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**UNDESIRABLE SELF-PRESENTATION: A LABORATORY  
EXPERIMENT TO INVESTIGATE THE AVOIDANCE OF AVERSIVE  
EVENTS THROUGH IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT**

**A Dissertation  
Presented for the  
Doctor of Philosophy  
Degree  
The University of Mississippi**

**Mojgan Soltanpour**

**April, 2003**

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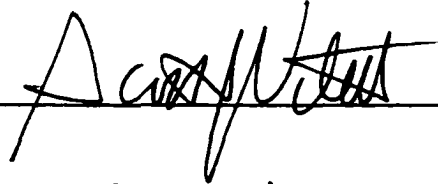
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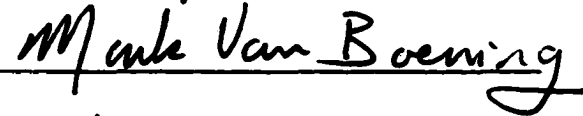
To the Graduate Council:


I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Mojgan Soltanpour entitled "Undesirable Self-presentation: A Laboratory Experiment to Investigate the Avoidance of Aversive Events through Impression Management." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Business Administration, with a major in Management.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. William Gardner, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation  
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## **DEDICATION**

**This dissertation is dedicated to my parents,  
Assad Soltanpour and Azar Eftekhari  
for their immeasurable love, support, and encouragement,  
and to my husband,  
Dr. Bahram Alidaee  
for his immeasurable love, support, and encouragement,  
and his constant patience, and sacrifices throughout every  
phase of the dissertation process. Without his help this  
accomplishment would never have been possible.**

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## **Abstract**

The present study involved a partial replication of an experiment by Kowalski and Leary (1990) and extended their work using a more realistic work setting. In addition, it provided a partial test of Becker and Martin's (1995) model of negative impression management. Specifically, the role that selected individual difference variables play in moderating individual efforts to create negative impressions was examined.

A job simulation experiment employing student participants examined the use of self-presentation as a means of avoiding an aversive event. Also, the effects of self-presentations on the presenters' resultant self-esteem were explored. A 1 by 3 factorial design was used with selection criterion (low, random, and high) as the independent variable. Participants in the high and low conditions were instructed to believe that they would be evaluated and selected for an employee selection workshop based upon their performance on an employee selection task, as well as their self-reported skills regarding employee selection procedures. Participants in the random (control) condition were informed that they would be randomly selected to participate in an upcoming employee selection workshop.

The results suggest that participants do broadcast their skill limitations and partially self-depreciate with regard to an employee evaluation/selection task in order to avoid participating in a subsequent unpleasant event. In addition, between-treatment differences in post-performance self-evaluations do mirror differences in self-presentations. Finally, there are no between-group self-presentational differences regarding individual difference variables of self-esteem, self-monitoring, or locus of control under the high versus low selection criterion condition.

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## **Chapter One**

### **1. Introduction**

#### **1.1. Purpose of the Research**

Impression management (IM) involves the packaging of information in order to lead target audiences to desired conclusions (Gardner & Avolio, 1998). This view draws heavily upon the writings of social psychologist Erving Goffman. From Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical perspective, "actors" engage in "performances" in various "settings" for particular "audiences" in order to shape their "definition of the situation."

The vast majority of research on impression management (IM) has assumed that individuals are motivated to convey favorable impressions to the target audience. However, Becker and Martin's (1995) groundbreaking study demonstrated that people sometimes intentionally attempt to look bad instead; that is, they sometimes attempt to appear incompetent, unintelligent, undesirable, etc. Although this phenomenon does not appear to occur with great frequency, it appears to be common enough to merit additional research. Several studies (Becker, & Martin, 1995; Braginsky, Grosse, & Ring, 1966; Gove, Houghes, & Geerken, 1980; Komarovsky, 1946; Kowalski, & Leary, 1990; Wallin, 1950; Weary & Williams, 1990) have indicated that individuals pursue poor impressions at times to achieve their personal and social objectives. Nevertheless, unfavorable impression management (UIM) remains an underinvestigated area of organizational behavior.

The central finding of Becker and Martin's (1995) study is verification that individuals do sometimes intentionally convey unfavorable impressions at work in order

to avoid experiencing aversive events or to obtain desired outcomes. Not surprisingly, the most common target of this type of impression management is an immediate supervisor. Similarly, an experiment by Kowalski and Leary (1990) documents the use of “self-depreciation” as a negative impression management strategy to avoid performing an unwanted, undesirable task in future. The experimental participants both high and low in self-esteem, self-depreciated when it is to their advantage to do so. According to Becker and Martin’s (1995) classification of unfavorable IM methods and motives, “self-depreciation” strategy is a form of “not working to potential.”

Relatively high levels of negative IM in an organization may be indicative of a dysfunctional organizational culture. In addition, employees’ efforts to intentionally look bad at work may have important adverse consequences. As Becker and Martin point out, intentionally looking bad at work can lead to decrements in individual and organizational effectiveness. Just as a desire to produce a favorable impression can serve to motivate organizational citizenship behavior (Bolino, 1999), unfavorable impression management intentions may elicit behaviors that detract from organizational effectiveness and productivity. One obvious work-related problem that may accrue from unfavorable impression management is a deliberate reduction in performance.

Intentionally looking bad at work may also produce misperceptions of organizational members (e.g., coworkers, managers, and subordinates) and incorrect attributions for employee behavior, and, as a result, poor decisions. Thus, the motives and methods for purposefully conveying unfavorable impressions can produce a variety of negative organizational outcomes. As Becker and Martin point out, these outcomes include inequitable treatment of employees, increased health care costs, decreased



customer satisfaction, and reduced productivity. Given the adverse consequences that undesirable self-presentations can create in work situations, it is important that we learn more about the nature of such dysfunctional behaviors and the antecedent conditions that lead individuals to view themselves negatively. Thus, an understanding of the methods and motives for managing poor impressions will help managers to better diagnose employee performance problems, and thereby enhance the effectiveness of individuals and organizations.

The purpose of the present research is fourfold: First it is intended to provide an extensive, integrative review of the literature on unfavorable impression management, as well as the related topics of favorable IM, and the individual difference variables of self-esteem, self-monitoring, and locus of control. The second objective is to perform a partial replication of Kowalski and Leary's (1990) experiment and extend their study using a simplified research design in a different work setting. The third objective is to partially test Becker and Martin's (1995) model of poor impression management. Specifically, the inclinations of persons with high versus low self-esteem, high versus low self-monitoring ability, and an internal versus external locus of control to promote negative impressions will be contrasted. The fourth objective is to measure the impact of negative self-presentations on the actor's resultant self-esteem. Thus, the current study seeks to contribute to the organizational behavior literature by conducting a follow-up experiment to Kowalski and Leary's (1995) study on "self-depreciation", while examining the moderating role that self-esteem, self-monitoring, and locus of control (as individual difference variables) play for negative IM.

## **1.2. Plan of the Study**

This dissertation is divided into five chapters. In this initial chapter, the purpose of the study has been discussed. In the second chapter, unfavorable impression management and the related organizational behavior literature on topics such as favorable IM, self-conception, self-esteem, self-monitoring, and locus of control are extensively reviewed, and relevant research hypotheses are proposed. The third chapter describes the research design for performing a job simulation (an “employee evaluation and selection” job is simulated by constructing a standard job description, resumes, and evaluation forms for Southeastern Mutual Life Insurance Company.) experiment that will demonstrate the use of “self-depreciation” and “broadcasting limitations” as means of avoiding undesirable events, while exploring the potential relationships between negative self-presentational strategies and individual difference variables such as self-esteem, self-monitoring, and locus of control. The results of the experiment are presented in the fourth chapter. In the final chapter, the findings pertaining to the use of negative IM strategies at work, as well as the moderating effects of the focal individual difference variables on negative self-presentations are discussed, and future directions for research into unfavorable IM behaviors are recommended.

## **Chapter Two**

### **2. A Review of Prior Theory and Research on Undesirable Self-presentations and Related Literatures**

To better understand the purpose and direction of the proposed study, a good knowledge of the extant theory and research on unfavorable self-presentation and the related literature is necessary. Thus, this chapter will discuss the literature relevant to the purposes of this thesis.

The discussion is organized into four main sections: (1) impression management to secure positive impressions, (2) impression management to create negative impressions, (3) the relationship between negative IM and individual difference variables such as self-esteem, self-monitoring, and locus of control, and (4) research hypotheses. Throughout the present chapter, the relevant literature on negative impression management will be reviewed and key findings will be used to provide a framework to support the research hypotheses.

#### **2.1. Impression Management to Secure Positive Impressions**

##### **2.1.1. A Dramaturgical Perspective of Impression Management**

In his classic work, "The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life," social psychologist Erving Goffman (1959) views social interactions as theatrical plays that are performed on the stage of the environment. From Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical perspective, "actors" engage in "performances" in various "settings" for particular "audiences" in order to shape their "definition of the situation." Similarly, Schlenker

(1980) notes that there are many similarities between our every day lives and theater. We employ scripts that help us to behave in various situations as we are expected to act. We perform roles that illustrate how we desire to be perceived by others. We select words, gestures, and props to portray our character. We construct and project different faces for different audiences (e.g., our parents, children, friends, enemies, employees, employer, etc.). A “face” is an image of self which is delineated in terms of positive social values (Goffman, 1967). These different faces are not necessarily contradictory, but they do show different aspects of our identities that are made salient by the situation.

Goffman (1959) distinguished between the “frontstage” where one must regulate one’s performance before an immediate audience, and the “backstage” where one could relax without concerns for propriety of his/her actions. Public behavior can be observed and evaluated by others, while private behavior can be hidden from view (Schlenker & Weigold, 1992). As such, public behavior influences the actor’s identity, obligates the actor to behave consistently in the future, constrains the actor to defend his/her positions when challenged, and consensually validates the actor’s opinions and characteristics (Schlenker, 1980; Tetlock & Manstead, 1985). Furthermore, it has been suggested that people are more likely to engage in positive impression management when the audience can provide them with valuable rewards for a successful performance or when they will lose little if they fail in their performance (Schlenker, 1980; Schlenker & Weigold, 1989). In fact, public scrutiny can alter the significance of the performance to the actor by making success more rewarding but also failure more costly.

Schlenker (1975, 1980, 1986) points out that public behavior has significant social consequences and hence it can create a greater impact than private behavior. Public

behavior is more committing because it suggests that the actor will behave commensurately in the future, and implies that the actor has behaved similarly in the past. Also, public behavior will construct a reputation for the actor from which he/she will be treated by others. In contrast, private behavior can be easily dismissed by the person. In fact, in private behavior the person is not accountable to others who might disapprove or approve his/her behavior. On the other hand, in public behavior the actor offers evidence for others to evaluate his/her performance. Reactions of the audiences must be integrated with the actor's self-knowledge to shape his/her identity.

### **2.1.2. Leary and Kowalski's Two-Stage Model of IM**

This section will initially define some basic terms that are important for understanding the impression management process, and then it will discuss the IM process by focusing on Leary and Kowalski's (1990) model of impression management.

Although the terms "self-presentation" and "impression management" are often used interchangeably (Leary & Kowalski, 1990), it is important to distinguish the difference between the two. To understand this difference we need to pay attention to the definition of "self-identification" versus "impression regulation". Schlenker (1985) defines "self-identification" as the process, means, or result of showing oneself to be a particular type of person, thereby fixing and expressing one's identity for oneself and others. Here, self-presentation marks out the activity of regulating identity primarily for real or imagined audience (Schlenker & Weigold, 1992). Furthermore, as defined by Schlenker and Weigold (1992), "impression regulation" refers to controlling information about self, some object (e.g., business organization, or product) or event in order to

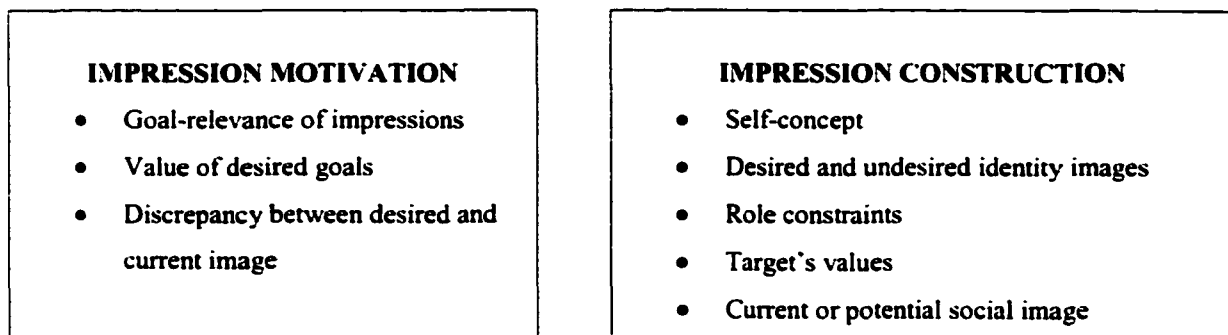
achieve certain goals. Here, impression management denotes the activity of regulating information primarily for real or imagined audience. In this view, impression management is a broader concept than self-presentation because it subsumes the concept of self-identification. Focusing on self-presentation, Schlenker and Weigold proffer three broad categories of motives that guide regulating information about oneself: (1) self-glorification (self-esteem maintenance and enhancement); (2) self-consistency (validating the self by confirming self-beliefs); (3) self-authentication (trying to learn the truth about self by pursuing diagnostic information).

To better understand the notion that there are certain motives behind every method for conveying negative impressions (Becker & Martin, 1995), this section will describe a two-stage model of impression management developed by Leary and Kowalski (1990). This two-component model conceptualizes impression management as being composed of two discrete processes: impression motivation and impression construction. Their framework is illustrated in Figure 2.1. Impression motivation is the process by which the individual becomes motivated to create specific impressions in others' minds. It may or may not lead to overt impression-relevant behaviors. Impression construction involves altering one's behavior to influence others' impressions after being motivated to create those impressions. This involves choosing the type of impression to project, as well as deciding on a precise way of doing so (e.g., creating the desired impression via self-description, nonverbal behavior, or props).

According to Leary and Kowalski's model, the impression motivation process is a function of three factors: the goal-relevance of impressions, the value of the desired outcomes, and the existing discrepancy between desired and current image. As such,

people are more likely to be motivated to shape others' impressions of them when these impressions are relevant to the achievement of one or more of these goals: (a) acquiring social and material outcomes, (b) enhancing or maintaining one's self-esteem, and (c) creating desired identities. Impression motivation increases as a function of the value or importance of desired goals (e.g., people are more likely to be motivated to manage their impressions for powerful, high status, attractive, or likable individuals). Moreover, when the image one desires to convey is different from the image he/she believes others already hold of him/her, the individual is more likely motivated to impression-manage than when the person's desired and current images are the same.

Figure 2.1. The two components of impression management.  
Source: Leary and Kowalski (1990)



Finally, the impression construction process is determined by five factors: 1)the self-concept, 2)desired and undesired identity images, 3)role constraints, 4)target's values, and 5)current or potential social image. Regarding the self-concept, the impressions people try to create are often consistent with how they see themselves and are not necessarily false. In terms of identity images, people tend to project images that are consistent with their desired identities and inconsistent with their undesired identities.

A desirable identity image refers to what a person would like to be and thinks he/she can be at his/her best (Schlenker, 1985). Furthermore, people try to form public images that conform to their role demands. Such images reflect on certain role-defined personal characteristics. Regarding the target's values, people accommodate their public images to the perceived values and preferences of significant others even if such tailoring of images results in negative self-presentations such as playing dumb (e.g., Gove, Hughes, & Geerken, 1980). Finally, with respect to a current or potential social image, the impressions people try to make are influenced both by how they think others currently perceive them and by how they think others may view them in the future. Thus, the content of people's impression management behavior is also affected by the possibility that others may learn certain information about them in the future.

Although Leary and Kowalski's model has been designed to explain efforts to convey positive impressions, it can also be used to explain the process whereby actors project negative images. Specifically, the model explains that why motives to create negative impressions may not necessarily lead to unfavorable impression management behaviors. This notion is consistent with Becker and Martin's (1995) conceptualization that motives and methods of managing negative impressions should belong to two distinct categories. Becker and Martin's motives and methods for projecting negative images will be discussed in a subsequent section of this chapter.

### **2.1.3. Defensive vs. Negative Self-Presentation**

Impression management theory has always distinguished between assertive (acquisitive) and defensive (protective) IM behaviors (e.g., Arkin, 1981; Tedeschi &



Norman, 1985; Tetlock & Manstead, 1985). Overall, assertive IM behaviors (e.g., self-promotion) are undertaken to enhance the actor's present social identity. In contrast, defensive IM behaviors (e.g., apology) are used to protect the actor's current social identity. It is during the last decade that a new category of negative impression management has been introduced into the IM literature by Becker and Martin (1995).

Importantly, Becker and Martin (1995) point out that projecting unfavorable images is different from concepts such as modesty and learned helplessness. The authors argue that for unfavorable IM, the individual is motivated to intentionally present himself/herself in a negative light to a specific target audience. However, in some forms of defensive IM such as modesty, or learned helplessness the actor attempts to look bad to one person (or group) in order to look good to another person (or group). In addition, Becker and Martin assert that many unfavorable IM behaviors (e.g., self-depreciation, pretending to be physically sick, displaying symptoms of mental illness, etc.) are initiated to protect oneself from some types of negative event/outcome (e.g., performing an unwanted task). On the other hand, past literature on defensive IM behaviors (e.g., modesty, self-handicapping, facesaving, etc.) contends that such behaviors are undertaken to protect some image of self in the eyes of others.

In spite of the above differences, some similarities can still be identified between defensive and negative IM. For example, Arkin (1981) argues that a major cost of using protective self-presentations is that the presentation of self tends to be viewed as an accurate measure of personal qualities by both the presenter and others. For example, to forestall challenges from others an actor may use modesty or self-depreciation. However,

to the extent that the target audience and/or the actor him/herself accept modesty or self-depreciation, the presenter will be relegated to a lower position in social relations.

Thus, past research suggests that both “defensive” and “negative” self-presentations can be costly to the presenter if she/he comes to believe her/his own self-presentations, or if the target audience attributes him/her with negative performance qualities. In other words, both “defensive” and “negative” IM behaviors can lead to lower self-evaluations or lower evaluations by others. Furthermore, it is likely that the use of both defensive and negative IM behaviors are moderated by individual difference variables. For example, it has been suggested that people with high self-esteem are inclined to present themselves in an acquisitive fashion, while people with low self-esteem tend to adopt a protective self-presentational style (Arkin, 1981; Baumeister, Tice, & Hutton, 1989; Schlenker, Weigold, & Hallam, 1990). The moderating role of individual difference variables will be discussed in detail in the last part of this chapter.

#### **2.1.4. Impression Management and Citizenship Behavior**

Several researchers have recently noted that organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB) may also be impression enhancing and self-serving (e.g., Bolino, 1999; Eastman, 1994; Fandt & Ferris, 1990; Ferris, Judge, Rowland, & Fitzgibbons, 1994). That is, people who engage in organizational citizenship appear to be perceived positively by their target audience, and achieve favorable attributions. Thus, impression management motives may explain citizenship behaviors.

Organ (1988: p. 4) defines OCB as “individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate

promotes the effective functioning of the organization.” Recent reviews of the literature on citizenship indicate that such behavior has two motivational bases (Organ, 1990; Organ & Ryan, 1995). The first type of motivation is based on social exchange theory and considers citizenship behavior as a reciprocal reaction to the actions of organization. The second type of motivation reflects an individual’s personality attributes which predispose him/her to engage in citizenship behaviors.

Bolino (1999) provided a framework showing how IM motives may encourage citizenship behavior. He contends that IM is an important motivational force underlying organizational citizenship behavior. In fact, Bolino proposes IM model of organizational citizenship behavior in which IM motives are classified as a separate category of motives behind citizenship behavior. In other words, Bolino suggests that favorable IM motives may motivate citizenship in addition to other motivational bases such as social exchange, or personality dispositions, which traditionally underlie OCB. According to Bolino’s (1999) model, individuals will be motivated to engage in citizenship behaviors for self-presentation reasons when (1) their goal is to be perceived as a good citizen, (2) the value they place on being seen as good organizational citizens is high, and (3) there is a discrepancy between their desired image and the image they believe others may hold. From this point of view, citizenship behavior is image-enhancing when it is interpreted favorably and noticed by individuals who influence valued and desired outcomes.

Just as motivations to project positive images can serve to encourage organizational citizenship behaviors, negative self-presentational intentions may lead to behaviors that detract from organizational effectiveness and productivity. In addition, personality attributes may provide insights regarding the antecedent motives for both citizenship and

dysfunctional behaviors in organizations. Although Bolino's (1999) model is designed to explain the relationship between positive impression management and organizational citizenship behaviors, it can be readily extended to include negative IM and dysfunctional behaviors in the workplace.

#### **2.1.5. Gardner and Martinko's Three-Dimensional Taxonomy of IM Behaviors**

Throughout impression management literature, IM behaviors have been classified along different dimensions such as assertive (acquisitive) versus defensive (protective) (Arkin, 1981; Tedeschi & Norman, 1985; Tetlock & Manstead, 1985), tactical versus strategic (Tedeschi & Norman, 1985), and functional versus dysfunctional (Gardner & Martinko, 1998). This section will focus on Gardner and Martinko's (1998) Three-Dimensional Taxonomy of IM Behaviors. This classification is important to the purpose of the present study because it accounts for negative (unfavorable), as well as positive (favorable) IM behaviors.

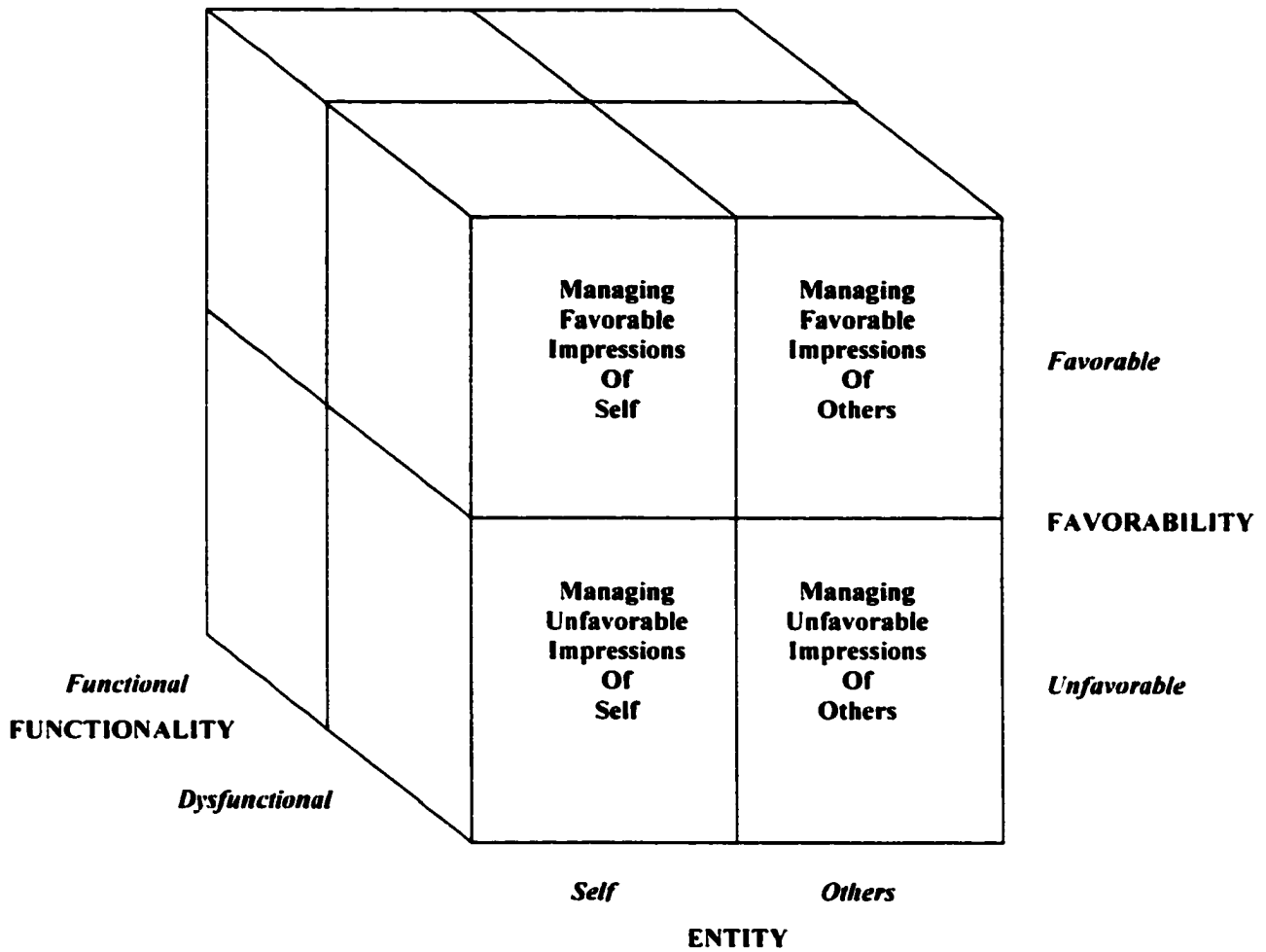
Gardner and Martinko (1998) presented a three-dimensional taxonomy of impression management behaviors which includes the dimensions of functionality, the entity (self or others), and favorability. Their classification is presented in Figure 2.2. The *functionality* of IM behaviors is determined based upon both short-term and long-term organizational consequences of those behaviors. For example, an individual's self-promotion tactic (Jones & Pittman, 1982) could be functional if it results in a job assignment in which the person's skills and abilities are better utilized. However, if instead it results in an assignment for which the individual is not qualified, the person's self-promotion behavior would be dysfunctional. This is true because such an allocation

of human resources detracts from the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization (Huselid, 1995; Terpstra & Rozell, 1993). For instance, Terpstra and Rozell's (1993) study demonstrates that organizational profitability across different industries (e.g., manufacturing, service, financial) significantly depends upon the extent of use of staffing practices such as employing structured, standardized interviews, cognitive aptitude and ability tests, and validation studies. In addition, most IM behaviors that are dysfunctional for the actor such as "playing dumb" or presenting oneself as mentally ill will be dysfunctional for the organization as well (e.g., Becker & Martin, 1995; Gove, et al., 1980; Leary & Miller, 1986).

Consistent with the above argument, Leary and Miller (1986) explains that while intimidating self-presentations are dysfunctional for society, individuals who use them can achieve three types of personal and social goals. First, such individuals often engage in aggressive behavior in order to get others to comply with their wishes. Next, they may convey aggressive impressions for the purpose of preserving their social image in the face of physical or verbal attacks. Finally, they may use self-presentations of aggressiveness just because such presentations are often directly reinforced by certain subgroups (e.g., gang members) within society. In this last condition, individuals may achieve valued images through antisocial acts, even though they may have almost no socially desirable activity upon which they can base positive social identities.

Regarding the dimension of *entity*, in Gardner and Martinko's (1998) taxonomy, the authors point out that in addition to managing personal impressions sometimes individuals try to manage the impressions target audiences form of other persons, including those of their own or another organization. For instance, organizational

Figure 2.2. A Taxonomy of Functional and Dysfunctional Impression Management Behaviors  
 Source: Gardner and Martinko (1998)



members might be interested in shaping the images of their organization and/or its products/services for key constituents such as prospective customers and investors (Alvesson, 1990; Dutton & Dukerich, 1991; Elsbach, 1994; Elsbach & Sutton, 1992; Ginzel, Kramer, & Sutton, 1992; Sutton & Callahan, 1987). With regard to the *favorability* dimension, as Becker and Martin's (1995) study illustrates, efforts to project negative images of the self, while far less common than efforts to create positive impressions, do occur. Moreover, not all unfavorable impressions are dysfunctional. For

instance, presenting negative, but accurate information about a rival organization could facilitate the achievement of organizational objectives.

A comprehensive review of prior theory and research on unfavorable impression management will be presented in the next section.

## **2.2. Unfavorable Impression Management**

### **2.2.1. Methods and Motives for Conveying Negative Images**

To avoid adverse consequences that negative impressions can create in organizations, it is important to learn why and how employees manage these impressions. Toward this objective, the following section will focus on Becker and Martin's (1995) research, which distinguished between the antecedent conditions and dysfunctional behaviors involved in negative IM situations, and identified different classes of each category.

The groundbreaking work of Becker and Martin (1995) documented several different forms of methods and motives used for purposefully projecting undesirable impressions at work. Intentionally looking bad at work is a type of impression management in which employees purposefully attempt to convey unfavorable impressions (Becker & Martin, 1995:174). This type of behavior is required to be seen as bad by a specific target audience, be it a person or a group. Obviously this definition does not involve looking bad in one way in order to look good in another way. Hence, Becker and Martin contend that managing poor impressions differs from related concepts such as humility, modesty, and self-handicapping. In fact, an important finding of their study is

that intentionally looking bad is empirically distinguishable from the management of favorable impressions or self-handicapping.

Becker and Martin (1995) investigated people's methods and motives for intentionally looking bad in organizations. Drawing on the employment experiences of 162 student participants, they documented five different forms of behavior (i.e., decreasing performance, not working to potential, withdrawal, displaying a bad attitude, and broadcasting limitations), and four types of motives (i.e., avoidance, concrete rewards, exit, and power) for managing poor impressions. The participants represented a variety of occupations. To generate cases of intentionally looking bad in organizations, participants provided answers to an open-ended question regarding their observations of the management of undesirable impressions. Using a Likert-type scale, respondents also reported the frequency with which they managed poor impressions at work. Finally, respondents indicated the actor (e.g., you, another person), and the target (e.g., superior, subordinate, co-worker, etc.) in the cases they provided.

