

I am what I am – whether you watch me or not:

The Effects of Impression Management Tactics on Performance Ratings
in an Assessment Center

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Abstract

Although candidates' Impression Management (IM) has been shown to affect selection decisions in structured interviews (Barrick, Shaffer, & DeGrassi, 2009), research on its consequences in Assessment Centers is still rare. Building on the two-component model of IM (Leary & Kowalski, 1990) and on trait-activation theory (Tett & Guterman, 2000), this study aims at investigating whether candidates' assertive IM leads to increased performance ratings in an Assessment Center. Results suggest that candidates' use of self-promotion increases their performance ratings on the dimension leadership, while ingratiation leads to higher ratings on the dimension cooperation. IM shown in the Assessment Center furthermore predicts candidates' performance ratings in comparable, but non-observed situations and proves to possess internal construct-related validity. These findings support the notion that IM does not pose a threat to the accuracy of hiring decisions in personnel selection, but that it can be regarded as a behavioral manifestation of candidates' underlying inter-individual traits.

Keywords: Assessment Center; Impression Management; Personnel selection; validity

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Impression Management (IM), the process through which individuals can influence the impressions others hold of them in social interactions (Rosenfeld, Giacalone, & Riordan, 1995), is commonly viewed as a great concern in personnel selection. Research that has investigated the outcomes of IM in selection has indeed shown that candidates make use particularly of assertive IM, i.e. proactive image construction, and that they do so successfully (McFarland, Ryan, & Kriska, 2002; Kleinmann & Klehe, 2011). The amount of IM that applicants use predicts their evaluations particularly in selection interviews (Gilmore & Ferris, 1989; Stevens & Kristof, 1995; Ellis, West, Ryan, & DeShon, 2002; Peeters & Lievens, 2006; Barrick et al., 2009), while investigations of Assessment Centers are still rare and inconclusive (McFarland, Ryan, & Kriska, 2003; McFarland, Yun, Harold, Viera, & Moore, 2005). Applicants' IM may be regarded as a threat in the context of personnel selection because it is feared to reduce the accuracy of the selection decision (Hogan, Barrett, & Hogan, 2007). The first goal of this study is thus to investigate whether what is commonly found for selection interviews also holds true for Assessment Centers – namely that candidates make use of IM, and that these IM tactics influence the assessors' performance ratings.

More recently however, scholars have suggested that IM could also be regarded as a stable inter-individual disposition rather than a source of measurement error in personnel selection (Van Iddekinge, McFarland, & Raymark, 2007; Kleinmann & Klehe, 2011). The second goal of this study is to further investigate this contrary viewpoint, thus making several extensions to previous research. First, this study investigates candidates' performance ratings

on particular performance dimensions rather than their overall performance. This approach allows distinguishing between the effects single IM tactics have on different performance dimensions, leading to more differentiated conclusions concerning the relationship between IM and performance ratings. It would imply that candidates' ratings of performance on different dimensions can be predicted by their use of specific IM tactics. Second, this study investigates how the IM tactics used by applicants in the selection situation predict assessors' ratings of performance in comparable, but non-evaluated performance situations. If IM is only induced by the selection situation and solely aimed at enhancing evaluations, it would have no predictive value for later performance. IM could thus indeed be regarded as a threat to criterion-related validity of the selection procedure and therewith to the accuracy of selection decisions. Alternatively, if IM behaviors are a behavioral manifestation of candidates' personality, then the IM behaviors shown by candidates in selection situations should predict performance ratings also in non-evaluated situations. The notion of viewing IM as a threat in personnel selection would then become arbitrary, as IM tactics may then even be predictive of performance on the job. Third, the present research tests whether or not the IM tactics used by candidates prove to possess internal construct-related validity. Although the internal construct-related validity of performance dimensions in Assessment Centers is usually low (Klimoski & Brickner, 1987), Assessment Centers have good predictive validity for performance on the job (Gaugler, Rosenthal, Thornton, & Benson, 1987). Investigating the internal construct-related validity of IM behaviors may therefore help explain the predictive validity of Assessment Centers for job performance where the construct-related validity of performance dimensions fails to do so.

This study thus extends previous research by investigating the effects of IM tactics on distinctive performance dimensions in selection situations as well as in comparable, but non-

evaluated situations. In addition, it aims to shed more light on the current debate of whether candidates' use of IM needs to be regarded as a threat to the accuracy of selection decisions.

IM in personnel selection

Much of the research on IM in personnel selection has found assertive IM behavior to be more relevant to the selection context than defensive IM behavior (Gilmore & Ferris, 1989; Ellis et al., 2002; Kleinmann & Klehe, 2011). While assertive IM behavior aims at creating a favorable impression with another person, defensive IM behavior is used to protect one's image (Kleinmann & Klehe, 2011). Assertive IM behavior consists of self-promotion and ingratiation – two IM tactics that Jones and Pittman (1982) propose to be especially relevant for interpersonal interactions in an organizational setting. Self-promotion is conceptualized as stressing one's extraordinary experiences, highlighting one's qualities, and pointing out one's accomplishments with the goal of conveying an impression of competence. Ingratiation, however, is defined as expressing gratitude towards others, stressing similarity between oneself and the other, and praising the other, aimed at eliciting interpersonal liking. Although both self-promotion and ingratiation are assertive IM behaviors, they differ in their focus on either the self, as is the case with self-promotion, or on the other person, as is the case in ingratiation (Proost, Schreurs, De Witte, & Deroos, 2010). In the context of personnel selection, IM may be especially prominent because candidates have an incentive to leave a favorable impression with the possible employer (Bolino, Kacmar, Turnley, & Gilstrap, 2008). This notion can be derived from two independent theories, namely the two-component model of IM (Leary & Kowalski, 1990) and trait-activation theory (Tett & Guterman, 2000).

According to the two-component model of IM (Leary & Kowalski, 1990), IM consists of two distinct processes. The first one, impression motivation, describes the processes that motivate impression-relevant behavior, while the second one, impression construction,

determines the content of those behaviors. In personnel selection, a candidate can be expected to have a high impression motivation, as two of its antecedents, namely the goal-relevance of impressions and the value of the desired goal, should be especially high. The goal-relevance of impressions describes the degree to which the impression made is relevant for fulfilling a certain goal, such as a social or material outcome. In personnel selection, a candidate's IM behavior is public rather than private, as it is observed by at least one designated observer. Furthermore, a candidate in a selection situation is dependent on the observer(s), who decide whether the candidate will be hired for the job or not. As publicity of IM behavior and dependency on the target of IM determine goal-relevance (Leary & Kowalski, 1990), candidates' impression motivation in the context of personnel selection should thus be high. Besides the goal-relevance of impressions, the value of the desired goal(s) is also an antecedent of a person's impression motivation. Building on earlier motivation theories, a person's motivation increases as a function of a goal's value (Beck, 1983). Likewise, impression motivation increases with the value of a goal for which the impression is relevant (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Since a candidate in a selection situation has most likely applied for that particular job, the value of that desired goal should also be high, leading to increased impression motivation. The goal of obtaining that particular job may furthermore be especially valuable because the competition for it is high. Pandey and Rastagi (1979) found that IM in a selection context increased as the number of applicants for the job increased. This finding may be especially relevant in the context of an Assessment Center, as the competition for the job is visible to the candidates. The goal-relevance of candidates' impressions and in turn their impression motivation should therefore be high in selection situations. According to the two-component model of IM, candidates can thus be expected to make more use of IM in selection situations than in comparable non-evaluated situations.

Trait-activation theory (Tett & Guterman, 2000) predicts similar behavior for candidates in selection situations. By focusing on the person-situation interaction, the theory proposes that an individual's behavior can be explained as a response to trait-relevant cues that are present in a given situation. A situation is considered relevant to a trait when it provides cues for expressing trait-relevant behavior. Applied to candidates' use of IM, a situation may or may not provide cues for expressing IM on a behavioral level. According to trait-activation theory, a situation's trait relevance for IM will determine to what extent IM is visible in candidates' behavior. When trait-relevant cues are indeed present in a situation, that situation's trait-activation potential is said to be high (Tett & Guterman, 2000). In a selection situation, many cues for IM should be present so that trait-activation potential for IM is probably high. Candidates are therefore likely to make strong use of IM. In a comparable, but less competitive non-evaluated situation, the candidates may however make less use of IM because the situation does not activate IM as strongly. Candidates would thus behave according to their traits also in non-evaluated situations, but do so to a lesser extent because the trait-activation potential of the situation is smaller.

Building on the two-component model of IM (Leary & Kowalski, 1990) and on trait-activation theory (Tett & Guterman, 2000), I thus predict that candidates will make more use of IM in selection situations than in comparable but non-evaluated situations.

Hypothesis 1: Candidates make more use of (a) self-promotion and (b) ingratiation in selection situations than in comparable non-evaluated situations.

IM and overall performance ratings in Assessment Centers

The common concern associated with the increased use of IM in selection situations stems from the finding that candidates' use of IM affects assessors' ratings of performance (Barrick et al., 2009; McFarland et al., 2005). Research on candidates' use of IM in structured

interviews has been emergent in the past ten years (Posthuma, Morgeson, & Campion, 2002) and supports the notion that interviews are vulnerable to candidates' use of IM (Gilmore & Ferris, 1989; Stevens & Kristof, 1995; Ellis et al., 2002; Peeters & Lievens, 2006; Barrick et al., 2009). In a field study, Gilmore and Ferris (1989) found IM to positively influence interviewers regardless of candidates' credentials. Likewise, IM tactics significantly predicted interviewer evaluations in another field study (Stevens & Kristof, 1995). Investigating candidates' use of assertive and defensive IM, Ellis et al. (2002) found that self-promotion and ingratiation were positively related to interviewer evaluations in both situational and experience-based interviews. Similarly, self- as well as other-focused IM influenced interviewer evaluations in situational and behavioral interviews in a study by Peeters and Lievens (2006). In their meta-analysis, Barrick et al. (2009) support the above conclusions, finding that candidates' self- as well as other-focused IM were positively related to interviewer ratings, and that this relationship was stronger for unstructured than for structured interviews. Several studies investigating the consequences of IM in interviews have thus shown that IM, be it self-promotion or ingratiation, influences interviewer evaluations in the selection interview.

