-gender member of the first class. Male and female members of the first class were designated as the target in each dyad and were randomly assigned to either the "ask" or "tell" conditions prior to their session. Participants were unaware of their status as target or perceiver, and were told only that the experimenters were investigating initial interaction between "opposite-sex members."

Measures

Gender-Schematicity. Martin's (1987) ratio measure of sex stereotyping was employed to assess gender-schematicity. The measure consists of 30 items listing traditionally male stereotypic, female stereotypic and neutral personality traits taken from Bem Sex-Role Inventory (Bem, 1981). Participants were asked to estimate the percentages of North American males and females possessing each personality trait. Percentages were then used to calculate

³Three dyads were dropped from the study prior to analysis. One target did not follow task instructions. One target was sightless. A third dyad was dropped because the perceiver indicated that he could not complete the measures because he was "on LSD" at the time of his experimental session.

ratio measures of male stereotyping, female stereotyping, and total sex stereotyping.

Estimated percentages for males were divided by the percentages estimated for females on 10 male stereotypic items (e.g., dominant, assertive, forceful, aggressive) and 10 female stereotypic items (e.g., gentle, tender, compassionate, understanding, affectionate), to create male stereotyping and female stereotyping subscales. Cronbach's alphas for both subscales was .76. Participant scores for each subscale were calculated by summing and averaging the items in each subscale, and were used next to create a total index of sex stereotyping. The total index was calculated by subtracting scores for female stereotyping from scores for male stereotyping. The higher the total score, the more the participant stereotypes men and women in a traditional way (Martin, 1987). A median split on perceivers' scores (median = .597) was used to create schematic and aschematic (total stereotyping index) perceiver groups.

Ratings of Positive Affect. The ten positive items from Watson et al.'s (1988) Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) were used to obtain an assessment of participants' interest and pleasurable engagement during the interaction. Each item on the scale consisted of a single emotionally descriptive term such as "active," "interested," or "alert." Participants indicated the extent to which they experienced feelings during the interaction as described by each term on a scale of 1 to 5. Coefficient alpha for the scale was .83. Final scores for positive affect were created by averaging the scores across the ten items for each participant.

Social Attraction. The social attraction items from a revised version of McCroskey & McCain's (1974) Interpersonal Attraction Scale (McCroskey & Richmond, 1979) were used to assess perceptions of partners' social attractiveness. Participants rated their partner on twelve 7-point Likert items, indicating the extent to which the partner was perceived as friendly and the extent to which the partner had potential for future friendship and further interaction. The alpha reliability for the scale in this study was .87. Scores were averaged across items for each participant to create the final index of social attractiveness.

Perceived Manipulativeness. Because targets would be instructed to either ask questions or talk about themselves regardless of the partner's behavior during the interaction, we included a measure of perceived manipulativeness in the study as a covariate in the main analyses. The measure consisted of eight 7-point items, included in the Appendix. Alpha reliability for the items was .75. The index of perceived manipula-

tiveness was calculated by averaging the scores across items for each participant.

Procedure

A minimum of three days before reporting for the experimental session, participants were asked to sign a statement of informed consent and complete Martin's (1987) ratio measure of sex stereotyping. At the time they signed up for the experiment, participants and targets were asked to report to separate rooms for their experimental session.

Shortly after arriving for their session, perceivers were seated in a room and given the following information:

We will be examining what occurs between men and women during an initial interaction. In a moment, we are going to pair you with a member of the opposite sex and ask you to engage in conversation with each other for approximately 5 minutes.

This information deliberately emphasized "men," "women," and "member of the opposite sex" in order to activate perceivers' gender-schemata. Targets, reporting to a second room, were given the same information but also received additional instructions. Targets assigned to the "ask" condition were told:

During this interaction, it is very important that you *ask your partner as much about him or herself as you comfortably can*. YOU MUST NOT REVEAL TO YOUR PARTNER THAT YOU HAVE RECEIVED THESE INSTRUCTIONS. If you have any questions about these instructions, please ask now.