Based upon the results of the above experiment, Becker and Martin (1995) documented several specific methods whereby employees try to form negative impressions at work, as well as the underlying motives for these poor IM methods. Five methods for creating negative images at work were identified: (1) decreasing performance (e.g., performing one's job slower than he/she did in the past, reducing the quality of one's work, making more errors than usual); (2) not working to potential (e.g., restricting the quality/quantity of one's work, playing dumb in solving work problems, trying not to display special competencies in unwanted work areas); (3) displaying a bad attitude (e.g., making comments that one doesn't like his/her work situations, trying to



look stressed out or bored at work, driving oneself in ways that are inconsistent with the values of one's superior, giving the appearance of not being a leader in a leadership position); (4) broadcasting limitations (e.g., intentionally letting others know of one's errors at work, talking about one's physical limitations, pretending to be sick at work); (5) withdrawal (e.g., being absent from one's job for no specific reason, taking long/unauthorized breaks, coming to work late). Also, four categories of motives for intentionally making poor impressions at work were identified: (1) avoidance of unpleasant/unwanted tasks, additional responsibilities, stressful events, or an unwanted promotion or transfer; (2) obtaining concrete rewards such as a less demanding task, a pay raise, job security, a desired transfer or promotion or demotion, less responsibilities, a lower workload, fewer work hours, or an improved work environment; (3) exiting the organization by getting dismissed, fired or laid off, perhaps for collecting unemployment or workers' compensation; (4) gaining power by manipulating the organization, controlling others, retaliating, or making someone else look bad.

The cases of poor IM identified in Becker and Martin's (1995) study resulted in adverse individual and organizational consequences such as inequitable treatment of employees, increased health care costs, reductions in customer satisfaction, and lower productivity. Obviously, employees' tactics and motives for purposefully promoting negative images at work involve behaviors that detract from organizational and individual efficiency and effectiveness.

Becker and Martin's (1995) study contributes to the broad literature on impression management in several ways. The results of the study show that individuals do use poor IM at work to achieve their specific goals. Also, it is the first study that specifies the

methods and motives for managing poor impressions in organizations. Thus, their study adds to the understanding of impression construction and impression motivation (cf. Leary, & Kowalski, 1990). Finally, it provides a preliminary framework for a deeper understanding of the management of unfavorable impressions.

Obviously, the methods and motives for intentionally looking bad are different from those for conveying favorable impressions (cf. Jones, & Pittman, 1982; Leary, & Kowalski, 1990). To date several studies have been conducted with a variety of research methods to identify some of the motives and methods for conveying poor impressions. Regarding the methods of intentionally looking bad, prior theory and research indicate that individuals may purposefully use specific types of self-depreciation, such as playing dumb (e.g., Gove, et al., 1980), and attempting to look incompetent (e.g., Kowalski, & Leary, 1990), broadcasting actual or feigned limitations (Twaddle, 1979), or acting contrary to social norms (e.g., Braginsky, Braginsky, & Ring, 1969; Braginsky, Grosse, & Ring, 1966; Leary, & Miller, 1986). With respect to motives for intentionally looking bad, people may engage in certain forms of self-depreciation (e.g., appearing incompetent) in order to avoid negative outcomes (Braginsky et al., 1969, 1982; Kowalski, & Leary, 1990; Leary, & Miller, 1986) such as stressful events or unpleasant tasks. They may underplay their skills, abilities, and apparent competence in order to avoid being assigned more responsibility or held to higher standards of performance (Shepperd, & Kwavnick, 1999). Also, individuals may use undesirable impressions to obtain valued outcomes. For example, psychiatric researchers have suggested that some mental patients behave offensively with the goal of receiving positive reinforcement (e.g., Carson, 1969; Schlenker, 1980). As Schlenker (1980) explains, being labeled as a mental

patient serves to orient the behavior of others toward the “sick” person, so that he/she is treated consistently with their image of illness. For example, a mental patient’s violent behaviors may elicit care-taking behavior from others on his/her behalf (Carson, 1969). Consequently, once an individual has been labeled mentally ill because of shocking or offensive behavior, there is a strong possibility that such behavior will become stable over time through reinforcement (Schlenker, 1980). Ultimately, the patient may find it more advantageous to go along with such a label than to resist. Negative impressions in mental patients will be discussed in detail in the next section.

From this review of the extant theory and research, it is clear that the first wave of evidence for the use of undesirable impressions emerged in nonwork settings. Examples are playing dumb in dating situations (Komarovsky, 1946), or creating the impression of being mentally “ill” (Braginsky, Braginsky, & Ring, 1969). Later on, the literature on undesirable IM was extended into organizational contexts. Examples include playing dumb at work (Gove et al., 1980), or attempting to look bad on one’s job (Kowalski & Leary, 1990). Overall, the phenomenon of purposefully creating negative impressions has been documented in both normal and psychiatric (i.e., mental patients inside hospitals) populations.

### **2.2.2. Negative Impressions in Mental Patients**

Different people use impression management to construct different types of identities (Schlenker, 1980). Interestingly, many people willingly choose to present themselves in ways that are negatively evaluated by others. Schlenker suggests that people who are classified as mentally ill use IM to establish and support aberrant (e.g.,

violently anti-social, threateningly explosive, extremely powerless, extremely incompetent, extremely powerful, extremely negative, etc.) rather than normal identities. Schlenker (1980) also notes that most of the experimental research in social psychology illustrates that participants pretend to possess consistently admirable images such as being strong, competent, likable, and sociable. However, many normal identities may deviate somewhat from these positive images. In fact, some situations (e.g., a bargaining situation) make it profitable for people to project negative rather than positive images of themselves.

In terms of desired images for mental patients, Braginsky and his colleagues (e.g., Braginsky & Braginsky, 1967; Braginsky, et al., 1966) documented the use of impression management tactics (e.g., flattery, pretending to be sicker than one really is, etc.) by mental patients in an effort to influence staff decisions and to control their own life inside the hospital. As such, IM is applied as a counterpower to undermine the legitimate power that is available to staff. In fact, by using IM tactics, mental patients violate the power system in ways that are invisible to the staff. Indeed, IM is employed by mental patients in an attempt to increase the chances of achieving desirable outcomes (e.g., to avoid being discharged and stay in the mental hospital, to avoid the possibility of a transfer from the open ward to the closed ward, to be released from mental hospital, etc.).

Braginsky et al. (1966) hypothesized that the low discharge rate among the old-timers (i.e., patients who had been resident in the mental hospital for three months or longer), as opposed to high discharge rate in new-comers (i.e., patients who had been resident for less than three months and for the first time), may be attributable to the long-term residents' desire to stay in the hospital and their ability to achieve this goal through

IM. In other words, if mental patients voluntarily choose to stay in the hospital, they should be motivated to misrepresent their mental condition. In fact, the experimental data, supported Braginsky et al.'s (1966) initial expectations. Among mental patients, long-term residents, as opposed to new-comers, were motivated to remain in the hospital and pretended to be severely ill so as to influence the kind of decision made about them and achieve specific goals. In some instances, people may present themselves as mentally ill to avoid responsibilities for their criminal actions and hence to avoid prison (Shepperd & Kwavnick, 1999).

According to Braginsky, Braginsky, & Ring (1969, 1982), the majority of long-term residents had the desire to remain in the mental hospital in order to escape the responsibilities of life and to enjoy life as much as possible there. Thus, they were more likely to create the impression that they are still "sick" enough not to deserve discharge, but not "sick" enough to be assigned to a closed ward. Generally, open wards allow greater freedom to their residents and are more pleasant sections to live.

Further, reality constraints (e.g., publicly known negative information about oneself) may make it advantageous for people to claim negative identities such as images of below-average intelligence, popularity, power, and so on (Schlenker, 1980). Indeed, when people have experienced consistent failure or expect to fail in public situations they are more likely to present images of themselves that are self-demeaning. For instance, mental patients are willing to give the impression that they can no longer function effectively in the outside world, as discussed earlier. By creating such an impression and bypassing their freedom, these patients can achieve valuable rewards such as escape from life pressures and responsibilities.

Previous research has acknowledged that an interpersonal relation is a hedonistic one in which the outcome of the interaction achieved by an individual can be calculated in terms of the rewards minus the costs (Carson, 1969; Homans, 1961; Thibaut, & Kelley, 1959). Based upon Thibaut and Kelley's (1959) conceptualization, a reward is any positively valued consequence that a person receives and a cost is any negatively valued consequence that a person acquires in the interaction. Each person brings to an interaction a set or sequence of behaviors in order to attain his/her objectives. In this view, many rule-breaking and violent behaviors of individuals with personality disorders are merely devices for evoking responses such as care-taking behavior in others (Carson, 1969). Apparently, the commonly held belief that mental patients' offensive behaviors must be a manifestation of illness, and therefore involuntarily, may lead to positive reinforcement of such behaviors by others who interact with them.

### **2.2.3. Self-Deception**

Consistent with the above research from social psychology, personality research provides further evidence for the use of unfavorable IM by documenting the phenomena of "deceiving down" (Hartung, 1988) in organizations. The capacity for self-deception seems to increase with age (Feldman, & Custrini, 1988). According to Hartung's (1988) hypothesis, people use self-deception to downwardly adjust their self-esteem when it is to their advantage to maintain a job for which they are overqualified. As such, individuals convince themselves that there is no disparity between their self-image and their reality. Self-deceiving down is the opposite of self-deceiving up (Goffman, 1959, 1971). Hartung argues that self-deceiving down, like self-deceiving up, is an adaptive behavior.

Specifically, in oppressive situations it is to an individual's advantage to occupy a lower position and/or engage in a dependency, which generates more benefits than loss.

Empirical research on self-deceit indicates that normal participants, as opposed to depressed participants, consistently mislead themselves about the amount of control they have over positive or negative events (Alloy & Abramson, 1979; Abramson & Alloy, 1981). These results are consistent with Sackeim and Gur's (1979) finding, which suggests that self-deceit is a mechanism for maintaining mental health. Moreover, past research on self-deception indicates that individuals high in self-esteem tend to self-deceive up about their characteristics (e.g., Monts, Zurcher, & Nydegger, 1977; Ickes & Layden, 1978), and there is evidence that individuals low in self-esteem tend to self-deceive down about their attributes (Korabik & Pitt, 1981).

#### **2.2.4. Intentional Response Distortion in Self-Report Measures of Personality**

Within the field of organizational behavior, the general perception appears to be that it is very unusual for employees to intentionally present themselves unfavorably in an organizational setting. Indeed, Zerbe and Paulhus (1987) suggested that impression management is a subset of socially desirable responses. According to these authors, socially desirable responding (SDR) refers to presenting oneself favorably regarding current social norms and standards. It has been argued that SDR has two separate components, self-deception and impression management (Paulhus, 1984; Paulhus, 1986; Zerbe, & Paulhus, 1987). Regarding the faking of selection instruments, self-deception refers to the unconscious tendency to present oneself positively. In contrast, the term impression management represents conscious distortion of test responses to create

favorable impressions. The notion that IM is a subset of socially desirable responding implies that the management of impressions is always a means of looking good rather than projecting socially undesirable images.

Becker and Martin's (1995) important findings call into question Zerbe and Paulhus' suggestions regarding the possible relationship between impression management and social desirability. In agreement with Becker and Martin, it is believed that a more reasonable view would be to consider impression management as a larger class of phenomena that only sometimes involves socially desirable responding. This notion implies that the management of impressions could be a means of looking socially undesirable rather than an attempt to look good.

Personality researchers have demonstrated that experimental participants are able to present themselves in both a positive and a negative light when they are instructed to do so (e.g., Dunnett, Koun, & Barber, 1981; Furnham & Craig, 1987; Furnham & Henderson, 1982; Hinrichsen, Gryll, Bradley, & Katahn, 1975; Schwab, 1971; Thornton & Gierasch, 1980). As recently as 1990, the prevailing wisdom was that the intentional distortion of personality scales may attenuate their validities when they are used in selection contexts or other human resource decisions. Since then, however, research on the relationship between personality measures and performance criteria has obtained reliable estimates of criterion-related validity, which lead to the conclusion that criterion-related validity is not adversely affected by deliberate faking (e.g., Barrick & Mount, 1991; Christiansen, Goffin, Johnston, & Rothstein, 1994; Cunningham, Wong, & Barbee, 1994; Hogan, Hogan, & Roberts, 1996; Hough, Eaton, Dunnette, Kamp, & McCloy,



1990; Hough & Schneider, 1996; McHenry, Hough, Toquam, Hanson, & Ashworth, 1990; Ones, Viswesvaran, & Schmidt, 1993; Tett, Jackson, & Rothstein, 1991).

With regard to the “faking bad” literature, Furnham and Henderson (1982) investigated the susceptibility of five standard psychological tests to three types of response bias: social desirability or faking good, faking bad (i.e., giving a bad impression), and faking mad (i.e., giving an impression of mental instability). The self-report measures included the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire, Snyder’s original Self-monitoring Scale, Watson and Friend’s (1969) Social Anxiety and Distress Scale, Rotter’s (1966) Locus of Control Scale, and Edwards’ (1957) Social Desirability Scale. The results of Furnham and Henderson’s experiment demonstrate that, with the exception of two individual differences measures (i.e., Self-monitoring Scale and Locus of Control Questionnaire), the self-report measures are highly sensitive to positive and negative response bias, though in predictable directions. For example, in the case of the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire, the pattern of faking is clear in that past research has often considered extraversion as opposed to introversion to be a socially desirable characteristic. Similarly, neuroticism and psychoticism have been considered socially undesirable.

Consistent with the above experiment, Furnham and Craig (1987) found that over half of the 20 scales in Kostick’s (1977) Perception and Preference Inventory (PAPI) were sensitive to faking good and faking bad. PAPI is a self-report work inventory that is used in the selecting, training, and counseling context and provides information on the person’s style and motivation at work. The test measures the following clusters of social behaviors: work direction, leadership, activity, social nature, work style, temperament

and followership. Although the PAPI is open to faking, that faking is not easily predictable. Furnham and Craig speculate that the unpredictability of the test is due to the fact that many of the measured dimensions (e.g., leadership role) have both positive and negative features.

Furthermore, the results of Furnham's (1990) study showed that three well-known, and widely used personality questionnaires in occupational psychology were highly susceptible to deliberate response distortion in both positive and negative directions. The self-report measures included Cattell's (1969) 16PF, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, and Schutz's (1978) Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation Behavior. As in the other personality measures, the intentional faking results in these questionnaires are fairly predictable in that socially desirable responses (e.g., outgoing, assertive, trusting, etc.) tend to be those generally considered to be most acceptable, while socially undesirable responses (e.g., reserved, submissive, suspicious, etc.) tend to be those generally regarded to be least acceptable.

In another representative example of this research, Hough et al. (1990) examined the effect of intentional distortion on the criterion-related validities of personality constructs in a selection context for soldiers. They found that response distortion in a desirable way was not a serious problem. Thus, there were only small differences on criterion validity results between soldiers who responded in a socially desirable manner and those who did not. On the other hand, response distortion in an undesirable way, that is poor impression management, reflected significant differences between soldiers instructed to answer honestly and those instructed to fake bad. However, the authors concluded that, "The likelihood of such distortion occurring in most applicant settings is

remote.” Circumstances in which a person is motivated to portray him or herself negatively are probably specific to a draft (mandatory military service) or clinical setting (such as evaluations related to Worker’s Compensation claims)” (Hough et al., 1990: p. 593).

In fact, many researchers have concluded that success in faking as a function of personality and individual differences is not a serious threat to the validity of personality tests (e.g., Christiansen et al., 1994; Hogan et al., 1996; Kroger & Wood, 1993; Ones, Viswesvaran, & Reiss, 1996; Rahim, 1984; Riggio, Salinas, & Tucker, 1988). For example, Ones et al. (1996) using a meta-analytic approach obtained a correlation of 0.37 between emotional stability and social desirability, and a correlation of 0.20 between conscientiousness and social desirability. The authors interpret the results as evidence that these dimensions (i.e., emotional stability and conscientiousness) of the Big Five can be measured by social desirability inventories and they are not susceptible to desirable responding. As such, partialing social desirability from test scores is likely to remove some true variance from the measures of personality. Consistently, Hogan et al. (1996) suggest that personality scales scores should be regarded as a kind of self-presentation strategy. The concept of faking must be replaced by the idea that the test-taker uses the test items to portray himself or herself as a certain kind of person on a specific occasion (Kroger & Wood, 1993). Similarly, individuals who are concerned with presenting themselves in a favorable light may actually perform in a way that make them more likely to be accepted by others (Riggio et al., 1988).

### **2.2.5. Broadcasting Limitations**

Regarding self-presentations of physical illness, many people occasionally use physical symptoms to elicit desired reactions from others, whether to avoid undesirable responsibilities, to excuse undesirable behaviors, or to elicit supportive and care-taking behavior from others (Leary, & Miller, 1986). Twaddle (1979) explained the sickness behavior and sick role from an interaction perspective. In this view, the kinds of expectations held for a sick person vary depending on his/her interpersonal relationships with different individuals, and socialization patterns. Relative to their status to the sick person, other individuals (e.g., wife, children, physician, boss, nurse, coworker, etc.) may have expectations derived from a different framework of interaction. For example, the physician may make judgements considering physical capacities of the sick individual while a boss or coworker may think in terms of the individual's ability to perform work activities. However, it is always a legitimate benefit of sickness that the sick person is exempted from normal activities. Twaddle contends that exemption from normal activities would be more likely when those activities are seen as onerous and difficult.

Where work is valued less highly than other things, such as longevity or self-preservation, the individual may "embrace" illness as a legitimate "excuse" for avoiding work (Twaddle, 1979:p. 119). Overall, Twaddle's work suggests that people can be actually ill or injured, or pretend to be so, and broadcast their physical limitations in order to influence and control the impression of others. Based upon Becker and Martin's (1995) definition of poor impression management, to the extent that the objective of this form of self-presentation is to look bad, it would constitute a method of conveying undesirable characteristics rather than self-handicapping.

### **2.2.6. Playing Dumb**

The literature on playing dumb supplies additional evidence of unfavorable impression management behavior. Social psychologists often demonstrated that there is general tendency for women to pretend to be less intelligent than they really are; that is to play dumb (e.g., Komarovsky, 1946; Wallin, 1950). This behavior was explained as a reaction to cultural contradictions in sex-role expectations. In fact, playing dumb was a solution to balance working hard for a career and at the same time not becoming unfeminine. In other words, playing dumb for women was a remedy to balance two contradictory roles, namely the “feminine” and the “modern” roles. In the modern role, the college woman was expected to strive for academic achievement; on the other hand, in feminine role, she was required to adopt the subordinacy of the traditional role. These classic works on “playing dumb” were based upon female college students and did not present any comparable data on men.

In a later study, Dean, Braito, Powers, and Bruton (1975) found that college males tend to play dumb in almost the same proportions that college women do. Wallin’s (1950) viewpoint was that college women who face incompatible expectations, either do not take them seriously or resolve them readily. In other words, they can easily balance their dual roles (i.e., feminine vs. modern) by playing dumb if they care to. Consistent with Wallin (1950), Dean et al. perceived that their participants did not have any difficulty confront the role contradictions and goal inconsistencies involved in playing dumb. This finding is in stark contrast to Komarovsky’s (1946) assumption that playing dumb was related to a significant amount of psychological strain and distress.

Although, there has been little research on the management of unfavorable impressions in real –life work settings, previous evidence suggests that the management of poor impressions does occur in organizations. For instance, Gove et al. (1980) interviewed 2,247 employees via phone, and asked them about the frequency of their engagement in playing dumb behaviors and the targets of such behaviors. Their findings suggest that men are more likely to report playing dumb with their bosses, their coworkers, their friends, and strangers. The data also suggest that playing dumb is a type of IM that comprises a modest aspect of most individuals' behavior.

According to Gove et al.'s results, being highly educated, male, and having high occupational status are positively related to playing dumb, while there is a negative relationship between age and playing dumb. Interestingly, playing dumb can be seen as a defensive reaction and is likely to be evoked in situations that constrain individuals to act less intelligent. Those who do not tend to report playing dumb in constraining situations are characterized by the personality attributes of "considerate," "sympathetic," and a "high degree of self-confidence." Moreover, as Gove et al. (1980) note Komarovsky (1946), Wallin (1950), and Dean et al. (1975) all treat playing dumb as a form of IM. To these social scientists, individuals play dumb in an effort to control their social images. Playing dumb will give their audience a sense of superiority and facilitate social interaction. In fact, Gove et al.'s study suggests that playing dumb is a form of IM that in only selected situations is related to incompatible sex roles imposed by the society.

#### **2.2.7. Self-Depreciation**

Regarding self-depreciation strategy at work, Kowalski and Leary (1990) employed an experimental design to demonstrate the utility of self-depreciation as a self-

presentational strategy for avoiding an aversive event. Their study involved a job simulation paradigm using psychology students as participants. Student participants were instructed to believe that either the more or less well-adjusted of two workers would perform an onerous task. The task required the participant to sing “The Star Spangled Banner” into a video tape-recorder.

Kowalski and Leary used a 2 (supervisor power: high/low) by 3 [valued image: well-adjusted (or negative)/poorly-adjusted (or positive)/unknown] factorial design. Half of the participants were informed that the supervisor was responsible for selecting which worker would perform the onerous task (high supervisor power). The other half of the participants were told that the task assignments would be made by the flip of a coin (low supervisor power). To give the supervisor the opportunity to measure workers’ “adjustment” and “maladjustment,” participants rated themselves on a set of adjectives relevant to adjustment, and then selected the adjective cards they wanted to show the supervisor. To manipulate the “valued image” factor, one-third of the participants were told that the supervisor would examine the workers’ self-ratings and select the more well-adjusted individuals to perform the task of singing “The Star Spangled Banner.” In this treatment condition, the valued image was “negative” because participants who were deemed to be less well-adjusted were able to avoid being assigned to the aversive task. In the “positive” valued image condition, the participants were told that the supervisor would assign workers deemed to be poorly-adjusted to the unpleasant task. In the control condition (valued image unknown), participants received no information regarding how the supervisor would select workers for the singing task.

Interestingly, Kowalski and Leary demonstrated a significant interaction effect between the valued image and supervisor power. As expected, in the high supervisor's power condition, participants presented themselves in ways that helped them avoid the aversive task of singing "The Star Spangled Banner." Specifically, they presented themselves less positively when instructed that the well-adjusted worker was to perform the onerous task, and more positively when instructed that well-adjusted worker could avoid this task. However, when the participants' assignment to the unpleasant task was made in a random manner, self-presentations of adjustment did not differ as a function of the valued-image manipulation. These findings demonstrate that people may at least temporarily create less positive impressions of themselves when it is to their benefit to do so. With respect to participants' self-evaluations, when the supervisor's power in assigning tasks was high, and when the valued image was negative, participants evaluated themselves less favorably than when the valued image was positive. When the supervisor's power in assigning tasks was low, however, participants' self-evaluations did not differ between these conditions.

Further evidence on the use of the self-depreciation strategy is provided by Weary and Williams (1990) in a study of depressive responses among college students participating in a relatively simple visual-motor task. In this study, introductory psychology students completed the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI), and based on their responses, groups of depressed and nondepressed participants were selected. All participants were given a simple motor task, and were told that the task could be successfully completed within a specific amount of time. Half of the depressed and nondepressed participants were informed that successful performance on initial task



would result in their participation in a second task designed to tap similar abilities. The remaining participants received no information about a possible subsequent task. Weary and Williams found that depressed individuals in the “future performance expectancy” condition, as opposed to nondepressed persons and depressed individuals in the “no future performance expectancy” condition, strategically failed at the initial task when successful completion could result in future performance of a similar task. Also, depressed participants in the “future performance expectancy” condition, compared with participants in other experimental conditions, experienced further losses in self-esteem, more discomfort, and more negative affect as a result of using poor impression management.

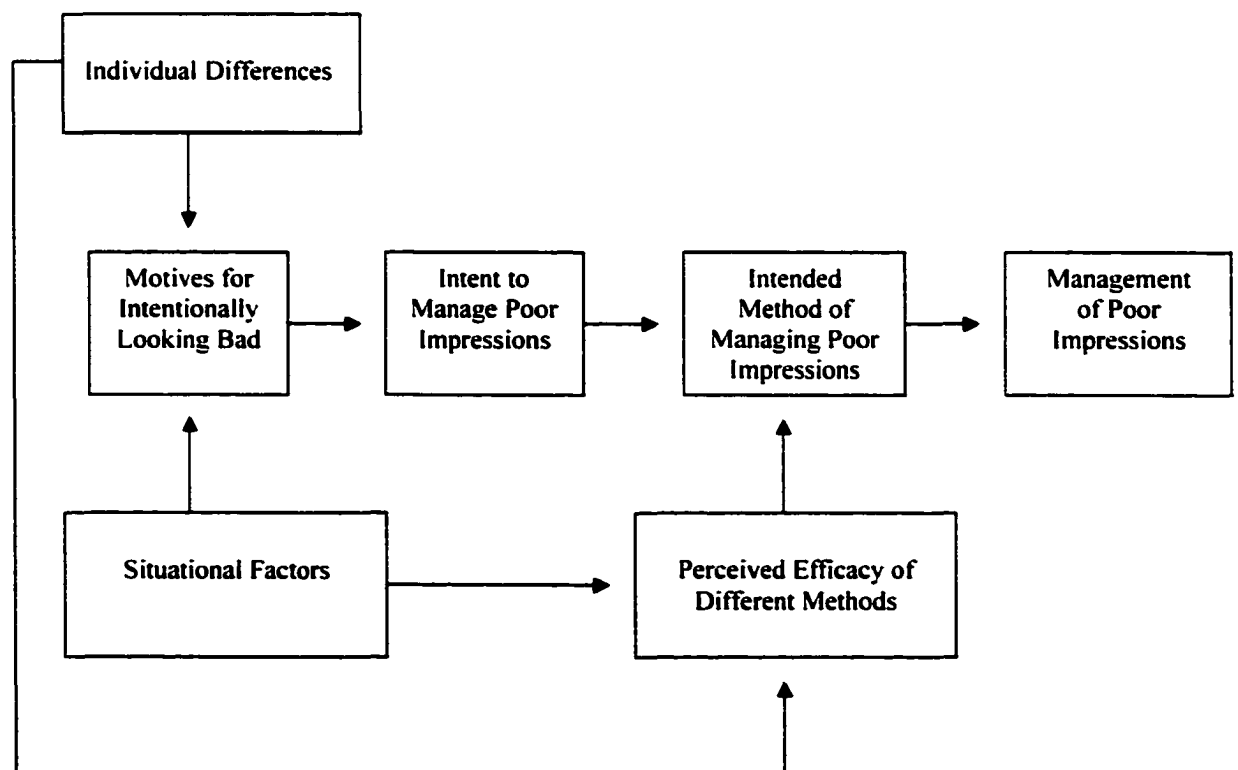
#### **2.2.8. A Conceptual Framework for Managing Poor Impressions**

The findings summarized in previous sections of this chapter support the contention that individuals are very likely to use negative, as well as positive impressions in order to achieve their personal objectives at work. This section will examine the role that individual difference variables play for negative IM by discussing Becker and Martin’s (1995) Model of the Management of Poor Impressions (see Figure 2.3).

This preliminary framework predicts whether or not a certain individual would attempt to manage poor impressions in an organizational setting. According to this framework, an individual’s motives for purposefully conveying negative impressions are a function of individual differences variables (e.g., the need for achievement, self monitoring, self-esteem, etc.) and situational factors (e.g., task characteristics, leader attributes, etc.). Generally, individuals with a high need for achievement and high self-

esteem are predicted to be less likely to engage in the management of poor impressions, because negative impressions would not generally lead to long-term career advancement. Also, individuals low in self-esteem are expected to be more likely to present themselves in a negative light, because such presentations are consistent with their self-perceptions. Furthermore, work situations that involve unpleasant tasks, low autonomy, insufficient feedback, and unsupportive leaders are more likely to set the stage for the development of such motives as the avoidance of unwanted responsibilities, organizational exit, and revenge.

Figure 2.3. Model of the Management of Poor Impressions  
Source: Becker and Martin (1995)



In Becker and Martin's model, the existence of motives for intentionally looking bad, as well as the intention to manage poor impressions are antecedents to the intended method. The particular methods that an individual intends to use for managing poor impressions are directly determined by the perceived efficacy of those methods. Hence, employees intend to use methods that would likely have the highest perceived efficacy (a person's estimate of his or her ability to accomplish a certain task). The perceived efficacy of each method depends on individual differences and situational variables.

The next part of this chapter will focus on providing the rationale for the moderating role that certain individual difference variables may play for: 1) the tendency to use negative self-presentations, and 2) the relationship between such presentations and subsequent self-evaluations.

### **2.3. Unfavorable Impression Management and Individual Difference Variables: An Interactional View**

#### **2.3.1. Self-Esteem and the Tendency to Project Negative Images**

**2.3.1.1. The nature and stability of self-esteem.** Self-esteem has been defined in many different ways by social psychologists. Two basic and competing perspectives regarding the nature of self-esteem and its role in psychological functioning are identified by Hoyle, Kernis, Leary, and Baldwin (1999). The traditional view equates self-esteem with the totality of specific self-evaluations in domains for which an individual aspires to do well (e.g., Morretti & Higgins, 1990; Harter, 1993; Pelham, 1995; Kernis, Cornell, Sun, Berry, & Harlow, 1993). From this perspective, self-esteem reflects the ratio of

successes to aspirations. The second and more current view of self-esteem conceptualizes this psychological concept in terms of global feelings of self-worth, liking, and acceptance that are separate from specific self-evaluations. In this view, how much we like, value, and accept ourselves in general will influence our self-evaluations on specific qualities such as intelligence, attractiveness, sophistication, and so on (e.g., Brown, 1993). In other words, instead of relying on specific successes or failures, self-esteem reflects the average or “baseline” feelings that an individual has toward himself or herself.

Hoyle et al. (1999) conclude that self-esteem is the extent to which an individual likes, values, and accepts himself or herself. Although people’s evaluations of themselves along self-important dimensions relate to self-esteem, they are not equivalent. In fact, Hoyle et al.’s review of past research on self-esteem identifies three self-evaluation domains that are most strongly related to global self-esteem. These areas are physical appearance, social acceptance, and competence.