Research on IM use in other forms of personnel selection, such as Assessment Centers however, is scarce and inconclusive. Some initial research found that candidates' use of IM did not predict assessor ratings in a role-play (McFarland, Ryan, & Kriska, 2003). Another study however yielded contrary results, showing that IM was used effectively in role-plays as well as in a mock presentation (McFarland et al., 2005). Therefore, little can be concluded concerning the effectiveness of candidates' IM in Assessment Centers. The present study aims at closing this gap by investigating the relation between candidates' IM and their performance ratings in an Assessment Center. As the vast majority of previous research suggests a positive relationship between IM and performance ratings in selection situations

other than Assessment Centers, I propose that self-promotion and ingratiation are positively related to assessors' ratings of candidates' performance ratings also in an Assessment Center.

Hypothesis 2: Candidates' use of (a) self-promotion and (b) ingratiation are positively related to assessor ratings of their performance in an Assessment Center.

IM and performance ratings on certain dimensions in Assessment Centers

The two-component model of IM (Leary & Kowalski, 1990) suggests that when a person is motivated to form an impression, the content of that impression needs to be determined. This process is referred to as impression construction and is partly dependent on the role constraints of the situation. People are likely to convey an impression that is consistent with the role demands they perceive in the situation. Applied to the context of personnel selection, candidates will construct impressions that they think are demanded in the selection situation (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Previous research suggests that those constructed impressions are associated with increased performance ratings in personnel selection in general (McFarland et al., 2005; Barrick et al., 2009). There is however reason to assume that self-promotion and ingratiation have differential effects on performance ratings. Ferris and Judge (1991) proposed that candidates can exert influence in personnel selection via distinct processes such as through assessment of their competence or through liking. Candidates' use of self-promotion will most likely increase the assessment of competence (Jones & Pittman, 1982; Rudman, 1998). By using self-promotion, a candidate conveys abilities and skills relevant for the job, leading the assessor to be aware of the candidate's positive qualities (McFarland et al., 2003). Ingratiation, however, is associated with increased liking by stressing similarities between the candidate and the assessor (Chen, Lee, & Yeh, 2008; Higgins & Judge, 2004). As assessors are likely to perceive candidates who stress similarities in a favorable way due to the similar-to-me error (Pulakos & Wexley, 1993), ingratiation is

likely to increase performance ratings. The above argumentation suggests that self-promotion and ingratiation lead to increased performance ratings through differential processes. It is likely that these differential processes also have diverging effects on performance ratings when considering only certain dimensions of performance.

Borrowing from theory concerning leader emergence (De Souza & Klein, 1995) and some preliminary research findings (Judge, Bono, Ilies, & Gerhardt, 2002; Smith & Foti, 1998), it can be suggested that self-promotion might be associated with increased performance ratings on the dimension leadership. In the context of an Assessment Center, the concept of emergent leadership is especially relevant. Emergent leaders are not formally assigned the role of a leader, but they rather exert influence through the support of the other group members (De Souza & Klein, 1995). Leader emergence can therefore be observed in several Assessment Center exercises, such as group-discussions or role-plays. The phenomenon of leader emergence can be explained by the other group members' perceptions of the leader. When an individual possesses and expresses the traits associated with a prototypical leader, that person is likely to emerge as a leader in the group (Lord & Maher, 1991) and will likely be evaluated positively concerning leadership skills. Two traits that are often associated with leader emergence are dominance (Gough, 1990; Morrow & Stern, 1990; Judge et al., 2002) and self-efficacy (Smith & Foti, 1998; Chemers, Watson, & May, 2000). Candidates making use of self-promotion stress their own qualities, accomplishments, and experiences. They thus convey an impression of being capable of taking the leadership role, stressing their own dominance and articulating their self-efficacy. By making use of self-promotion, candidates are likely to associate themselves with prototypical traits of a leader, resulting in emergent leadership. Through self-promotion, candidates furthermore imply that they hold expert power, which enables them to take on a leadership role (Montana & Charnov,

2000). Building on the above argumentation, it is likely that candidates' self-promotion is related to assessors' ratings of their performance on the dimension leadership.

Hypothesis 3a: Candidates' use of self-promotion is positively related to assessor ratings of their performance on the dimension leadership in an Assessment Center.

Likewise, previous research suggests that candidates' use of ingratiation may be related to performance ratings on the dimension cooperation. By using ingratiation, candidates are likely to make themselves likable and show that they value their group members. This behavior has been found to lead to higher quality exchange relationships in groups (Strutton & Pelton, 1998). Furthermore, Rosenfeld et al. (1995) suggested that ingratiation may foster harmony within a group and facilitate decision-making, which are both aspects of successful cooperation within the group. Nguyen, Seers, and Hartman (2008) even view ingratiation as a means of facilitating social interaction. They argue that ingratiation acts as a catalyst for social interactions, making it easier for group-members to establish a cooperative environment. It is therefore likely that candidates making use of ingratiation will perform well on the performance dimension cooperation.

Hypothesis 3b: Candidates' use of ingratiation is positively related to assessor ratings of their performance on the dimension cooperation in an Assessment Center.

IM as a trait

As stated above, research concerning IM in personnel selection has generally focused on the effects of IM on outcomes of the selection. It was found that candidates use IM in selection situations, which in turn positively influences performance ratings (Barrick et al. 2009; McFarland et al. 2005). IM is therefore often regarded as a threat to the accuracy of hiring decisions, as it is viewed as an error term, or worse, as a bias, in the measurement of candidates' performance in selection situations. According to this viewpoint, candidates' IM

in selection situations should be unrelated to their IM comparable, but non-evaluated situations, as they only use IM in selection situations to increase their performance ratings in those situations. The IM shown by candidates in selection situations would have no predictive value for their performance outside of the selection situation.

More recently however, scholars have started investigating the antecedents of IM (Peeters & Lievens, 2006; Van Iddekinge et al., 2007) and have offered a contrary viewpoint which is consistent with the predictions of the two-component model of IM (Leary & Kowalski, 1990) and trait-activation theory (Tett & Guterman, 2000). They conclude that IM can be regarded as a behavioral manifestation of candidates' underlying traits (Peeters & Lievens, 2006) or, put differently, that IM has a dispositional component related to candidates' personality (Van Iddekinge et al., 2007). If these conclusions are valid, then IM tactics should be shown not only in selection situations, but also in comparable non-evaluated situations by the same individual. IM might then even be predictive for performance in situations other than the selection situation, as it could then be regarded as a behavioral pattern that is specific to the particular person (Kleinmann & Klehe, 2011) rather than as a bias in measurement.

Supporting the notion of viewing IM as a function of a person's underlying dispositions, the two-component model of IM (Leary & Kowalski, 1990) states that a person's self-concept is one of the main determinants of impression construction. Research suggests that people try to form impressions that are consistent with the images they hold of themselves (Gergen, 1968; Jones & Pittman, 1982; Schlenker, 1980). Leary and Kowalski (1990) propose that people convey impressions in line with their self-concepts due to three processes. First, most people are likely to reveal parts of themselves to others that they are especially proud of. According to this rationale, people make use of IM to ensure that those positive attributes are accurately perceived by others. In a personnel selection situation,

candidates would use IM to show certain aspects of themselves to the assessors, for example self-promotion to stress their accomplishments or ingratiation to put forward their likeability. Second, people hesitate to construct images that are not consistent with the view they hold of themselves because they fear that they “cannot pull it off” (Leary & Kowalski, 1990, p. 40; Schlenker, 1980). Therefore, they tend to rather use IM in line with their underlying self-concept. Third, most people believe it is immoral to lie (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). People are therefore unlikely to behave in a way that is not compatible with their self-view. The two-component model of IM thus suggests that IM is used in line with people’s self-concepts. It therewith supports the notion that candidates in selection situations will make use of IM according to their underlying dispositions.

Conceptualizing IM as a behavioral expression of underlying traits does not imply that a person should behave according to that trait to the same extent in every situation that he or she encounters (see hypothesis 1). Rather, it depends on whether the situation demands the person to make use of IM, a notion embedded in trait-activation theory (Tett & Guterman, 2000). As stated above, trait-activation theory predicts behavior as a function of trait-relevant cues in the situation (Tett & Guterman, 2000). In an exercise of an Assessment Center, for example, a candidate could encounter cues for making use of self-promotion, while those cues are less salient in a non-evaluated but conceptually similar type of situation. The same individual would then make less use of self-promotion in a non-evaluated than in a selection situation, because the situation does not provide such strong cues for that person’s self-promotion (see hypothesis 1). It is furthermore likely that a situation’s trait relevance is subjective among candidates (Murray, 1938). For another candidate, the same Assessment Center exercise may for example include cues for ingratiation rather than cues for self-promotion. That candidate would therefore be likely to make strong use of ingratiation in the selection situation, while he or she would use ingratiation to a smaller extend in a similar non-

evaluated situation. Depending on how a candidate perceives the cues of the situation, he or she would make use of differential IM tactics according to his or her underlying traits.

In line with the argumentation leading to hypotheses 3a and 3b, self-promotion and ingratiation may lead to an increase in performance ratings on the dimensions leadership and cooperation, respectively. If the predictions of trait-activation theory (Tett & Guterman, 2000) hold true, then the IM shown by candidates in selection situations might even be predictive of candidates' performance in non-evaluated situations. In selection situations, trait-activation potential for both self-promotion and ingratiation can be expected to be high, so that the trait is visible in candidates' behavior to a great extent. In non-evaluated situations, however, trait-activations potential is most likely lower than in selection situations. Although a candidate's underlying trait would be less visible in his or her behavior in non-evaluated situations, that trait might still affect the candidate's performance ratings on the related performance dimension. Some indirect support for this notion stems from past research, showing that assertive IM improves performance ratings during selection (Barrick, et al., 2009) and that those performance ratings obtained during personnel selection in turn predict job performance (McDaniel, Whetzel, Schmidt, & Maurer, 1994). Van Iddekinge et al. (2007) conclude that the IM shown during selection may even be predictive of job performance and Kleinmann and Klehe (2011) argue that the behavior that is successful in a selection context should also be effective in jobs that require similar skills. If candidates' IM in selection situations indeed explains some of the variance in candidates' performance in non-observed situations that is not explained by their IM in those non-evaluated situations, then viewing IM in personnel selection as a threat becomes obsolete.

