



Distinct Nonverbal Expressions of Dominance and Prestige



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How is Rank Communicated From Nonverbal Behaviors?

- Open and expansive nonverbal behaviors are associated with high rank (Hall, Coats, & Smith LeBeau, 2005).
- Nonverbal displays of pride (i.e., head tilted slightly back, small smile, and expanded posture) are automatically and cross-culturally perceived as high rank (Shariff & Tracy, 2009; Tracy, Shariff, Zhao, & Henrich, 2013)

However, recent research suggests that there are two distinct forms of high rank (Cheng, Tracy, Foulsham, Kingstone, & Henrich, 2013)

- Dominance:** High rank attained via aggression and intimidation
- Prestige:** High rank attained via the demonstration of knowledge, expertise, and earned respect

No prior studies have examined whether dominance and prestige are associated with distinct nonverbal behaviors

An ability to distinguish between dominance and prestige from nonverbal displays is likely to benefit both observers and displayers

- Dominant leaders should be feared and avoided
- Prestigious leaders should be admired and copied

Research Hypotheses

1. Dominance and Prestige will be Recognized from Distinct Nonverbal Displays

- Powerful, intimidating, and antisocial nonverbal behaviors (i.e., downward head tilt, expansiveness, no smile) will increase perceptions of dominance; whereas powerful but friendly and confident nonverbal behaviors (i.e., pride expressions) will increase perceptions of prestige

2. Dominant and Prestigious Individuals will Signal their Status Using Distinct Dominance and Prestige Displays

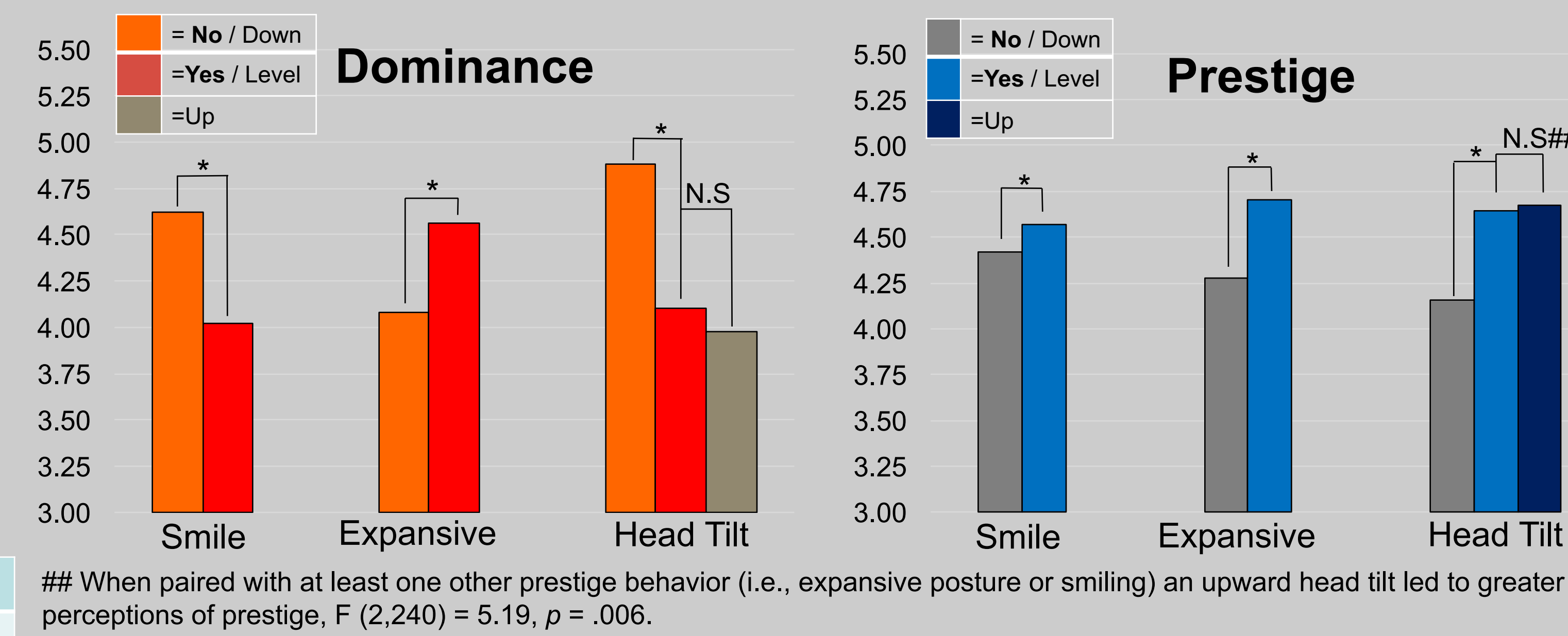
Study 1: Recognition of Dominance and Prestige from Nonverbal Displays