Targets in the tell condition were given similar instructions, asking them to "tell your partner as much about yourself as you comfortably can." After receiving these instructions, targets were reminded to follow instructions to the best of their ability, regardless of the behavior of their partner.

Targets were taken to the same room as their perceiver partner. Partners were seated diagonally across the corner of a table from each other at a distance of approximately 20 inches to 24 inches. After both participants were seated, the experimenter repeated instructions to conduct a 5 minute conversation, emphasizing again the opposite-sex nature of the interaction. The experimenter then left the room, returning after a five minute period. Targets and perceivers were moved to another room and seated at separate tables in order to complete a packet of measures. Total time of participation in the experimental session was approximately 25 minutes. At the end of each session, participants were

thanked, debriefed and asked not to reveal the procedures of the study to anyone else.

RESULTS

Manipulation Checks

Departures from expectations can elicit a response even when the departures are not processed by the perceiver consciously and with effort (e.g., Cappella & Greene, 1982). Further, individuals often cannot report correctly that a given stimuli has affected them, or which stimuli have affected them (Schneider, Hastorf & Ellsworth, 1978). For these reasons, we decided to forego asking our participants if they perceived departures from the norm and instead checked to see if targets in the ask and tell condition did indeed perform the tasks we requested.

We employed two manipulation checks to determine if participants in the ask and tell conditions followed instructions. First, targets had been asked in an open-ended question to write down information they learned about their partner during the conversation. Since the targets were told to either ask about their partner or tell about themselves, we predicted that targets should hold different amounts of information. If the manipulation worked, targets in the ask condition should report more information about their partner than targets in the tell condition.

Two coders blind to the purpose of the study were trained to identify and then count each separate unit of information listed by the participants. One coder evaluated all of the data while a second coded a random selection of 28% of the data. Inter-rater reliability for the coders was .90 (Holsti, 1968) on the portion of the data that both coded. Participants reported an average of 14.90 ($SD = 6.86$) separate pieces of information. A one-tailed t -test revealed that targets in the ask condition ($M = 17.18$, $SD = 7.81$) reported significantly more items of information about their partner, $t(73) = 3.69$, $p < .01$, than did targets in the tell condition ($M = 11.34$, $SD = 5.79$).

The second manipulation check compared the number of questions actually asked by the targets in the ask and tell conditions. Number of questions was coded from a video-tape of the interactions that were recorded with participants' awareness. One coder, blind to the purpose of the study, counted the number of questions asked by the targets in both conditions and then one of the researchers coded an additional 14 (20%) randomly selected interactions. The Pearson correlation between the two coders was .75. The results of a one-tailed t -test, $t(68) = 6.27$, $p < .01$,

indicated that targets in the ask condition ($M = 12.51$, $SD = 6.38$) generated significantly more questions than targets in the tell condition ($M = 4.09$, $SD = 4.76$).⁴ Both manipulation checks suggested that manipulation of ask and tell was successful.

Hypotheses

The hypotheses were tested in a pair of 2 (gender) \times 2 (tell versus ask) \times 2 (high or low gender schematicity) ANCOVAs, with the manipulation measure serving as a covariate after determining that there were no covariate by treatment interactions. The manipulation measure evaluated the extent to which the perceivers felt manipulated by their partner due to task instructions. Only perceiver data was used for testing the hypotheses. Alpha was set at .05 for all statistical tests.

Positive Affect

The analysis of covariance for positive affect produced no significant main-effects or two-way interactions. The analysis did, however, produce a significant target gender \times ask versus tell \times gender-schematicity interaction, $F(1, 68) = 9.28$, $p < .01$, which accounted for 14% of the variance. Because the manipulation variable was a significant covariate, $t = -5.23$, $p < .01$, subsequent analyses used adjusted cell means.

Consistent with our first hypothesis, the results of a post-hoc Duncan procedure indicated that gender-schematic perceivers felt less positive affect following conversations with women who talked about themselves (adjusted $M = 3.00$) than women who asked questions (adjusted $M = 3.64$). Schematic perceivers of men who asked questions (adjusted $M = 3.03$) also felt slightly, but not significantly, less positively than schematic perceivers of men who talked about themselves (adjusted $M = 3.25$). Adjusted means and standard deviations for the analysis of positive affect can be found in Table I.