Hypothesis 4a: Candidates' use of self-promotion in an Assessment Center explains variance in assessors' ratings of their performance on the dimension leadership in a non-observed situation.

Hypothesis 4b: Candidates' use of ingratiation in an Assessment Center explains variance in assessors' ratings of their performance on the dimension cooperation in a non-observed situation.

IM's internal construct-related validity

Although research has shown that candidates' performance in Assessment Centers predicts their subsequent success on the job (Gaugler et al., 1987), Assessment Centers' construct-related validity is surprisingly low (Klimoski & Brickner, 1987). More specifically, a common finding is that correlations of ratings for different performance dimensions within an exercise (suggesting a poor discriminant validity) are often higher than correlations of ratings for the same performance dimension across exercises (convergent validity; Melchers, Kleinmann, Richter, König, & Klehe, 2004a; Kleinmann & Klehe, 2011). This finding leads to the conclusion that Assessment Centers, despite their predictive validity for job-related criteria, are not actually measuring what they have been designed to measure.

If Assessment Centers do not reliably measure the performance dimensions they intend to measure, but still predict performance on the job, there may be other factors contributing to their predictive validity. If the above arguments are correct, then candidates' use of IM might improve the internal construct-related validity of an Assessment Center because it reflects inter-individual differences between the candidates. IM behaviors that are specific for an individual may even be criterion relevant for the job (Ellis et al., 2002), as most jobs involve the requirement to work effectively with others, providing the chance make use of IM (Stevens & Kristof, 1995). If IM is really a behavioral manifestation of a candidate's underlying dispositions, it would consistently be used and should thus show internal construct-related validity within the Assessment Center.

Hypothesis 5: The IM tactics used in an Assessment Center have high internal construct-related validity – convergent validity coefficients will be higher than discriminant validity coefficients.

In sum, this study considers two viewpoints concerning candidates' use of IM in Assessment Centers. On the one hand, it investigates whether candidates make more use of IM in Assessment Center exercises than in comparable non-evaluated situations. It furthermore tests whether this use of IM in an Assessment Center leads to increased performance ratings. On the other hand, the present study challenges the common notion that IM thus has should be regarded as a threat to the accuracy of selection decision. This is obtained by testing whether IM is a behavioral expression of candidates' underlying traits.

Methods

Setting

The Assessment Center was conducted under the framework of an application training for prospective university graduates, as validated in previous studies (Kleinmann, 1993; Klehe, König, Richter, Kleinmann, & Melchers, 2008). Participants received a fictitious job advertisement for a trainee position, broadly positioned in a management context to make it attractive for prospective university graduates from various academic disciplines. Assessment Centers included ten to twelve participants each. During the Assessment Centers, participants took part in several exercises in which they were observed by trained observers. They furthermore participated in two more exercises where no observers were present in the room, resembling comparable, but non-evaluated situations (see appendix A for all exercises). In those situations, participants were videotaped without their explicit knowledge, however.¹

¹ Prior to the conduction of the study, participants signed an agreement to be videotaped at any time in the process. Some of the videotaping was done openly in the Assessment Center exercises, while some of it was done secretly in the exercises where no observers were present in the room. Participants were informed about the videotaping in non-observed situations after the completion of the study.

Participants were debriefed after the completion of the study. By using an experimental design that involved a selection training for prospective university graduates, it was possible to recruit participants who had very limited experiences in the context of personnel selection. As prior participation in Assessment Centers would have most likely strongly influenced the results, this design was the most fitting for the purposes of this study. Furthermore, video-taping candidates without their explicit knowledge would have been unethical for the company conducting the Assessment Center.

Sample

Participants were recruited among prospective graduates of a university. They had to pay a small fee for participation in order to ensure commitment and motivation. Of the 124 participants, only 114 were included in the data-analysis as cameras did not work in one of the Assessment Centers. Of those included, 74 participants were female and 45 were male, the average age being 23.8, with the youngest participant being 21 and the oldest being 48 years old. Most of the participants (29 %) studied business and economics, 13 % psychology, 9 % law, 3 % politics, and 18 % other social sciences. Another 9 % of participants reported that they studied other subjects not further specified, and 20% of participants did not indicate their subject of studies. Participants had studied for an average of 9.65 semesters ($SD = 3.91$), reflecting the fact that they were close to finishing their degrees.

Observers

To serve as observers of the Assessment Center, 60 graduate psychology students majoring in work and organizational psychology were recruited. They received a certificate of participation at the end of the study. All observers first participated in a one-day observer training, preparing them to rate either candidates' IM or candidates' performance in the

Assessment Center. During the training, observers were introduced to the Assessment Center exercises and were provided with rating scales and behavioral anchors of either IM (see appendix B) or performance (see appendix C) to achieve a common frame-of-reference amongst the observers. They were furthermore informed about common rating errors and were required to act out all of the exercises to achieve an understanding of the behaviors they would be rating.

Observed IM Tactics. Those observers trained to rate IM assessed the two assertive tactics of self-promotion and ingratiation. Self-promotion was defined as stressing one's extraordinary experiences, highlighting one's qualities, and pointing out one's accomplishments, while ingratiation was defined as expressing gratitude towards others, stressing similarity between oneself and the other, and praising the other. An observation sheet validated in previous studies (Kleinmann & Klehe, 2011) was used. Observers rated to what extent candidates used the two IM tactics within each of the Assessment Center exercises on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*weak IM*) to 5 (*strong IM*).

Observed Performance Dimensions. Observers have been found to reduce the dimensions rated within Assessment Centers to a manageable number of categories (Shore, Thornton, & Shore, 1990). While Shore et al. (1990) first established a dyadic categorization between interpersonal style and performance style dimensions, the authors later proposed a triadic approach. Kolk, Born and van der Flier (2003) proposed and successfully tested the use of a threefold taxonomy with the dimensions power, feeling, and thinking. The three performance dimensions leadership, cooperation, and planning were used in the context of this study to represent this triadic categorization. Therefore observers trained to rate performance assessed the three performance dimensions leadership, cooperation, and planning. Leadership was defined as striving for and assuming responsibility for tasks and groups, coordination of teams, and arguing for one's point of view in groups, while cooperation was defined as

assisting others with problems they may have, considering the needs of others, being prepared to compromise with others, and mediating between diverging points of view. Planning was described as prioritizing tasks, making plans for tasks and projects, making appointments in due time, and allocating tasks. An observation sheet validated in previous studies (Klehe et al., 2008) was used. Observers rated candidates' performance within each of the Assessment Center exercises on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*weak performance*) to 5 (*strong performance*).

Procedure

Participants were involved in three observed exercises: Two group-discussions and one role-play. These exercises were developed and tested for their usefulness for the given context in previous studies (see Kleinmann, 1993; König, Melchers, Kleinmann, Richter, & Klehe, 2007 for a detailed description). Exercises were randomized across participants. Besides the three observed Assessment Center exercises, candidates took part in two non-evaluated (videotaped) exercises: One group-discussion and one role-play. In the observed exercises, two observers per participant rated candidates' performance, while two other observers per participant rated candidates' use of IM. In the non-evaluated exercises, no observers were present in the room. Participants were, however, secretly videotaped. Two observers later rated candidates' IM on the basis of these videotapes, while two other observers rated performance.

Results

Descriptives. Table 1 includes the overall means, the standard deviations, and the intercorrelations amongst the studied variables. In table 2, those values can be found separately for each of the observed as well as for each of the non-evaluated exercises. In a

manipulation check, 90% of the participants said that they behaved the same way they would have in an actual selection context.

Hypothesis 1. Hypothesis 1 states that candidates make more use of (a) self-promotion as well as of (b) ingratiation in the selection situations than in comparable non-evaluated situations. A paired-samples t-test was conducted to compare candidates' use of self-promotion and ingratiation in the selection situations and the comparable non-evaluated situations. The assumptions were supported for self-promotion as well as ingratiation: Candidates used significantly more self-promotion ($M = 3.56$; $SD = .67$) and ingratiation ($M = 3.48$; $SD = .61$) in the selection situations than in the comparable non-evaluated situations ($M = 2.71$; $SD = .58$; $t(114) = 11.42$, $p < .01$ for self-promotion and $M = 2.99$; $SD = .51$; $t(114) = 7.24$, $p < .01$ for ingratiation). These results suggest that candidates used more IM tactics in selection situations than when they were in a similar situation in which they were not evaluated.

Hypothesis 2. Hypothesis 2 states that candidates' use of (a) self-promotion and (b) ingratiation are positively related to their performance ratings in an Assessment Center. As can be seen in table 1, these assumptions were supported for self-promotion ($r = .59$, $p < .01$) and ingratiation ($r = .27$, $p < .01$). Both IM tactics were thus related to candidates' overall performance ratings in the Assessment Center.

Hypothesis 3. Hypothesis 3a states that candidates' use of self-promotion is positively related to assessor ratings of their performance on the dimension leadership in an Assessment Center. Likewise, Hypothesis 3b states that candidates' use of ingratiation is positively related to assessor ratings of their performance on the dimension cooperation in an Assessment Center. Again, table 1 shows that these assumptions were supported. Candidates' use of self-promotion was significantly related to their performance ratings on the dimension leadership ($r = .71$, $p < .01$). Using Williams' t (t_w ; Williams, 1959), it furthermore became evident that

the correlation between self-promotion and performance ratings on the dimension leadership was significantly stronger than the correlations between self-promotion and performance ratings on the other two performance dimensions ($t_w(114) = 5.79, p < .01$ for cooperation and $t_w(114) = 4.40, p < .01$ for planning). Likewise, candidates' use of ingratiation was significantly related to performance ratings on the dimension cooperation ($r = .38, p < .01$). Analyses using Williams' t again revealed that the correlation between ingratiation and performance ratings on the dimension cooperation was significantly stronger than the correlations between ingratiation and performance ratings on the other two performance dimensions ($t_w(114) = 2.68, p < .01$ for leadership and $t_w(114) = 3.02, p < .01$ for planning). Candidates' self-promotion was thus positively related to their performance ratings on the dimension leadership, while their ingratiation was positively related to their performance ratings on the dimension cooperation in the Assessment Center.