In terms of self-esteem stability, Hoyle et al. (1999) distinguish between long-term and short-term fluctuations in self-esteem. Long-term fluctuations reflect changes in one’s baseline or typical feelings of self-worth, and occur slowly and over an extended period of time. On the other hand, short-term fluctuations can be viewed as changes in an individuals’ current, or immediate feelings of self-worth (i.e., how much do I like myself at this moment?), and may be measured daily or even more frequently.

Changes in one’s self-esteem can be explained based upon sociometer theory (Leary, 1999a; Leary & Downs, 1995; Leary, Tambor, Terdal, & Downs, 1995) of self-esteem. According to this theory, self-esteem is a mechanism whereby one continuously

monitors the social environment for cues regarding one's degree of acceptance or rejection by other people. As such, self-esteem is a psychological gauge that is sensitive to changes in other people's evaluations of the self. Additionally, Leary (1999b) argues that events such as social exclusion and failure that lead others to devalue their relationship with the person, are likely to threaten his/her self-esteem. However, events such as achievement, recognition, compliments, and admiration that enhance one's perceptions of being accepted and included, tend to raise self-esteem.

Three different lines of research including self-confirmatory feedback (Swann & Read, 1981a,b), compensatory self-enhancement (Baumeister, 1982), and depressive self-depreciation (Weary & Williams, 1990) suggest that individuals low in self-esteem, as compared to those high in self-esteem, might be more inclined to engage in negative self-presentation. The remaining part of this section will focus on discussing these lines of research.

**2.3.1.2. Self-esteem and self-confirmatory feedback.** Research indicates that low self-esteem, as opposed to high self-esteem, persons react differently to negative feedback. In a series of experiments, Swann and Read (1981a, b) demonstrated that people prefer to seek social feedback that will confirm rather than disconfirm their self-conceptions. Self-conceptions are defined as thoughts and feelings about the self that are derived from past experience, especially the reactions of others (Swann & Read, 1981a: p. 352). In Swann and Read's (1981a) experiment, student participants were classified as "self-likables" (individuals with positive self-concepts) and "self-dislikables" (individuals with negative self-concepts) after completing a measure of their self-conceptions. Next, participants received bogus evaluation feedback on a specific

personality measure. The feedback consisted of either a favorable or an unfavorable evaluation of the personality. The results revealed that the participants spent more time examining feedback information that confirmed as opposed to disconfirmed their self-conceptions. Hence, self-likables spent more time reading the evaluative statements within the favorable condition than in the unfavorable condition, whereas self-dislikables spent more time reading the evaluative statements within the unfavorable condition than in the favorable condition.

In a follow-up experiment, Swann and Read (1981a) allowed “self-likables” and “self-dislikables” being evaluated by their interaction partner based upon their participation in getting-acquainted conversations. The results suggest that self-likables, as opposed to self-dislikables, elicit more favorable reactions by using ingratiation strategies such as complimenting and praising the evaluator. Furthermore, both “self-likables” and “self-dislikables” are especially likely to elicit confirmatory reactions when they suspect that the evaluator’s feedback may invalidate their self-conceptions.

Further evidence of preference for self-confirmatory feedback is provided by Swann and Read’s (1981b). In this experiment, participants were classified as “assertive,” “unassertive,” “emotional,” and “unemotional” after completing measures of self-perceived assertiveness and self-perceived emotionality. Next, each participant completed a personality inventory and received feedback information regarding the assertiveness and emotionality of his/her personality. Participants were then given the opportunity to select the type of feedback that they were most interested in. The results demonstrate that participants seek feedback information that will confirm rather than disconfirm their self-conceptions. Those who perceive themselves as assertive ask for more evidence of

assertive feedback than unassertive feedback, those who view themselves as unassertive are apt to examine more evidence of unassertive feedback. Similarly, those who perceive themselves as emotional prefer to ask for emotional feedback, and those who see themselves as unemotional prefer to solicit unemotional feedback.

Perhaps individuals attach greater value to self-confirmatory feedback because they believe such feedback is highly informative concerning who they are (Swann & Read, 1981a). As such, people are likely to attend to evaluations of others when they believe that these evaluations verify, validate, and sustain their self-images. Importantly, Swann and Read's (1981a) experimental results show that people are motivated to actively elicit self-confirmatory reactions from others in order to bring their social environments into harmony with their self-conceptions.

Generally, individuals reject information that is incongruent with the self-structure (e.g., Markus, 1977; Swann & Read, 1981 a, b; Swann & Hill, 1982; Tesser & Campbell, 1983). Swann (1985) contends that once individuals form certain self-views, they are likely to confirm these views in a variety of behavioral and cognitive activities. Indeed, people who perceive themselves as likable should use ingratiation strategy throughout their social interactions more than those who regard themselves as unlikable. This is especially true when individuals suspect that others' impressions may disconfirm their self-conceptions. Thus, self-likables tend to behave in ways that evoke favorable reactions from others, whereas self-dislikables are inclined to behave in ways that evoke unfavorable reactions from others. Additionally, Swann (1985) assumes that this self-sustaining process is continuous and cyclical. That is, people's self-views influence their

behaviors, which evoke reactions of others, which in turn shape people's subsequent self-conceptions.

**2.3.1.3. Self-esteem and the use of compensatory self-enhancement.** Past research has documented that low versus high self-esteem individuals are less likely to use enhancing self-presentations to compensate for unfavorable reputations. Baumeister (1982) explored the influence of self-esteem on self-presentational strategies within an experimental design. Student participants confronted with public reputations in the form of bogus feedback from a personality profile. Although both high and low self-esteem individuals did not contradict the bad reputation verbally, they behaved differently upon receiving public bad evaluations. High self-esteem participants used compensatory self-enhancement by describing themselves significantly more favorably on dimensions not related to the evaluation, whereas, low self-esteem participants did not employ compensatory self-enhancement and conformed to the public expectancies about their behaviors.

Baumeister (1982) notes that low self-esteem individuals appear to regard their unfavorable reputations as constraining them to behave in certain ways. In fact, low self-esteem persons are reluctant to disconfirm public behavioral expectancies because they habitually expect failure, rejection, or humiliation. They are not willing to claim favorable attributes because they lack the confidence that subsequent interactions will confirm such claims. Finally, their lack of confidence in themselves and in their own judgements makes low self-esteem individuals unwilling to behave independent of the influences of others. On the other hand, high self-esteem persons experience the experimental situation as a source of opportunity to impress others as favorably as



possible. High self-esteem individuals are habitually successful and likable in their interactions with others, are willing to take the risk of making self-enhancing statements to compensate for unfavorable public reputations, and are confident that these statements will be supported by future events.

**2.3.1.4. Self-esteem, depression, and the use of self-depreciation.** Past research has documented that depressed persons are inclined to use self-depreciation to avoid unwanted responsibilities. Weary and Williams (1990) found that depressed versus nondepressed individuals were more likely to fail at task when expected to perform a subsequent task upon successful completion of the first one, and experienced further losses in esteem. These experimental findings provide strong support for Hill, Weary, and Williams' (1986) contention that depressives' characteristically shaky self-confidence and self-doubts may lead them to adopt a protective self-presentation style (Arkin, 1981) in various social interaction situations. In this view, depressed individuals may emphasize their inabilities, weaknesses, or illness and deprecate their present achievements in order to avoid performance demands and responsibilities in future. As such, depression can lead to self-depreciation, broadcasting limitations, and a subsequent loss of esteem. Indeed, there exist many similarities between depressed and low self-esteem characters.

The above findings suggest that low self-esteem individuals are less reluctant to use self-depreciation and broadcasting limitations in order to avoid more responsibilities at work. In fact, since individuals low in self-esteem see themselves in a negative light, they present themselves negatively. As such, low as opposed to high self-esteem persons are expected to engage in self-depreciation and broadcast limitations more often.

### **2.3.2. Effects of Self-presentation on Subsequent Self-Esteem**

Relying upon past theory and research, this section will develop a supporting argument for the proposition that self-esteem plays a moderating role in the relationship between self-presentation and the resultant self-esteem.

**2.3.2.1. The self-concept and the phenomenal self.** Research has demonstrated that using self-presentational strategies may change an actor's phenomenal self or "working self-concept." The self-concept is a composite view of oneself that is presumed to be formed through direct experience and evaluations adopted from significant others (Bandura, 1997). The phenomenal self refers to a "person's awareness, arising of his/her own beliefs, values, attitudes, the links between them, and their implications for his/her behavior" (Jones & Gerard, 1967: p.716). To Markus and Wurf (1987), the self-concept is a collection of self-representations (e.g., self-schemas, standards, strategies, production rules, possible selves, etc.), and the working self-concept is that subset of representations which is accessible at a given moment. The self-concept as a dynamic structure mediates intrapersonal (e.g., self-relevant information processing) and interpersonal (e.g., social perception) information processing. The self-concept organizes self-relevant actions, and provides standards and scripts for behavior.

Interestingly, it has been proposed that available self has an asymmetrical structure with a broader range of acceptance for positive than negative self-relevant information (Jones, Rhodewalt, Berglas, & Skelton, 1981; Rhodewalt & Agustsdottir, 1986). Self-presentational behaviors implying favorable evaluations are likely to fall within the acceptance range of self-knowledge, while most behaviors implying unfavorable self-evaluations tend to fall within the rejection range of self-knowledge.

**2.3.2.2. Self-conception and carry-over processes.** Previous research has examined the processes by which individuals come to believe their own self-presentations. According to Jones et al. (1981), two different processes may account for these carryover effects. In other words, self-enhancement and self-depreciation may change the presenter's feelings about the self through different processes. The first process is based upon cognitive dissonance theory (Wicklund & Brehm, 1976) which assumes that self-conception is stable and well-defined. Thus, if an actor's initial self-conception is discrepant from her or his self-presentation, cognitive dissonance (lack of harmony in thoughts) should be aroused. Furthermore, cognitive dissonance should be induced if the actor perceives option or personal responsibility to participate in the self-presentational behavior. Similarly, cognitive dissonance should be induced if the actor expects negative consequences to be produced as a result of his/her self-presentational behavior. For example, the actor should experience cognitive dissonance if he/she participates in a self-discrepant behavior that will question his/her own integrity or ethical principles. Jones et al. (1981) proposed that the cognitive dissonance mechanism is responsible for lowering the actor's self-esteem after presenting him/herself negatively.

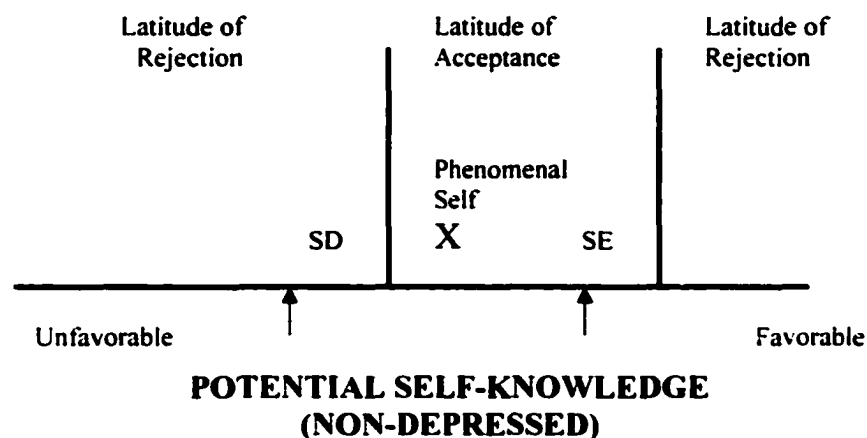
In the second process the influence of self-presentation on the phenomenal self is based upon a biased scanning variant of Bem's (1972) self-perception theory. In this view, the self-concept is the current situationally salient subset of larger library of alternative conceptions that has been made accessible through self-presentational behavior. Overall, self-perception theory, as opposed to cognitive dissonance theory, assumes that self-concept is highly fuzzy, mutable, and in flux. As such, whatever self-conception the actor has is influenced by the more recent and more salient self-

presentational behavior. The biased scanning variant assumes, instead, that the self-concept consists of a complex set of alternative views of self with continuously shifting salience. Accordingly, self-presentational behaviors are likely to make one of the competing alternative conceptions of self salient. In the biased scanning version of self-perception theory, the self-concept is shifting constantly and its potential features are rendered salient through self-presentational behavior that is owned by actor and is reflective of his or her contemporary phenomenal self. Jones et al. (1981) proposed that a biased scanning mechanism is responsible for raising the actor's self-esteem after presenting him/herself positively.

Yet, another theory that accounts for the way in which people's public self-presentations carry over to modify their private selves was developed by Rhodewalt (1986). Rhodewalt's theory of self-presentation and the phenomenal self explains the carry-over (internalization) effect (Gergen, 1967; Jones et al., 1981; Rhodewalt, & Agustsdottir, 1986) by integrating two different perspectives on the self. On one hand, cognitive researchers view the self as consistent across time, resistant to disconfirming information, well-structured, and stable (e.g., Bower & Gilligan, 1979; Cheek & Hogan, 1983; Swann & Ely, 1984; Markus, 1977; Markus, & Sentis, 1982; Swann, 1983; Swann, 1985; Swann, & Read, 1981a). In this view people create a specific "social reality" through their self-presentational behaviors and choices of people and interactional contexts, and it is this "social reality" that produces their self-knowledge (Swann, 1983; Swann, 1985; Swann & Ely, 1984; Swann & Hill, 1982; Swann & Read, 1981a, 1981b). On the other hand, the second perspective on the self and "carry-over" effect assumes that the self is highly mutable, socially malleable and in a continual state of flux.

In Rhodewalt's model, as depicted in Figure 2.4a, all the information about the self (i.e., potential self-knowledge) is arranged along a dimension of favorability. Latitude of acceptance includes more favorable than unfavorable information about the self.

Figure 2. 4a. Latitudes of acceptance and rejection of the phenomenal self.  
 (SE = Self-enhancement, SD = self-depreciation)  
 Source: Rhodewalt (1986)



Negative and positive information that is not incorporated into the person's self-concept falls into latitudes of rejection of the phenomenal self. Self-presentational behavior may fall within the range of either acceptance or rejection. Self-presentations within the latitude of acceptance make certain aspects of self-knowledge more accessible and this salient information is given greater weight in subsequent private self-evaluation. In contrast, self-presentations in the latitude of rejection arouse cognitive dissonance and are in conflict with individual's private conceptions of self. Thus, an individual's responses to the inconsistency between current self-presentation and prior self-knowledge leads to the shifts in the phenomenal self and subsequent private self-evaluation.

**2.3.2.3. Experimental evidence of carry-over effects/processes.** Prior research has shown that people are influenced by the images they create for themselves through their own self-presentations (e.g., Jones et al., 1981; Rhodewalt & Augusdottir, 1986). Organizational behavior researchers have studied the amount of change in a person's feelings about the self that arise when participants self-enhance and are exposed to social feedback in the interaction situation (e.g., Gergen, 1965), and when participants self-enhance or self-depreciate and are not exposed to social reinforcement (Jones et al., 1981). In Gergen's (1965) experiment, participants were instructed during a 30-min interview to either present themselves in a positive light or to be accurate about themselves. The results demonstrated that in the presence of social feedback, participants who made a good impression on the interviewer rated themselves more positively than did accurate participants.

Similarly, Jones et al. (1981) demonstrate that strategic self-presentational behavior influences subsequent private self-concept ratings so that the phenomenal self or "working self-concept" will shift in the direction of the self-presentation. Importantly, research evidence provides strong support for the proposition that different types of self-presentational behaviors (e.g., self-depreciation vs. self-enhancement) change the phenomenal self through different processes (i.e., cognitive dissonance, biased scanning self-conceptions). Jones et al. (1981), employing a 2 (self-enhance vs. self-depreciate) by 2 (self-referenced vs. yoked) by 2 (choice vs. no choice) role-playing paradigm, instructed participants to present themselves either positively or negatively during a job interview. In the self-referenced condition, participants were directed to improvise their experimental performance through thinking of their own favorable or unfavorable

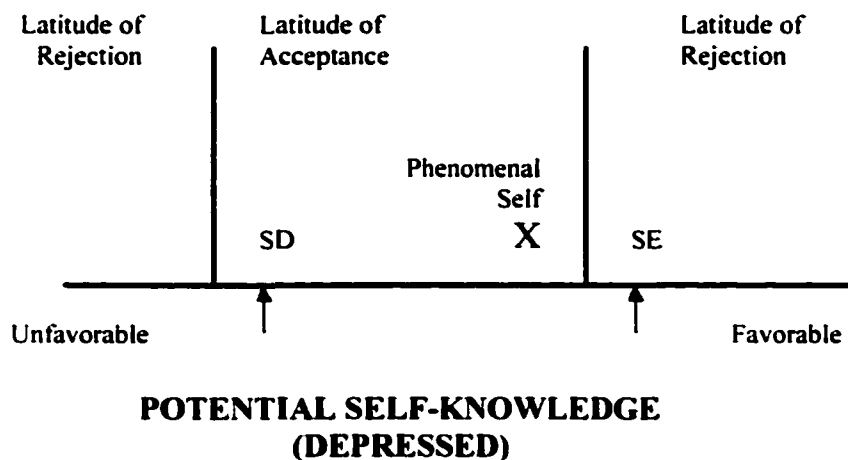
experiences. Their responses were then provided to yoked participants in order to be used in answering the same questions during the interview. Next, in the “choice” condition, participants were given the option to withdraw the experiment, whereas in the “no choice” condition, participants were told that they have to play the assigned roles. After completion of the interview, subsequent self-esteem was measured within a neutral context.

The results revealed that participants who were instructed to self-enhance, later viewed themselves more positively only if they improvised their interview behavior. This relationship was independent of the “choice” manipulation. Participants who were instructed to self-depreciate later viewed themselves more negatively only if they were given the choice not to play their roles. The self-referencing manipulation had no effect on these participants. Jones et al. concluded that self-enhancement carried over to high self-esteem via a biased-scanning mechanism, whereas self-depreciation carried over to low self-esteem via a cognitive dissonance mechanism.

To provide further evidence of the carry over processes proposed by Jones et al. (1981) and to provide support for Rhodewalt’s (1986) self-knowledge theory of carry over effects, Rhodewalt and Agustsdottir (1986) replicated Jones et al.’ (1981) procedure, using nondepressed and depressed participants. For the nondepressed participants their findings replicated Jones et al.’s results; the results were reversed for depressed participants. Apparently, for depressed individuals, self-depreciation fell within the acceptance interval of self-knowledge and influenced their phenomenal self through biased-scanning processes. On the other hand, self-enhancement fell within the rejection range of self-knowledge and was governed by cognitive dissonance processes (see Figure

2.4b). As such, depressed participants who were directed to self-depreciate, showed a significant decline in self-esteem only if they self-referenced during the interview. As expected, this occurred whether or not they had choice over their roles. Also, self-enhancement influenced depressed participants' self-esteem in a positive direction only if they performed under "choice" instructions. This relationship was independent of the self-serving manipulation. Rhodewalt and Agusdottir explain that self-esteem is similar to depression in that the self-schemata of low as opposed to high self-esteem individuals contain more negative self-referent information.

Figure 2. 4b. Latitudes of acceptance and rejection of the phenomenal self.  
 (SE = Self-enhancement, SD = self-depreciation)  
 Source: Rhodewalt (1986)



**2.3.2.4. Self-esteem and the tendency to accept social influence.** Past research suggests that low self-esteem individuals are more easily influenced than high self-esteem persons. Coopersmith (1967) demonstrated that low self-esteem individuals, compared to individuals high in self-esteem, are more easily persuaded. Coopersmith's experimental findings point to pervasive and significant differences in social behaviors of



persons who differ in self-esteem. These findings suggest that persons with high self-esteem believe that their experiences regarding tasks and social situations are accurate and reliable evaluations of events. These individuals' internal frame of reference, therefore, gives them the opportunity to attend to their own judgements, perceptions, and conclusions as significant in making decisions. As such, high self-esteem persons' attitudes lead them to greater social independence and creativity. On the other hand, individuals with low self-esteem lack trust in themselves and are likely to engage in listening rather than participating in social situations. Apparently, low self-esteem individuals' preoccupation with their difficulties limits their social interaction in group discussions, and prevents them from accepting and expressing their own opinions.

Similarly, it has been shown that low self-esteem, as compared to high self-esteem individuals, are more accepting of bogus personality feedback (Snyder & Clair, 1977; Snyder & Shenkel, 1975; Snyder, Shenkel, & Lowery, 1977). Snyder and Clair (1977) argue that one reason for this acceptance is the psychological insecurity that low self-esteem individuals feel inside themselves. In Snyder and Clair's experiment, college students were classified into secure and insecure categories using Maslow's (1952) Insecurity Inventory. Then experimental participants took psychological tests that consisted of four Rorschach inkblots. Finally, the participants' tests were purportedly scored and interpreted. The results revealed that dispositional insecurity leads to greater acceptance of the interpretive feedback, more faith in psychological tests, and perception of the experimenter as more skilled.

Still, Brockner (1983) argues that individuals low in self-esteem, as compared to those high in self-esteem, demonstrate greater plasticity in their behavior. Plasticity refers

to susceptibility to social influence. Furthermore, it is suggested that the greater behavioral plasticity of low self-esteem persons is not due to more attention to social information and/or more understanding of the cues' meanings, but due to more yielding. This is true because individuals low in self-esteem dislike themselves, lack confidence in their own beliefs and/or behaviors, and are preoccupied with others' evaluations of them. Thus, individuals low in self-esteem may be more easily persuaded to others' viewpoints, and are more apt to yield in response to external (social) cues in order to receive positive evaluations.

**2.3.2.5. Self-esteem and malleability of self-concept.** With regard to the malleability of self-conceptions, Baumgardner, Kaufman, and Levy's (1989) experiments focused on the different coping mechanisms by which low and high self-esteem people react to others' evaluations, and the link between reactions to evaluators and subsequent shifts in esteem levels. Student participants with high and low self-esteem participated in a social interaction experiment, and received bogus feedback implying that they were liked (positive feedback) or disliked (negative feedback) by their interaction partner. Each participant was then asked to evaluate the accuracy of his partner's judgements on his personality. The evidence showed that low self-esteem participants self-enhanced by complimenting evaluators who gave them positive feedback and publicly derogating those who gave them negative feedback. These self-enhancement methods resulted in higher levels of subsequent self-evaluations for low self-esteem participants. In contrast, high self-esteem participants generally did not exhibit self-enhancement upon receiving either positive or negative feedback, and showed no shift in esteem.

Baumgardner et al.'s (1989) experimental results support the argument that low self-esteem persons are not certain about their own self-worth and hence are susceptible to the impact of their self-presentation behavior. On the other hand, high self-esteem persons are certain about their own self-worth and show less self-esteem malleability and hence, greater stability in their self-esteem regardless of self-presentations. Furthermore, high self-esteem persons already have a positive self-concept so they have little to gain by believing their own self-presentations. However, individuals low in self-esteem are likely to internalize their self-enhancing presentations in order to regulate their private self-views.

Similarly, there is evidence that most people low in self-esteem are highly uncertain of their negative self-views (Swann, 1985). Swann argues that due to undesirability of negative feedback in our society, when people do encounter it, they will receive such feedback in small intermittent doses. As a result, those who do develop negative self-concepts, will typically shape these conceptions based upon weak and inconsistent evidence. This should make low self-esteemers less certain of who they are, and render their self-concepts more susceptible to changes based upon their self-presentational behaviors in various social contexts.

With regard to aforementioned differences between low and high self-esteemers, Kowalski and Leary (1990) conducted an experiment to investigate the possible relationship between "self-depreciation" and "self-esteem". The design of this experiment followed that of their first experiment which was explained in previous sections of this chapter, except that the supervisor's power in assigning participants to the tasks was held constant at its high level. The results revealed that both groups of participants, low and

high in self-esteem, presented themselves as less adjusted when the more well-adjusted worker would perform an onerous task. Thus, contrary to their expectations, the authors obtained no evidence that high self-esteem participants were less likely to self-depreciate than low self-esteem participants when using poor impression was to their advantage.

Kowalski and Leary also found that self-esteem had a moderating effect on the relationship between self-presentation and the subsequent self-evaluations. Interestingly, the self-rating of participants with low self-esteem changed in the direction of their self-presentations to the supervisor, while the self-evaluations of participants with high self-esteem were almost unaffected by the manipulation. Kowalski and Leary's interpretation of the data suggests that participants with low self-esteem, as compared to those higher in self-esteem, more internalized their unfavorable self-presentations (less positive self-images), and thus, their self-evaluations changed negatively in the direction of their self-presentations.

The above findings on self-esteem suggest that people with low self-esteem have less well-defined, and thus more malleable self-concepts than those with higher self-esteem. Thus, it is expected that low self-esteem, as compared to high self-esteem, persons evaluate themselves more negatively after participating in negative self-presentations, even though such self-presentational strategies have benefited them in achieving their objectives. In other words, one's level of self-esteem should moderate the relationship between the self-presentation and the phenomenal self. In the next two sections, the possible effect of two other important individual differences variables, "self-monitoring" and "locus of control," on the use of unfavorable impressions and follow-up self-evaluations will be discussed.

### **2.3.3. Self-Monitoring and the Tendency to Project Negative Images**

As initially conceptualized by Snyder (1974), the social psychological construct of self-monitoring involves: (1) the observation of the self and control of expressive behavior (e.g., nonverbal behavior such as facial expressions, body motions, or voice quality), and (2) self-presentations based upon situational cues regarding social appropriateness. One key source of situational cues is the emotional expressive behavior of comparison persons in the same situation. The self-monitoring individual is sensitive to the expressions and self-presentations of others in social situations and uses these cues as guidelines for managing his/her own self-presentation and expressive behavior.

To operationalize this construct, Snyder (1974) constructed a self-report measure of individual differences in self-monitoring. He conducted four studies to validate Self-Monitoring Scale. According to peer evaluations, high self-monitors score high on learning socially appropriate behavior in new situations, control their emotional expression well, and effectively use their ability to create the impressions they want. Theater actors scored higher and hospitalized mental patients scored lower than university students. Individuals with high self-monitoring scores, as compared to those with low self-monitoring scores, were better able to intentionally communicate emotion in their expressive behavior. Finally, in a self-presentation task, high self-monitors were more likely than low self-monitors to seek out and consult social comparison information.

Interestingly, the measure of Openness to Experience (i.e., one of the five dimensions on the Big Five Model of personality) is significantly correlated with scores on self-monitoring (Morrison, 1997). Morrison explains that characteristics of those

classified as high in self-monitoring, such as flexibility and adaptability, are also relevant to the Openness factor of the Big Five. In fact, those who score high on openness tend to prefer novel ideas, be emotionally responsive, and be creative.

Lennox and Wolfe's (1984) revision of Snyder's (1974) Self-Monitoring Scale incorporates new conceptualizations of Snyder's (1974, 1979) theory of self-monitoring. Based upon Lennox and Wolfe's (1984) Revised Self-Monitoring Scale (RSMS), high self-monitors are viewed as people who are neither socially anxious nor reluctant to behave in a way that will bring attention to themselves. Furthermore, Wolfe, Lennox, and Cutler's (1986) expectation was that the RSMS would measure Arkin's (1981) acquisitive style of self-presentation. Wolfe et al. (1986) examined self-reported instigation of drug use among introductory psychology students. As expected, the results demonstrated that student participants who scored high on the Revised Self-Monitoring Scale tended to describe their own drug use as self-initiated rather than peer-induced. This finding suggests that high self-monitors perceive personal responsibility for arriving at self-relevant decisions.

People do differ in terms of the ability and the willingness to influence the impressions that others receive of them. According to Snyder (1979), high self-monitoring individuals are concerned with the situational appropriateness of their behavior and control their verbal and nonverbal self-presentation during social interactions. Snyder contends that "this high self-monitoring strategy gives the individual the flexibility to cope quickly and effectively with the shifting situational demands of a diversity of social roles" (p. 109). Since high self-monitors regulate their behaviors on the basis of situational information, they ought to demonstrate considerable situation-to-

situation specificity in their self-presentation. In addition, for these individuals consistency between behavior and attitude ought to be minimal. In fact, “high self-monitors are capable of presenting striking contradictions between their public persona and their private self” (Robbins, 1998: p. 60).

By contrast, low self-monitoring individuals are not so sensitive to social information and situational specificity of self-presentation. Instead, low self-monitors base their behavior upon salient information from their inner state and express their behavior as they feel it without tailoring it to fit the situation. Consequently, low self-monitors’ social behavior ought to display significant cross-situational consistency and temporal stability. In addition, low self-monitors would manifest substantial consistency between their attitudes and behavior through accurately communicating relevant feelings and personal dispositions.

Snyder (1987) subsequently modified his interpretation of the construct of self-monitoring. This construct has evolved from his initial concerns with the control of expressive behavior into a much broader theory of interpersonal relations (Snyder, 1987). In this view, the high self-monitor treats social interactions as dramatic performances designed to make impressions. In contrast, the low self-monitor tends to communicate his/her authentic dispositions. Schlenker (1980: 76) concludes “a self-monitoring individual is one who is sensitive to what others want and has the ability to control his or her actions to present a desired identity.” Also, high self-monitors seem to be motivated to search for and use information that indicates what is socially appropriate. Consistently, Lamphere and Leary (1990) assert that self-monitoring involves the “locus of behavioral

influence” which is the extent to which individuals are responsive to motives mediated by the public versus the private self.

According to Snyder (1987), high and low self-monitors adopt two distinct and contrasting interpersonal orientations. High self-monitors actively invest effort to seek social information to assist them in selecting their own self-presentation (e.g., Berger & Douglas, 1981; Berscheid, Graziano, Monsonn, & Dermer, 1976; Jones & Baumeister, 1976). High self-monitors also try to attend to social information useful for inferring an individual’s intention. For instance, Jones and Baumeister (1976) demonstrate that high, as opposed to low self-monitors, are sensitive to motivational aspects of people’s behaviors in social interaction situations. In their research, college students watched a videotaped discussion between two men who either agree or disagree with each other in their argument. The students are also told that one of the two men was motivated either to seek affection of the other or to gain his respect. Low self-monitors are attracted to the agreeable person regardless of whether his intention is to win the affection or the respect of the other man. By contrast, high self-monitors like the man who is motivated to gain affection better when he is autonomous than when he is agreeable. However, they are more attracted to the man who intends to seek respect when he engages in an agreeable rather than autonomous self-presentation.