The second hypothesis was also partially supported. The direction of means for gender-aschematic (adjusted $M = 3.29$) and gender-schematic perceivers of female tell targets (adjusted $M = 3.00$), though consistent with the hypothesis, were not significantly different. Schematic perceivers of male ask targets, however, felt significantly less positively (adjusted M

⁴Errors or poor quality of video-taping prevented us from being able to code five of the video-taped interactions.

Table I. Analysis of Covariance for Positive Affect

	<i>N</i>	Adjusted Means	<i>SD</i> ^a
Ask condition			
Aschematic perceivers of males	8	3.67	.72 _a
Schematic perceivers of males	10	3.03	.48 _b
Aschematic perceivers of females	10	2.93	1.03 _b
Schematic perceivers of females	9	3.64	.69 _a
Tell condition			
Aschematic perceivers of males	9	3.10	.57
Schematic perceivers of males	10	3.25	.54
Aschematic perceivers of females	10	3.29	.79
Schematic perceivers of females	9	3.00	.99 _b

^aCategories with different subscripts are significantly different using the Duncan procedure.

= 3.03) following their interactions than did aschematic perceivers (adjusted $M = 3.67$).

Social Attraction

The analysis of covariance for social attraction produced a significant main-effect for the ask versus tell manipulation, $F(1, 68) = 6.30$, $p = .02$, $\eta^2 = .10$, but this effect was not considered because of the significant target gender \times ask versus tell \times gender schematicity interaction, $F(1, 68) = 5.38$, $p = .02$. The three-way interaction accounted for 8% of the variance in social attraction. The manipulation variable was a significant covariate, $t = 4.57$, $p < .01$, and subsequent analyses used adjusted cell means.

Hypothesis 3 was not supported. A post-hoc Duncan procedure revealed no significant differences between schematics' perceptions of women who talked about themselves (adjusted $M = 5.73$) and women who asked questions (adjusted $M = 5.65$). Further, the analysis indicated that schematic perceivers found men who asked questions (adjusted $M = 5.99$) to be significantly *more* socially attractive than males who talked about themselves (adjusted $M = 5.19$). Adjusted means and standard deviations for the analysis of social attractiveness are contained in Table II.

The fourth hypothesis was also largely unsupported. Although the means suggested that schematic perceivers of female tell (adjusted $M = 5.73$) did find their targets to be less socially attractive than did aschematic perceivers (adjusted $M = 5.30$), this difference was not significant. Results

Table II. Analysis of Covariance for Social Attraction

	<i>N</i>	Adjusted Means	<i>SD</i> ^a
Ask condition			
Aschematic perceivers of males	8	5.28	.44 _b
Schematic perceivers of males	10	5.99	.61 _a
Aschematic perceivers of females	10	5.93	.50 _a
Schematic perceivers of females	9	5.69	.73
Tell condition			
Aschematic perceivers of males	9	5.15	.99 _b
Schematic perceivers of males	10	5.19	.74 _b
Aschematic perceivers of females	10	5.30	.99 _b
Schematic perceivers of females	9	5.73	.44

^aCategories with different subscripts are significantly different using the Duncan procedure.

of the analysis further indicated that gender-schematic individuals actually perceived males asking questions (adjusted $M = 5.99$) to be *more* rather less attractive than did the gender-aschematic individuals (adjusted $M = 5.28$).

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine perceptions of behavior violating gender stereotypes during initial interaction. We employed two dependent variables in the study, positive affect and social attraction, and obtained effects for a three-way interaction on both variables. The three-way interactions indicated that positive affect and perceived social attractiveness are indeed a function of whether or not a target's behavior is consistent with the stereotype for his or her gender and the perceiver's tendency toward gender-schematicity, but the pattern of results for each dependent variable differ. Although we found some evidence of the less positive perceptions we initially proposed, we discovered both more positive and indifferent perceptions of people who engage in behavior counter to gender stereotypes.

