

# The Experimental Manipulation of Negative Implicit Gender Self-Stereotyping on Women's Implicit Self-Esteem and Career Identification

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## INTRODUCTION

Despite the substantial progress United States has made toward gender equality, modern sexism still persists (Swim & Hyers, 2009). This is important because sexism can influence women's self-concept through the process of implicit gender self-stereotyping (Barreto et al, 2009), or the automatic associations between women and gender stereotypes (Hogg & Turner, 1987). Moreover, implicit gender self-stereotyping can have implications for women's self-image and careers. The present research developed an experimental manipulation of women's implicit negative gender self-stereotyping and examined its effect on implicit self-esteem and career identification.

## PREDICTIONS

1. Automatically activating negative implicit gender self-stereotyping will lead to stronger implicit (but not explicit) self-esteem relative to women in stereotype priming and no stereotype exposure conditions.
2. Automatically activating negative implicit gender self-stereotyping will lead to stronger implicit (not explicit) identification with female careers relative to women in stereotype priming and no stereotype exposure conditions.

## METHOD

### PARTICIPANTS

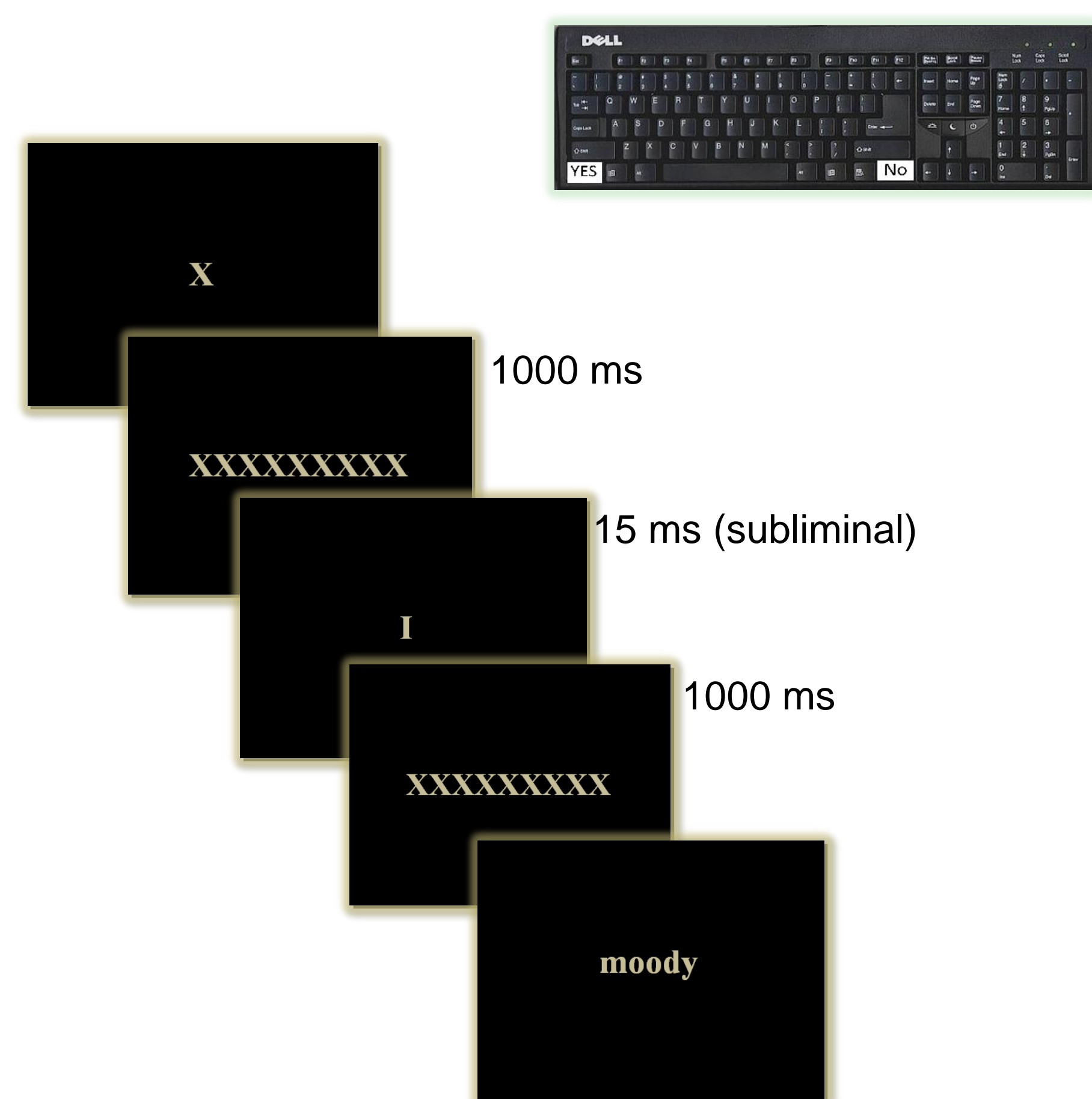
N = 49 heterosexual females

### INDEPENDENT VARIABLE - NEGATIVE IMPLICIT GENDER SELF-STEREOTYPING:

Participants randomly assigned to either (a) Implicit Negative Gender Self-Stereotyping (IGSS) or (b) Stereotype-only control conditions completed a lexical decision task. Participants decided if a string of letters was a word or a non-word across 50 trials. In the IGSS, participants were subliminally primed with a self-related pronoun. In the stereotype-only condition, participants did not receive a self-prime.