It seems that low self-monitors tend to accept the behaviors of others at face value. On the other hand, high self-monitors prefer to acquire information about others’ behaviors in situations where these behaviors are likely to reflect personal dispositions (not formal role requirements) (Berger & Douglas, 1981; Snyder, 1987). Snyder (1987) explains that high self-monitors think of other people in terms of stable dispositions and



are attentive to the interplay between others' motivations and behaviors. These cognitive acts make it easier for high self-monitors to predict and even influence other people, and manage their view of the social world.

With regard to the nature of the link between attitudes and behaviors, Snyder (1974, 1979, 1987) notes that low self-monitors are concerned that their behaviors must accurately reflect their personal attitudes, whereas high self-monitors do not regard their behaviors and their beliefs as necessarily equivalent. Thus, high self-monitors, as opposed to low self-monitors, display less behavioral consistency over time and continuously adapt their behaviors to the specific situation. Low self-monitors tend to express their private beliefs regardless of the situation and exhibit a high degree of consistency between their private beliefs and their subsequent behaviors (e.g., Snyder & Swann, 1976; Snyder & Tanke, 1976). Interestingly, when low self-monitors engage in self-presentational behaviors that are deviant from their attitudes, their old attitudes will shift to become congruent with new behaviors (Snyder & Tanke, 1976). However, high self-monitors are relatively unaffected by attitude-discrepant behaviors, and their private attitudes are likely to remain stable despite shifts in their public self-presentations.

Past studies on self-monitoring suggest that high self-monitors are skilled impression managers (e.g., Arkin, Gabrenya, Appleman, & Cochrane, 1979; Snyder, 1987). There is also evidence that high self-monitors are flexible and responsive to situational demands (e.g., Caldwell & O' Reilly, 1982; Hamilton & Baumeister, 1984; Schlenker, Miller, & Leary, 1983; Snyder & Gangestad, 1982). Snyder and Monson's (1975) research demonstrates that among students who join discussion groups, high as opposed to low self-monitoring group members are sensitive to differences between the

contexts (public vs. private situation) in which the discussion occurs. In fact, high self-monitors are concerned with audience reactions, take contextual information into account, and change their behavior to create the best impression possible. As such, high self-monitors display a relatively high amount of conformity to the others' opinions in their private discussions (i.e., discussion situations where only group members will view the meeting) where conformity is the most situationally appropriate behavior. On the other hand, high self-monitors appear autonomous and independent in the public discussions (i.e., discussion situations in which the meeting is videotaped for possible viewing by other college students) where nonconformity is favored as a reaction to social pressure. By contrast, low self-monitors are not influenced by their social settings, and apparently they do not engage in impression management behaviors.

Previous research also demonstrates that within a role-playing context, high self-monitors' self-esteem increases when they have successfully convinced the audience even though the content of the role is not positive (e.g., presenting oneself as a selfish individual) [Jones, Brenner, & Knight, 1990; Riordan, Gross, & Maloney, 1994]. On the other hand, low self-monitors' self-esteem increases if they have failed to convince the audience they are self-interested. Thus, high self-monitors value the effectiveness of their role-playing, while low self-monitors care more about the content of the role. These results suggest that high self-monitors are good at intentionally influencing the audience's perceptions of them.

The above theory and research on self-monitoring demonstrate that high self-monitors are more sensitive to social information, better able to manage others' impressions, and regard themselves accountable in self-relevant decisions. Hence, it is

expected that high as opposed to low self-monitors will engage in either positive or negative IM such as “self-depreciation” or “broadcasting limitations” more if situational cues call for such behaviors and help them to achieve what they want. Following a negative self-presentation, high as opposed to low self-monitors are less likely to give themselves a negative evaluation because they acknowledge that their decision to project negative self-images has been made solely to control the interaction situation.

#### **2.3.4. Locus of Control and the Tendency to Project Negative Images**

When a person perceives a reinforcement (either positive or negative) as following some action of his/her own, but not being entirely contingent upon his/her action, then he/she is likely to interpret the event as the result of luck, chance, fate, as under control of powerful others, or as unpredictable because of the complexity of the situation (Rotter, 1966). Rotter labels this a belief in “external control”. On the other hand, if the person perceives that the reinforcement (e.g., reward, gratification, success, or failure) is contingent upon his/her own behavior or his/her own relatively stable personal characteristics, Rotter terms this a belief in “internal control.” Thus, individuals differ in the degree to which they attribute reinforcement to their own behaviors. A generalized attitude or expectancy regarding the nature of such a causal relationship between one’s own behavior and its consequences might influence a variety of behavioral choices in different situations.

Locus of control is also characterized by the tendency to attribute control of events to the internal causes of ability or effort, or the external causes of luck or task difficulty (Rotter, 1966). Internals hold high expectancies about their capacity to control situations,

while externals hold low expectancies about their valence over situations. Rotter's argument is similar to Riesman's (1954) conceptualization in that Rieman also distinguishes between the degree to which people are controlled by internal goals, desires, etc.; and the degree to which they are controlled by external forces, specifically social forces or conformity forces.

With regard to behavioral differences between internals and externals, a series of past studies provide strong support for the Rotter's (1966) hypotheses that internals (who believe they can control their own destiny) are likely to take steps to affect their environment through their own behaviors in important life situations. For example, internal hospitalized patients are more curious than external ones to know about their own medical condition regardless of their occupational status and education (Seeman & Evans, 1962). As another example, "internal" reformatory inmates, as compared to "external" ones, are able to remember more information about how the reformatory is run and this type of recall is independent of intelligence (Seeman, 1963). Furthermore, "internal" college students are more willing than "external" ones to join political activities that can improve their social life conditions (e.g., Gore & Rotter, 1963; Strickland, 1965). In addition, "internal" experimental participants, as compared to "external" ones, are significantly more successful in changing the attitudes of others (Phares, 1965).

With regard to the control of oneself, Straits and Sechrest (1963) found that non-smokers were significantly more "internal" than smokers, and male smokers who quit and did not return to smoking in a certain period of time were more "internal" than those who did not quit smoking (James, Woodruff, & Werner, 1965). Generally, internals, as

opposed to externals, believe that health is significantly under one's own control (not a function of luck or chance), take responsibility for their health, and hence develop better health habits (e.g., Keller, 1983; Lau, 1982; Wallston & Wallston, 1978).

Albusabha and Achterberg (1997) review the literature on the relationship of locus of control (and several other cognitive variables) to health-related behavior. They conclude that internals take responsibility for their own actions and, compared to externals, engage more readily in health-promoting behaviors. In fact, internality has been associated positively with preventive health-related behaviors (e.g., Kelly, Lawrence, Brasfield, & Lemke, 1990; Quadrel & Lau, 1989) and treatment compliance (Lewis, Morisky, & Flynn, 1978).

In a similar study, Booth-Butterfield, Anderson, & Booth-Butterfield (2000) examined the association of locus of control with adolescents' tobacco uptake. The study confirms that students who feel their health is controlled by external factors such as chance or fate, as compared to internals, are less likely to step up and take responsibility for "saying no" to tobacco or for quitting after they start smoking. In fact, internals, as compared to externals, are more likely to believe that they can avoid negative health consequences by not smoking, attribute less responsibility for their behavior to external factors, and feel more in control of the situation.

Regarding the issue of conformity versus autonomy, Crowne and Liverant's (1963) study demonstrated that "externals", as compared to "internals", had more tendencies to conform to others' judgements. Interestingly, individuals with an "internal" orientation would resist conformity only where it might be clearly to their disadvantage (e.g., a betting situation in which if they conform to the others' opinion, they may lose their

money). Furthermore, Lefcourt's (1982) review of theory and research on internal and external locus of control suggests that regardless of moderating variables in the various studies, externals are always more easily persuaded than internals. In addition, Avtgis (1998) performed a meta analysis on studies related to persuasion and locus of control including the sources cited in Lefcourt (1980, 1981, 1982) texts on locus of control. The results of this meta analytic review support the general conclusion of earlier literature concerning the relationship between locus of control, persuasion, social influence, and conformity. People with an external locus of control orientation are more influenced, persuaded, and conform more than those with an internal locus of control orientation. Thus, the literature on persuasion, social influence, and conformity suggests that individuals with an external locus of control are more susceptible to behavioral and attitudinal change than individuals with an internal locus of control.

With regard to dealing with negative outcomes, Phares (1962) demonstrated that in a learning situation, participants who feel they have control of the situation (i.e., skill-instructed participants) are likely to display perceptual behavior that will better enable them to cope with potentially threatening situations (where brief exposure of visual stimuli is accompanied by shock) than subjects who feel their success will depend on chance or other uncontrollable forces (i.e., chance-instructed participants).

Furthermore, people with an internal, as compared to an external, locus of control have tendency to exert more control over their conditions (Rotter, 1992; Strickland, 1989). This tendency extends to behaviors to prevent damage from natural hazards such as tornados, flood, and earthquakes (Baumann & Sims, 1978; Lindell & Perry, 1992; McClure, Walkey, & Allen, 1999; Sims & Baumann, 1972; Simpson-Housley &

Bradshaw, 1978). For example, McClure et al. (1999) using student participants and a questionnaire method demonstrated that locus of control, as compared to risk-taking propensity, was the stronger predictor of judgements that earthquake damage was preventable. Although both internals and externals perceive global damage as unpreventable, individuals with an external locus of control tend to judge an exceptional earthquake damage (e.g., where one building in a street collapses whereas all other buildings in the street are undamaged) as less preventable. In general, internals more actively collect information before making a decision, and make a greater attempt to control their environment (Robbins, 1998).

Based upon the above theory and research, internally oriented individuals perceive that they do have control over what happens to them, and are expected to take an active role to avoid negative outcomes. As such, it is expected that individuals with an internal, as compared to an external, orientation are more likely to present themselves negatively if it is to their advantage to do so. In such a situation, internals will most probably not attribute their performance failure to task difficulty or lack of skills/ability, and consequently they will not expect future failure on similar tasks. Thus, internals are less likely than externals to evaluate themselves negatively because they are aware that they choose to create poor impressions in order to control an aversive situation.

The theory and research reviewed throughout this chapter clearly calls attention to the moderating role of individual difference variables (i.e., self-esteem, self-monitoring, and locus of control) in using self-presentational strategies and internalizing the carry-over effects. The next and final section of the current chapter will present the statement of research hypotheses on the basis of the aforementioned expected relationships and

conclusions. It is expected that individuals low in self-esteem, high in self-monitoring, and those with an internal locus of control will be more likely to engage in negative self-presentational behaviors such as “not working to potential” and “broadcasting limitations.” Also, it is expected that there will be greater changes in self-evaluation among low self-esteem, low self-monitoring and external individuals than high self-esteem, high self-monitoring, and internal persons as a function of their self-presentation. In the following section, based upon the above review of prior theory and research on favorable and unfavorable self-presentations, self-concept, self-esteem, self-monitoring, and internal/external locus of control, a set of relevant research hypotheses will be proposed.

#### **2.4. Statement of Research Hypotheses**

Overall, the theory and research discussed in this chapter demonstrate that the motivation to achieve and/or avoid specific outcomes may lead individuals to project images of themselves that include socially undesirable attributes. Although favorable impressions are more likely to be used by individuals to advance their goals, there are situations in which unfavorable self-presentations are more likely to create the desired effects. Furthermore, the use of negative self-presentations as well as the carry-over effect of negative self-presentational behaviors on the private self may be moderated by individual differences variables such as self-esteem, self-monitoring, and internal/external locus of control.

The present study employs a 1 by 3 experimental design to measure the main effect of selection criterion (high, low, and random) on the use of negative impression method



(i.e., broadcasting skill limitations and self-depreciation), and post-performance self-evaluations. Experimental instructions in the high and low conditions motivate the participants to engage in negative or positive self-presentations on a current task in order to avoid participating in a future unpleasant event. In addition, the moderating role of individual difference variables (self-esteem, self-monitoring, and locus of control) on the use of negative self-presentations, and post-performance self-evaluations is investigated. In the following paragraphs, a set of relevant research hypotheses will be proposed and the rationale for each will be explained.

The literature of impression management has long documented the use of strategies such as “playing dumb” (e.g., Gove et al., 1980; Komarovsky, 1946) or “pretending to be physically/mentally sick” (e.g., Leary & Miller, 1986; Twaddle, 1979) to balance and control one’s career and life. However, these strategies were never classified as negative self-presentations. Becker and Martin (1995) identified and documented different methods used for intentionally projecting negative images. Becker and Martin also noted that employees use negative self-presentations in order to obtain valued outcomes or to avoid negative events. Importantly, Kowalski and Leary’s (1990) research on “self-depreciation” demonstrates that when incentives for the use of negative self-presentation are high (i.e., when the supervisor is responsible for assigning workers to the task, the task is undesirable, and the most qualified workers will be selected to perform the onerous task for the organization), employees are most likely to present themselves unfavorably to avoid the aversive task. To further examine these relationships, the following hypotheses are investigated:

**H1: When the researcher is responsible for assigning an onerous future task, workers**

who are targets for the assignment will describe their skills less positively and broadcast more skill limitations if the criterion for task assignment is high versus low skill level.

**H2:** When the researcher is responsible for assigning an onerous future task, workers who are targets for the assignment will exhibit lower levels of current task performance if the criterion for task assignment is high versus low performance.

As previously discussed, Kowalski and Leary's (1990) experiment on self-depreciation noted that when the supervisor was not responsible for assigning workers to the aversive task, self-presentations did not differ regardless of whether or not the best or the worst worker would perform the undesirable task. Therefore, based upon this evidence and the rationale provided for H1, and H2, the present study hypothesizes the following:

**H3:** When workers are informed that an onerous future task will be randomly assigned, they will describe their skills more (less) positively and broadcast fewer (more) skill limitations than they will under the high (low) skill criterion/researcher assigned task treatments.

**H4:** When workers are informed that an onerous future task will be randomly assigned, they will exhibit higher (lower) levels of performance on a current task than they will under the high (low) performance criterion/researcher assigned task treatments.

The literature of impression management has long noted the carry-over effect of self-presentations on subsequent self-esteem (e.g., Gergen, 1965; Jones et al., 1981). In addition, past research has explicated the processes by which self-presentational

strategies change the actor's phenomenal self (e.g., Jones et al., 1981, Rhodewalt, 1986; Rhodewalt & Agustsdottir, 1986). Similarly, Kowalski and Leary's research on self-depreciation noted that participants rated themselves less favorably when the supervisor was responsible for selecting the most as opposed to least qualified workers to perform the aversive task. To further examine the carry-over effects of self-presentation on resultant self-esteem, the present study explores the following hypothesis:

**H5:** When the researcher is responsible for assigning an onerous future task, and the criterion for task assignment is high versus low performance, workers will report lower self-evaluations of their performance.

A pre-test measure of self-reported skills regarding a current task was used as a covariate variable to examine the effects of high versus low levels of pre-test skills on self-reported skills during the performance of a current task, the task performance itself, and post-performance self-esteem. Overall, it is expected that high as opposed to low levels of pre-test skills will result in higher levels of self-reported skills during the experimental task, better task performance, and higher levels of post-performance self-esteem. Therefore, the following hypothesis is investigated.

**H6:** Initial self-reported ability and familiarity with a current task are positively related to (a) subsequent self-reported skills, (b) performance on the current task, and (c) post-performance self-evaluations.

Research on self-confirmatory feedback has demonstrated that low self-esteem individuals (dislikables), compared to high self-esteem persons (likables), are more likely to seek and elicit negative reactions from others to validate their self-conceptions (Swann & Read, 1981a, b). Also, research on compensatory self-enhancement indicates that

individuals low as opposed to high in self-esteem are unwilling to self-enhance to compensate for unfavorable public reputations because they lack the confidence that future interactions will confirm their claims of favorable attributes (Baumeister, 1982). Furthermore, research on depressive self-depreciation has noted the similarity between depressed and low self-esteem persons by demonstrating that depressed, compared to nondepressed, individuals are more likely to depreciate their performance on a current task, and experience further losses in esteem when they are expected to perform a similar future task upon successful completion of the first one (Weary & Williams, 1990). The above three lines of research suggest that low as opposed to high self-esteem persons are more likely to engage in negative self-presentation. However, Kowalski and Leary's (1990) experiment demonstrated that both low and high self-esteem individuals presented themselves less positively to avoid an aversive task. To further test this proposition and to attempt to resolve these contradictions, the following hypothesis are investigated:

**H7:** When the researcher is responsible for assigning an onerous future task, and the criterion for task assignment is high versus low skill level (and performance), low as opposed to high self-esteem individuals will: (a) describe their skills less positively, thereby broadcasting more skill limitations, (b) and exhibit lower levels of current task performance.

As previously discussed, the literature on "social influence" indicates that low as opposed to high self-esteem individuals are more easily persuaded (Coopersmith, 1967), more accepting of bogus personality feedback (Snyder and Clair, 1977), and demonstrate greater plasticity in their behavior (Brockner, 1983). Furthermore, previous research on malleability of self-conceptions supports the argument that low as opposed to high self-

esteem persons are less certain about their own self-worth, have less well-defined self-concepts, and thus are more sensitive to the impact of their self-presentations (Baumgardner et al., 1989). Finally, Kowalski and Leary's (1990) research on self-depreciation found greater changes in self-evaluations for low as opposed to high self-esteem individuals when participants are exposed to a "high supervisor power" and "well-adjusted" condition. Based on this research, the following hypothesis is advanced:

**H8:** When the researcher is responsible for assigning an onerous future task, and the criterion for task assignment is high versus low skill level (and performance), low as opposed to high self-esteem individuals will report lower self-evaluations.

The literature on self-monitoring has documented that high as opposed to low self-monitoring individuals: (a) are skilled impression managers (Arkin et al., 1979; Snyder, 1987), (b) are flexible and responsive to situational demands (Caldwell & O'Reilly, 1982; Morison, 1997; Schlenker et al., 1983; Snyder, 1979; Snyder & Gangstad, 1982), (c) are more attentive to social information (Snyder, 1974), (d) are sensitive to the motivational bases of people's behaviors (Jones & Baumeister, 1976), (e) regard themselves as responsible in self-relevant decisions (Wolfe et al., 1986), and (f) do not regard their behaviors and their beliefs as necessarily consistent (Snyder, 1974, 1979, 1987). Additionally, past research has demonstrated that high self-monitors' self-esteem increases when they successfully manage the impressions others form of them, and see themselves in control of the interaction situation, even if the content of the role is not positive (Jones et al., 1990; Riordan et al., 1994). Hence, based on past theory and research, the following hypotheses are advanced:

**H9:** When the researcher is responsible for assigning an onerous future task, and the

critterion for task assignment is high versus low skill level (and performance), individuals with high as opposed to low self-monitoring abilities will: (a) describe their skills less positively and broadcast more skill limitations, and (b) exhibit lower levels of current task performance.

**H10:** When the researcher is responsible for assigning an onerous future task, and the critterion for task assignment is high versus low skill level (and performance), individuals with low as opposed to high self-monitoring abilities will report lower self-evaluations.

Past theory and research on locus of control indicate that internal as compared to external individuals: (a) are more likely to take steps to influence and improve their social life conditions (Gore & Rotter, 1963; Rotter, 1966; Strickland, 1965), (b) are more successful in changing others' attitudes (Phares, 1965), (c) take responsibility for their health (e.g., Keller, 1983; Lau, 1982; Wallston & Wallston, 1978), (d) more readily engage in preventive health-related behaviors (e.g., Kelley et al., 1990; Quadrel & Lau, 1989), (e) have less tendency to conform to others' judgements (Crown & Liverant, 1963), (f) are less easily persuaded and influenced (Avtgis, 1998; Lefcourt, 1982), (g) have a greater tendency to engage in preventive behaviors to protect themselves against natural hazards such as tornadoes, flood, and earthquakes (e.g., Baumann & Sims, 1978; Lindell & Perry, 1992; McClure et al., 1999), and (h) perceive that they have control over what happens to them. Therefore, based on past theory and research, the present study hypothesizes the following:

**H11:** When the researcher is responsible for assigning an onerous future task, and the

**criterion for task assignment is high versus low skill level (and performance), individuals with an internal as opposed to external locus of control will: (a) describe their skills less positively and broadcast more skill limitations, and (b) exhibit lower levels of current task performance.**

**H12: When the researcher is responsible for assigning an onerous future task, and the criterion for task assignment is high versus low skill level (and performance), individuals with an external as opposed to internal locus of control will report lower self-evaluations .**

**A summary of research hypotheses is provided in Table 2.1 and Table 2.2. In the next chapter, the research design employed to test the hypotheses generated is presented.**

Table 2.1. Research Hypothesis (1 through 6)

Hypothesis Number	Independent Variable	Covariate Variable	Dependent Variables		Form of Self-Presentation
	Selection Criterion	Pre-Test Skills	Favorability of Self-Presentation	Post-Performance Self-Evaluations	
1	High		Less +		Broadcasting Limitations
	Low				
2	High		Less +		Self-Depreciation
	Low				
3	High		Less +		Broadcasting Limitations
	Random		Less +		
	Low		More +		
4	High		Less +		Self-Depreciation
	Random		Less +		
	Low		More +		
5	High		Less +		
	Low				
6		High	More +	More +	Broadcasting Limitations & Self-Depreciation
		Low			



Table 2.2. Research Hypothesis (7 through 12)

Hypothesis Number	Independent Variable	Dependent Variables		Moderating Variables				
	Selection Criterion	Favorability of Self-Presentation	Post-Performance Self-Evaluation	Self-Esteem		Self-Monitoring Ability	Locus of Control	
7	High	Less +		High	Low			
	Low							
8	High		Less +	High	Low			
	Low							
9	High							
	Low					Low		
10	High							
	Low					High		
11	High	Less +					Internal	External
	Low							
12	High		Less +				Internal	External
	Low							

## **Chapter Three**

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1. Research Design**

The present study employs a 1 by 3 (selection criterion: high, low, random) factorial, job simulation experimental design. These treatments and the manipulation of their conditions will be discussed in detail under “manipulations” section. Participants were either told that they would be given the opportunity to participate in a future event (sponsored by Southeastern Mutual Life Insurance Company) based upon their performance on an initial task, or they received no information regarding who would participate in the upcoming event. The first task involved an “employee selection” exercise that was said to be sponsored by Southeastern Mutual Life Insurance Company (SMLI). Employee selection is “the process of choosing from a group of applicants those individuals best suited for a particular position and an organization” (Mondy, Noe, & Premeaux, 1999: p. 208). The second task was a bogus seminar on “employee evaluation and selection” procedures that participants were told would occur on a Friday afternoon. Student participants were instructed that at the end of the seminar, the company’s representatives would provide the attending students with free financial planning advice. It would be implied that the insurance representatives attempt to persuade them to buy the company’s insurance products. It was expected that most students would find this “opportunity” undesirable because they would not be excited about spending a Friday afternoon in an “employee evaluation and selection” workshop. In addition, they might not be interested in working with financial representatives, and were likely to perceive

the entire workshop as a scheme to sell them company's insurance policies. Finally, most students were unlikely to find the workshop a pleasant opportunity since they would not be offered extra credit for participating in this event.

The task materials included a set of six different resumes and a standard job description for a human resource management position. Participants were informed that the six job applicants were 25 to 30-years old. The job description specified a job level that represented a higher level position than those the applicants had held in prior jobs, and were held constant for all applicants. By holding the job level constant and restricting the range of the applicants' age, the possibility of an interaction among job level, age, and evaluators' perceived accountability and the impact of such effects on ratings of job applicants (Gordon, Rozelle, & Baxter, 1988, 1989) were minimized.

Although participants were not required to justify their employee selection decisions in the present study, they were instructed to report their skills and experience to the researcher. In addition, in two of the experimental conditions, the researcher assigned the participants to the second task based upon their performance on the first task, which was a decision-making task. Thus, the experiment was likely to be regarded as non-anonymous, and some participants might have perceived low to moderate levels of accountability. Participants might have also assumed that job applicants, who graduated earlier, as opposed to those who graduated later, were older. Moreover, participants might have thought that the age of job applicants with more job experience was greater than the age of those with less job experience. Consequently, the present research controlled for potential interactive effects among age, job level, and accountability in two different ways. First, age differences among applicants were restricted to less than 5 years. Second,

all applicants were rated for only one job level. In addition, past research in management has demonstrated that organizational members engage in gender stereotyping by sometimes giving better evaluations to male as opposed to female candidates for managerial positions (e.g., Powell, 1993). Thus, this study controlled for gender effect by using only male applicants.

Furthermore, to make sure that all of the universities the job applicants are stated to have graduated from on their resumes are equally ranked, they were selected from the third tier portion of the US News and World Report's 2001 college rankings (see the Internet site: [www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/college/corank.htm](http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/college/corank.htm)). The undergraduate catalog for each selected school was checked to ensure that the required degree (Bachelor of Science in Business Administration), and the area of concentration (Management or Human Resource Management) were offered. Only one applicant was described as having a degree in education. This applicant's school was checked for an education degree and the relevant area of concentration. Also, to simplify the evaluation/selection task, resumes had been designed in a standardized format. Finally, participants were randomly assigned to the three experimental treatments.

### **3.2. Manipulations**

This study includes one experimental factor: selection criterion. The experimental design is illustrated in Figure 3.1. and explained in the following paragraphs.

Selection criterion factor is manipulated to create 3 experimental conditions: high vs. low vs. random. In fact, the "selection criterion" is manipulated so as to motivate participants to perform negatively or positively in high and low selection criterion

conditions. Approximately, one third of the participants were assigned to each one of the three performance criterion conditions. In the first treatment, participants were instructed that the best performers (the top 10%) would participate in the second task for the company (high performance criterion for job assignment). In the second treatment, another third of the participants were informed that the worst performers (the bottom 10%) would be assigned to the second task (low performance criterion for job assignment). The remaining participants were informed that 10% of performers would be randomly assigned to the second task (control condition).

Figure 3.1. Treatment Manipulations

Selection Criterion		
High	Low	Random
66	77	59

In the high and low “selection criterion” conditions, the assignment of participants to the second task based on the initial task was described as being either “reward-based” or “need-based”. When “selection criterion” was set at a high level, participants were told that the researcher would examine the workers’ self-ratings and performance to reward the individuals who appear to be the most skilled and the best performers by selecting them to participate in the workshop. Specifically, participants were told that the researcher would select the best performers to provide them with a reward in the form of an opportunity to receive more information on employee evaluation and selection procedures, as well as free and exciting information about the company’s financial

products. In situation where the “selection criterion” was set at a low level, participants were told that the researcher would assign the students who appear to be less skilled and low performers to the second task because they needed further training. The rationale provided for this selection criterion was that the workshop would provide the low performers with an opportunity to learn more about employee evaluation and selection procedures, as well as a chance to receive free and exciting financial advice.

### **3.3. Pilot Study**

A pilot study was conducted to assess the effectiveness of the experimental manipulations. Sixty freshmen students during fall 2001 semester attending two Undergraduate Studies (U.S.) 101 orientation courses at the University of Mississippi were selected to participate in the pilot study. In exchange for their participation, students were permitted to substitute their participation in the study for completion of one essay homework assignment. The pilot study included only two experimental treatments: high vs. low “selection criterion,” and only one dependent variable: “favorability of self-presentation.” Also, the role of individual difference variables on negative self-presentation was not considered during the pilot study.

The pilot study began with a brief overview of the research and the collection of signed consent forms. Next, a packet of questionnaires was administered which included: the self-report measure of employee selection skills and experience, a standard job description for a human resource management position, a set of six applicant resumes, six applicant evaluation forms, and an applicant decision form. Once the applicant evaluation and selection task was finished, the initial packet of questionnaires was collected. To

assess the effectiveness of the “selection criterion” treatments, all participants were then asked to respond to a post-task questionnaire. This questionnaire included of a few Likert scales, as well as a semantic differential scale designed to measure participants’ perceptions of the treatments and the desirability of the second task. The second packet of questionnaires also included a demographic survey form.

### **3.4. Main Study**

**3.4.1. Participants.** Four hundred twenty one undergraduate business administration students enrolled in different sections of strategic management (MGMT 493) and principle of management (MGMT 371) classes at the University of Mississippi were invited to participate in the experiment. Students who volunteered to participate signed up for an “Employee Selection” experiment. This form of participation provided each participant with an equal probability of receiving one of the three treatment conditions. In exchange for their participation, students received extra credit toward their final course grade. Approximately equal number of students were randomly assigned to each of the three treatment conditions.

**3.4.2. Procedures.** This section describes the administration of individual difference measures, as well as the “employee evaluation” task that the participants performed. In addition, information on the second task is provided. Finally, this section discusses the post-experimental packet of questionnaires, which was administered after the completion of the experimental task, as well as the debriefing procedures. The order in which the experimental materials and measures were presented to the participants is shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1. Presentation order for materials and measures

<b>Presentation Order</b>	<b>Materials and Measures</b>
<b>Phase (1)</b>	1 Rosenberg's (1965) Self-Esteem Scale
	2 Lennox and Wolfe's (1984) Revised Self-Monitoring Scale
	3 Rotter's (1966) Internal-External Scale
<b>Phase (2)</b>	4 "Employee Selection" Skills Questionnaire
	5 Southeastern Mutual Life's job description document
	6 A set of six applicant resumes
	7 Demographic Survey Questionnaire
	8 MacFarland and Ross' (1982) Measure of Resultant Self-Esteem
	9 Post-Task Questionnaire

*3.4.2.1. Individual difference questionnaires.* In order to avoid sensitizing participants to the purpose of this study, and thereby possibly biasing their responses, the individual difference questionnaires and the main experiment were presented as unrelated research projects. Thus, Rosenberg's (1965) Self-Esteem Scale, Lennox and Wolfe's (1984) Revised Self-Monitoring Scale, and Rotter's (1966) Locus of Control Scale were administered to all potential volunteers early in the semester.

*3.4.2.2. The initial (experimental) task.* Participants were informed that the researcher was working with the support of the Southeastern Mutual Life Insurance Company to conduct an experiment to assess people's skills at evaluating job candidates.