Participants and Procedure:

- 121 participants each viewed 12 images of computer-generated targets
- Targets' nonverbal displays were manipulated to portray all permutations of the following behaviors in a 3x2x2 design:
 - Head tilt (up vs. down vs. level)
 - Expansiveness (body expanded vs. neutral posture)
 - Smiling (smile vs. no smile)
- Each target was rated on the following measures (Cheng et al., 2010):

Dominance 4 items "This person would enjoy having control over others"
Prestige 4 items "Members of this persons group respect and admire him"

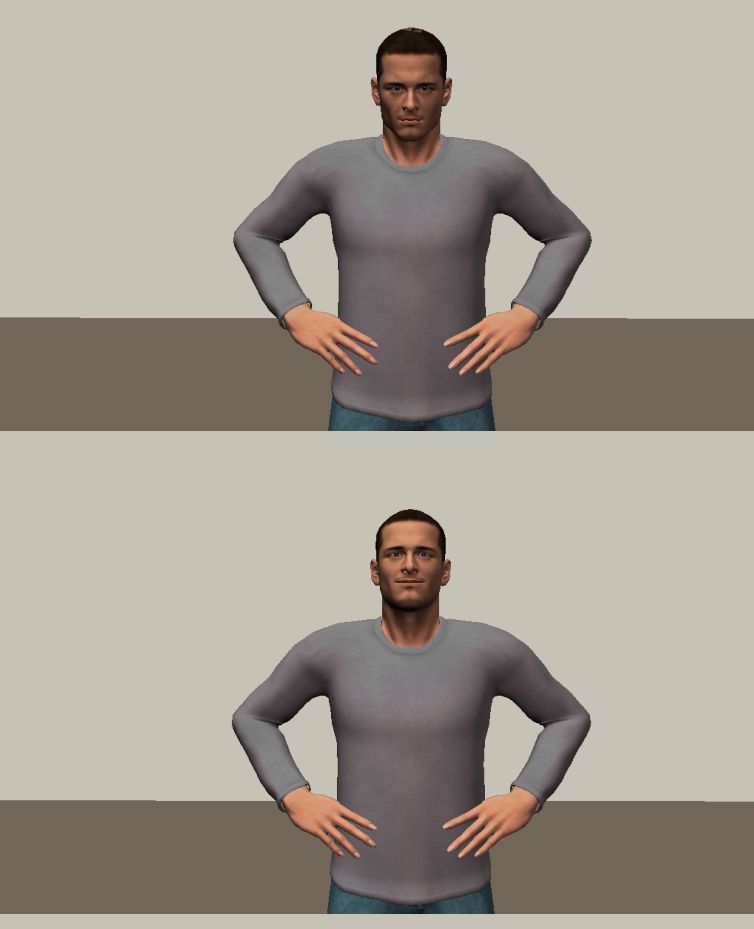
Study 1: Perceptions of Dominance and Prestige from Specific Behaviors