## METHOD CONTINUED

Participants randomly assigned to a third "no stereotype" control condition did not complete the above task and proceeded directly to the dependent variables.



## DEPENDENT VARIABLES

- **Implicit Self-Esteem:** an Implicit Association Test (IAT) measured the relative strength of association between SELF [I, me, my, mine, myself] vs OTHER [they, them, their, theirs, others] words and GOOD [smile, laughter, gift, joy, paradise] vs BAD [poison, filth, cancer, war, vomit] words ( $\alpha = .68$ ; Greenwald & Farnham, 2000).
- **Implicit Career Identification:** an IAT measured the relative strength of association between SELF vs OTHER words and NURTURING [elementary teacher, nurse, social worker, speech therapist] vs MECHANICAL [ship captain, police officer, pilot, and surgeon] occupations ( $\alpha = .79$ ).
- **Explicit State Self-Esteem:** six-item modified Rosenberg self-esteem scale (Rosenberg, 1965;  $\alpha = .89$ ).
- **Explicit Career Identification:** the careers from the above IAT were measured on a scale from 0 (not very interested) to 6 (very interested) ( $\alpha = .78$ ).

## RESULTS

### Self-Esteem

Women in the iGSS condition displayed higher implicit self-esteem ( $M_{self-stereotyping} = .74$ ,  $SD_{self-stereotyping} = .22$ ) than women in the combined stereotype-only and no stereotype control conditions ( $M_{no stereotype control} = .47$ ,  $SD_{no stereotype control} = .40$ ;  $M_{stereotype-only} = .55$ ,  $SD_{stereotype-only} = .52$ ),  $t(40.64) = 2.26$ ,  $p = .03$

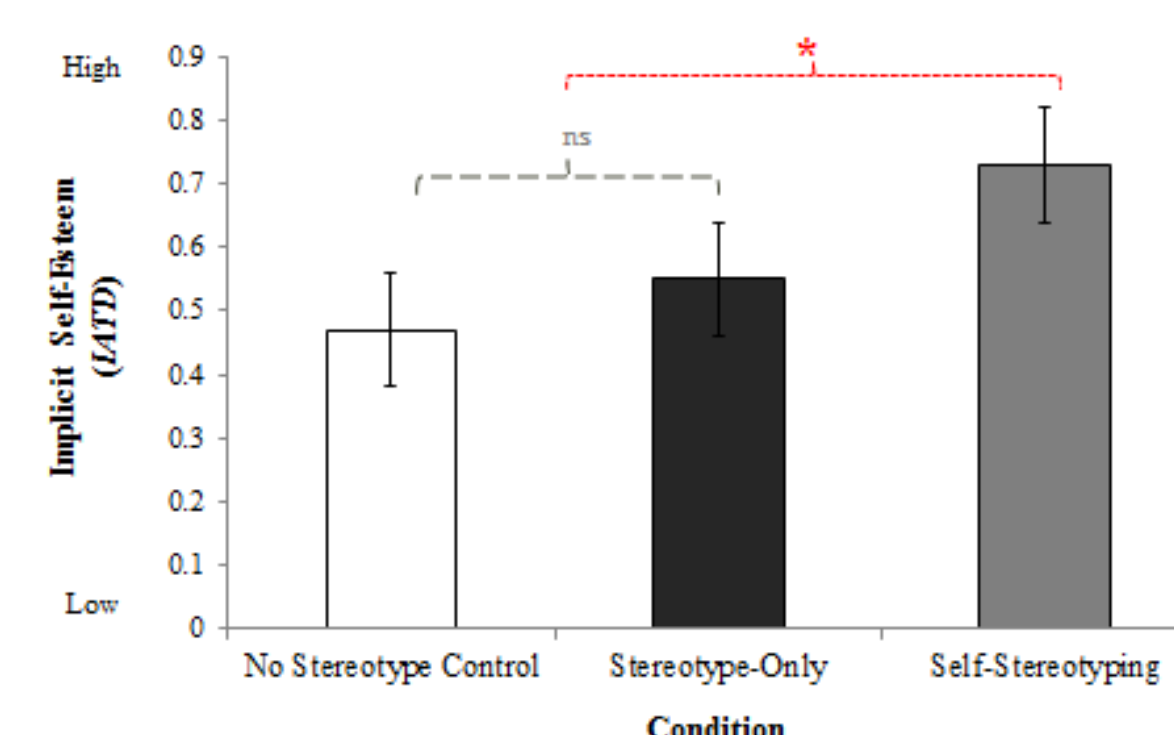


Figure 1. Effect of negative IGSS on implicit self-esteem. Higher Self-Esteem IAT D numbers indicate higher implicit self-esteem on the IAT.