Participants were also told that they would be given the opportunity to participate in a second task following the initial task. In addition, participants were informed that all job applicants were of almost the same age that was 25 to 30-years old. At this point, all participants received instructions based upon their treatment conditions. Each participant received the first packet of questionnaires including the following items: 1) an employee selection skills questionnaire (a self-report measure of skills/experience on employee selection procedures), 2) a job description document designed to represent a human resource management position, 3) a set of six resumes, 4) six applicant evaluation forms (with each one having been labeled with one of the applicants' name), and 5) an employee selection decision form. Participants were asked first to report their skills and experiences regarding employee selection procedures, and then to evaluate job applicants for a human resource management position on specific job-related dimensions based upon their resumes and the company's job description. Participants were instructed to calculate a total evaluation score for each applicant, and record their employee selection decisions on the "decision" form. To simplify and standardize the evaluation process, participants were instructed to consider resumes sequentially and evaluate each job applicant using the appropriate form. They also rank-ordered the six candidates on the "decision" form based upon their total evaluation scores.

All participants were provided with a time estimate for the successful completion of the "employee selection" task. The amount of time required to complete this task was determined by several expert judges who performed the evaluation task in advance. To be able to differentiate between users of negative IM and slow performers, participants were provided with an "enough" amount of time for successful completion of the experiment.

**3.4.2.3. *The second (bogus) task.*** At the beginning of the experiment, all participants were also informed about the nature of the second (bogus) task. They were told that the seminar would be held in approximately one month. To increase participants' willingness to self-depreciate, the second task was described in a fashion that was likely to be perceived as undesirable by participants. Specifically, participants were informed that the seminar would be held on a Friday afternoon, and that Mutual Life's financial advisors were looking forward to tell them about the company's insurance policies. At this point, in all experimental sections, participants were told that the results from the "employee evaluation and selection" task would be made available in the next day, and they should check the results through a specific website to find out whether or not they had been assigned to the second task. Participants were also informed that because Southeastern Mutual Life had donated its time and money to sponsor the employee evaluation workshop, it was critical for them to attend the seminar if they were selected. The instructions emphasized the extra credit for participating in the study was contingent on completion of the initial experimental task, and, for those selected, their participation in the workshop. Finally, all participants were advised not to discuss the results with one another, until all phases of the experiment were complete. All the above instructions were included in the cover page that was attached to the experimental packet of questionnaires.

**3.4.2.4. *The post-experimental packet of questionnaires.*** Once the experimental task (employee evaluation and selection task) was finished, the initial packet of questionnaires was collected. All participants were then asked to respond to a second packet of questionnaires including a measure of post-performance self-esteem, a

demographic survey, and a post-task questionnaire that checked for the perception of the treatment manipulations and the desirability for the second task. Post-performance self-esteem was measured by MacFarland and Ross's (1982) Measure of Resultant Self-esteem. This instrument is explained in detail under "variables and measures" section and is available in Appendix 2. The demographic survey asked participants to report their age, gender, race/ethnicity, college standing, academic major, grade-point-average, and years of full-time and part-time work experience. A copy of demographic survey questionnaire is included in Appendix 1.

As for the manipulation checks, all participants were asked to complete a questionnaire designed to check the effectiveness of the "selection criterion" manipulation. The post-task questionnaire included four Likert scales, as well as a semantic differential scale. These scales asked participants to indicate their perceptions regarding the experimental conditions and the desirability of the second (bogus) task. To test participants' understanding of the selection criterion manipulation, they were asked to respond to a multiple choice question that asked, "What criterion will be used to select participants for the next task?" The response options included: (a) high performance on the employee selection task, (b) low performance on the employee selection task, and (c) don't know. Also, students were asked to respond to a multiple choice question that asked, "How will you be assigned to the next task?" The response options included: (a) by the researcher, (b) randomly, and (c) don't know.

The next two items on the post-task questionnaire had been designed to test participants' perception of the desirability for the employee selection seminar. Students reported their attitudes toward the unpleasant task on 5-point scales by responding to two

questions. The first question asked the participants to rate the desirability of participating in the employee selection seminar to be conducted as part of the second task. The anchors for this scale were: (a) very undesirable, (b) slightly undesirable, (c) neither desirable nor undesirable, (d) slightly desirable, and (e) very desirable. The second question asked the participants to rate their willingness about the opportunity to participate in employee selection seminar. The anchors for this scale were: (a) very unenthusiastic, (b) unenthusiastic, (c) neither enthusiastic nor unenthusiastic, (d) enthusiastic, and (e) very enthusiastic. In addition, a semantic differential scale consisting of eleven bipolar adjectives was used to measure the perceptions of the employee selection workshop. A copy of the post-task questionnaire is included in Appendix 1.

*3.4.2.5. Debriefing.* All participants were provided with access to the debriefing form. The debriefing form was made available through the website developed for this purpose in approximately two weeks after the data collection process was initiated. A sample debriefing form, as well as a sample consent form is provided in Appendix 1. As part of the debriefing, participants were informed that the true purpose of the experiment was to assess the extent to which people would change how they present themselves to others in order to avoid an unpleasant task. Participants were also informed of the treatment manipulations and the elements of deception in the study.

### **3.5. Stimulus Materials: Resumes and Job Description**

**3.5.1. Job description.** The job description document for a human resource management position was developed based upon Mondy et al.'s (1999) work on human resource management, and the Internet website: <http://www.hotjobs.com>. A copy of the

job description document used in this study is provided in Appendix 1. The human resource manager's job was described in terms of three dimensions: 1) basic purpose/accountabilities, 2) primary functions/responsibilities, and 3) critical job requirements. The rate of pay was not specified in the job description.

**3.5.2. Resumes.** Previous research into employee selection decisions has utilized paper and pencil stimulus materials such as performance appraisals (Rosen, Jerdee, & Lunn, 1981; Schwab & Heneman, 1978) and work-related measures designed to evaluate only some of the dimensions (e.g., interpersonal skills, education, recommendations, etc.) that usually are included in resumes. In addition, other criteria such as aptitude scores (Haefner, 1977; Rosen & Jerdee, 1976b), interview transcripts, (Connor, Walsh, Litzelman, & Alvarez, 1978; Locke-Connor & Walsh, 1980) and in-basket tasks (Rosen & Jerdee, 1976a) have been used to examine the selection of employees in hiring, development, or retirement decisions. The present study utilizes complete resumes rather than partial ones as stimulus materials for evaluating job applicants. As discussed earlier, each resume includes information regarding the applicant's job-related objectives, education, grade-point-average, professional certification in human resources, honors, accomplishments, work history (including managerial experience), computer skills, affiliations, and references. To simplify the evaluation/selection task, all six applicants' resumes had been designed in a standardized format. As such, inaccurate responses were likely to be attributed to the use of negative IM rather than to the task difficulty. Copies of all six applicants' resumes are included in Appendix 1.

All resumes had been constructed based upon Mondy et al. (1999), and the following Internet websites:

<http://resume.monster.com/samples>

<http://resume.monster.com/restips/hr/sucesstory/sampleresume>

<http://www.hotjobs.com>

<http://widdl.com/resumes/files/19>

<http://thesynergy.com/jobseeker>

### **3.6. Variables and Measures**

This section will discuss the experimental variables including the independent variables, dependent variables, and three different individual difference variables (moderating variables). Four pre-existing scales were used to measure the focal individual difference variables, as well as transient post-performance self-esteem. All four scales are included in Appendix 2. The following section will also discuss the psychometric properties of each of these scales.

The independent variables include “selection criterion,” “self-esteem,” “self-monitoring,” and “locus of control.” Selection criterion and its different levels were previously explained in detail under the “manipulations” subheading. The nature and measurement of individual difference variables of self-esteem, self-monitoring, and locus of control will be discussed in subsequent paragraphs of this section. The main dependent variable in this experiment is *unfavorability of self-presentation*. This variable is measured by participants’ self-descriptions of their skills and experiences with employee selection procedures, as well as their performance on the employee selection task. Thus, the dependent variables include: (1) undesirable self-presentations in the form

of self-depreciation and broadcasting limitations, and (2) post-performance self-evaluations. The two dependent variables are described in more detail below.

**3.6.1. Self-depreciation.** From Becker and Martin's (1995) point of view, "not working to potential" or "self-depreciation" was measured by evaluating participants' performance on the employee selection task. Since all participants processed six resumes during the allotted time frame, the quantity of "resumes processed" was not generated to measure participants' performance on employee evaluation/selection task. Thus, performance on the first task was measured only based upon the quality of participants' evaluations. The quality of participants' ratings was determined by assessing the accuracy of two performance measures: (1) the dimension-specific evaluations (e.g., evaluation on academic degree, computer skills, etc.), and (2) the rank-ordering of the job applicants. The correct answers based upon the information provided in applicants' resumes, and the Southeastern Mutual Life Insurance Company's job description document, are discussed in more detail below.

To measure the quality of participants' performance on the employee selection task, a standard evaluation form was employed for each job applicant. The evaluation form contains a set of evaluative statements that refer to the following job relevant dimensions: 1) academic degree, 2) grade point average (GPA), 3) work experience, 4) professional certification, 5) accomplishments, 6) computer skills, 7) managerial positions, 8) references, 9) leadership ability, and 10) adaptation to changing business software technology. A forced choice scale follows each evaluative statement which includes two responses: (1) Yes, and (2) No. The total evaluation score for each job applicant was obtained by counting the number of "Yes" choices. For example, if an applicant had a

**Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration (as required by the job description), he should receive one point on the academic degree dimension. On the other hand, if he had a Bachelor's degree in Psychology or Education, he would not receive any point for the academic degree dimension. As another example, if an applicant had prior work experience in human resources department (as required based upon the job description), one point should be added to his evaluation score. However, if the applicant had worked as a fast food restaurant manager, his work experience did not meet the requirement, and hence he should not have received a point on the experience dimension.**

**The employee selection decision form includes the six job applicants' names written in an alphabetical order. Each name is followed by two spaces that indicate the applicant's: (1) total evaluation score, and (2) rank. Participants were asked to assign a rank number (i.e., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6) to each one of the six job applicants based upon his total evaluation score. For example, the most recommended applicant with the highest total evaluation score should be ranked first. On the other hand, the least recommended applicant with the lowest total evaluation score should be assigned a rank of 6.**

**Participants were also informed that more than one applicant in the list might have the same total evaluation score, and thus receive the same rank number.**

**After the employee evaluation and selection experiment was completed, each participant's evaluation performance was compared to designated evaluation maps. These maps include the correct answers to the employee evaluation and selection task, as determined in advance by the experimenter (as an expert judge). The more a participant's evaluation ratings/rankings match the experimenter's evaluation map, the better the quality of his performance. For example, if a participant's rank numbers for the job**



applicants are consistent with the rank numbers on the decision map, he has performed well on the employee selection task. Otherwise, if the participant's ranking is very different from the decision map, he has performed poorly.

Participants could intentionally perform poorly by (1) producing relatively few evaluations during the specific experimental time, (2) responding the specific evaluative dimensions inaccurately, and/or (3) rank-ordering job applicants incorrectly. Copies of applicant evaluation and employee selection decision forms are provided in Appendix 1.

**3.6.2. Broadcasting limitations.** Broadcasting limitations was measured by evaluating self-reports of participants' skills and experiences with employee selection procedures. This measure is called Employee Selection Skills Questionnaire, and is provided in Appendix 1. Some of the items of this questionnaire were used as a pre-test measure to compare the participants' responses before and during the employee selection experiment. The pre-test items were added among the items on self-esteem and self-monitoring scales.

**3.6.3. Post-performance self-evaluations.** The second dependent variable in this experiment is the participant's self-evaluation after completing the initial task. Once the experimental task was finished, participants evaluated themselves by completing McFarland and Ross' (1982) Measure of Resultant Self-esteem that consisted of items from the "low self-esteem feelings" and "high self-esteem feelings" factors identified from MacFarland and Ross' (1982) factor analysis of mood adjectives (Weiner, Russell, & Lerman, 1978, 1979). Sample items include proud, competent, inadequate, and efficient. This twelve-item instrument was used to measure participants' post-performance self-esteem. Respondents were instructed to indicate the number on a 5-

point scale (extremely = 5, very = 4, moderately = 3, slightly = 2, not at all = 1) that best described their feelings at that moment. This scale measures temporary changes in self-evaluation precipitated by transient events. Participants' self-evaluations were calculated by summing the items from MacFarland and Ross' scale. Negatively worded items were reverse-scored, so that higher scores would indicate high self-esteem.

The remaining part of this section will discuss the psychometric properties of three individual difference scales that were used to measure the independent as well as the moderating variables of self-esteem, self-monitoring, and locus of control.

**3.6.4. Rosenberg's (1965) Self-Esteem Scale (SES).** Rosenberg's (1965) Self-Esteem Scale (SES) was used to measure participants' pre-experimental self-esteem. This scale is perhaps the most widely used self-esteem scale and has been included in thousands of studies conducted by psychologists, sociologists, and educators. One positive feature of Rosenberg's scale is that it includes only ten items. Half of these ten items are worded so that agreement indicates high self-esteem, and half so that agreement indicates low self-esteem. As Hoyle et al. (1999) note, a considerable strength of these items is that they clearly tap global self-esteem. That is, they focus on overall satisfaction and worthiness and not on self-evaluations along specific dimensions such as friendliness or intelligence. Since Rosenberg's scale revolves around liking and/or approving of the self, the scale measures the self-acceptance aspect of self-esteem (Crandall, 1973).

With respect to the scale's scoring, negatively worded items are reverse-scored so that high scores will indicate high self-esteem. Overall, a high score on the scale reflects high self-esteem. In Rosenberg's scale, "positive" and "negative" items are presented alternatively in order to reduce the effect of respondent set. The items generally deal with

a favorable or unfavorable attitude toward oneself. Respondents are asked to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with each statement on four-point scales: strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree. This response format results in a scale range of 10-40 with higher scores representing higher self-esteem.

In terms of the reliability, Rosenberg's scale has been shown to be internally reliable and unidimensional. Fleming and Courtney (1984) report an alpha coefficient of 0.88. Also, they report a test-retest correlation of 0.82 for 259 participants with a one-week interval. In terms of predictive validity, evidence that the scale is a valid measure of self-esteem is provided by the fact that individuals with low scores appear to be depressed, unhappy, discouraged, and socially anxious (Rosenberg, 1965). In addition, low self-esteem respondents tend to hold low levels of sociometric status in the group (e.g., inactive class participant, socially invisible student, etc.).

Regarding convergent validity, scale correlations of 0.56 to 0.83 with several similar measures have been obtained (Silber & Tippett, 1965) and a scale correlation of 0.60 with Coopersmith's Self-Esteem Inventory (Crandall, 1973) has been reported. Also, Lorr and Wunderlich (1986) report a correlation of 0.65 between SES scores and confidence and 0.39 between SES scores and popularity. Furthermore, Fleming and Courtney (1984) demonstrate negative relationships between the SES and concepts such as anxiety and depression. Finally, Demo (1985) finds a correlation of 0.55 between SES scores and scores on the Coopersmith's (1967) Self-Esteem Inventory, and a correlation of 0.32 between SES scores and peer ratings of self-esteem.

With regard to discriminant validity, although correlations with measures of self-stability are substantial, (0.21 - 0.53) (Crandall, 1973), correlations with (1) stability of

ratings of others, and (2) stability of perceptual performance, are close to zero (Tippett & Silber, 1965). Also, there are no significant correlations between SES scores and grade point averages (0.10), Scholastic Aptitude Test verbal (-0.06), quantitative (0.10) (Reynolds, 1988), work experience (0.07), and vocabulary (-0.04) scores (Fleming & Courtney, 1984). Thus, considerable discriminant validity has also been demonstrated for the SES.

**3.6.5. Lennox and Wolfe's (1984) Revised Self-Monitoring Scale (RS-M).** This scale was used to measure participants' self-monitoring ability. Lennox and Wolfe's (1984) Revised Self-Monitoring Scale is a 13-item scale which measures sensitivity to the expressive behavior of others and ability to modify self-presentation. There are two subscales: Ability to Modify Self-Presentation (7 items) and Sensitivity to the Expressive Behavior of Others (6 items). These subscales measure two types of interpersonal skills that are likely to be found in the repertoire of individuals who rely on the acquisitive (assertive) (Arkin, 1981) style of self-presentation (Wolfe, Lennox, & Cutler, 1986).

In terms of internal consistency, Lennox and Wolfe (1984) obtained coefficient alpha values of 0.77 for the seven items measuring ability to modify self-presentation, 0.70 for the six items measuring sensitivity to expressive behavior of others, and 0.75 for the total scale. With regard to relationships with other constructs, none of the three self-monitoring variables (i.e., ability to modify self-presentation, sensitivity to expressive behavior of others, and the total scale) is significantly and positively correlated with social anxiety, public self-consciousness, or individuation. The two self-monitoring subscales do, however, correlate dissimilarly with both "public self-consciousness" and

“social anxiety”. In view of this fact, Lennox and Wolfe (1984) suggest that prospective users should consider the subscale scores separately as well as together.

In terms of scale scoring, the six-point response format is recommended by Lennox and Wolfe (1984) because it has already produced relatively stable correlation matrices. Thus, based upon the above suggestions, the following 6-point Likert format was used: 5 = certainly, always true; 4 = generally true; 3 = somewhat true, but with exceptions; 2 = somewhat false, but with exceptions; 1 = generally false; 0 = certainly, always false. These weights were reversed for negatively worded items.

**3.6.6. Rotter’s (1966) Internal-External Scale (I-E Scale).** Locus of control was measured by Rotter’s (1966,1971) Internal-External scale (I-E scale). Rotter’s I-E scale is a 29-item, forced choice test including 6 filler items intended to make the purpose of the test somewhat more ambiguous. The score on the I-E scale is the total number of external choices. Each selected external statement is given one point, so that scores can range from zero (the most internal) to 23 (the most external). Thus externals fall at the upper end of the distribution of the scores.

The items from Rotter’s I-E scale deal exclusively with the respondents’ beliefs about the nature of the world. Detailed literature reviews on internal-external locus of control (e.g., Lefcourt, 1966, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984; Phares, 1976; Rotter, 1966) indicate that Rotter’s I-E scale is sensitive to individual differences in perception about one’s control over one’s destiny. That is, the items are concerned with the participants’ expectations about how reinforcement is controlled. Consequently, Rotter contends that the test is a measure of a generalized expectancy.

The I-E scale demonstrates reasonably high internal consistency (0.69-0.73) for an additive scale. An internal consistency coefficient (Kuder-Richardson) of 0.70 was obtained for a sample of 400 college students (Rotter, 1966). Test-retest reliability is satisfactory (0.55-0.72). Furthermore, Rotter's I-E scale correlates satisfactorily with other methods of measuring the same variable such as questionnaire, Likert scales, interview assessments, and ratings from a story-completion technique. In terms of discriminant validity, low relationships between the I-E scale and such variables as intelligence, social desirability, and political liberalness, adjustment, and need for approval indicate good discriminant validity.

### **3.7. Summary**

This chapter described the methodology including the research design, participants, treatment manipulations, task materials, variables and measures, and procedures for conducting the employee evaluation and selection experiment. The study contributes to the impression management literature by partially replicating and extending Kowalski and Leary's (1990) experiment in a more realistic work setting. Specifically, a real task in a business environment was used for measuring self-depreciation to avoid an aversive event. Also, the second (unpleasant) event was selected to be relevant to the initial task so that "broadcasting limitations" (regarding the second task) could be measured during the experimental task. Finally, the study investigated the impact of individual difference variables such as self-monitoring, locus of control, and self-esteem on the use of negative IM and on resultant self-esteem. The next chapter will discuss the results of the study.

## **Chapter Four**

### **4. Results**

This chapter will provide detailed information on the results of the experiment using two main divisions for the pilot and main study.

#### **4.1. Pilot Study**

The pilot study was conducted to test if the experimental manipulations can produce the hypothesized effects using a small number of participants. The pilot study involved only the low and high (but not the random) selection criterion conditions, and three dependent variables of skills, total wrong, and ranks. Calculations of these variables will be explained in the coming sections of this chapter. Post-performance self-evaluations (mood score) as well as individual difference measures (self-esteem, self-monitoring, and locus of control), were omitted from the pilot study. Thus, the pilot study was mainly concerned with the main effect of the selection criterion on the participants' self-report of employee selection skills, and their performance regarding the employee evaluation and selection task under low versus high experimental condition.

**4.1.1. Demographic survey.** The pilot data were collected from two undergraduate studies orientation classes at the University of Mississippi. The majority of the participants in the pilot study were 18 years in age, male, and Caucasian freshmen. The mean age for participants in the pilot study was 18.44 years and the standard deviation was 2.00. Also, most of the participants majored in liberal arts, and business studies, reported their GPA somewhere between 3.0 to 4.0, and had no full-time work experience. The frequencies of the demographic variables for the pilot participants are

shown in Table 4.1. In the next two sections, the results of manipulation checks, as well as workshop undesirability checks will be discussed.

Table 4.1. Pilot Study, Demographic Survey Frequencies

Demographic Variable	Anchor	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	20	33.9
	Male	39	66.1
Ethnicity	African American	9	15.3
	Asian American	2	3.4
	Caucasian	46	78.0
	International/Permanent Resident	1	1.7
	Unidentified	1	1.7
Major	Accounting/Business Studies	1	1.7
	Business Studies	8	13.6
	Finance	1	1.7
	International Business/Liberal Arts	1	1.7
	Liberal Arts	21	35.6
	Marketing	1	1.7
	Others	15	25.4
	Undecided	11	18.6
GPA	1.5-1.99	1	1.7
	2.0-2.49	5	8.5
	2.5-2.99	9	15.3
	3.0-3.49	16	27.1
	3.5-4.0	28	47.5
Full-Time Work Experience	None	38	64.4
	<1 year	8	13.6
	1 – 2	7	11.9
	3 – 5	4	6.8
	6 – 10	2	3.4
Part-Time Work Experience	None	13	22.0
	<1 year	5	8.5
	1 – 2	22	37.3
	3 – 5	18	30.5
	6 – 10	1	1.7
College Standing	Freshman	55	93.2
	Sophomore	4	6.8

**4.1.2. Manipulation checks.** For the post-task questionnaires, there was one missing case among the 59 participants in the pilot study. Thus, the results on manipulation and workshop undesirability checks are reported based on 58 participants. Regarding the manipulation checks, 48 (83%) of the 58 participants responded correctly



to the question asking how participants will be chosen for the employee selection workshop. Also, 27 (87%) of the 31 participants in low selection criterion condition and 25 (93%) of the 27 participants in high selection criterion condition perceived the selection criterion in a manner consistent with their experimental condition. Thus, the pilot manipulations were successful in inducing the targeted perceptions.

**4.1.3. Workshop undesirability checks.** Twenty two (71%) of the 31 participants in the low selection criterion condition and only 4 (15%) of the 27 participants in high selection criterion condition found the opportunity to participate in the upcoming employee selection workshop to be undesirable or very undesirable. In addition, 26 (45%) of the 58 participants reported that they were neither enthusiastic nor unenthusiastic about the opportunity to join the upcoming workshop. These results indicate that, overall, the pilot instructions did not induce the intended level of undesirability for workshop participation to all participants.

Furthermore, although the mean level of undesirability was expected to be approximately the same under the low and high experimental conditions, the results revealed otherwise. The mean for combined workshop undesirability (i.e., the sum of Q3 and Q4 on post-task questionnaire) was significantly higher under the low selection criterion condition ( $M = 8.19$ ,  $SD = 1.83$ ) than under the high selection criterion condition ( $M = 5.85$ ,  $SD = 1.51$ ). Perhaps the difference between the two means can be explained by the fact that participants in the low as opposed to the high condition expected to show up for the upcoming workshop as the worst performers, and thus they found workshop participation to be especially undesirable. There also was a significant difference between the high and low selection criterion conditions ( $t = 5.33$ ,  $df = 55.85$ ,  $p$

= .00025, *one-tailed*) on the variable of combined workshop undesirability. In addition, the *t*-test for workshop attraction was significant ( $t = 2.91$ ,  $df = 56$ ,  $p = .0025$ , *one-tailed*) indicating that participants in the low selection criterion condition ( $M = 50.48$ ,  $SD = 14.64$ ) were less attracted to the employee selection workshop than those in the high selection criterion condition ( $M = 39.89$ ,  $SD = 12.79$ ). Workshop attraction was calculated by summing the answers to the eleven bipolar questions that asked for the participants' opinion of employee selection workshop through attributing adjectives such as pleasant/unpleasant, attractive/unattractive, important/unimportant, useful/useless, or interesting/uninteresting to the workshop event.

**4.1.4. Broadcasting limitations.** Three different means were calculated from the skills questionnaire including the average of: (1) the first 8 positively worded questions or "skills assessment," (2) the last 7 questions or "skills activity," and (3) all 16 questions of the skills questionnaire or "skills." To check if the three means were statistically different from one another, 3 *t*-tests were performed to test for differences among these means under the low and high conditions. Since none of the *t*-tests were significant, only the variable "skills" was used to measure broadcasting limitations. Group statistics for the three different skills' means, and the results of the *t*-tests are shown in Tables 4.2.

Broadcasting limitations was calculated by summing the participants' scores on the 16-item skills questionnaire measuring self-reported skills of the employee evaluation/selection process. As noted above, participants in the low versus high selection criterion condition reported their skills at higher levels. However, the *t*-test for the skills' scores did not reveal a significant main effect of selection criterion. One

Table 4.2. Pilot Study, Main Effect of Selection Criterion on Skills Variable and Its Components

Skills Components	Selection Criterion	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T
Skills Self-Assessment	Low	31	31.71	2.91	-.53
	High	28	32.18	3.82	
Skills Activity	Low	31	20.06	6.92	1.14
	High	28	18.00	6.94	
SKILLS	Low	31	54.32	8.05	.72
	High	28	52.68	9.55	

$p < .05, p^{**} < .01, p^{***} < .001$

possible explanation for this lack of significant results for skills is that the instructions for the pilot study did not highlight self-reported employee evaluation skills as a selection criterion. Thus, participants in the high selection criterion condition may not have been motivated to denigrate their skills in order to avoid workshop participation. To correct this problem, self-reported skills was emphasized as a selection criterion in the instructions for the main study.

**4.1.5. Self-Depreciation.** Self-depreciation was measured using two variables: (1) the total number of wrong answers on the evaluation forms (total wrong), and (2) the sum of the differences between the candidates' ranks on the selection form and the correct rankings (ranks). With regard to calculating the total wrong variable, a candidate who met all the job requirements would receive a "Yes" answer to all ten positively worded questions on the evaluation form. Therefore, the total wrong variable was calculated by reverse-coding the "No" answers to job requirements that the candidate did not meet, and summing the number of "No" answers to the job requirements which he/she met (but was mistakenly rated on those requirements by participants). The sum of the differences for the ranks was calculated by subtracting the participants' ranks from the correct ranks and

summing the absolute values for the 6 candidates. In the methods chapter, the number of processed resumes was identified as a performance criterion for the participants.

However, since all participants processed 6 resumes during the experiment, “the number of resumes processed” was not considered as a performance criterion. Thus, participants’ performance was measured using two variables: total wrong and ranks.

Participants in the low as opposed to high selection criterion condition produced fewer wrong answers when rating the candidates ( $M_{Low} = 8.51$ ,  $SD_{Low} = 5.27$ ;  $M_{High} = 11.21$ ,  $SD_{High} = 8.01$ ) and more accurate rankings of the candidates ( $M_{Low} = 4.90$ ,  $SD_{Low} = 5.00$ ;  $M_{High} = 6.89$ ,  $SD_{High} = 5.41$ ). However, the difference between the two conditions did not reach significance for the two dependent variables of total wrong ( $t = -.51$ ,  $df = 45.91$ ,  $p = .069$ , *one-tailed*) and ranks ( $t = -1.47$ ,  $df = 57$ ,  $p = .075$ , *one-tailed*). Again, the lack of significant results for the total wrong and ranks means may be attributed to the fact that throughout the pilot instructions, performance on the employee evaluation/selection task was not highlighted as a selection criterion. Thus, participants in the high selection criterion condition may not have been motivated to depreciate their performance in order to avoid workshop participation. To correct this problem, performance on the evaluation/selection task was emphasized as a selection criterion in the instructions for the main study.

**4.1.6. Conclusions.** Despite the lack of significant results for parts of the pilot study, the condition means were consistent with experimental predictions. Participants self-reported better skills in the low selection criterion condition than in the high selection criterion condition. Also, participants produced fewer wrong answers on the evaluation forms in the low as opposed to the high selection criterion condition.

Moreover, participants' rankings of the candidates on the selection forms were more similar to the correct ranks (the key) in the low as opposed to high selection criterion condition. In recognition of the limitations of the pilot study, the instructions were refined to create more clear treatments with the expectation that these changes would yield more effective manipulations.

## **4.2. Main Study**

**4.2.1. Participants.** Out of 421 School of Business Administration students who were invited to participate in the experiment, 296 signed up and 234 actually showed up for the experimental sessions. Participants included 108 students from Strategic Management (MGMT 493) classes, and 126 students from Principles of Management (MGMT 371) classes. The participants were fairly equally divided among the three experimental conditions (i.e., low, random, and high). Figure 4.1 presents the total number of participants, as well as the total number of usable records in each of the three different experimental cells.

Because 32 out of 234 participants did not complete the individual difference questionnaires at the beginning of the semester, the number of usable cases was reduced to 202, including 106 students from MGMT 371 and 96 students from MGMT 493.

**4.2.2. Selection criterion and class interaction effect.** Since two different researchers administered the experimental materials and measures in the MGMT 493 and MGMT 371 classes, a one-way between-subjects ANCOVA was performed to test for possible experimenter effects. The ANCOVA was performed with the selection criterion

Figure 4.1. Total Number of Participants and Usable Records in Three Experimental Treatments

	Selection Criterion		
	Low	Random	High
Participants	88	65	81
Useful Usable	77	59	66

and class as factors, pre-test skills as a covariate, and skills, total wrong, ranks, and post-performance self-evaluations (or mood score) as dependent variables. The results of the ANCOVA revealed no significant interaction effect between selection criterion and the class factors. Thus, the Strategic Management and Principles of Management classes were combined for the purpose of data analysis. The descriptive statistics for selection criterion and class, as well as the results of the interaction test between the two variables are presented in Table 4.3.