Hypothesis 4. Hypothesis 4a states that candidates' use of self-promotion in an Assessment Center explains variance in their performance ratings on the dimension leadership in a non-evaluated situation. Likewise, hypothesis 4b states that candidates' use of ingratiation in an Assessment Center explains variance in their performance ratings on the dimension cooperation in a non-evaluated situation. Two analyses were conducted to test these hypotheses: Stepwise regression analyses and model comparisons using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

Table 3, which includes the results of the stepwise regressions, shows that the self-promotion shown in selection situations was a significant predictor of performance ratings on the dimension leadership ($\beta = .14, p < .05$) when controlling for self-promotion in non-evaluated situations as a predictor also. Likewise, ingratiation shown in selection situations was a significant predictor of performance ratings on the dimension cooperation ($\beta = .23, p < .01$) when controlling for ingratiation in non-evaluated situations as a predictor also. This

finding supports the notion that candidates' use of IM in selection situations predicts their performance ratings in non-evaluated situations.

Hypotheses 4a and 4b were furthermore tested via SEM using AMOS 5.0 (Arbuckle, 2003). In all analyses throughout this study that use SEM, the fit indices comparative fit index (CFI; values $> .95$ indicating good fit) and root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA; values $< .08$ indicating good fit) are reported next to the χ^2 values (Cheung & Rensvold, 2009). Three competing models were tested for each of the hypotheses 4a and 4b (see figure 1). Model 1 assumes that candidates' IM in selection situations predicts assessor ratings of their performance in selection situation (path a_1), and that IM in non-evaluated situations predicts assessor ratings of performance in non-evaluated situations (path a_2). It however does not assume an effect of IM in selection situation on either IM in typical situations or on performance ratings in typical situations. Model 1 thus represents the common notion of seeing candidates' IM in selection situation as a situational demand effect that is unrelated to candidate's behavior in non-evaluated situations. Model 2 extends model 1 by adding a path from IM in selection situations to IM in typical situations (dashed lines in figure 1; path b). It thus assumes that the IM shown by candidates in selection situations predicts their IM in non-evaluated situations. The notion that IM represents an underlying trait of participants that can be activated to a greater or to a smaller extent is thus included in model 2. Model 3 furthermore extends the previous model by adding a path from IM in selection situations to performance in non-evaluated situations (bold lines in figure 1; path c). It therefore assumes that the maximum expression of a candidate's underlying traits, which is visible in selection situations due to high trait-activation potential, also affects performance ratings in non-evaluated situations. As can be seen in table 4, the third models fit the data significantly better than the alternative models. Additionally, all paths of the third models were significant at $p < .05$ (see figure 1). The models representing the notion that IM in

selection situations predicts both IM and performance ratings in non-evaluated situations was thus supported.

The results of the SEM analyses concerning hypothesis 4b suggested that although the third model fit the data significantly better than the other two models, fit indices were still not satisfactory. Therefore, an additional exploratory SEM was conducted, which allowed the residuals of the performance ratings in the selection and in the non-observed situation to covary (path d, see figure 1). This additional constraint was based on the assumption that there may be a common bias in the measurements of ingratiation in the selection situation and the non-evaluated situation, since exercises were conceptually comparable. Fit indices revealed that this fourth model fit the data significantly better than the third model ($\Delta X^2(1) = 8.9, p < .01$) and possessed good fit in general. This finding supports the notion that there is a common bias in the measurement of ingratiation across the two types of situations.

Hypothesis 5. Hypothesis 5 states that the IM tactics used in an Assessment Center have high internal construct-related validity. Before testing this hypothesis, the internal-construct related validity of performance dimensions in the Assessment Center was analyzed. As previous research has generally shown that the convergent validity of Assessment Center performance dimensions fails to be considerably larger than the discriminant validity (Klimoski & Brickner, 1987; Melchers et al., 2004a), similar results were expected in this study. To test this hypothesis, multitrait-multimethod (MTMM) analyses were conducted. It was expected that correlations between ratings of identical performance dimension across the different Assessment Center exercises, i.e. convergent validity coefficients, should not be notably larger than correlations between ratings of different performance dimensions in identical Assessment Center exercises, i.e. discriminant validity coefficients. The three performance dimension (i.e. planning, leadership, and cooperation) were treated as different traits, while the three Assessment Center exercises (i.e. group-discussion 1, group-discussion

2, and role-play) were treated as different methods. Table 5 includes the MTMM scores that were the result of correlating the mean scores for the three different performance dimensions from the three Assessment Center exercises with each other. The monotrait-heteromethod values, representing convergent validity, are shown in bold, while the heterotrait-monomethod values, representing discriminant validity, are presented in underlined font. Results indicated that the convergent validity of performance dimensions (average $r_{\text{MTHM}} = .41$ using an *r-to-Z* transformation) was indeed not notably larger than the discriminant validity (average $r_{\text{HTMM}} = .46$ using an *r-to-Z* transformation). If anything, then the average correlations between ratings of identical performance dimensions across exercises were even smaller than the average correlations of different performance dimensions within identical Assessment Center exercises.

As the use of the original MTMM design for testing construct-related validity has been criticized by methodologists (Marsh, 1988; Schmitt & Stults, 1986), the performance dimensions' construct-related validity was also analyzed using SEM. Some previous research has made use of traditional confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) models to approach this issue, but has shown that those models often have numerous estimation problems (Scullen, 1999). Therefore, the correlated uniqueness (CU) model (Marsh, 1988) was used to further analyze the construct-related validity of performance dimensions in the Assessment Center. In the CU model (figure 2), each performance rating is affected by its respective performance dimension and by an error term. The error terms are allowed to covary within one Assessment Center exercise, but not between exercises. The three performance dimensions are also allowed to covary. The model was analyzed using AMOS 5.0 software (Arbuckle, 2003). Fit indices suggest that the model fit the data acceptably well ($\chi^2(15) = 22.4$; CFI = .98; RMSEA = .06). When investigating the factor loadings (table 6) it became evident that almost all factor loadings of the performance dimensions are moderately high. This supports the notion that the

performance ratings are related to their respective performance dimensions, providing evidence for convergent validity. Table 6 furthermore shows that the three factors leadership, cooperation, and planning, all significantly correlated with each other. This suggests that discriminant validity is not satisfactory. The last column in table 6 refers to the correlated uniqueness of the model, providing further estimates of discriminant validity. Correlated uniqueness represents the degree to which the error terms of the performance dimensions are correlated. Six of the nine correlated uniquenesses proved to be significant, suggesting that some method effects were present in the measurement of performance dimensions in the Assessment Center. There was thus a bias in the measurement of performance dimensions due to assessing different dimensions with the same exercises. Overall, the results of fitting the CU model to the data suggested a relatively poor internal construct-related validity of performance dimensions in the Assessment Center.

To test hypothesis 5, namely that the internal construct-related validity of IM tactics in the Assessment Center is high, the same two analyses as described in the previous section were run. First, MTMM analyses were conducted. According to the hypothesis, correlations between ratings of identical IM tactics across the different Assessment Center exercises, i.e. convergent validity coefficients, should be notably larger than correlations between ratings of different IM tactics in identical Assessment Center exercises, i.e. discriminant validity coefficients. While the two IM tactics (i.e. self-promotion and ingratiation) were now treated as different traits, the three Assessment Center exercises (i.e. group-discussion 1, group-discussion 2, and role-play) were treated as different methods. Table 7 includes the MTMM scores which resulted from correlating the mean scores for the different IM tactics from the three Assessment Center exercises with each other. The monotrait-heteromethod values, representing convergent validity, are again shown in bold, while the heterotrait-monomethod values, representing discriminant validity, are again presented in underlined font. Concerning

the convergent validity of the IM tactics, results indicated a moderately high average of the monotrait-heteromethod coefficients (average $r_{MTHM} = .49$ using an r -to- Z transformation). The discriminant validity of the IM tactics, investigated via the average of the heterotrait-monomethod coefficients was considerably lower (average $r_{HTMM} = .39$ using an r -to- Z transformation). These results suggest that the IM tactics used in the Assessment Center indeed show some construct-related validity.

Again, the construct-related validity was also tested via the CU model (Marsh, 1988). As can be seen in figure 3, each of the IM ratings is affected by either the latent variable self-promotion or ingratiation and by an error term. Again, those error terms are allowed to covary within each of the Assessment Center exercises, but not between exercises. The two IM tactics self-promotion and ingratiation are again also allowed to covary. The resulting CU model was fitted to the data using AMOS 5.0 (Arbuckle, 2003). The resulting fit indices suggested that the model fit the data well, leaving hardly any room for improvement of the model ($\chi^2(5) = 6.2$; CFI = .99; RMSEA = .04). Table 8 presents the factor loadings, factor correlations, and correlated uniquenesses. All factor loadings were significant and took moderate to high values. This suggests that the IM dimensions measured in the Assessment Center possess convergent validity, as the IM ratings load substantially on their respective IM dimensions. Factor correlations revealed that the two dimensions self-promotion and ingratiation however also correlated with each other. This correlation was however lower than the correlations between performance dimensions (see table 6). This finding provides evidence that discriminant validity is not satisfactory, but that it is better for IM than for performance dimensions. Table 6 furthermore shows that two of the three correlated uniquenesses were significant at a moderate level. There is thus reason to assume that there is some bias due to methods effect in the measurement of IM. Overall, the construct-related validity of IM is good concerning convergent validity, while discriminant validity could be

improved. In summary, results reveal that the internal-construct related validity of IM dimensions is better than that of performance dimensions in the Assessment Center.

Discussion

The goal of the present study was twofold: First, it aimed at investigating whether the common finding that candidates use IM in selection interviews, and do so successfully, also holds for Assessment Centers. The second goal was to investigate whether the common conclusion that IM poses a threat to the accuracy of selection situations is justified.

Concerning the first goal, this study revealed that similar to selection interviews, candidates also made use of the two assertive IM tactics self-promotion and ingratiation in an Assessment Center. Results show that candidates used more IM in selection situations than in comparable situations that they were not evaluated in. The use of self-promotion and ingratiation proved to be beneficial for candidates' performance ratings in the Assessment Center, as both tactics improved the overall performance ratings that candidates received. Furthermore, candidates' use of self-promotion predicted assessor ratings of their performance on the dimension leadership, while their use of ingratiation predicted performance ratings on the dimension cooperation. This finding provides indirect evidence for the notion that IM might not pose a threat to the accuracy of selection decisions after all: Since candidates' use of particular IM tactics predicts their performance ratings on specific performance dimensions, IM cannot be regarded as a measurement error, but rather as a reliable predictor of assessors' ratings of performance. This notion is further supported by the results of this study: Candidates' use of self-promotion and ingratiation in the selection context predicted their performance ratings on the dimensions leadership and cooperation in non-evaluated situations even when controlling for the effects of IM in non-evaluated

situations. Furthermore, IM possesses satisfactory internal construct-related validity. Results thus indicate that the general view of IM as a threat should be reconsidered.