The results of analyses and the pattern of means illustrated in Fig. 1 suggest that initial encounters with persons departing from gender-norms are less than pleasurable, particularly for gender-schematic perceivers. Schematic perceivers demonstrated significantly less positive affect when women talked about themselves than when women asked questions. Although not a significant difference, schematic perceivers also experienced

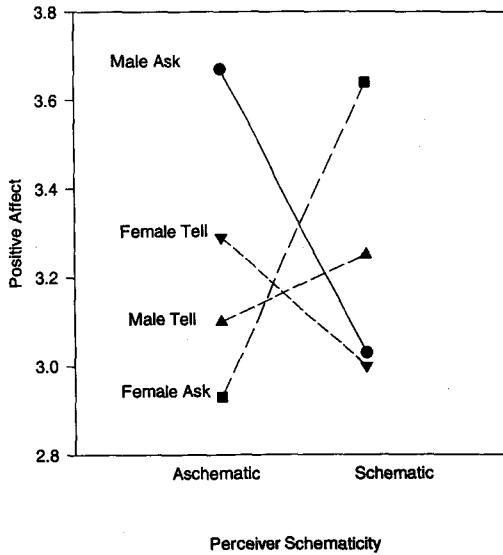


Fig. 1. ANCOVA for positive affect.

less positive affect when men asked questions rather than talking about themselves. Schematics felt significantly less positive affect than did their aschematic counterparts in the male ask condition, and there were similar though not significant differences between schematics and aschematics in the female tell condition. Overall, results relevant to positive affect suggest that schematic perceivers will experience less interest and pleasurable engagement during initial interaction when encountering individuals who display behavior contrary to the stereotype for their given gender, as compared to individuals who act according to the stereotype. Further, and as predicted, schematics are more likely to be bothered by individuals acting counter to gender stereotypes than are gender-aschematics.

Although perceivers in some cases experienced less positive feelings when the targets' behavior deviated from stereotype, their perceptions of the targets themselves tended to be no different from or more positive than perceptions of targets who engaged in stereotypical behavior. The pattern of results for social attraction (Fig. 2) indicate that schematic perceivers saw no difference in the social attractiveness of women due to whether the women talked about themselves or asked questions. Further, schematic perceivers found men who asked questions to be more, not less, socially attractive than men who talked about themselves. Schematics also found male ask targets to be more socially attractive than did aschematics. Inde-

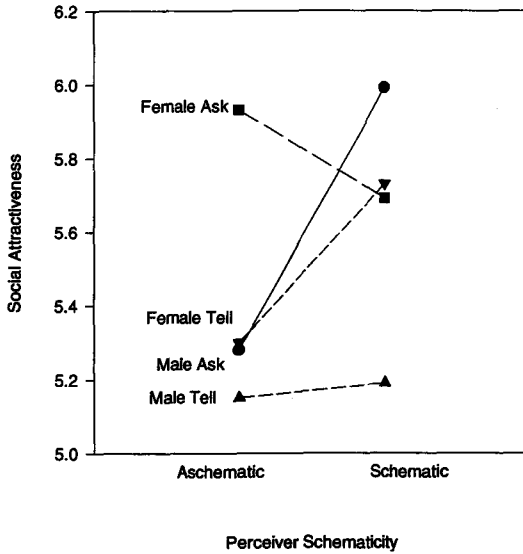


Fig. 2. ANCOVA for social attractiveness.

pendent of the results for positive affect, the results for social attraction initially suggest, as does the research of Bradley (1981) and Burgoon et al. (1991), that men are given more license to depart from gender stereotypical norms for communication behavior than are women, insofar as schematic perceivers are concerned, and indeed, may receive greater levels of approval. The results for positive affect, however, suggest that such a license may not be accompanied necessarily by positive feelings on the part of the perceiver.

Given a significant correlation between positive affect and social attraction ($r = .42, p < .05$), the different and indeed almost opposite patterns of results for the two dependent variables are interesting. Gender-schematic women found men who asked questions to be more socially attractive, but they also tended to feel less positive affect when interacting with them. While male schematics made no discrimination between the female ask and tell behaviors in terms of social attraction, they felt significantly lower levels of positive affect when women talked about themselves. It may be that the different patterns reflect different sources of evaluation. Social attraction is an evaluation of the conversational partner, but positive affect may be a more global evaluation of the partner, the interaction as a whole, and of the self. Relatively low scores on positive affect, contrasted to relatively high scores on social attraction,

may reflect an indication that perceptions of the partner were positive, but perceptions of the self and the interaction as a whole were less so.