The main effects of selection criterion on the variables of skills [ $F(2,195) = 9.69, p < .0005$ ], mood score [ $F(2,195) = 3.56, p < .03$ ], and total wrong [ $F(2,195) = 4.61, p < .01$ ] were statistically significant. Participants in the high as opposed to low selection criterion condition reported lower levels of employee selection skills, performed less positively on the evaluation task, and reported their post-performance self-evaluations at lower levels. However, there was no significant main effect of the class condition for any of the four dependent variables.

Table 4.3. Main Study, Selection Criterion and Class Interaction Effect

Selection Criterion	Class	Skills				Total Wrong				Ranks				Mood Score			
		Mean	Std. Deviation	N	F	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	F	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	F	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	F
Low	Mgmt 493	58.96	9.43	24		6.79	1.86	24		3.67	1.55	24		51.42	6.22	24	
	Mgmt 371	56.62	8.27	53		6.96	2.97	53		3.64	1.68	53		50.70	5.14	53	
Random	Mgmt 493	50.97	8.87	34		8.68	4.28	34		4.41	2.45	34		47.62	5.46	34	
	Mgmt 371	54.60	8.93	25		8.52	2.96	25		4.68	3.15	25		49.04	4.40	25	
High	Mgmt 493	51.84	11.30	38	1.38	8.24	3.61	38	.07	4.37	2.12	38	.64	49.45	6.57	38	.56
	Mgmt 371	49.89	11.20	28		7.96	3.10	28		3.79	2.11	28		49.29	5.18	28	
Total	Mgmt 493	53.31	10.47	96		8.03	3.58	96		4.21	2.13	96		49.29	6.22	96	
	Mgmt 371	54.37	9.61	106		7.59	3.05	106		3.92	2.23	106		49.93	5.00	106	

$p^* < .05, p^{**} < .01, p^{***} < .001$

**4.2.3. Demographic data.** Frequencies for the demographic variables are reported in Table 4.4. In terms of the demographic make-up of the participants in the main study, most were between 21 and 22 (about 67%) years old, male (53%), Caucasian (85.5%) and seniors (72%). The mean age for participants in the main study was 22.32 with a standard deviation of 3.57. Most participants majored in marketing, business studies, accounting, finance, and management (64.6%). In addition, the majority had a GPA between 2.5 and 3.49 (62%), lacked full-time work experience (63.7%), and had 1-5 years of part-time work experience (55.6%).

**4.2.4. Correlations.** Table 4.5 summarizes the inter-correlations among the covariate, independent, dependent, and moderating variables. Note that there are significant relationships between the dependent variables of total wrong and skills ( $r = -.247$ ), total wrong and ranks ( $r = .483$ ), total wrong and mood score ( $r = -.197$ ), and skills and mood score ( $r = .413$ ). Also, the independent variable of selection criterion is significantly correlated with skills ( $r = -.269$ ) and with total wrong ( $r = .160$ ). In addition, self-esteem, self-monitoring, and locus of control are all significantly correlated with skills and mood score but not with total wrong and ranks. Moreover, there are significant correlations between self-esteem and self-monitoring ( $r = .376$ ), and self-esteem and locus of control ( $r = -.195$ ). Finally, there are no significant correlations between selection criterion and the individual difference variables of self-esteem, self-monitoring, or locus of control.



Table 4.4. Main Study, Demographic Survey Frequencies (N = 234)

Demographic Variable	Anchor	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	110	47.0
	Male	124	53.0
Ethnicity	African American	21	9.0
	Asian American	5	2.1
	Caucasian	200	85.5
	International/Permanent Resident	3	1.3
	Native American	2	.9
	Unidentified	1	.4
Major	Accounting	25	10.7
	Business Studies	32	13.7
	Business Studies/Finance	1	.4
	Business Studies/Management	4	1.7
	Business Studies/Marketing	2	.9
	Finance	24	10.3
	Finance/Management	1	.4
	International Business	3	1.3
	International Business/Liberal Arts	3	1.3
	Management	23	9.8
	Marketing	47	20.1
	Management/Marketing	5	2.1
	MIS/POM	6	2.6
	Business Studies/Others	1	.4
	Liberal Arts	12	5.1
Others	44	18.8	
Undecided	1	.4	
GPA	< 1.5	1	.4
	1.5 - 1.99	4	1.7
	2.0 - 2.49	44	18.8
	2.5 - 2.99	72	30.8
	3.0 - 3.49	73	31.2
	3.5 - 4.0	40	17.1
Full-Time Work Experience	None	149	63.7
	<1 year	32	13.7
	1 - 2	24	10.3
	3 - 5	13	5.6
	6 - 10	8	3.4
	>10 years	8	3.4
Part-Time Work Experience	None	37	15.8
	<1 year	28	12.0
	1 - 2	61	26.1
	3 - 5	69	29.5
	6 - 10	36	15.4
	>10 years	3	1.3
College Standing	Sophomore	1	.4
	Junior	64	27.4
	Senior	168	71.8
	Graduate/Others	1	.4

Table 4.5. Inter-correlations of Dependent, Independent, Covariate, and Individual Difference Variables<sup>a</sup>

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Selection Criterion										
2. Total Wrong	7.80	3.30	.160*							
3. Skills	53.87	10.01	-.269**	-.247**						
4. Ranks	4.06	2.18	.097	.483**	-.105					
5. Mood Score	49.63	5.60	-.122	-.197**	.413**	-.104				
6. Self-Esteem Score	32.67	4.38	.044	.053	.168*	.135	.427**			
7. Self-Monitoring Score	44.29	7.78	.138	-.007	.235**	.006	.281**	.376**		
8. Covariate Skills	23.20	3.17	.008	-.004	.267**	-.025	.315**	.416**	.632**	
9. Locus of Control Score	10.93	3.62	-.055	.059	-.227**	.017	-.202**	-.195**	-.073	-.110

*p*\* < .05, *p*\*\* < .01, *p*\*\*\* < .001  
<sup>a</sup>Listwise N=202

**4.2.5. Reliability analysis.** The reliability results for the 16-item Skills Questionnaire, and the four pre-existing measures of self-esteem, self-monitoring, locus of control, and resultant self-esteem are shown in Table 4.6. The alpha coefficients exceed .80 for every scale except for Rotter's (1966) Internal-External scale, which is .67. Other studies have also reported relatively low reliabilities for this scale (e.g., Lefcourt, 1981; Rotter, 1966). Despite this limitation, Rotter's scale has been extensively used and the alpha coefficient obtained is close to the .70 cutoff for acceptable reliability recommended by Nunnally (1978).

Table. 4.6. Reliability Analysis

Measures	Number of Cases	Number of Items	Reliability Coefficients (Alpha)
Skills Questionnaire	216	16	.85
Rosenberg's (1965) Self-Esteem Scale	197	10	.84
Lennox and Wolfe's (1984) Revised Self-Monitoring Scale	199	13	.84
Rotter's (1966) Internal-External Scale	196	23	.67
McFarland and Ross' (1982) Measure of Resultant Self-Esteem	232	12	.82

**4.2.6. Manipulation checks.** Seventy eight (88.6%) of the 88 participants in the low, 57 (87.7%) of the 65 participants in the random, and 66 (81.5%) of the 81 participants in the high selection criterion conditions responded correctly to the question about how participants will be chosen for the employee selection workshop. In addition,

75 (85.2%) of the 88 participants in the low, 76 (93.8%) of the 81 participants in the high, and 40 (61.5%) of the 65 participants in the random experimental conditions perceived the selection criterion accurately. Overall, the manipulations successfully created the desired perceptions for the majority of the participants. The cross-tabulations for the selection criterion and the two 3-anchor manipulation check questions (Q1 and Q2) are presented in Tables 4.7.

Table 4.7. Main Study, Manipulation Check Frequencies

Selection Criterion		Selection Method (Q1) <sup>a</sup>			Evaluation Criterion (Q2) <sup>b</sup>		
		1.00	2.00	3.00	1.00	2.00	3.00
Low	Count	78	3	7	13	75	
	% within Selection Criterion	88.6%	3.4%	8.0%	14.8%	85.2%	
Random	Count	7	57	1	23	2	40
	% within Selection Criterion	10.8%	87.7%	1.5%	35.4%	3.1%	61.5%
High	Count	66	7	8	76		5
	% within Selection Criterion	81.5%	8.6%	9.9%	93.8%		6.2%

a. The response scale for this item is: 1=By the researcher; 2=Randomly; 3=Don't know

b. The response scale for this item is: 1=High performance on the employee selection task; 2=Low performance on the employee selection task; 3=Don't know

**4.2.7. Workshop undesirability checks.** Only 102 (44%) of the 234 participants considered the opportunity to join the upcoming employee selection workshop to be very undesirable or undesirable. Also, only 100 (43%) of the 234 participants were very unenthusiastic or unenthusiastic about the opportunity to participate in the upcoming employee selection workshop. In fact, 95 (41%) of the 234 participants were neither enthusiastic nor unenthusiastic about the opportunity to join the future employee selection workshop. In addition, 75 (32%) of the 234 participants perceived the employee selection workshop to be neither a desirable nor an undesirable event. Overall, the checks

for undesirability reveal that the instructions did not portray the participation in the upcoming workshop as an undesirable situation to all participants. The cross-tabulations for selection criterion and the two 5-anchor undesirability check questions (Q3 and Q4) are presented in Tables 4.8.

One-way between-subjects ANCOVAs were performed for the variables of combined workshop undesirability (i.e., the sum of Q3 and Q4), and workshop attraction (i.e., sum of the last eleven bipolar questions) from the post-task questionnaire. The ANCOVA results did not reveal a significant main effect of selection criterion on workshop attractiveness. On the other hand, there was a significant effect of selection criterion on combined workshop undesirability. The results of pairwise comparisons for combined workshop undesirability showed that the difference between the means of the random and high selection criterion conditions was significant. In fact, the mean for workshop undesirability was greater in the random condition ( $M = 7.39$ ) than the means in both the low ( $M = 7.06$ ) and high ( $M = 6.40$ ) conditions. Perhaps participants in the random condition as compared to the other two conditions found the opportunity to join the workshop less desirable because they were instructed that they would be selected at random, and thus, felt they had no control over their fate. The descriptive statistics, the ANCOVA results, and the post hoc analysis for workshop attraction and combined workshop undesirability are shown in Table 4.9.

Based on the results of workshop undesirability checks, the majority of participants did not perceive the employee selection workshop as either an undesirable or very undesirable event. Also, most participants were not unenthusiastic or very unenthusiastic to join the workshop. Since perceived workshop undesirability was a basic

premise for the present experiment, the participants were screened to remove those who perceived the workshop as a desirable or a neutral opportunity. Thus, the sample size was reduced to 112 participants who had perceived the employee selection workshop as an undesirable or very undesirable event. These participants had combined workshop undesirability (Q3+Q4) scores (reversed) of 7 or above on a scale ranging from 2 (the most undesirable) to 10 (the most desirable). The mean and standard deviation for these scores, respectively, were 8.68 and 1.18. Only 99 out of 112 participants completed the individual difference questionnaires, and thus were used for the purpose of hypothesis testing.

#### **4.2.8. Hypothesis Testing.**

*4.2.8.1. Main effects of selection criterion.* To test the first six hypotheses, four one-way between-subjects ANCOVAs were performed, with selection criterion as the factor, pre-test skills as a covariate, and skills, total wrong, ranks, and mood score as dependent variables. The three variables of skills, total wrong, and mood score were calculated the same way as in the pilot study. Mood score was calculated by reverse-coding the negatively worded items and summing all 12 items from McFarland and Ross' (1982) Measure of Resultant Self-Esteem. The descriptive statistics, as well as the results of ANCOVAs and post hoc analyses for the four dependent variables are presented in Table-4.10.

In terms of broadcasting limitations, the selection criterion was significantly related to skills. The estimated marginal mean in the low condition ( $M = 56.23$ ) was much greater than its counterpart in the high condition ( $M = 44.63$ ). Consistently, the pairwise

**Table 4.8. Main Study, Workshop Undesirability Check Frequencies**

Selection Criterion		Participation Undesirability (Q3) <sup>a</sup>					Willingness to Participate (Q4) <sup>b</sup>				
		1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00
Low	Count	27	15	23	19	4	18	23	33	12	2
	% within Selection Criterion	30.7%	17.0%	26.1%	21.6%	4.5%	20.5%	26.1%	37.5%	13.6%	2.3%
Random	Count	20	15	22	7	1	16	18	25	5	1
	% within Selection Criterion	30.8%	23.1%	33.8%	10.8%	1.5%	24.6%	27.7%	38.5%	7.7%	1.5%
High	Count	17	8	30	20	6	17	8	37	16	3
	% within Selection Criterion	21.0%	9.9%	37.0%	24.7%	7.4%	21.0%	9.9%	45.7%	19.8%	3.7%

- a. The response scale for this item is: 1= Very undesirable, 2= Slightly undesirable, 3= Neither desirable nor undesirable, 4= Slightly desirable, 5= Very desirable
- b. The response score for this item is: 1= Very unenthusiastic, 2= Unenthusiastic, 3= Neither enthusiastic nor unenthusiastic, 4= Enthusiastic, 5= Very enthusiastic

**Table 4.9. Main Study, Main Effect of Selection Criterion for Workshop Attraction and Combined Workshop Undesirability**

Selection Criterion	Workshop Attraction			F	Combined Workshop Undesirability			F
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N		Mean	Std. Deviation	N	
Low	42.22	12.01	74	.60	7.06	2.17	77	3.26*
Random	41.39	12.19	59		7.39	1.72	59	
High	43.24	14.53	66		6.39	2.21	66	

*p*\* < .05, *p*\*\* < .01, *p*\*\*\* < .001  
*M*<sub>R</sub> > *M*<sub>H</sub>

comparisons revealed a significant difference between skills means in the high and low conditions. Thus, the results of pairwise comparisons provided further evidence of the selection criterion main effect on self-reported skills, and Hypothesis 1 was fully supported. As expected, to avoid an onerous future task, participants described their skills less positively and broadcast more skill limitations when the selection criterion was a high versus low skill level. As predicted, the mean for skills in the random condition fell between the means in the low and high conditions. Furthermore, based on the pairwise comparisons, there was a significant difference between the skill means in the random and low conditions, as well as in the random and high conditions. Thus, the results of pairwise comparisons provide full support for Hypothesis 3. To avoid an onerous future task, participants in the random condition described their skills more (less) positively and broadcast fewer (more) skill limitations than they did under the high (low) skill criterion.

With regard to self-depreciation, there was a significant main effect of selection criterion on total wrong. On the other hand, although the ranks mean in the high condition was larger than the one in the low condition, there was no significant main



effect of selection criterion on ranks. Also, the estimated marginal mean for total wrong is greater in the high ( $M = 8.78$ ) than in the low ( $M = 6.88$ ) condition. Moreover, a pairwise comparison for the total wrong variable shows that the difference between the high and low conditions contributed to the main effect. Thus, Hypothesis 2 was partially supported. To avoid an onerous future task, participants exhibited lower levels of current task performance (in terms of employee evaluations but not for employee selection) when the criterion for task assignment was high versus low performance.

For the total wrong variable, the estimated marginal mean in the random condition ( $M = 8.27$ ) fell between the means in the low ( $M = 6.88$ ) and high ( $M = 8.78$ ) conditions. For the ranks variable, the mean in the random condition did not fall between the means in the low and high conditions. In fact, the ranks mean in the random condition ( $M = 4.54$ ) was greater than means in the low ( $M = 4.05$ ) and high ( $M = 4.14$ ). With regard to total wrong, as hypothesized, participants in the random condition performed worse on the evaluations part of the initial task than those in the low condition, and performed better than those in the high condition. Moreover, based on the pairwise comparisons for the total wrong variable, there was a significant difference between the low and random conditions, but not between high and random conditions. Thus, Hypothesis 4 was partially supported overall.

With regard to the post-performance self-evaluations, selection criterion was significantly related to mood score. Participants in the high versus low condition reported lower levels of post-performance self-esteem after using negative self-presentations. Also, the results of pairwise comparisons revealed that the difference between the means in the high and low conditions was significant. Thus, Hypothesis 5 was fully supported.

Table 4.10. Main Study, Main Effect of Selection Criterion on Dependent Variables

Selection Criterion	Skills				Total Wrong				Ranks				Mood Score			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	F	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	F	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	F	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	F
Low	56.40	8.45	42		6.90	2.70	42		4.05	1.71	42		50.21	6.02	42	
Random	52.06	9.74	35	12.32***	8.28	3.14	35	3.54*	4.54	2.81	35	.49	48.74	5.07	35	4.34*
High	44.14	8.27	22		8.72	3.22	22		4.14	2.14	22		45.23	6.23	22	

$p^* < .05, p^{**} < .01, p^{***} < .001$

Skills:  $M_L > M_R > M_H$

Total Wrong:  $M_L < M_H = M_R$

Mood Score:  $M_L > M_H$

The estimated marginal mean for the mood score is significantly lower in the high ( $M = 45.67$ ) than in the low ( $M = 50.05$ ) condition.

**4.2.8.2 Covariate hypothesis.** The pre-test skills variable was significantly related to the dependent variable of mood score [ $F(1,95) = 7.15, p < .01$ ]. In contrast, the relationships between pre-test skills and self-reported skills [ $F(1,95) = 3.49, p = .065$ ], pre-test skills and total wrong [ $F(1,95) = .36, p = 0.550$ ], as well as pre-test skills and ranks [ $F(1,95) = .94, p = .335$ ] were not significant. Thus, Hypothesis 6 was partially supported. Overall, as predicted, participants who reported their pre-test skills at higher levels, also reported their post-performance self-evaluations more positively at the end of the experiment. On the other hand, contrary to expectations, participants who reported their pre-test skills at higher levels did not report their skills at higher levels during the experiment, and did not perform more positively on the current task (the evaluation/selection task).

**4.2.8.3. Selection criterion and individual difference interactions.** To determine if there are interactions between selection criterion and any of the individual difference variables of self-esteem, self-monitoring, or locus of control, the participants were divided into categories based on their scores on the individual difference variables. Self-esteem scores were calculated by reverse-coding 5 negatively worded items on the 10-item Rosenberg's (1965) Self-Esteem Scale, and summing the total number of items for each participant. Self-monitoring scores were computed by reverse-coding two negatively worded items on the 13-item Revised Self-Monitoring Scale (Lennox & Wolfe, 1984), and then summing all 13 items for each participant. Locus of control scores were calculated by giving one point to each external statement on Rotter's (1966) Internal-

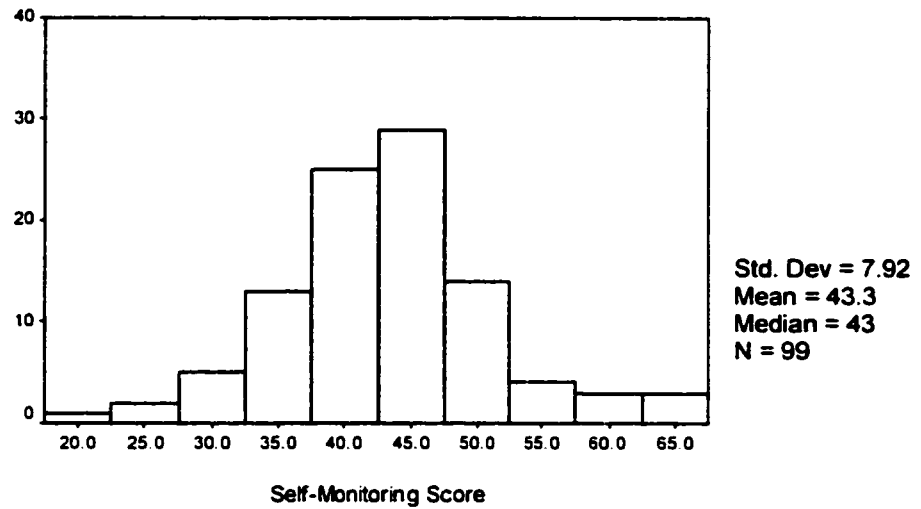
External scale and summing the total number of external choices for each participant. The means for self-esteem, self-monitoring ability, and locus of control, respectively, were 32.14 ( $SD = 4.60$ ), 43.28 ( $SD = 7.92$ ), and 11.25 ( $SD = 3.52$ ).

To determine how to classify participants into the high and low or external and internal groups, histogram distributions of their scores on the above three individual difference scales were obtained. These graphs appear in Figures 4.2 to 4.4. As the graphs indicate, the majority of the participants' scores lie in the middle range.

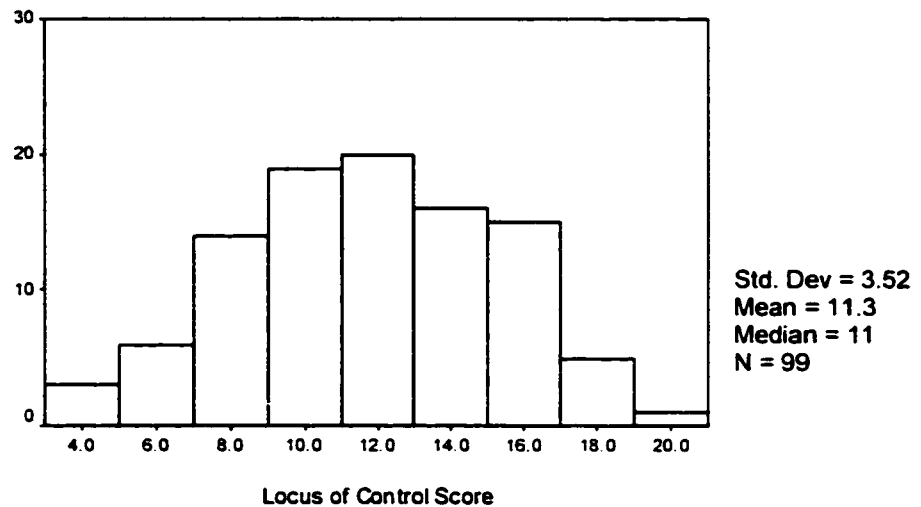
Importantly, past research on self-esteem documents different types of scoring for the various types of self-esteem scales. For example, Kowalski and Leary (1990) used Berger's (1952) Self-Acceptance scale and classified participants into high and low



**Figure 4.3. Self-Monitoring Scores Histogram**



**Figure 4.4. Locus of Control Scores Histogram**



self-esteem groups based on their scores in the upper and lower thirds of the distribution of scores (one-third split). As another example, Baumgardner et al. (1989) used Rosenberg's (1965) Self-Esteem Inventory and determined high versus low self-esteem groups based on a median split of participants' scores. In addition, past research on self-monitoring provides evidence for use of a median split of participants' scores on a variety

of self-monitoring scales such as Lennox and Wolfe's (1984) 13-item Revised Self-Monitoring Scale (Bozionelos & Bennett, 1999; Cutler & Wolfe, 1989), Snyder's (1974) 25-item Self-Monitoring Scale (Mill, 1984; Prislin & Kovilija, 1992), and Snyder and Gangestad's (1986) 18-item Self-Monitoring Scale (DeBono, Green, Shair, & Benson, 1995; Demono & Telesca, 1990). Based on the histogram distribution of scores and consistent with past research, a median split was used to classify participants into opposite categories in terms of their self-esteem (median = 32.00), and self-monitoring (median = 43.00) ability. With regard to locus of control, as recommended by Rotter (1966), participants' scores were computed by giving one point to each selected external statement. Since the scale includes 23 external and 23 internal choices, the scores can range from zero (the most internal) to 23 (the most external). As locus of control histogram indicates, the participants' median score is equal to the median score in Rotter's Internal-External scale which is 11. Thus, a median split was also used to divide participants into internal and external groups regarding the locus of control. Participants whose scores were above 11 were classified as "externals," while those with scores of below 11 were classified as "internals."

Based on the median splits for the individual difference variables, self-esteem scores and self-monitoring scores were each divided into two groups: high and low. Also, locus of control scores were divided into two groups: internals and externals. To better balance the number of records in the cells, participants whose individual difference scores fell at the median were included in the group above or below the median that had the fewest respondents. It was hypothesized that persons with low versus high in self-esteem, high versus low in self-monitoring ability, and an internal versus external locus

of control would use more negative impressions in the high versus low selection criterion condition to avoid participating in the upcoming unpleasant workshop. Also, it was predicted that persons low in self-esteem or self-monitoring ability, and those with an external locus of control would report lower levels of post-performance self-evaluations in the high versus low selection criterion condition. To determine if there are interactions between selection criterion and each of the three individual difference variables of self-esteem, self-monitoring, and locus of control, 4 one-way between-subjects ANCOVAs were performed for each individual difference variable. The ANCOVAs were performed with selection criterion and the specific individual difference variable as factors, pre-test skills as a covariate, and skills, total wrong, ranks, and mood score as the dependent variables. The cell sizes, means, and standard deviations, as well as ANCOVA results for the four dependent variables are shown in Tables 4.11 to 4.13.

As the tables indicate, there were no significant interactions between selection criterion and self-esteem, selection criterion and self-monitoring, or selection criterion and locus of control for any of the four dependent variables. Thus, Hypotheses 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12 were not supported. That is, there were no significant differences between participants with high versus low self-esteem or high versus low self-monitoring ability, and between internals and externals in terms of self-reported skills, employee evaluation/selection task performance, and post-experimental self-evaluations under the three different selection criterion conditions.

**4.2.9. Main effects of self-esteem, self-monitoring, and locus of control.** It was expected that overall, individuals with low versus high self-esteem, high versus low self-monitoring ability, and an internal versus external locus of control would project more

negative images regardless of their selection criterion condition to avoid participating in the unwanted employee selection workshop. Also, it was expected that, in general, participants low in self-esteem or self-monitoring ability, and individuals with an external versus internal locus of control would report lower levels of post-performance self-esteem. Although these predictions were not hypothesized a priori, they were still explored. To test the main effects of the individual difference variables on the dependent variables, four independent sample *t*-tests were performed for each individual difference variable. The cell means and standard deviations and the *t*-test results are shown in Tables 4.14 to 4.16.

There was a significant difference between the high and low self-esteem participants in terms of their mood score. Overall, participants with high as opposed to low self-esteem reported their post-task self-evaluations at higher levels. There were no significant main effects of self-esteem on skills, total wrong, or ranks variables.

The *t*-test results also revealed a main effect of self-monitoring on self-reported skills and mood score, however, the significant result for skills was opposite to the expectation. Participants with high versus low self-monitoring abilities produced higher scores in terms of the employee evaluation/selection skills and post-performance self-evaluations. There were no significant differences between the high and low self-monitoring conditions with regard to either the total wrong or ranks variables.

Finally, the results of the *t*-tests for the locus of control variable showed no significant difference between the internal and external conditions in terms of skills, total wrong, ranks, or mood score. There was no significant difference between participants with an internal versus external locus of control with regard to employee



Table 4.11. Interactions of Selection Criterion with Self-Esteem for the Dependent Variables

Selection Criterion	Self-Esteem Score	Skills				Total Wrong				Ranks				Mood Score			
		Mean	Std. Deviation	N	F	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	F	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	F	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	F
Low	Low	55.81	6.57	21	.541	6.24	2.59	21	.464	3.43	1.16	21	3.05	48.57	5.07	21	.06
	High	57.00	10.12	21		7.57	2.71	21		3.67	1.95	21		51.86	6.55	21	
Random	Low	50.09	8.59	21		8.09	4.95	21		4.86	3.14	21		46.90	4.57	21	
	High	55.00	10.91	14		8.57	3.50	14		4.07	2.27	14		51.50	4.65	14	
High	Low	44.25	7.53	12		8.75	3.05	12		3.33	1.92	12		43.08	6.75	12	
	High	44.00	9.50	10		8.70	3.60	10		5.10	2.07	10		47.80	4.64	10	
Total	Low	51.02	8.70	54		7.52	2.98	54		3.96	2.35	54		46.70	5.60	54	
	High	53.49	11.28	45		8.13	3.14	45		4.58	2.07	45		50.84	5.75	45	

$p^* < .05, p^{**} < .01, p^{***} < .001$

**Table 4.12. Interactions of Selection Criterion with Self-Monitoring for the Dependent Variables**

Selection Criterion	Self-Monitoring Score	Skills				Total Wrong				Ranks				Mood Score			
		Mean	Std. Deviation	N	F	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	F	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	F	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	F
Low	Low	54.96	7.87	26		6.84	2.78	26		4.11	1.84	26		49.03	6.38	26	
	High	58.75	9.09	16		7.00	2.65	16		3.93	1.52	16		52.12	5.00	16	
Random	Low	48.94	6.88	16		7.69	3.09	16		3.75	1.94	16		46.87	4.59	16	
	High	54.68	11.12	19		8.79	3.17	19		5.21	3.27	19		50.31	5.04	19	
High	Low	43.43	9.28	14	.26	8.78	2.79	14	.332	4.00	2.21	14	1.81	45.28	6.18	14	.71
	High	45.37	6.52	8		8.62	4.10	8		4.37	2.13	8		45.12	6.75	8	
Total	Low	50.36	9.18	56		7.57	2.92	56		3.98	1.93	56		47.48	5.98	56	
	High	54.46	10.60	43		8.09	3.22	43		4.58	2.55	43		50.02	5.81	43	

$p^* < .05, p^{**} < .01, p^{***} < .001$

Table 4.13. Interactions of Selection Criterion with Locus of Control for the Dependent Variables

Selection Criterion	Locus of Control Score	Skills				Total Wrong				Ranks				Mood Score			
		Mean	Std. Deviation	N	F	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	F	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	F	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	F
Low	Internal	58.30	9.07	23		6.43	2.37	23		4.26	2.03	23		50.65	6.90	23	
	External	54.10	7.20	19		7.47	3.02	19		3.79	1.23	19		49.69	4.89	19	
Random	Internal	52.90	9.20	19		7.95	2.95	19		4.95	3.60	19		49.58	5.51	19	
	External	51.06	10.57	16		8.68	3.40	16		4.06	1.39	16	.85	47.75	4.48	16	
High	Internal	46.00	8.05	10	.236	7.80	3.61	10	.22	3.80	1.23	10		47.10	5.80	10	.16
	External	42.58	8.47	12		9.50	2.78	12		4.42	2.71	12		43.67	6.39	12	
Total	Internal	53.96	9.91	52		7.25	2.89	52		4.42	2.60	52		49.58	6.24	52	
	External	50.13	9.77	47		8.40	3.15	47		4.04	1.74	47		47.49	5.61	47	

$p^* < .05, p^{**} < .01, p^{***} < .001$

Table. 4.14. Main Effect of Self-Esteem on the Dependent Variables

Dependent Variables	Self-Esteem Score	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T
Total Wrong	Low	54	7.51	2.98	
	High	45	8.13	3.14	-.99
Skills	Low	54	51.02	8.70	
	High	45	53.49	11.28	-1.20
Ranks	Low	54	3.96	2.35	
	High	45	4.58	2.07	-1.37
Mood Score	Low	54	46.70	5.60	
	High	45	50.84	5.75	-3.62***

$p^* < .05, p^{**} < .01, p^{***} < .001$

Table. 4.15. Main Effect of Self-Monitoring on the Dependent Variables

Dependent Variables	Self-Monitoring Score	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T
Total Wrong	Low	56	7.57	2.93	
	High	43	8.09	3.22	-.84
Skills	Low	56	50.36	9.18	
	High	43	54.46	10.60	-2.063*
Ranks	Low	56	3.98	1.94	
	High	43	4.58	2.55	-1.33
Mood Score	Low	56	47.48	5.98	
	High	43	50.02	5.80	-2.12*

$p^* < .05, p^{**} < .01, p^{***} < .001$

Table. 4.16. Main Effect of Locus of Control on the Dependent Variables

Dependent Variables	Locus of Control Score	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T
Total Wrong	Internal	52	7.25	2.89	-1.90
	External	47	8.40	3.15	
Skills	Internal	52	53.97	9.90	1.93
	External	47	50.13	9.77	
Ranks	Internal	52	4.42	2.60	.86
	External	47	4.04	1.74	
Mood Score	Internal	52	49.58	6.24	1.74
	External	47	47.49	5.61	

$p^* < .05$ ,  $p^{**} < .01$ ,  $p^{***} < .001$

evaluation/selection skills, performance on employee evaluation/selection task, or post-performance self-evaluations.