Theoretical and Practical Contributions

There are two main contributions of this study for theory and practice. First and foremost, this study provides preliminary evidence that IM can be regarded as a consistent inter-individual difference variable rather than a measurement error in personnel selection. Certain IM tactics predict performance ratings on certain dimensions, and they do so not only in the selection situation itself, but also in non-evaluated situations. Since IM tactics furthermore proved to possess internal construct-related validity, this study provides evidence that the IM tactics used by candidates reflect a behavioral expression of underlying traits (Ellis et al., 2002; Van Iddekinge et al., 2007; Kleinmann & Klehe, 2011). Both in selection and in non-evaluated situations, candidates' use of IM tactics predict their performance ratings on differential dimensions. Candidates thus do not only react to the high demands of selection situations with increased use of IM, but rather act according to their underlying dispositions.

Second, this study has some implications for trait-activation theory (Tett & Guterman, 2000). Results suggest that the trait-activation potential of a situation is not necessarily objective in nature, but that situations might be potent to activate various traits. In the Assessment Center, the role-plays and group-discussions activated some candidates' self-promotion and subsequently leadership behavior, while it lead other candidates to make use of ingratiation and behave in a cooperative manner. The trait-activation potential of a situation could thus be high for several different traits, a notion that is somewhat implicit in trait-activation theory, but might have to be considered more thoroughly in the future. Especially in Assessment Centers, where exercises are designed in such a way to assess several skills,

one has to consider whether the situation possesses trait-activation potential for all those skills. This question is especially relevant for practitioners developing or using Assessment Centers for personnel selection.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

There are two main limitations of this study that may diminish its relevance for theory and practice: First, the Assessment Center was set up as a selection training rather than an actual selection situation, and second, the non-observed situations took place in this Assessment Center setting rather than in an independent context. Since data was collected in the context of an Assessment Center training, participants might have behaved differently than they would have in an actual selection. However, this is unlikely because participants gained a benefit out of behaving similarly to an actual selection situation as they received individual feedback at the end of the day. They furthermore reported that they behaved as if they had been in a selection situation. Another problem of the simulation context may be that the observers were work- and organizational psychology students rather than personnel selection professional. However, observers in this study received a one-day training prior to the data collection that was designed similar to observer trainings used in the field. Furthermore, observers were trained separately for rating either IM behaviors or performance. Since IM is not usually rated separately in the field, the findings of this study might even be more conservative than what would be found in a field study. One direction for future research might therefore be an extension of the present findings to the setting of an actual Assessment Center to ensure generalizability.

The other main limitation of this study lies in the fact that the non-evaluated situations took place within the context of the Assessment Center. Participants may thus have behaved differently than in a truly non-evaluated situation. On the other hand, it allowed the

investigation of situations that are comparable to those used in the selection context under standardized conditions. Future research would however benefit substantially from investigating whether candidates' IM in a selection context also predicts performance ratings in situations that are completely unrelated to the selection context.

Future research is needed to further explain the findings of the exploratory SEM concerning hypothesis 4b. When fitting the model concerning the effects of self-promotion in selection situations on leadership in non-observed situations, results suggested satisfactory fit to the data. For the model investigating the relationship between ingratiation in selection situations and cooperation in non-observed situations, however, results indicated poor fit. When the error terms of the performance measurements in the two situations were allowed to covary, fit however improved substantially, resulting in good fit. This suggests that there may be a common bias in both situations when measuring ingratiation. That finding is not surprising, as both selection and non-observed situations are conceptually similar. What is however surprising is the fact that this common bias was only found in the measurement of ingratiation, and not in the measurement of self-promotion. For ingratiation, ratings in both situations thus seem to commonly measure something besides candidates' ingratiation in the respective situations. This common factor could be an interesting area for future investigations.

The results of this study furthermore open up a venue for future research into the area of IM and faking in selection situations. This study revealed that correlations between the two IM tactics self-promotion and ingratiation were noticeably larger in the selection situations than in the non-evaluated situations (see figure 4). An explanation for this unexpected finding may be that some candidates make stronger use also of IM tactics that are not usually an expression of their underlying traits. This could mean that they fake certain behaviors that do

not represent underlying traits. Investigating this hypothesis, therewith shedding light on the distinction between IM and faking, would greatly aid theory and practice.

Conclusion

The results of this study support the notion that candidates use IM and therewith increase their performance ratings in an Assessment Center. More specifically, their use of self-promotion is associated with performance ratings on the dimension leadership, while their use of ingratiation relates to higher performance ratings on the dimension cooperation. These two IM tactics used in the selection context furthermore predict assessor's ratings of performance in non-evaluated situations and show internal construct-related validity. This contradicts the notion that candidates' use of IM poses a threat to the accuracy of selection decisions, as IM can be regarded as an inter-individual difference in candidates' traits that is predictive for performance ratings even outside the selection context.

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Table 1. Means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations among the studied variables

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Impression Management selection													
1 Self-promotion	3.56	.67	$\alpha=.89$										
2 Ingratiation	3.48	.61	.42**	$\alpha=.86$									
Performance selection													
3 Leadership	3.21	.80	.71**	.09	$\alpha=.89$								
4 Cooperation	3.28	.75	.24**	.38**	.25**	$\alpha=.77$							
5 Planning	3.34	.70	.48**	.12	.70**	.51**	$\alpha=.86$						
6 Overall performance	3.32	.57	.59**	.27**	.78**	.72**	.89**						
Impression management non-observed													
7 Self-promotion	2.71	.58	.24*	-.09	.29**	.01	.22*	.21*	$\alpha=.76$				
8 Ingratiation	2.99	.51	-.01	.19*	-.01	.15	.06	.10	.06	$\alpha=.62$			
Performance non-observed													
9 Leadership	2.83	.67	.31**	.12	.33**	.17	.26**	.30**	.70**	.17	$\alpha=.74$		
10 Cooperation	3.05	.55	.24**	.31**	.15	.37**	.22*	.31**	.12	.42**	.38**	$\alpha=.55$	
11 Planning	2.89	.61	.39**	.23*	.37**	.31**	.38**	.42**	.44**	.34**	.70**	.62**	$\alpha=.59$
12 Overall performance	2.93	.51	.41**	.26**	.37**	.34**	.35**	.43**	.57**	.37**	.86**	.74**	.89**

N = 114, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Note. Interrater reliabilities presented in the diagonal

Table 2. Means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations among the studied variables per exercise

Observed group-discussion 1	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4
Impression management						
1 Self-promotion	3.44	.87				
2 Ingratiation	3.49	.70	.43*			
Performance						
3 Leadership	3.14	.94	.67**	.17		
4 Cooperation	3.24	.99	.24**	.23*	.26**	
5 Planning	3.25	.85	.44**	.13	.54**	.45**
Observed group-discussion 2	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4
Impression management						
1 Self-promotion	3.61	.78				
2 Ingratiation	3.43	.71	.36**			
Performance						
3 Leadership	3.10	1.10	.66**	.19*		
4 Cooperation	3.05	1.24	.29**	.34**	.37**	
5 Planning	3.40	.93	.48**	.17	.70**	.45**
Observed role-play	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4
Impression management						
1 Self-promotion	3.64	.82				
2 Ingratiation	3.52	.88	.40**			
Performance						
3 Leadership	3.40	.85	.59**	-.01		
4 Cooperation	3.55	.96	.19*	.43**	.11	
5 Planning	3.36	.91	.41**	.08	.62**	.47**

Non-observed group-discussion		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4
Impression management							
1	Self-promotion	2.77	.66				
2	Ingratiation	2.94	.59	.07			
Performance							
3	Leadership	2.90	.66	.73**	.071		
4	Cooperation	2.94	.59	.01	.62**	-.02	
5	Planning	2.18	.68	.44**	.40**	.55**	.47**
Non-observed role-play		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4
Impression management							
1	Self-promotion	2.70	.72				
2	Ingratiation	3.05	.60	.04			
Performance							
3	Leadership	2.86	.85	.71**	.24*		
4	Cooperation	3.17	.68	.07	.34**	.42**	
5	Planning	2.98	.75	.53**	.30**	.82**	.60**

N = 114. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$

Table 3. Stepwise regressions predicting performance in non-evaluated situations with the help of IM in non-evaluated situations and IM in selection situations

Predictor	Leadership in non-evaluated situations				Predictor	Cooperation in non-evaluated situations			
	B	SE B	β	p		B	SE B	β	p
Step 1					Step 1				
Constant	.77	.21			Constant	1.78	.27		
Self-promotion in non-evaluated situations	.77	.08	.69**	.00	Ingratiation in non-evaluated situations	.43	.09	.42**	.00
Step 2					Step 2				
Constant	.39	.28			Constant	1.2	.33		
Self-promotion in non-evaluated situations	.73	.08	.65**	.00	Ingratiation in non-evaluated situations	.39	.09	.38**	.00
Self-promotion in selection situations	.14	.07	.14*	.04	Ingratiation in selection situations	.19	.07	.23**	.01

N = 114. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$

Table 4. Goodness of Fit Indexes and Model Comparisons for the Structural Equation Models concerning Hypotheses 4a and 4b

Hypothesis 4a		$X^2_{(114)}$	<i>df</i>	CFI	RMSEA	Model Comparison	ΔX^2	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
1	Path a ₁ : Self-promotion _{selection} → Leadership _{selection} Path a ₂ : Self-promotion _{non-evaluated} → Performance _{non-evaluated}	16.9	4	.92	.16	Model 1-3	11.9	2	.00
2	Additional path b: Self-promotion _{selection} → Self-promotion _{non-evaluated}	9.6	3	.96	.13	Model 2-3	4.6	1	.00
3	Additional path c: Self-promotion _{selection} → Leadership _{non-evaluated}	5.0	2	.98	.11				
Hypothesis 4b		$X^2_{(114)}$	<i>df</i>	CFI	RMSEA	Model Comparison	ΔX^2	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
1	Path a ₁ : Ingratiation _{selection} → Cooperation _{selection} Path a ₂ : Ingratiation _{non-evaluated} → Cooperation _{non-evaluated}	22.2	4	.66	.19	Model 1-3	12.2	2	.00
2	Additional path b: Ingratiation _{selection} → Ingratiation _{non-evaluated}	17.6	3	.73	.20	Model 2-3	7.6	1	.01
3	Additional path c: Ingratiation _{selection} → Cooperation _{non-evaluated}	10.0	2	.85	.18	Model 3-4	8.9	1	.00
4	Additional path d: Residual Cooperation _{selection} ↔ Residual Cooperation _{non-evaluated}	1.1	1	1.00	.02				

Note. CFI = comparative fit index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation.