Smith-Lovin & Robinson (1992) and Deaux and Major (1987) suggest that behavior departing from gender stereotypes may be experienced less positively because it tends to be disconfirming not only of the target's gender identity, but more importantly, the perceiver's own gender identity. The lower scores for positive affect, relative to those for social attraction, may indicate that schematic perceivers felt the female tell and male ask behaviors reflected more poorly on themselves than on the target. Further, departures from the gender stereotype may leave schematics in a position of uncertainty as to how they themselves may need to act in the situation. To some extent, behavior departing from gender stereotypes may deprive schematic perceivers of gender scripts for their own behavior. While schematic women find the male ask target to be socially attractive, they may at the same time feel uncomfortable because they have been deprived of their own role in doing the "shitwork." Schematic men may not find a woman who talks about herself to be any more or less socially attractive than a woman who asks questions, but they may wonder what their own role is in response to their partner's atypical gender behavior. Our plans for future research include exploring the effect of a target's departure from gender norms on a perceiver's perception of his/her own gender identity and subsequent role in the interaction. This goal could be accomplished by obtaining measures of self- as well as other-perception.

CONCLUSION

The results of the present study are consistent with the broad notion that, during initial and different-gender interactions, persons departing from gender stereotypes will be perceived differently than persons who follow those norms. We found, however, that the differences in perception are not reflected in a simple preference for stereotypical male and female communication behavior or a rejection of behavior departing from stereotype. As Deaux and Major (1987) note, the tendency of the perceiver to use gender stereotypes, or gender-schematicity, should be taken into account. Further, the type of evaluation made should be taken into account. Results indicate that it is not always the case that evaluations of atypical gender behavior will be less positive. Wherein schematic perceivers experience less positive affect in the presence of a person departing from stereotype, their social attraction to a "gender-bending" different-gender partner will be more positive (in the case of female schematic perceivers) or fairly indifferent (as in the case of male schematic perceivers) in nature. We sug-

gest the differences in evaluation may be a result of who is being evaluated: the interactional partner or the self.

Possible avenues for future research include investigating our explanation for differences in evaluation, in addition to examining differences in perception due to the perceiver's gender. We suggest that men may be given more license to break gender stereotype, but it is also plausible that their schematic female perceivers may be more tolerant, overall, of departures from gender norms than are men. The design of the current study does not allow for a test between perceiver gender differences, but they could be tested by assigning both male and female perceivers to each condition in a future study.

Limitations to the study also suggest future research goals. The brief task instructions given to targets gave us control only over behaviors of asking and telling and not over other possible influential factors in perception such as the content of questions and talk, the age difference in the interactants and levels of physical attractiveness. The use of trained confederates or a video-taped stimulus in a study, instead of designating a target from a pair of participants, would allow control over these additional factors. The study is also limited in that we have examined departures from only one of possibly multiple gender-related conversational behaviors. Other research has investigated men's use of tag questions and women's use of certainty (Bradley, 1981), men's use of affiliative verbal content and women's use of assertive content (Burgoon et al., 1991) as departures from conversational gender norms, and our results tend to be consistent with those found in the previous studies. While we were able to add to the research by examining perceptions of women who talk about themselves and men who ask questions, future research might contribute to the area by examining additional conversational behavior.

APPENDIX

Perceived Manipulativeness Items

Participants were asked to indicate (on a scale of 1 to 7) the extent to which the following statements applied to his or her partner in the interaction.

1. He/she seemed manipulative.
2. He/she would probably like to have control in most social situations.
3. He/she appeared to be sincere and honest.
4. My partner let me get to know who he/she really is.

5. He/she appeared to have hidden motives.
6. He/she appeared to be genuine.
7. He/she was natural and relaxed.
8. He/she tried to control me.

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