Key Findings

Most Dominant:
 1) No smile
 2) Expansive posture
 3) Downwards head tilt

Most Prestigious:
 1) Smile
 2) Expansive posture
 3) Upwards head tilt

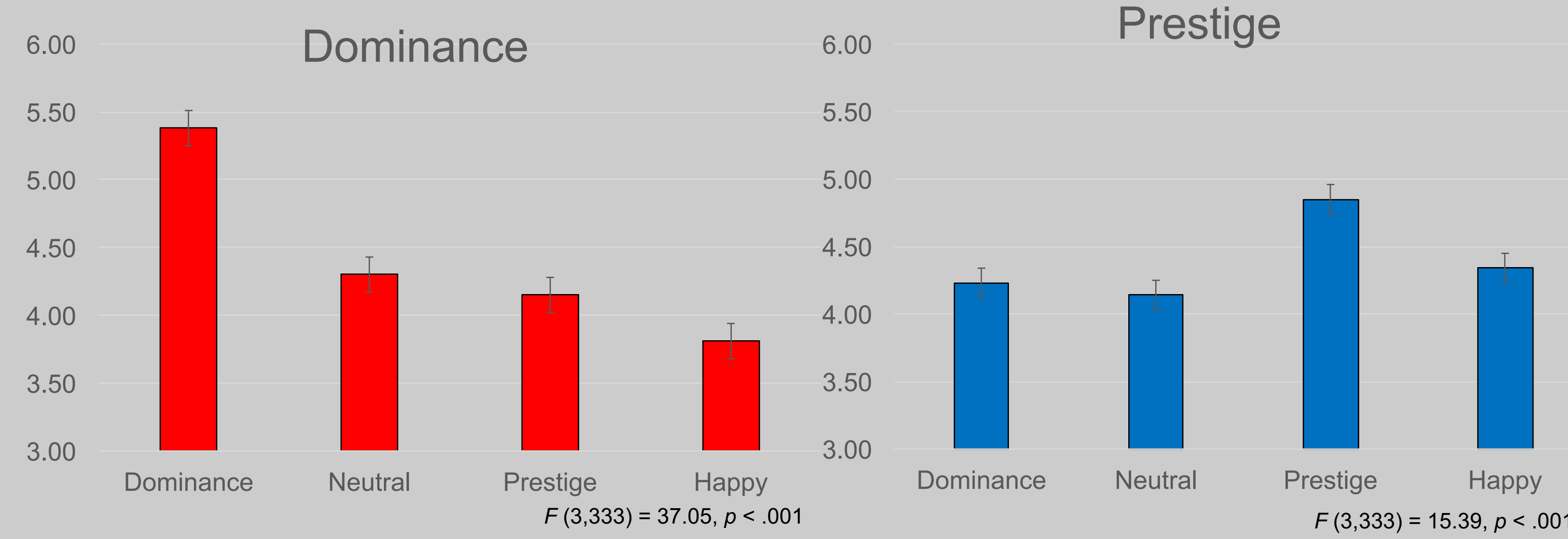


Study 2: Dominance and Prestige Prototypes

Participants and Procedure:

- 112 participants viewed a targets displaying permutations of behaviors expected to yield optimal perceptions of dominance and prestige based on study 1
- Participants also viewed this target displaying control expressions of happiness and neutral:
 - Dominance prototype (Expanded posture, head tilt down, no smile)
 - Prestige prototype (Expanded posture, head tilt up, smile)
 - Happy (Neutral posture, neutral head angle, smile)
 - Neutral (Neutral posture, neutral head angle, no smile)
- Participants rated each target on dominance and prestige using the items from Study 1