Table 5. Multitrait-Multimethod Mate for performance in selection situations

Dimensions	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Group-discussion 1										
1 Planning	3.25	.85								
2 Leadership	3.14	.94	<u>.54**</u>							
3 Cooperation	3.24	.99	<u>.45**</u>	<u>.26**</u>						
Group-discussion 2										
4 Planning	3.40	.93	.50**	.42**	.24**					
5 Leadership	3.09	1.10	.43**	.64**	.21*	<u>.70**</u>				
6 Cooperation	3.05	1.24	.21*	.16	.38**	<u>.45**</u>	<u>.37**</u>			
Role-play										
7 Planning	3.36	.91	.32**	.21*	.18*	.48**	.32**	<u>.30**</u>		
8 Leadership	3.40	.85	.43**	.45**	.11	.45*	.48**	<u>.15</u>	<u>.62**</u>	
9 Cooperation	3.55	.96	.11	-.09	.15	.10	-.09	.19*	.47**	.11

N = 114. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$

Note. Monotrait-heteromethod values are shown in bold; heterotrait-monomethod values are shown in underlined font.

Table 6: Correlated-uniqueness model for performance in selection situations

	Factor Loadings			Factor Correlations			Correlated Uniquenesses		
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
Group-discussion 1									
1 Leadership	.74**								
2 Cooperation		.51**		.25**			.22		
3 Planning			.61**	.70**	.51**		.32*	.40**	
Group-discussion 2									
1 Leadership	.83**								
2 Cooperation		.74**					.45*		
3 Planning			.82**				.50*	.22	
Role-play									
1 Leadership	.62**								
2 Cooperation		.24**					.19		
3 Planning			.54**				.55**	.50**	

N = 114. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$

Table 7. Multitrait-Multimethod Matrix for IM in selection situations

Tactics	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5
Group-discussion 1							
1 Self-promotion	3.44	.87					
2 Ingratiation	3.49	.70	<u>0.43**</u>				
Group-discussion 2							
3 Self-promotion	3.61	.78	0.67**	0.22*			
4 Ingratiation	3.43	.71	0.20*	0.47**	<u>0.36**</u>		
Role-play							
5 Self-promotion	3.64	.82	0.35**	0.22*	0.50**	0.34**	
6 Ingratiation	3.52	.88	0.13	0.38**	0.18*	0.53**	<u>0.40**</u>

N = 114. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$

Note. Monotrait-heteromethod values are shown in bold; heterotrait-monomethod values are shown in underlined font.

Table 8. Correlated-uniqueness model for IM in selection situations

	Factor Loadings		Factor Correlations		Correlated Uniquenesses	
	1	2	1	2	1	2
Group-discussion 1						
1 Self-promotion	.69**					
2 Ingratiation		.59**	.42**		.48**	
Group-discussion 2						
1 Self-promotion	.96**					
2 Ingratiation		.84**			.18	
Role-play						
1 Self-promotion	.53**					
2 Ingratiation		.59**			.34**	

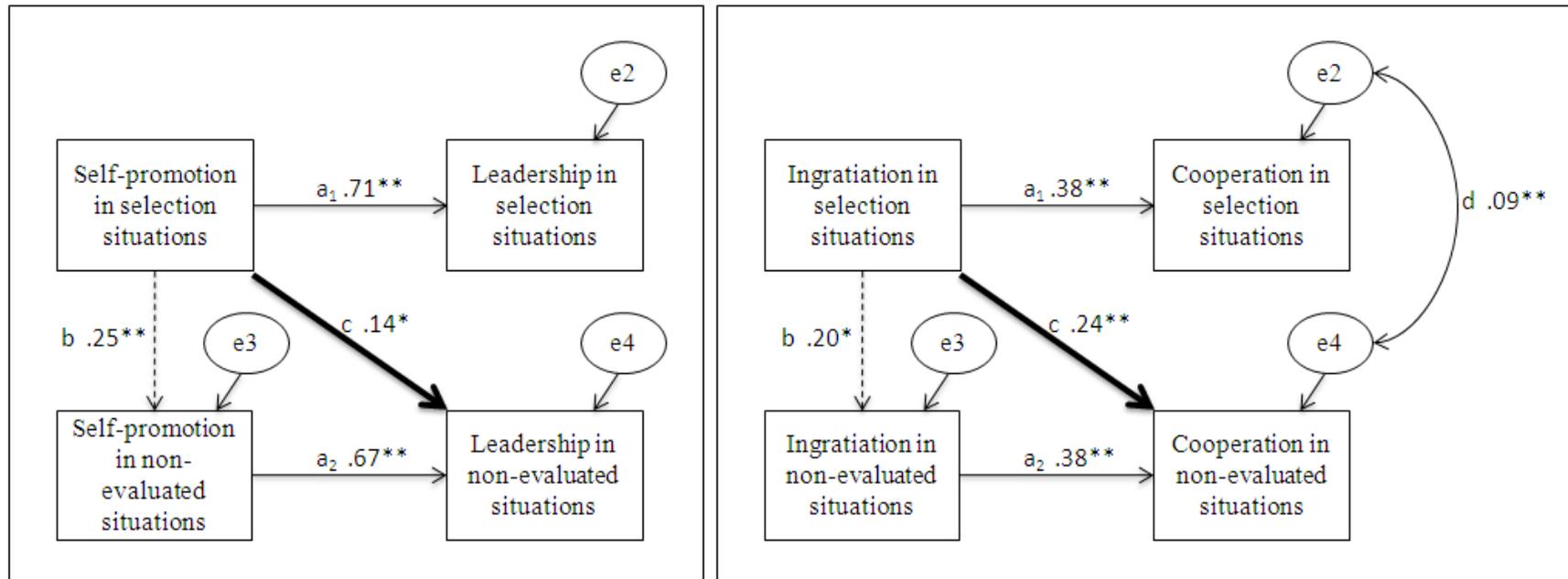


Figure 1. Best fitting Structural Equation Models concerning hypotheses 4a (left) and 4b (right)

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$; dashed line represents the additional path of model 2; bold lines represent the additional path of model 3