There were no differences in explicit self-esteem as a function of condition,  $t(46) = 1.45$ ,  $p = .16$ .

### Career Identification

Women in the IGSS condition displayed stronger implicit identification with feminine than masculine careers ( $M_{self-stereotyping} = .66$ ,  $SD_{self-stereotyping} = .29$ ) compared to the combined stereotype-only and no stereotype control conditions ( $M_{stereotype-only} = .43$ ,  $SD_{stereotype-only} = .34$  versus  $M_{no stereotype control} = .35$ ,  $SD_{no stereotype control} = .52$ ),  $t(46) = 2.23$ ,  $p = .03$ .

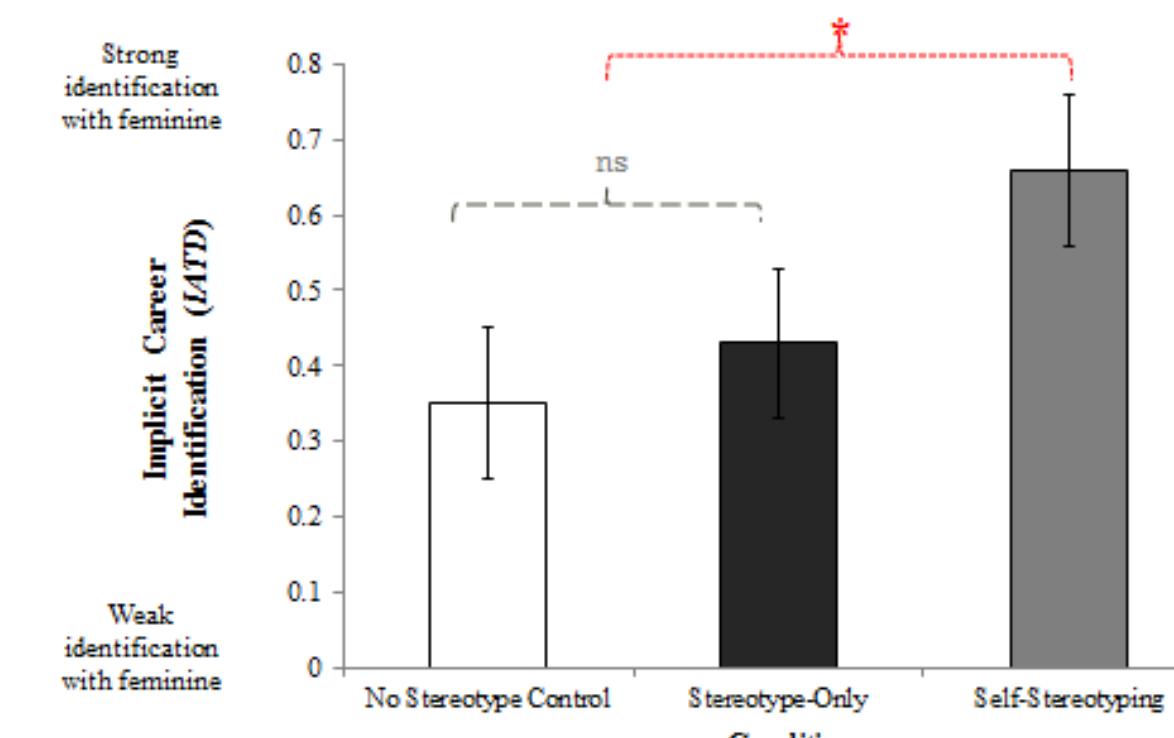


Figure 2. Effect of negative IGSS on implicit career identification. Higher Career Identification IAT D numbers indicate strong implicit identification with feminine careers on the IAT.

## RESULTS CONTINUED

There were no differences in explicit career identification as a function of condition,  $t(46) = 1.28$ ,  $p = .21$ .

## DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

The finding that negative IGSS increases women's implicit self-esteem relative to two control conditions is in line with Social Identity Theory (Abrams & Hogg, 2010). Thus, associating oneself with ingroup stereotypic traits can be enhancing to one's self-image, even when those traits are negative, as it appears to allow group members to feel included and prototypical of their ingroup. Lastly, the finding that negative IGSS increases women's implicit identification with feminine careers is in line with our predictions that negative IGSS may subconsciously prevent women from striving for higher status but traditionally masculine occupations.

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