Study 2: Perceptions of Dominance and Prestige from Nonverbal Displays



Key Findings

1) Dominance display rated as more dominant than all other displays

2) Prestige display rated as more prestigious than all other displays

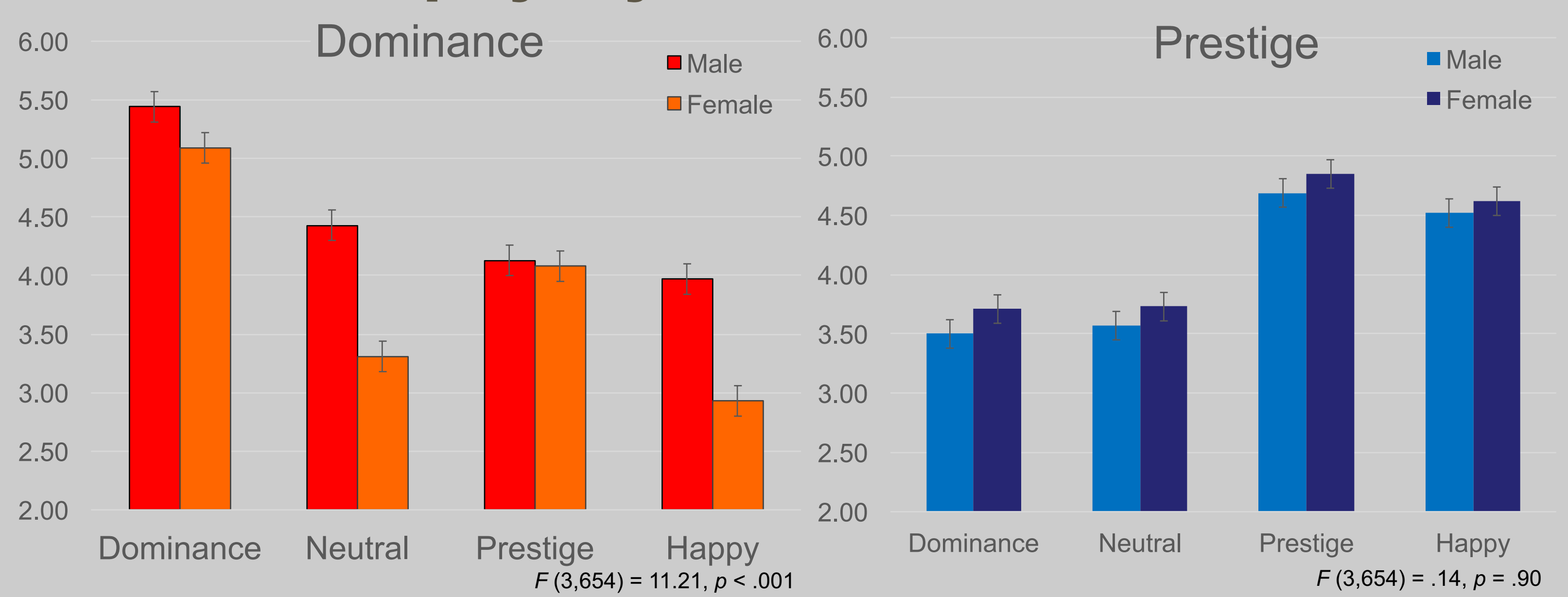


Study 3: Dominance and Prestige Prototypes Replication Study

Participants and Procedure:

- 220 participants viewed either a male or female human poser (matched to participants' gender) displaying the dominance and prestige prototypes, as well as control expressions
- Participants rated each target on dominance and prestige using the items from Studies 1 and 2

Study 3: Perceptions of Dominance and Prestige from Nonverbal Displays by Gender



Key Findings

1) Dominance display rated as more dominant than all other displays for men and women

2) Prestige display rated as more prestigious than all other displays for men and women



Study 4: Nonverbal Behaviors Displayed by Dominant and Prestigious Individuals

Participants and Procedure:

- Groups of 4-6 unacquainted individuals ($N = 191$) were video-recorded as they completed a group decision task
- Two research assistants coded nonverbal behaviors at eight time-points
- Participants rated each group member using the full 16-item dominance and prestige measures (Cheng et al., 2010).
- Social Relations Model (Kenny 1994) was utilized to derive target effects

Study 4: Correlations Between Behaviors and Rank Strategies

Behavior	Dominance	Prestige
Expansive	.15*	.19**
Head Up	.03	.19**
Smile	-.07	.28**
Head Down	-.11	-.12

Key Findings

- Expansiveness positively correlated with both dominance and prestige
- Upwards head tilt positively correlated with prestige only
- Smiling positively correlated with prestige only

Conclusions

- Dominance and prestige are associated with distinct behavioral displays
- Expansive posture leads to perceptions of both dominance and prestige
- The addition of prideful and affiliative nonverbal behaviors leads to perceptions of prestige, while hostile and aggressive nonverbal behaviors leads to perceptions of dominance
- These perceptions are consistent with the actual nonverbal behaviors displayed by dominant and prestigious individuals during social interactions

References

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