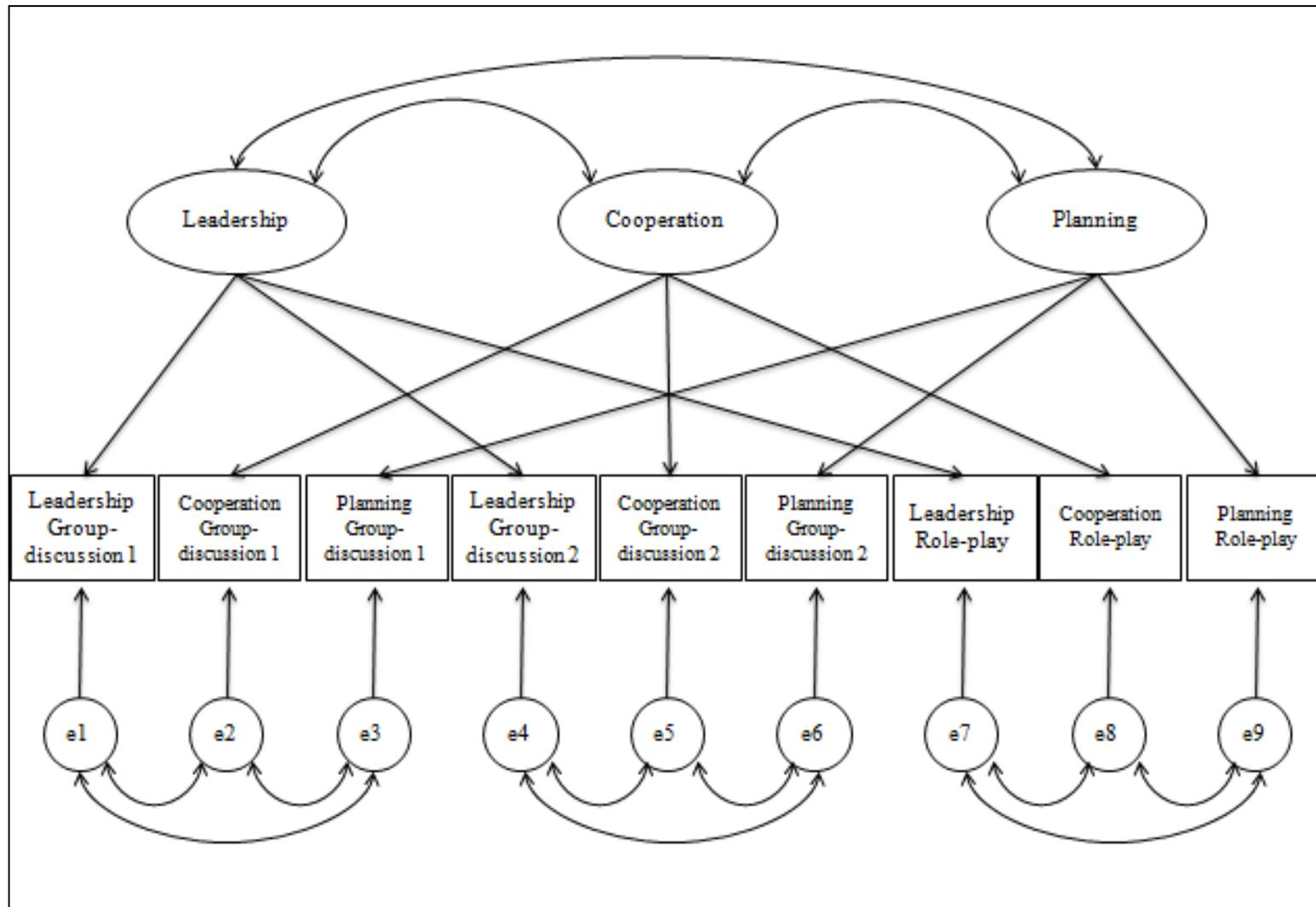


Figure 2. Correlated uniqueness model for performance in selection situations

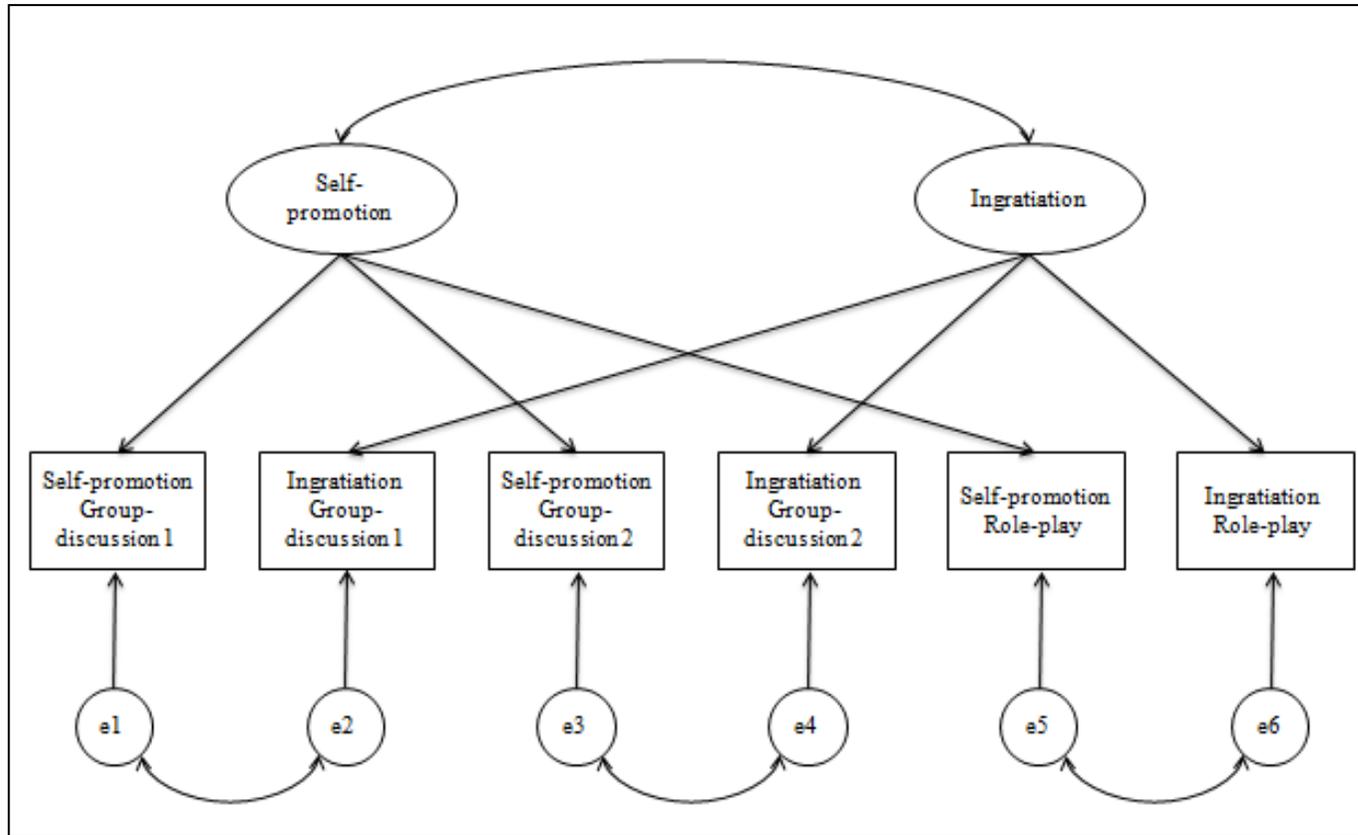


Figure 3. Correlated uniqueness model for IM in selection situations

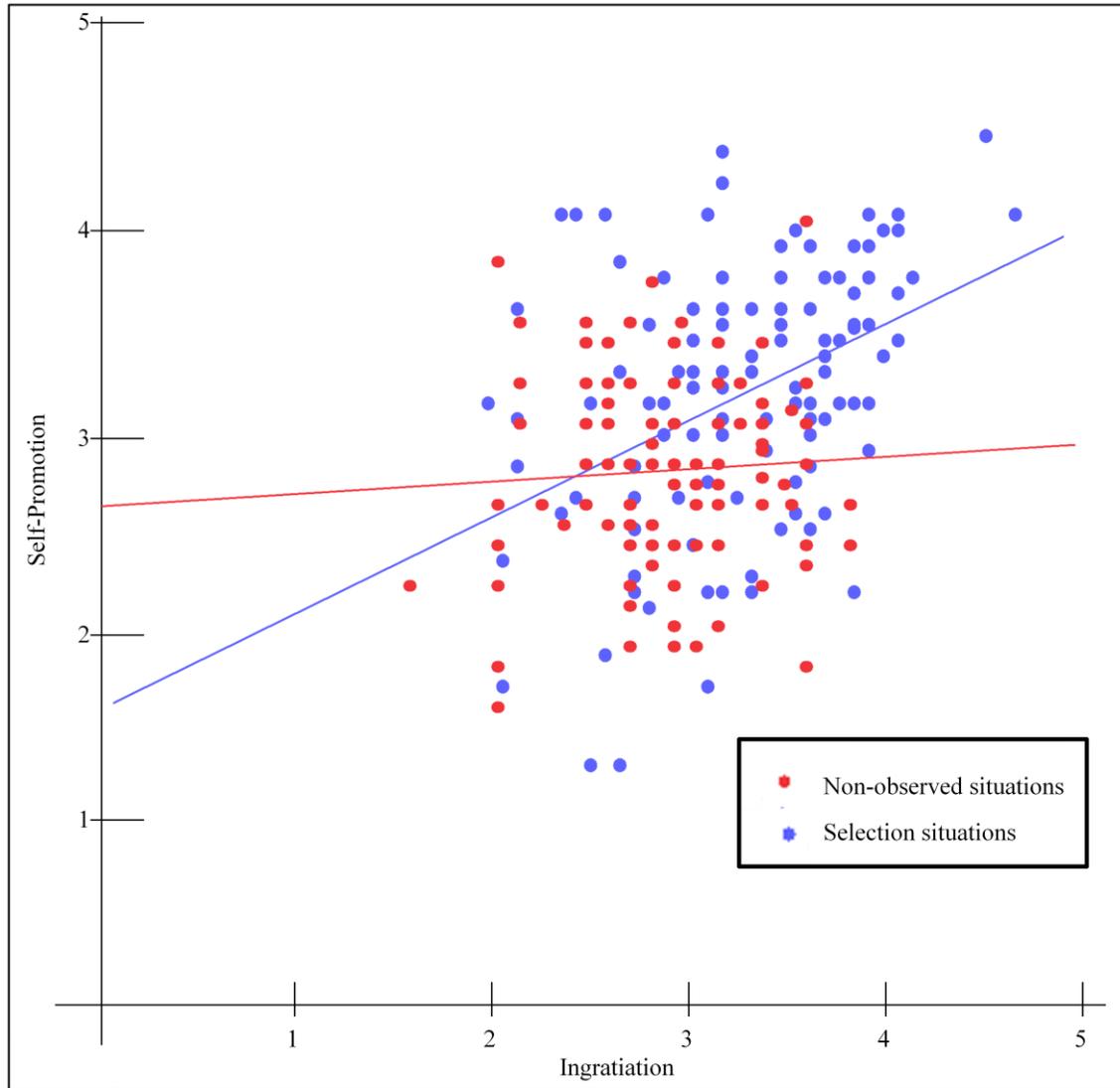


Figure 4. Correlations between self-promotion and ingratiation are higher in the selection

Appendix A

Exercises

Observed group-discussion 1

Your computer-based task as a group is to maximize the capital of the company's plant in a simulation timeframe of 20 months. It is important that you keep the following information in mind while doing the task together.

Keys:

- F5 End of the month (pressing the key finishes the current month)
- F10 Information regarding the actions and variables of interest
- F1 Development of capital (opens a figure that shows the development of capital so far, available from the second month onwards)
- F2 Overview of the months so far (all actions and their consequences, available from the second month onwards)
- F3 Time (spent on this task so far)

Observed group-discussion 2

Task

A manufacturer of edible oil in the Netherlands would like to extend to the UK market. The production facilities are located at several locations in the Netherlands. From here both the domestic market and the markets in France and Scandinavia are supplied. General information and information that you have prepared previously for this meeting can be found in this folder. Your colleagues also have the general information and their specific information. The goal for this meeting is to decide whether and how the company should establish in the UK market.

General Information

1. Description of the product

"OILY - finest cooking oil" with the words "100% pure vegetable oil" and "vitamins" is almost odorless edible oil without a strong taste. The high quality of the oil, the health aspect, the relatively high price compared to the competition and the advantages of light-protected-package (box) over the bottle were arguments that were used for image building. The main thrusts of the advertisement are:

- Health
- Packaging
- Salad Application

2. General description of the fat market of the three markets entered so far

Average % rate of market share:

Butter 24%

Margarine 25%

Edible fat 7%

Grease 20%

Cooking oil 24%

In these markets in the food sector, the market share proportions are relatively stable. On the domestic market, the market share of oily is stagnant at 26% after a continuous growth.

3. Description of the market situation in England

The market share for the production lines last year was:

Butter 20%

Margarine 31%

Edible fat 6%

Grease 9%

Cooking oil 34%

Concerning the oils, mostly the cheap no-name products are sold, but there are two brands, one of them from the U.S., competing in the market as well. As oils are sold in the 3 or 4 liter cans also for the brand products, the price level is also relatively low. The manufacturer from the U.S. is relatively independent of fluctuations of prices of commodities.