### 4.3. Summary

Overall, the results of the current study are in agreement with past findings with regard to documenting the use of negative impression methods to avoid experiencing aversive events. Also, consistent with the prior research, the present study found no evidence of interactions between the individual difference variables and the conditions that induce the use of negative impressions. Finally, in agreement with past findings, individuals who use negative self-presentational methods to avoid aversive events do report lower levels of post-performance self-esteem.

The next and final chapter will provide an interpretation of the results, discuss the strengths and limitations of the research methodology, consider the practical implications of the findings, and identify possible avenues for future research.

## **Chapter Five**

### **5. Discussion**

The purpose of the present study is to explore the tendency of individuals to intentionally project unfavorable impressions in order to avoid undesirable events. In the following section, a description and interpretation of findings related to this purpose is provided.

#### **5.1. Major Findings**

Twelve specific hypotheses were tested. The results provide full support for hypotheses 1, 3, and 5, partial support for hypotheses 2, 4, and 6, but no support for the other 6 hypotheses. A summary of research hypotheses as well as the results of hypothesis testing is provided in Tables 5.1 and 5.2.

The ANCOVA results for H1 indicate that when the researcher was responsible for assigning the employee selection workshop, participants who were targets for the assignment described their skills less positively and broadcast more skill limitations under the high versus low skill level assignment conditions. In addition, as predicted in H3, the means of the high and low selection criterion conditions for self-reported skills differed in opposite directions from the random condition. More specifically, the results reveal that when the participants were informed that the attendees for the employee selection workshop would be randomly assigned, they described their skills more (less) positively and broadcast fewer (more) skill limitations than they did under the high (low) skill criterion/researcher assigned task treatments.

These results differ from those of Kowalski and Leary (1990) who found the means for the high and random conditions being equal to each other. To the contrary, the random mean fell between high and low treatment means, and was not equal to the former, indicating that participants in the high criterion condition did engage in negative impression management to lower their self-reported skills. On the other hand, as Kowalski and Leary interpreted, the equality of means in the high and random conditions would suggest that participants in the low selection criterion condition might have self-enhanced relative to those in the other conditions.

With regard to the main effect of selection criterion on task performance (H2), mixed results were obtained. When the researcher was responsible for assigning the participants to the employee selection workshop and the criterion for task assignment was high versus low performance, participants exhibited lower levels of task performance for the total wrong variable but not for the ranks variable. Also, with regard to H4, total wrong mean in the random selection criterion condition fell between the means in the high and low conditions. Regarding H5, the participants in the high versus low selection criterion condition reported lower levels of post-performance self-evaluations.

An ethical interpretation of the mixed results for self-depreciation and lack of significant effects for ranks may help to explain the findings. Perhaps the participants avoided self-deprecating on the entire task because they were led to believe that their employee selection decisions would impact the future of job candidates, and they considered it unethical or undesirable to put the candidates at risk. Although participants in the high selection criterion condition self-depreciated on the evaluation part of the task in order to avoid participating in the unpleasant upcoming workshop, the accuracy of the

rankings was not adversely impacted for the selection component of the task, perhaps because they either consciously or subconsciously thought it would be unethical to distort these rankings. Also, the estimated marginal means for total wrong were almost equal in the random and high conditions. One possible explanation for the similarity of total wrong means in the random and high conditions is that the participants in the random condition lacked motivation. In other words, participants in the random condition were not motivated to perform well because they had been instructed that they would be randomly selected to join the workshop, rather than based on their performance.

Moreover, participants' self-esteem in the high selection criterion condition did change in the negative direction so much as to produce significant results with regard to post-performance self-evaluations. In general, consistent with Kowalski and Leary's (1990) findings, between-group differences in post-performance self-evaluations mirrored differences in self-presentations, suggesting that individuals' self-presentations produced immediate changes in self-esteem. Also, the results of pairwise comparisons revealed that only the difference between the means in the high and low conditions contributed to the significance.

Prior research has shown that people are influenced by the images they create for themselves through their own self-presentations (e.g., Gergen, 1965; Jones et al., 1981; Kowalski & Leary, 1990; Rhodewalt & Augusdottir, 1986; Weary & Williams, 1990). Jones et al. (1981) argue that the cognitive dissonance theory (Wicklund & Brehm, 1976) is responsible for lowering the actor's self-esteem after presenting him/herself negatively, while a biased scanning version of self-perception theory (Bem, 1972) is responsible for raising the actor's self-esteem after presenting him/herself positively. Cognitive



dissonance theory assumes that self-conception is stable, and if this initial self-conception is discrepant from self-presentation, cognitive dissonance should be produced. On the other hand, biased scanning version of self-perception theory assumes that the self-concept consists of a set of different views of self, and self-presentational behaviors tend to make one of these alternative self-concepts salient. In Kowalski and Leary's (1990) study, participants with low versus high self-esteem reported lower levels of post-performance self-evaluations after they had engaged in self-depreciation. Thus, it was explained that the effect of negative self-presentation must have carried over the presenters' self-esteem based on a biased scanning version of Bem's (1972) self-perception theory.

In the present study, participants in high as opposed to low selection criterion condition broadcast more skill limitations and self-depreciated on the employee selection task to avoid participating in the subsequent aversive event. Perhaps, these participants perceived personal responsibility in distorting their ratings and rankings of job candidates, and thus experienced cognitive dissonance (lack of harmony in thoughts) for putting job candidates at risk. Consequently, consistent with Jones et al.'s (1981) argument, the cognitive dissonance mechanism must have been responsible for lowering the participants' self-esteem (post-performance self-evaluations) after presenting themselves negatively.

As for H6, participants with higher levels of pre-test skills reported higher levels of post-performance self-evaluations, but did not perform better on employee evaluation/selection task or broadcast fewer skill limitations. Apparently, participants with higher initial levels of skills, like their less-skilled counterparts, broadcast more skill

limitations and self-depreciated on the current task to avoid participating in the upcoming workshop. However, their use of negative impression management did not result in significant lower levels of post-performance self-evaluations, perhaps because of their greater confidence in their skills.

With regard to the interaction effects of the selection criteria with the individual difference variables in H7 through H12, there were no differences between the participants with low versus high self-esteem or self-monitoring abilities in terms of broadcasting employee selection skill limitations, performing the employee selection task, or reporting post-performance self-evaluations. Also, participants with an internal versus external locus of control in the high as opposed to low selection criterion condition did not describe their employee selection skills less positively, did not exhibit lower levels of employee selection task performance, and did not report higher levels of post-performance self-esteem. Thus, there were no interaction effects between any of the three individual difference variables of self-esteem, self-monitoring, or locus of control and selection criterion. Perhaps, these interaction effects failed to emerge because the current study used a real world organizational setting to induce making negative impressions. Past research argues that dispositional effects are likely to be weak in relatively strong situations (Davis-Blake & Pfeffer, 1989; Mischel, 1968). Since organizational settings are strong situations, individual dispositions are likely to have only limited effects on individual reactions in organizations (Davis-Blake & Pfeffer, 1989: p.387).

Regarding the main effects of the individual difference variables, participants with low versus high self-esteem or self-monitoring abilities reported lower levels of post-performance self-evaluations. Also, participants with high versus low self-monitoring

abilities broadcast fewer employee selection skill limitations. In addition, there were no significant differences between the participants with an internal versus external locus of control for broadcasting skill limitations, self-depreciation, and post-performance self-evaluations. The results for self-esteem are consistent with Kowalski and Leary's (1990) findings for post-performance self-evaluations, but not for broadcasting limitations and self-depreciation. The weaker effect of self-esteem on self-depreciation or broadcasting limitations in the current study may be attributed to the experimental design differences between the two studies. In contrast to Kowalski and Leary's study, the present study uses an organizational work setting. As explained earlier, because organizational settings are typically strong situations, the effects of individual difference variables are often minimal (Davis-Blake & Pfeffer, 1989; Mischel, 1968).

In the next section, contributions and limitations of the present study will be discussed.

## **5.2. Contributions**

The present study contributes to the broad literature on impression management in many ways. Among the most significant contributions is the verification of Becker and Martin's (1995) assertion that individuals sometimes intentionally use negative impression management tactics to achieve certain outcomes and satisfy their self-interests. As Becker and Martin note, the methods and motives for purposefully looking bad are quite different from the methods (Arkin, 1981; Jones & Pittman, 1982; Tedeschi & Norman, 1985; Tetlock & Manstead, 1985; Yukl & Falbe, 1990) and motives (Leary & Kowalski, 1990) that individuals use to manage favorable impressions. This study

specifically demonstrates that people are sometimes motivated to negatively shape others' impressions of them through self-depreciation and broadcasting limitations in order to avoid participating in a subsequent unpleasant event. Furthermore, consistent with Becker and Martin's findings, the results suggest that it is more reasonable to consider impression management as a distinct phenomenon, rather than as a subset of socially desirable responding (Zerbe & Paulhus, 1987).

The present study also provides further support for the notion that people use self-depreciation (Kowalski & Leary, 1990; Weary & Williams, 1990) to avoid unpleasant or unwanted events. Importantly, this study extends Kowalski and Leary's (1990) experiment in several different ways. First, it employs a more realistic work setting in a business environment, and uses questionnaires as its data collection method. Second, it selects an unpleasant event (the employee evaluation/selection workshop) relevant to the experimental task, so that broadcasting skill limitations can also be measured as another method of intentionally looking bad in Becker and Martin's (1995) taxonomy. Third, it investigates the impact of self-monitoring ability, locus of control, and self-esteem on the management of negative impressions and post-performance self-evaluations.

Table 5.1. Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis Number	Independent Variable	Covariate Variable	Dependent Variables		Form of Self-Presentation	Results	
	Selection Criterion	Pre-Test Skills	Favorability of Self-Presentation	Post-Performance Self-Evaluations			
1	High		Less +		Broadcasting Limitations	Supported	
	Low						
2	High		Less +		Self-Depreciation	Partially Supported	
	Low						
3					Broadcasting Limitations	Supported	
	Random		Less +				
	Low		More +				
4					Self-Depreciation	Partially Supported	
	Random		Less +				
	Low		More +				
5	High					Less +	Supported
	Low						
6		High	More +	More +	Broadcasting Limitations & Self-Depreciation	Partially Supported	
		Low					

Table 5.1 Summary of Hypothesis Testing (Continued)

Hypothesis Number	Independent Variable	Dependent Variables		Moderating Variables				Results
	Selection Criterion	Favorability of Self-Presentation	Post-Performance Self-Evaluation	Self-Esteem		Self-Monitoring Ability	Locus of Control	
7	High	Less +		High	Low			Not Supported
	Low							
8	High		Less +	High	Low			Not Supported
	Low							
9	High						Low	Not Supported
	Low							
10	High					High		Not Supported
	Low							
11	High	Less +					Internal	Not Supported
	Low						External	
12	High		Less +				Internal	Not Supported
	Low						External	

### **5.3. Limitations**

With regard to shortcomings, the major limitation of this study stems from the fact that it was performed as a laboratory experiment, rather than a field situation. Student participants were asked to help a life insurance company to evaluate and select its employees based on their resumes. Therefore, to the extent that the study appeared artificial to the participants, the external validity and generalizability of its findings are reduced (Campbell & Stanley, 1967). Nevertheless, the care that was taken to reproduce a field situation by abstracting its essential elements (Locke, 1986), such as a real world initial task, a related unpleasant event, a business work setting, and simulated resumes for a specific job, substantially enhances the generalizability of the results.

As another limitation, in the present study participants' scores on the individual difference scales had a restricted range of distribution with the majority lying in the middle section. Thus, a median rather than a one-third split was used to classify participants to the opposite categories based on their individual characteristics. In a median split scores that fall near the median are very similar. In fact, the similarity of scores may have contributed to non-significant interaction effects between selection criterion and each one of the three individual difference variables. In addition, the suspect reliability of Rotter's (1966) Internal-External scale is another short coming for the current study. Although this locus of control scale was the best for the purpose of the study, it suffered from low (.67) reliability.

Still, as another limitation, the present study used student participants which raises questions about the generalizability of the findings to more experienced working populations. On the other hand, it is a basic human behavior to avoid unpleasant events,

and the current study tried to create a realistic work setting (e.g., a work-related unpleasant event with real aversive consequences, simulated resumes for a specific job) in the context of an educational organization. Consequently, to the extent that student participants in this realistic setting tried to use negative IM methods to avoid an unwanted future event, the current finding may be applicable to non-student working populations.

Another shortcoming of the present study is that the employee evaluation/selection task did not generate a quantity of “resumes processed,” and hence the study couldn’t use this measure as a criterion to evaluate participants’ performance on the task. In fact, all participants processed six resumes regardless of the instructions they received in their specific treatment condition (i.e., low, random, high selection criterion). Thus, participants’ performance on the employee evaluation/selection task was measured only by total wrong and ranks variables.

#### **5.4. Practical Implications**

The present study verified that individuals are sometimes motivated to use negative impression management methods such as self-depreciation on task performance and broadcasting skill limitations in order to avoid participating in an unpleasant event. As Becker and Martin (1995) argued, relatively high levels of negative impression management in an organization may be the sign of a dysfunctional culture. In fact, the methods and motives for intentionally looking bad identified in their study are typically disadvantageous to organizations.

Just as motivations to convey positive impressions are likely to encourage organizational citizenship behaviors (Bolino, 1999), negative self-presentational



intentions may lead to behaviors that detract from organizational effectiveness and efficiency. Becker and Martin (1995) argue that managing negative impressions may promote inaccurate perceptions of employees, misinterpretations of their behaviors, and hence, faulty organizational decision making and the resultant negative outcomes. For instance, not assigning employees to difficult tasks due to broadcasted skill limitations can be as dysfunctional (Gardner & Martinko, 1998) as assigning them to tasks for which they are not qualified. Besides, in such cases, the employees who avoid engaging in negative impression management may end up performing a disproportionate share of the most difficult tasks, even though they may not be the most capable workers for the assigned responsibilities. Thus, misleading managers about required skills in order to skip unpleasant tasks can create equity problems. Because misallocation of human resources is one of the major causes for reductions in organizational efficiency and effectiveness (Huselid, 1995; Terpstra & Rozell, 1993), it is clear that such effects of negative impression management have important practical implications for managers. Indeed, the negative impression cases described in Becker and Martin's (1995) resulted in harmful organizational outcomes such as inequitable treatment of employees, increased health care costs, decreased customer satisfaction, and lower productivity.

To avoid such adverse outcomes, organizations may find it beneficial to provide leaders and managers with attributional training to assist them in making accurate attributions for subordinate work behavior and job performance. As Green and Mitchell (1979) elegantly explain in their attributional model of leader-member relations organizational leaders are essentially information processors who attempt to discern the causes for member behaviors and outcomes. The leader's naïve causal attributions serve

as mediators between the stimulus behavior of the subordinate and the leader's response (p.429). Indeed, to be effective in an uncertain environment, the leader seeks informational cues about the subordinate's behavior and its causes, that in turn serves to guide his/her evaluations and reward/punishment behaviors.

Importantly, Green and Mitchell (1979) use Kelley's ANOVA model of attributional processes to explain how leaders categorize the causes of member behavior into three major dimensions: person, entity, or context (Kelley, 1967, 1972, 1973). For instance, the leader would determine if an employee's low productivity was caused by the employee (person), by the nature of the task (entity), or by some unique set of conditions surrounding that specific event (context). In addition, the leader would seek information concerning distinctiveness, consistency, and consensus (Kelley, 1967) in order to form attributions about a subordinate's behavior (Green & Mitchell, 1979).

Kelley's (1967, 1972, 1973) attributional paradigm, as well as Green and Mitchell's (1979) attributional perspective can be applied to help managers better understand negative impression management and avoid making inaccurate attributions for employee behavior. For instance, in cases of low employee task performance, the manager (or leader) can try to determine if the employee's negative behavior is distinctive in response to this specific task (an entity attribution). Similarly, the manager could explore the extent to which the employee has behaved poorly in other situations (context) or at other times (consistency). Finally, the manager could estimate the extent to which other employees also behave negatively on the same task (consensus). To the extent to which such data is available, the manager could use this information to achieve a meaningful causal explanation for the employee's behavior. For instance, if employee's

undesirable behavior (e.g., low productivity) is distinctive to a specific task, absent in other work situations, and is not exhibited by other employees, it is likely to be attributed to internal characteristics of the employee, such as a lack of ability. In response, the leader may decide to provide additional training to the employee. If, however, the employee is actually pretending to lack the required skills or abilities to avoid similar tasks in the future, additional training will be wasted and unnecessarily increase organizational costs. Thus, to make accurate evaluation decisions, managers should be aware of the potential for employees to engage in negative impression management, and actively look for the true causes of poor performance.

The current study found no difference between individuals with low versus high self-esteem, self-monitoring abilities, or an internal versus external locus of control with regard to self-depreciation and the broadcasting of skill limitations in the high as opposed to low selection criterion condition. Given the study's realistic design, these findings can best be explained by the conception of organizational settings as strong situations that are likely to limit the effects of individual difference variables on personal reactions (Mischel, 1968). In addition, attitudes and behaviors inside organizations are governed by common understandings about appropriate behavior (Zucker, 1983), and organizational members typically adopt attitudes and behaviors that are consistent with their organizational roles (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, & Snoek, 1964). Similarly, Davis-Blake and Pfeffer's (1989) review of research on individual attitudes and behaviors in organizations suggests that individuals adapt to organizational settings and that personality characteristics change in response to organizational situations. Also, attitudes and behaviors are significantly influenced by structural factors such as job design,

reinforcement patterns, compensation systems, goals, as well as by socialization and position in social information networks. To the extent that the effects of personality characteristics are indeed minimized in organizational settings, leaders and managers should design jobs, the work environment, and reward systems to discourage the formation of the motives for intentionally looking bad. Indeed, as Becker and Martin (1995) argued, oppressive work situations that involve unpleasant tasks, low autonomy, unreasonable goals, insufficient feedback, and nonsupportive leaders are more likely to lead to foster the development of motives to engage in negative impression management, such as a desire to avoid additional responsibilities, or exit the organization.

### **5.5. Future Research Directions**

Several specific avenues for future research are recommended. In this study, like other studies on self-depreciation (Kowalski & Leary, 1990; Weary & Williams, 1990) the target for negative impressions was the immediate supervisor. Future studies may portray experimental situations where employees attempt to intentionally look bad to their peers, or supervisors attempt to purposefully look bad to their subordinates.

Becker and Martin (1995) found that certain combinations of methods and motives for managing negative impressions are more likely to occur than others. For instance, not working to potential is likely to be motivated by the intention to avoid additional work, and displaying a bad attitude is likely to be motivated by an intention to leave an organization. Future research may focus on creating experimental situations including negative methods and motives that tend to occur in combination. The current study specifically demonstrated the use of self-depreciation and describing one's skill

limitations, which represent forms of not working to potential, and broadcasting limitations, respectively, in Becker and Martin's (1995) taxonomy of negative impression methods and motives. The tendency of participants to use these two tactics to avoid an unpleasant event was examined in the current study. Future research is recommended to focus on behaviors that can be placed in other categories of the taxonomy.

Below, six scenarios portraying typical real-life work situations are presented. Each scenario involves some poor impression management tactics used by a specific character in that scenario.

**Scenario 1.** Mark is a production worker whose job involves performing repetitive, uninteresting tasks at a high rate of speed. To impress his employer, Mark's new supervisor wants to increase the productivity of his unit. He has been given discretionary power to make job assignments. His strategy is to identify the most capable, motivated employees and give them more work. Mark is currently a good worker. He does high quality work and produces at a very satisfactory level of output. However, to avoid additional work, he decides to temporarily decrease his performance quickly so that his new boss won't recognize his potential. Thus, he does poorer-quality work, makes more mistakes, and neglects some tasks.

**Scenario 2.** John has recently graduated from an accredited business school with a doctoral degree in MIS. Shortly after graduation, a software company hired him. His new job is not only financially rewarding, but also provides him with very challenging job assignments and a great sense of autonomy. John's supervisor has a master's degree in computer science and has been employee of the firm for the last fifteen years. He has always been a hardworking and loyal member of the organization; however, he is very hard to get along with when working with others to solve problems or complete difficult assignments. Aware that he is unpopular with his coworkers and worried that his job is at risk, John tries to play to his new boss' a sense of superiority, by acting like he is less intelligent than he actually is (i.e., he plays dumb). John feels that by playing dumb, he avoids interpersonal conflict with his superior, facilitates social interactions, demonstrates a subordinate attitude toward his boss, and thereby increases his prospects for retaining employment.

**Scenario 3.** Mary has been working for a sewing contractor the last five years. The company provides services to a few small business firms in the clothing industry, and has not been profitable for the past two years. As a partial solution to its financial problems, the company recently moved to a smaller workspace. Although the owner saves money on rent, the working conditions are very poor (e.g., excessively hot or cold temperatures, defective equipment, high noise levels, and restrictive workspaces, etc.), and workloads

heavy. After several weeks of work in such an unpleasant environment, Mary feels very stressed and “burned out”. One afternoon, she is emotionally upset, a bit ill, and really doesn’t feel up to being at work. She pretends to be sicker than she actually is so that she can elicit supportive and care-taking behavior from others at work and leave work early.

**Scenario 4.** Bernard has proven to be a very intelligent, talented, and creative officer in the U.S. Navy. Recently he has been reassigned to be a group leader for a specific overseas mission. However, when he learns of the purpose of the job assignment, he is upset because it is inconsistent with his personal values. He chooses to act indifferent to the leadership position, expressing to others his dislike for team assignments, which he regards as a waste of time. He feels that by not committing to this leadership role he will be replaced by another employee and perhaps transferred to a more compatible work situation.

**Scenario 5.** Sara is an employee in merchandise sales for a large retail department store. She has been looking for another job since last year. She just received an offer from a rival store for a higher status job at a higher rate of pay. Now, she wants to get dismissed before finishing the last two weeks at her current job so she can start her new job. To do so, she is no longer carrying her workload, skipping work with/without providing an explanation, taking unauthorized/long breaks, arriving at work late, socializing excessively with her colleagues during work hours, and showing a disregard for the consequences of her actions.

**Scenario 6.** Jim has been working for a small distributor of health food products for the last two years. The firm has been very profitable recently. Although it is located in a medium-size city, its customer pool is growing on a daily basis. Jim figures that since he now uses the computer to ring up sales, something only two other employees can do, he deserves a raise. He reasons that to hire another salesperson the company would have to pay at least another \$4 per hour more than Jim’s wage. Jim feels he is overworked and that he should receive some of these savings, but his boss doesn’t think so. Thus, to receive a raise, Jim tries to look stressed out or bored in front of his boss, acts upset, and is hard to get along with.

From Becker and Martin’s (1995) model of the management of poor impressions, task characteristics emerge as important factors in determining employee motives for intentionally looking bad. Jobs with low autonomy, insufficient feedback, and uninteresting duties set the stage for the development of motives for negative impression management (p.192). In the current study, the unpleasant task was an unwanted employee selection workshop, which was scheduled at an undesirable time. Student participants were informed that if they were assigned to the workshop, they had to participate to

receive the extra credit promised. Participants were expected to view the upcoming workshop as an aversive event, and thus, attempt to avoid participating in the workshop by broadcasting skill limitations and self-deprecating on a current task. Future studies designed to replicate this experiment or perform similar experiments using other unpleasant tasks are merited. It is suspected that tasks with more severe psychological or physical consequences (e.g., additional work, harsh duties, difficult missions, etc.) will create stronger effects with regard to employees' intentionally looking bad at work.

The frequency with which participants in Becker and Martin's (1995) study used negative impression management may have possibly been influenced by positive impression management. Becker and Martin interpret this finding as evidence that employees who have a strong tendency to pursue favorable impressions are less likely than others to project unfavorable impressions. In light of this negative relationship between positive and negative impression management, an interesting avenue for future research would be to employ an experimental design to explore the type of impression management behaviors that emerge when people encounter a combination of mixed and contradictory consequences (e.g., recognition and more job responsibilities, recognition and a stressful task, a higher level salary and an unpleasant task, etc). In such a design, participants may seek positive impressions to secure the favorable outcomes, despite the occurrence of the associated negative outcomes, or foster negative impressions to avoid the unpleasant, unwanted consequence, but thereby forgo the desirable outcome. Given the fact that negative impressions (e.g., reducing performance or broadcasting skill limitations) are socially undesirable and harmful to career advancement, many individuals may be inclined to trade off the negative outcomes with positive

consequences. Thus, participants may be unwilling to use negative impression methods to avoid performing additional work (or participating in an unpleasant task), if doing so requires that they sacrifice desired objectives at work.

Another area that merits further investigation is the role that individual difference variables (other than self-esteem, self-monitoring, and locus of control) or related constructs play in determining negative self-presentational motives. For instance, Becker and Martin (1995) speculate that individuals with a high need for achievement will be less motivated to convey unfavorable impressions because such impressions will harm their long-term career advancement. In addition, Becker and Martin's model posits that the particular methods of negative impression management selected are directly determined by the perceived efficacy of those methods. The perceived efficacy associated with a given method is in turn determined by a variety of individual difference and situational variables. Self-efficacy is likely to guide employees to use certain methods of making negative impressions if they believe they have the ability to effectively execute it. Self-efficacy is defined as a person's belief that he or she can successfully perform a behavior to obtain a desired reward (Bandura, 1982). Moreover, self-efficacy involves a self-evaluation of how one reacts when exposed to taxing situations. In general, individuals with high as opposed to low levels of self-efficacy are expected to be more likely to pursue unfavorable impressions to achieve such objectives as avoidance, retaliation, or exit. Thus, future research may examine the impact of need for achievement, or self-efficacy on the use of negative impressions.

In conclusion, it is hoped that the present study has helped to further understanding of negative impression behaviors in organizations, and the conditions that motivate



**organizational members to engage in such behaviors. Indeed, the findings provide another, among many, reason why managers should seek to create healthy and supportive work climates: to discourage employees from undermining their own, as well as the work unit's performance by engaging in negative and dysfunctional impression management behaviors.**

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## **Appendices**

## 6. APPENDIX 1

Last 5 digits of ID #: \_\_\_\_\_

### 6.1. EMPLOYEE SELECTION SKILLS QUESTIONNAIRE

#### **Instructions**

Please record the last 5 digits of your student ID number in the space provided on the upper right hand corner of this page. This number will be used by the researchers for record keeping purpose only.

Employee selection is the process of choosing from a group of applicants those persons best suited for a job. The selection process begins with the screening of job applications and resumes; obviously unqualified candidates are rejected. Next, applicants are invited to visit the site for a preliminary interview. This step is followed by the administration of selection tests and a series of employment interviews, as well as reference and background checks. Finally, a selection decision is made to hire one or more applicants.

We are interested in your skills and experiences regarding employee selection procedures. *Remember, your individual scores will be kept confidential.* Please use the scale provided below to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following 8 statements.