Information for participant A

1. The utilization of your production has declined to 85 % in the last year. In the near future, no increase in productivity can be expected due to the regular replacement of old machines.
2. In case of a production for the expected sales volume in England, the current total production volume would be increased by 18%.

The market research company commissioned in England yielded the following results:

3. In the edible oil market, a decline in the number of sales is expected, as consumers turn to the cheaper edible fats and margarine. The sales increase was at 4% for both of them in the last month.
4. The trend toward no-name products in the edible oil market is increasing. Increase in sales in the last month was 3.5%.

5. The results of the test market for OILY in the last year was significantly positive.

Information for participant B

1. All of your production facilities were fully utilized in recent years almost entirely.
2. Long-term loans could be included in the moment at a relatively low interest rate.
3. In Scandinavia, the market research institute commissioned by you expects a rising demand in the next year. This is justified by the general increase in income due to the expected economic recovery.
4. In Scandinavia, only stagnating sales figures have been achieved after entering the market last year. A cost recovery can be reached in case of stable prices at 7% (25.000 units) market share. However, the market share is just under 5%.

Information for participant C

1. The market shares in France rose steadily.
 - First year 2% (6,000 units)
 - Second year 8% (28,000 units)
 - Third year 11% (35,000 units)
 - Fourth year 12% (38,000 units)
2. Your French market research institute INFO, which itself is also active in England, has made negative comments about the research institute that was commissioned in England.
3. INFO assumes that sales can be increased in France, if the company will switch to the standard 1.25 liter plastic bottles.

For the market launch (advertising, distribution) in England some of your own resources could be made available, which would be just enough.

Information for participant D

1. Due to the market launches in France and Scandinavia, money was taken from the advertising in the Netherlands. This could be the reason for the stagnation of the market share at 26% and thus the production capacity at 85%.
2. In England, a factory with outdated facilities and 600 employees could be bought at a cheap price. Here, the production of no name oil would be possible. A large buyer for those products is available. Good profits can be expected.
3. The production needs supplies, which might in the extreme be harmful. As there are no legal provisions and none are expected to be established, the health department will have no objections

By modernizing the facilities, brand oil could be produced. The number of employees would be reduced to 400. As the Scandinavian market could also be supplied, it would be possible to close a factory with 300 employees in the Netherlands.

Observed role-play

What has happened: You work as a senior client relations manager at ONECLICK. Together with your team, you have developed software for a client that simplifies the administration of logistics. You have installed the software, which cost 1 000 000 € at the client's company and offered to train the employees to use it at an additional fee of 15 000 € per employee. There are 10 employees who would receive that training, which lasts for one week. Due to financial reasons, this offer was however rejected by the client. The employees of the client have now worked with the software for one week, and there have been several problems in using it. This has led to delays in deliveries, because some data was not processed correctly by the program. Therefore, the client may be faced with substantial financial losses as he has not been able to make deliveries to customers on time.

Your present situation: The client's situation is very hectic and uncoordinated at the moment. The employees are trying to deal with the customers to minimize the losses of the company. At the moment, the costs of the problems are at 150 000 per month. The project manager in the client's company is very upset. He has just called you to let you know that he will arrive at your office in 10 minutes to discuss the whole catastrophe. He complained about the software and would like ONECLICK to reimburse him for the financial losses of the company.

Your company's view: You have not had the chance to discuss the situation with your team, as it is a busy time at the moment. You however suspect that the problem is not the software itself, but rather the way it is used. The employees of the client have not been trained to use the software yet, so they do not have enough know-how yet. At the moment, all trainings are completely booked. You are however also aware that this is a very important client. You have been working together for years. Reimbursing the client for the losses is however neither financially possible nor understandable. After all, an employee training was offered to the client. You only have 10 minutes left to prepare for the meeting with the project manager of the client's company. (The conversation will last around 15 minutes.)

Non-observed group-discussion

You are Mr. /Mrs. Peters. It is Thursday, the 9.5. at 16h. You have just come back from a business trip and will leave again tomorrow morning for a conference in New York. You will come back from the conference on 16.5. late at night. You now find several letters in your apartment that you have received while you were gone. As a group, you now have 45 minutes to read the letters and, if necessary, react to them. Whether you take notes concerning answers, make appointment, complete tasks right away or do nothing is up to you. Your phone is broken and will only be repaired tomorrow. The only phone you can use is that in the post office.

You will still have time from 17-19h to do things, of course keeping in mind the opening hours and times to get there. You will know about them from the letters or the map included. After 19h, you will have no more time. Everything you have not done till then will have to wait until you get back from New York.

Please read the letters now and write down in the answering sheet and in the agenda, when you want to fulfill which tasks with the help of whom. Please also indicate it if you wish to do nothing.

Non-observed role-play

Role 1: Factory director

You are the CEO of the second largest plant in the company. You have been employed for 27 years in the company. You started as a messenger boy and worked your way up through sales, purchasing and production departments until 3 years ago you took over your current senior position. Nobody knows about the work in this plant better than you. Last year, the head office expressed their satisfaction with the excellent work that you have done so far at a large dinner that was held at your honor.

You have just received notification from headquarters, that a new purchasing manager was hired who wants to try to centralize the entire purchasing of the company. You know that such an action looks very nice on paper, but you also know that one of the reasons for the recent success of the company was that the company was able to adapt quickly to unforeseen changes. The key to this flexibility was that the management has always attached great importance to the training of managers and that it has always let the individual plants make their own decisions.

You are aware that this new purchasing policy, if it enters into force, not only reduces the flexibility of your plant, but that it can probably also be the starting signal to limitations of the local influence on others in no less important areas.

You are determined to prevent the new purchasing manager from the implementation of the new policy. The new purchasing manager means well, but for the situation in your plant, he/she simply does not have the right understanding. You after all have 27 years of experience and have taken far greater expertise than any other person concerning decisions in this plant. Since little time is available, you have to discuss your ideas quickly and decisively when the purchasing manager is there. You must make clear to the purchasing manager that after all you are the one who directs this plant. You furthermore know that the outcome of this

conversation will have a great impact on the way your subordinates view your role as head of the plant.

You now await the visit of the purchasing manager.

Role 2: Purchasing manager

You have just received a position as purchasing manager of a large company, which is active in many different areas. You hold a degree in business administration, have managed a consulting company, and written two books on business management. You have come to the conclusion that the only way to solve the economic chaos in the company is a centralization of the purchasing. And this policy has to be implemented soon! You have decided that all purchases above 10.000 € must be approved from headquarters. You are aware that each plant that has had the right to make all its own purchases in the past will defend tenaciously. You also know that the shopping-season starts in 3 weeks.

You have decided that a promising way to make this new purchasing policy effective is to visit each plant and discuss with the responsible CEO that the rules of the new policy should be followed. You expect some resistance. Therefore, you have decided that you need to make sure that every plant's CEO is fully aware of what the plan is, what effect it has, and why it needs to be implemented. You are, after all, one of the few people who have an overview of the economic problems of the company.

You're on your way to a meeting with the CEO of the second largest plant in the company.

Appendix B

Rating scale / Behavioral anchors for IM tactics

	++	+	0	-	--	
Self-promotion						
Earns respect by acting competently						Appears incompetent
Indicates the importance of his / her information						Does not stress the importance of his / her information
Appears credible / believable						Appears noncredible / distrustful
Distinguished important from less important issues						Sees all issues as equally relevant
Appears self-confident						Appears self-conscious
Committed with great personal commitment						Acts with little personal effort
Influences the course of conversation						Has no influence on the course of conversation
Ingratiation						
Is compliant with others' opinions						Insists on his / her opinions
Tries to involve others in his / her ideas						Doesn't care about the opinions of his counterparts
Recognizes feelings and problems of others						Doesn't recognize feelings and problems of others
Considers others' feelings and needs in his goal-setting						Doesn't care about the others
Helps others when they have problems						Is focused on his / her own problems
Does not achieve something at the cost of the others						Achieves his / her goals at the cost of the others
Listens, doesn't interrupt others						Doesn't listen, interrupts others

Appendix C

Rating scale / Behavioral anchors for performance dimensions

Leadership	++	+	0	-	--
Grasps the initiative					Let's others ask questions but does not take the self initiative
Leads the discussion, parts of the conversation					Does not lead the discussion, or is a wrapper
Takes the role of the group coordinator/spokes person					Is a wrapper
Mentions that he/she strives for a leading position					Does not show any indication to strive for a leading position
Controls results and processes					Does not control results nor processes or simply accepts them
Represents the own point of view					Does not represent the own point of view persistently
Assigns assignments and delegates					Accepts assignments
Points to him/her initiating leading in different situations (e.g. as group coordinator)					Does not point out any leading positions
Clarifies that and how he / she is engaged in subjects related to leading a group					Does not clarify that he / she engages in subjects related to leading a group
Reaches awareness, other take over his / her ideas					Subordinates to others
Cooperation	++	+	0	-	--
Creates Win-Win situations (i.e. a situation that satisfies all parties involved)					Only cares about personal goals, or only for the best solution for him / herself
Agrees to compromises					Does not consider suggestions for compromises
Treats others fairly					Does not treat others fairly
Shares moments of success with others					When successful does not point to the importance of the team
Actively includes others					Carries out monologues
States that he / she has been a member of teams					States that he / she has no experiences with working in teams

IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT IN AN ASSESSMENT CENTER62

States that he / she enjoys working in teams and is successful doing so		States that he / she prefers to work alone
Mentions team and cooperation skills being a strength		Mentions individual working as a strength
Tries to negotiate between different parties		Blocks contributions of others or interrupts others
Planning	++ + 0 - --	
Controls facts & circumstances of all people involved before reaching a decision		Disregards some alternative perspectives
Searches and asks for all available information		Jumps to conclusions
Recognizes the essentials		Does not grasp the core of the problem
Recognizes relationships between things		Does not bring clarity about the issue at hand
Structures complex facts and circumstances		Cannot structure complex issues
Assigns reasonable priorities & goals		Does not set priorities or sets them wrong
Describes him / herself as responsible, on time and orderly		Describes him / herself as unreliable, not on time, and messy
Fills the given time frame, and does not need more time than given.		Does not fill the given time and cannot finish within the given time frame
Reports in a structured and logic sequence		Reports in an unstructured and illogical sequence
Indicates clearly to set priorities and personal goals		Does not indicate to set priorities or personal goals