- 1 – Strongly Disagree
- 2 – Disagree
- 3 – Neutral
- 4 – Agree
- 5 – Strongly Agree

*I am very skilled at ...*

1. .... assessing the job-related abilities of other people. \_\_\_\_\_
2. ... determining the personality characteristics of people that I meet. \_\_\_\_\_
3. ... finding out whether or not another person is ethical or honest. \_\_\_\_\_
4. ... evaluating how motivated or enthusiastic a person is about his or her job. \_\_\_\_\_
5. ... assessing how conscientious a person is about his or her work. \_\_\_\_\_
6. ... rating a person's willingness to cooperate and get along with others. \_\_\_\_\_

7. ... making a good impression with a recruiter during a job interview \_\_\_\_\_
8. ... developing a high quality resume. \_\_\_\_\_

9. How familiar are you with the activities involved in the employee selection process including structured interviews, the design and administration of employment tests, and/or reference and background checks? (Circle the best choice on the scale provided below)

**Not at all familiar**                      **Somewhat familiar**                      **Fairly familiar**                      **Familiar**                      **Very familiar**

**1**    **2**    **3**    **4**    **5**

10. How many times have you engaged in the following activities as a job applicant?  
(Place a check mark in the appropriate cells)

	<b>Never</b> <b>1</b>	<b>Once</b> <b>2</b>	<b>Twice</b> <b>3</b>	<b>Three times</b> <b>4</b>	<b>More than Three times</b> <b>5</b>
Submitted a resume					
Completed a job application					
Participated in an initial interview					
Completed an employment test					
Attended a site visit					
Participated in a follow-up interview					
Provided references					

## 6.2. Job Description Document

### For Southeastern Mutual Life Insurance Company

<b>Position Title:</b> Human Resource Manager	<b>Department:</b> Human Resource Management
<b>Salary Grade:</b> Competitive	<b>Report to:</b> The Director of Human Resources
<b>Basic Purpose /Accountabilities:</b> Responsible for utilizing human resources to achieve organizational objectives. Focus is on ensuring that workforce is capable of being productive under the current technological and legal environment.	
<b>Primary Functions / Responsibilities:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <u>Human Resource Planning, Recruitment, and Selection</u><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Systematically review human resource requirements to ensure that the required number of employees, with the required skills, are available when needed.</li><li>▪ Attract qualified individuals and encourage them to apply for work with the organization.</li><li>▪ Select from a group of applicants, those individuals best suited for open positions.</li></ul></li><li>2. <u>Human Resource Development</u><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Train and develop employees to utilize changing technologies.</li><li>▪ Assist employees in career planning.</li><li>▪ Evaluate employees' performance and provide feedback.</li></ul></li><li>3. <u>Compensation and Benefits</u><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Provide employees with adequate and equitable rewards (pay, benefits, and/or non-financial rewards) for their work contributions.</li></ul></li><li>4. <u>Safety and Health</u><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Advocate and implement safety and health programs to protect employees from work-related injuries and help them enjoy good health.</li></ul></li><li>5. <u>Employee and Labor Relations</u><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Develop effective employee relations systems associated with activities such as promotion, retirement, layoffs, etc.</li><li>▪ Develop effective labor relations systems to prepare the company for individual and/or collective bargaining.</li></ul></li></ol>	

**Job Description Document  
For Southeastern Mutual Life Insurance Company  
(Continued)**

**Critical Job Requirements:**

- Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration, with a concentration in Management or Human Resource Management.
- GPA requirement: 3.50 – 4.00
- A minimum of 4 to 6 years of HR-related work experiences in similar firms obtained while attending college or following graduation.
- Accomplishments and activities that demonstrate professionalism in the HRM area are required. Examples include conducting HRM seminars, HRM undergraduate assistant programs, or HRM undergraduate research programs.
- Prior experience in an entry-level managerial position (e.g., Compensation and Benefits Manager, HR Operations Manager, Recruitment Manager, Safety Manager, etc.) in the human resources department demonstrating leadership ability.
- Knowledge of business software applications and basic computer skills such as word processing, data entry, and Internet searching are required. Experience with Human Resource database software is a plus.
- Professional certification in human resources management.
- Multiple college and work references are required.

## 6.3. RESUMES

### Robert Thompson

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*Current address:*  
P.O. Box 1764  
Oracle, AZ 85623  
(520) 896-8253

**Objective:** To obtain a human resource management position in a business environment.

**Education:** Louisiana State University  
Bachelor of Science, Business Administration, May 1996  
Concentration: Human Resource Management  
GPA: 4.00

**Honors:** Full academic scholarship  
Honors in HRM  
Dean's List

**Accomplishments:** Conducted HRM seminars

**Certification:** Earned professional certification in Human Resources (PHR), 2000

**Experience:**

Fall 1999-present **HR Operations Manager**  
EMG Corporation  
Human Resource Management Department

- Resolved staffing issues for all functional areas in support of manufacturing operations
- Provided consultation on content and process to managers, supervisors, and recruiters regarding the recruitment, screening, selection, and processing of individuals to fill staffing needs
- Identified issues that impact staffing requirements, and contracted with support people such as functional consultants, specialists, and trainers to plan and deliver appropriate interventions aimed at resolving those issues
- Developed and conducted employee-related training by visiting field locations

Spring 1997-Fall 1999 **HR Consultant**  
Perkins Industrial Supply  
Human Resource Management Department

- Created a recruiting strategy for the organization to attract sales candidates
- Advised on updates to personnel policies
- Wrote and designed recruiting materials

Fall 1996-Spring 1997 **Assistant Administrator**  
Shine Software Company

- Responsible for solving customer-related issues
- Assisted with research and development programs
- Assisted with employee evaluation procedures

**Computer skills:** Microsoft Word, Windows and Window 2000 Applications

**Affiliations:** The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)

**References:** Available upon request

**Brad Henner**

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**Current address:**  
10 Elm Street  
San Diego, California 55567  
(222) 333-2321

**Objective:** To obtain a leadership role within the Human Resources function that will utilize my experience as a generalist (a person who performs tasks in a wide variety of human resource-related areas) and a recruiter.

**Education:** Oklahoma State University  
Bachelor of Science, Business Administration, December 1997  
Concentration: Management with emphasis on Human Resource Management  
GPA: 3.80

**Accomplishment:** Participated in HRM Internship program

**Experience:**

Fall 1999-present **Recruitment Manager**  
Leica Microsystems Inc.  
HR Department

- Effectively recruited key technical personnel
- Led a project team to develop company-wide job posting program
- Developed focus groups to identify areas for improving the organization's recruitment process, and implemented recommendations resulting in increased staffing efficiency
- Coordinated all workforce reductions and outplacement assistance to ensure fairness and to minimize legal exposure during period of significant company downsizing

Spring 1998- Summer 1999 **HR Generalist / Recruiter**  
Jones Engineering Systems  
Human Resource Management Department

- Created college-recruiting program targeting graduates from colleges and universities throughout the United States.
- Managed initial contacts, publicity, prescreening, and on-campus interviewing at more than 25 colleges and universities in the Eastern US.
- Analyzed current compensation structures and designed a program to improve sales force incentive compensation.
- Engaged in employee relations activities including administering employee surveys, and conflict resolution.
- Revised Travel Expense and Personnel Policy manuals.
- Designed and wrote copy for promotional materials including brochures, posters, and newspaper advertisements.

Summer 1996 **Human Resource Management Intern**  
Organic Inc.  
HRM Department

- Performed HR-related projects and tasks
- Updated and revised HR forms as required

**Computer skills:** Professional experience in gathering and utilizing data from the Internet and networks, Window 98 Applications

**Affiliations:** The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)

**References:** List of references available upon request



**Henry Kaledin**

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*Current address:*  
216 North Malone St.  
Athens, AL 35611  
256/233-1638

<b>Objective:</b>	To obtain a management position in a stable business environment, specifically relating to human resources.
<b>Education:</b>	Northeastern University Bachelor of Science, Business Administration, December 1995 Concentration: Human Resource Management GPA: 3.70
<b>Accomplishments:</b>	Participated in extracurricular undergraduate HRM research programs
<b>Experience:</b>	
September 1999-present	<u>Human Resources Assistant</u> Nolo.com HRM department <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Researched Internet sites, sourced potential candidates, posted jobs on Internet, screened resumes, scheduled interviews, and conducted background checks.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Researched HR web sites, magazines, and articles for changes in labor law and HR trends.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Created new hire and benefit packets and distributed to new employees.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Audited employee files for appropriate documentation.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Scheduled orientation meetings.</li></ul>
Summer 1996-September 1999	<u>HR Assistant</u> Robinson Business Research Firm HR Management Department <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Helped with designing and implementing performance appraisal and merit increase program</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Assisted with administering compensation, and benefit programs</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Assisted with developing training and safety programs</li></ul>
<b>References:</b>	List of references available on request

**James Bass**

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**Current address:**  
1703 Rankin Place  
Huntsville, AL 35816  
(256) 722-0746

**Objective:** To obtain a challenging managerial position in a stable company in the area where my skills and talents can be best used, ideally as a manager of human resources.

**Education:** University of Nebraska-Lincoln  
Bachelor of Science, Business Administration, May 1996  
Concentration: Management with emphasis on Human Resource Management  
GPA: 3.60

**Certification:** Earned professional certification in Human Resources (PHR), 2000

**Experience:**

May 1999- present **Compensation and Benefit Manager**  
Atlantic Broadband Communications  
HR Department

- Developed, implemented, and maintained the company's compensation functions including job description, job evaluation, and salary surveys
- Established salary structures and salary budgets
- Prepared policies and procedures to achieve equitable and competitive employee compensation
- Developed, implemented, and maintained the company's benefits program including vacation, holiday, unemployment, retirement plans, disability, flexible spending, service awards, group medical/health/dental coverage, and life insurance

Spring 1998-May 1999 **Human Resource Coordinator**  
Equality Specialties

- Assisted in benefit administration, payroll, and employee orientation.
- Provided administrative support to the human resources manager.

**Affiliations:** The Society for Human Resource Management

**Computer skills:** Computer proficient in Word, Excel, and Internet search; experience with Human resource database software

**References:** College and work references available upon request

**Joshua Logan**

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*Current address:*  
1223 Sweeney Street  
Tonawanda NY 14120  
(716) 693-2173

Objective:	To obtain a human resource management position in a reputable business firm.
Education:	Colorado State University Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, December 1994 Concentration: Management with emphasis on Organization Management GPA: 4.00
Experience:	
Summer 1999- present	<u>Independent Human Resources Consultant</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Provided assistance to the college recruitment programs.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Worked on 60+ openings at a time and filled 40 for Gordon International.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Provided advice on hiring and developing personnel for Sierra Technical Services Branch in New York.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Implemented a customized compensation plan suited to the unique needs of international personnel in high tax / cost of living countries for LTV Engineering Services, an international energy company.</li></ul>
January 1995-Summer 1998	<u>Recruiting coordinator</u> Experio Solutions HRM Department <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Managed resume flow and assisted with the recruitment effort (sourcing, follow-up, reject letters, etc.)</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Tracked candidates through the recruiting process (composed correspondence and prepared form letters, turndowns, welcome packages, etc.)</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Maintained an Internet presence in the marketplace (assisted with job posting and maintenance of postings)</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Coordinated / scheduled interviews, prepared interview packages for candidates</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Made travel arrangements for recruits and new hires</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Organized and maintained recruiting files</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Initiated background checks</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Assisted in preparing statistical reports (Matrix, Pipeline, New Hire Log, etc.)</li></ul>
Computer Skills:	Strong knowledge of MS Word, Power Point, Excel, email, Internet, HRIS Systems (e.g., People Soft).

**Sam Martin**

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**Current address:**  
1210 New Center Road  
Hartselle, AL 35640  
(256) 773-0568

<b>Objective:</b>	To obtain a managerial position in Human Resources Department
<b>Education:</b>	Temple University Bachelor of Art in Education, May 1997 Concentration: Secondary Education GPA: 3.40
<b>Experience:</b>	
Summer 1999-present	<u>Human Resources Assistant</u> LMC Technologies Inc. HR Department <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Provided administrative support to the HR manager (e.g., scheduling, meetings, making travel arrangements, faxes, mail, copying)</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Answered employee questions regarding benefits such as medical, dental, vision, etc.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Acted as liaison between HR and payroll</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Assisted in coordinating training for new HR hires</li></ul>
January 1997-January 1999	<u>Shipping Manager</u> Hice Sewing Inc.
September 1996-September 1997	<u>CJ's Video Manager</u>
Summer 1995-September 1996	<u>Office/Clerk</u> Kroger Grocery
<b>References:</b>	Available upon request

## 6.4. APPLICANT EVALUATION FORM

### **Instructions**

Attached are resumes from **six job applicants** and a **job description** for a human resource management (HRM) position. All the job applicants are between 25 to 30 years old. For each applicant, use the evaluation form provided to assess his qualifications for the position. Specifically, respond “**Yes**” or “**No**” to the questions provided to indicate whether or not the applicant meets the selection criterion. Once you have answered the 10 questions, **count the number of “Yes” responses to obtain the total evaluation score** for the applicant, and record this score in the space provided. After you have rated all 6 applicants, you will also be asked to rank order them from most to least qualified.

You will be judged based upon both the quantity and quality of your performance. The quantity of your performance will be determined by the number of evaluations (1 through 6) that you complete. The quality of your performance will be determined by assessing the accuracy of three performance measures: (1) the dimension-specific evaluations (e.g., evaluation on academic degree, computer skills, etc.), (2) the total evaluation scores, and (3) your rank-ordering of the job applicants.

**Applicant's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Applicant's Qualifications:**

1. Does the applicant possess a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with a concentration in Management or Human Resource Management? **(1) Yes (2) No**
2. Is the applicant's GPA between 3.50 and 4.00? **(1) Yes (2) No**
3. Does the applicant have a minimum of 4 to 6 years of human-resource-related work experience in similar business firms? **(1) Yes (2) No**
4. Has the applicant earned any professional certification in human resources? **(1) Yes (2) No**
5. Has the applicant participated in activities (e.g., conducting HRM seminars, participating in extra-curricular research/assistant programs,) demonstrating professionalism in human resources area? **(1) Yes (2) No**
6. Does the applicant have basic computer skills such as word processing and Internet searching? **(1) Yes (2) No**
7. Does the applicant have work experience in a human resource management position? **(1) Yes (2) No**
8. Does the applicant indicate that he will be able to provide the requisite references? **(1) Yes (2) No**

9. Do you think that the applicant has demonstrated leadership ability in his prior jobs that would be helpful in the human resources management job? (1) Yes (2) No

10. Do you think the applicant can easily update his skills and adapt to the fast-changing software technology in HRM environment? (1) Yes (2) No

**Total Evaluation Score:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Count the number of "Yes" choices for Questions 1 – 10)

### 6.5. EMPLOYEE SELECTION DECISION FORM

Please rank-order the following job applicants based upon their total evaluation scores. For example, assign a “1” to the job candidate with the highest “total evaluation score”, a “2” to the job candidate with the second highest “total evaluation score”, etc., until you have ranked all of the job candidates. It is possible for more than one job applicant to have the same total evaluation score, and thus receive the same ranking.

<b><u>Applicant's Name</u></b>	<b><u>Applicant's Evaluation Score</u></b>	<b><u>Applicant's Rank</u></b>
Brad Henner	_____	_____
Henry Kaledin	_____	_____
James Bass	_____	_____
Joshua Logan	_____	_____
Robert Thompson	_____	_____
Sam Martin	_____	_____





<b>6. Years of Work Experience:</b>	<b>Full-Time</b>	<b>Part-Time</b>
(a) None	(1) _____	(2) _____
(b) Less than 1 year	(1) _____	(2) _____
(c) 1-2 years	(1) _____	(2) _____
(d) 3-5 years	(1) _____	(2) _____
(e) 6-10 years	(1) _____	(2) _____
(f) Over 10 years	(1) _____	(2) _____

**7. College Standing:**

- (a) \_\_\_\_\_ Freshman
- (b) \_\_\_\_\_ Sophomore
- (c) \_\_\_\_\_ Junior
- (d) \_\_\_\_\_ Senior
- (e) \_\_\_\_\_ Graduate/Others

## 6.7. POST-TASK QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer the following questions by circling the appropriate choice.

1. *How will participants be chosen for the Employee Selection Workshop?*
  - (a) By the researcher
  - (b) Randomly
  - (c) Don't know
  
2. *What criterion will be used to select participants for the Employee Selection Workshop?*
  - (a) High performance on the employee selection task
  - (b) Low performance on the employee selection task
  - (c) Don't know
  
3. *How desirable do you consider the opportunity to participate in the upcoming Employee Selection Workshop to be?*
  - (a) Very undesirable
  - (b) Slightly undesirable
  - (c) Neither desirable nor undesirable
  - (d) Slightly desirable
  - (e) Very desirable
  
4. *How enthusiastic are you about the opportunity to participate in the upcoming Employee Selection Workshop?*

(a) Very unenthusiastic	(d) Enthusiastic
(b) Unenthusiastic	(e) Very enthusiastic
(c) Neither enthusiastic nor unenthusiastic	

5. Please put a check mark in the space on each line below to show your opinion of the upcoming event of Employee Selection Workshop.

<b>Pleasant</b>	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	<b>Unpleasant</b>
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
<b>Attractive</b>	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	<b>Unattractive</b>
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
<b>Important</b>	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	<b>Unimportant</b>
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
<b>Good</b>	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	<b>Bad</b>
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
<b>Useful</b>	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	<b>Useless</b>
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
<b>Exciting</b>	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	<b>Boring</b>
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
<b>Easy</b>	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	<b>Difficult</b>
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
<b>Interesting</b>	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	<b>Uninteresting</b>
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
<b>Meaningful</b>	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	<b>Meaningless</b>
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
<b>Rewarding</b>	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	<b>Exhausting</b>
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
<b>Demanding</b>	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	<b>Unwanted</b>
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

**COMMENTS:** If you would like to provide comments and feedback on this study, please use the space provided below.

## 6.8. CONSENT FORM

### Employee Evaluation and Selection Study

#### Investigators:

Dr. William L. Gardner  
*Michael S. Starns Professor of Management*  
*School of Business Administration*  
University of Mississippi  
(662) 915-7555; [bgardner@bus.olemiss.edu](mailto:bgardner@bus.olemiss.edu)

---

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Class:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

Mojgan Soltanpour  
Ph.D. Student in Management  
School of Business Administration  
University of Mississippi  
[mojgan@watervalley.net](mailto:mojgan@watervalley.net)

**Instructor:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### Description:

This study focuses on people's skills at evaluating job candidates for a human resource management position. You will be provided with a job description and asked to examine the resumes of several job applicants to determine their suitability for this position. Based on your evaluation of the applicants, you will then be asked to rank order them from most to least qualified for the job.

Following this task, some of you will be given the opportunity to participate in an Employee Selection Workshop to be conducted by *Southeastern Mutual Life Insurance Company (SMLIC)*, a key sponsor for this research, to be held at a later date.

Some information about the study is being withheld from you at this time to preserve the integrity of the research. However, this information will be revealed to you at the conclusion of the research.

#### Risks and Benefits:

There are really no potential risks involved in your participation in this study. In addition, you may request a copy of the findings from the investigator at the conclusion of the study.

**Costs and Payments:**

You will receive extra credit for your participation in today's study. Because *Southeastern Mutual Life Insurance Company (SMLIC)* has donated its time and money to sponsor the Employee Selection Workshop, it is important for you to attend the seminar, if you are selected. For those selected, the extra credit they receive for this study is contingent upon their participation in the workshop.

**Confidentiality:**

Any information obtained about you from this research, including your scores and your ratings of job candidates, will be kept confidential. You are requested not to put your name on the experimental forms. Instead, you will be asked to provide the last 5 digits of your student identification number for record keeping purposes only. Descriptive information about participants (e.g., age, race) will be destroyed upon completion of the study. Any publication or presentation of the data collected in this experiment will be in an anonymous group format.

**Right to Withdraw:**

You are free to refuse participation in this study or to withdraw at any time by simply informing the experimenter. Your decision will not adversely affect your status with the School of Business Administration or the University, nor will it cause a penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled.

**IRB Approval:**

This study has been reviewed by the University of Mississippi's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB has determined that this study meets the ethical obligations required by federal law and University standards. If you have any questions, concerns or reports regarding this study, please contact the IRB at 915-7482.

**Voluntary Consent:**

I certify that I have read the preceding or that it has been read to me, and that I understand its content. I acknowledge that I have been given the opportunity to ask questions regarding the study, hazards, discomforts, and benefits that were clear to me, and that questions asked were fully answered. I understand that further questions will be answered by the primary investigator. A copy of this consent form has been given to me. My signature below means that I freely agree to participate in this experimental study.

**Participant Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **6.9. DEBRIEFING FORM**

**Title: Undesirable Self-presentation: A Laboratory Experiment**

**To Investigate the Avoidance of Aversive Events**

**Through Impression Management**

### **Investigators:**

Dr. William L. Gardner  
Michael S. Starnes Professor of Management  
School of Business Administration  
University of Mississippi  
(662) 915-7555; [bgardner@bus.olemiss.edu](mailto:bgardner@bus.olemiss.edu)

Mojgan Soltanpour  
Ph.D. Student in Management  
School of Business Administration  
University of Mississippi  
[mojgan@watervalley.net](mailto:mojgan@watervalley.net)

### **Description:**

The purpose of this study was to assess the extent to which people will change how they present themselves to others in order to avoid an unpleasant task. To accomplish this, it was necessary to incorporate some minor elements of deception into the study's design. Specifically, you were informed that you were evaluating job candidates for a human resource management position in Southeastern Mutual Life Insurance Company based upon the firm's job description and applicants' resumes, and the company had sponsored the study. In actuality, Southeastern Mutual Life was a fictitious firm.

The second minor element of deception was that you were told you would be given the opportunity to participate in an employee evaluation and selection workshop based upon your performance on the initial task. In actuality, the workshop was included in the study as an unpleasant task for the purpose of measuring the extent to which people present themselves differently on an initial task in order to avoid participating in an unwanted event. We thought the workshop would be viewed as unpleasant because you would not be excited about spending a Friday afternoon in an "employee evaluation and selection" workshop. In addition, it was expected that you might not be interested in working with financial representatives, and would be likely to perceive the entire workshop as a scheme to sell you company's insurance policies. Finally, we thought most of you would be unlikely to find the workshop a pleasant opportunity since you would not be offered extra credit for participating in the event.

The third minor element of deception involved the individual difference measures that you completed earlier in the semester. In order to avoid sensitizing you to the purpose of this study, and thereby possibly biasing your responses, the individual difference questionnaires and the main experiment were presented as unrelated research projects. In actuality, they constituted two parts of the same study. The individual difference questionnaires were administered for the purpose of assessing the extent to which people's personality attributes would impact how they present themselves to others.

The study included one experimental manipulation: selection criterion. Selection criterion refers to the criterion be used to select qualified participants for the employee selection workshop. This factor was varied by informing some of you that participants would be assigned to the second task based upon their performance (either high or low) on the initial task. Alternatively, you may have been informed that selection to the second task will be made randomly.

**Confidentiality:**

As the study's instructions indicated, your individual responses to this study will be kept confidential; only summary information from the measures will be presented in any publications or presentations that emerge from this research.

**Rewards/Benefits:**

As the cover letters to each part of the study indicated, you will receive extra credit in this course in exchange for your cooperation. In addition, we hope that you found the experience to be interesting and worthwhile.

**Institutional Review Board:**

If you have any concerns about this research, you may contact the primary investigators and/or the University of Mississippi's Internal Review Board at 915-7482.

**Thank You!**

Your participation in this study is greatly appreciated. Without your cooperation and that of your classmates, this study would not have been possible. Thanks!



**Results Summary:**

If you would like to receive a summary of the study's results, complete the following form, and return it to your instructor or the primary investigators at your convenience.

---

**Results Request Form**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

## 7. APPENDIX 2

### 7.1. Self-Perception Scale 1

#### [Rosenberg's (1965) Self-Esteem Scale]

**Instructions:** Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Record your answer by circling the appropriate number on the following 4-point scale.

4 = Strongly agree

3 = Agree

2 = Disagree

1 = Strongly disagree

- |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.                                      | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. At times I think I am no good at all.  | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.                                 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.                           | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.                                      | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 6. I certainly feel useless at times.   | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 7. I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on<br>An equal plane with others. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.                                   | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 9. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.                         | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 10. I take a positive attitude toward myself.                                     | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

## 7.2. Self-Perception Scale 2

### [Lennox and Wolfe's (1984) Revised Self-Monitoring Scale]

**Instructions:** Please indicate the degree to which you think the following statements are true or false by circling the appropriate number. For example, if a statement is always true, circle the 5 next to that statement.

- 5 = Certainly, always true
- 4 = Generally true
- 3 = Somewhat true, but with exceptions
- 2 = Somewhat false, but with exceptions.
- 1 = Generally false
- 0 = Certainly, always false

- |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. In social situations, I have the ability to alter my behavior if I feel that<br>Something else is called for.                 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 2. I am often able to read people's true emotions correctly through their eyes.  | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 3. I have the ability to control the way I come across to people,<br>Depending on the impression I wish to give them.            | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 4. In conversations, I am sensitive to even the slightest change in: the facial<br>Expression of the person I'm conversing with. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 5. My powers of intuition are quite good when it comes to understanding<br>Other's emotions and motives.                         | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 6. I can usually tell when others consider a joke in bad taste, even though<br>They may laugh convincingly.                      | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 7. When I feel that the image I am portraying isn't working, I can readily<br>Change it to something that does.                  | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 8. I can usually tell when I've said something inappropriate by reading the<br>Listener's eyes.                                  | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 9. I have trouble changing my behavior to suite different people and different<br>Situations.                                    | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 10. I have found that I can adjust my behavior to meet the requirements of any<br>Situation I find myself in.                    | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 11. If someone is lying to me, I usually know it at once from that person's<br>manner of expression.                             | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 12. Even when it might be to my advantage, I have difficulty putting up a<br>Good front.   | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 13. Once I know what the situation calls for, it's easy for me to regulate my<br>Actions accordingly.                            | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

### 7.3. Self-Perception Scale 3

#### [Rotter's (1966) Internal-External Scale]

**Instructions:** Please read the following statements and indicate whether you agree more with choice a or choice b.

1.     a. Children get into trouble because their parents punish them too much  
       b. The trouble with most children nowadays is that their parents are too easy with them.
2.     a. Many of the unhappy things in people's lives are partly due to bad luck.  
       b. People's misfortunes result from the mistakes they make.
3.     a. One of the major reasons why we have wars is because people don't take enough interest in politics.  
       b. There will always be wars, no matter how hard people try to prevent them.
4.     a. In the long run people get the respect they deserve in this world.  
       b. Unfortunately, an individual's worth often passes unrecognized no matter how hard he tries.
5.     a. The idea that teachers are unfair to students is nonsense.  
       b. Most students don't realize the extent to which their grades are influenced by accidental happenings.
6.     a. Without the right breaks one cannot be an effective leader.  
       b. Capable people who fail to become leaders have not taken advantage of their opportunities.
7.     a. No matter how hard you try some people just don't like you.  
       b. People who can't get others to like them don't understand how to get along with others.
8.     a. Heredity plays the major role in determining one's personality.  
       b. It is one's experiences in life which determine what they're like.
9.     a. I have often found that what is going to happen will happen.  
       b. Trusting to fate has never turned out as well for me as making a decision to take a definite course of action.
10.    a. In the case of the well prepared student there is rarely if ever such a thing as an unfair test.  
       b. Many times exam questions tend to be so unrelated to course work that studying is really useless.
11.    a. Becoming a success is a matter of hard work, luck has little or nothing to do with it.  
       b. Getting a good job depends mainly on being in the right place at the right time.
12.    a. The average citizen can have an influence in government decisions.  
       b. This world is run by the few people in power, and there is not much the little guy can do about it.
13.    a. When I make plans, I am almost certain that I can make them work.  
       b. It is not always wise to plan too far ahead because many things turn out to be a matter of good or bad fortune anyhow.
14.    a. There are certain people who are just no good.  
       b. There is some good in everybody.
15.    a. In my case getting what I want has little or nothing to do with luck.  
       b. Many times we might just as well decide what to do by flipping a coin.
16.    a. Who gets to be the boss often depends on who was lucky enough to be in the right place first.  
       b. Getting people to do the right thing depends upon ability, luck has little or nothing to do with it.
17.    a. As far as world affairs are concerned, most of us are the victims of forces we can neither understand, nor control.  
       b. By taking an active part in political and social affairs the people can control world events.

**7.3. Scale Number Three  
(Continued)**

- 18. a. Most people don't realize the extent to which their lives are controlled by accidental happenings.  
b. There really is no such thing as "luck."
- 19. a. One should always be willing to admit mistakes.  
b. It is usually best to cover up one's mistakes.
- 20. a. It is hard to know whether or not a person really likes you.  
b. How many friends you have depends upon how nice a person you are.
- 21. a. In the long run the bad things that happen to us are balanced by the good ones.  
b. Most misfortunes are the result of lack of ability, ignorance, laziness, or all three.
- 22. a. With enough effort we can wipe out political corruption.  
b. It is difficult for people to have much control over the things politicians do in office.
- 23. a. Sometimes I can't understand how teachers arrive at the grades they give.  
b. There is a direct connection between how hard I study and the grades I get.
- 24. a. A good leader expects people to decide for themselves what they should do.  
b. A good leader makes it clear to everybody what their jobs are.
- 25. a. Many times I feel that I have little influence over the things that happen to me.  
b. It is impossible for me to believe that chance or luck plays an important role in my life.
- 26. a. People are lonely because they don't try to be friendly.  
b. There's not much use in trying too hard to please people, if they like you, they like you.
- 27. a. There is too much emphasis on athletics in high school.  
b. Team sports are an excellent way to build character.
- 28. a. What happens to me is my own doing.  
b. Sometimes I feel that I don't have enough control over the direction my life is taking.
- 29. a. Most of the time I can't understand why politicians behave the way they do.  
b. In the long run the people are responsible for bad government on a national as well as on a local level.

#### 7.4. Mood Scale

#### [McFarland and Ross' (1982) Measure of Resultant Self-Esteem]

**Instructions:** Please indicate the degree that each of the following adjectives best describes your feelings at this moment. Record your answers by circling the appropriate number on the following 5-point scale.

5 = Extremely  
4 = Very  
3 = Moderately  
2 = Slightly  
1 = Not at all

1. Proud	5	4	3	2	1
2. Inadequate	5	4	3	2	1
3. Competent	5	4	3	2	1
4. Stupid	5	4	3	2	1
5. Confident	5	4	3	2	1
6. Incompetent	5	4	3	2	1
7. Smart	5	4	3	2	1
8. Worthless	5	4	3	2	1
9. Resourceful	5	4	3	2	1
10. Shameful	5	4	3	2	1
11. Effective	5	4	3	2	1
12. Efficient	5	4	3	2	1