RESEARCH ARTICLE

Backlash for high self-promotion at hiring depends on candidates' gender and age

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Abstract

Previous research has shown that evaluators react negatively to intense, high levels of self-promotion during the interview, in particular when displayed by female candidates, presumably because these behaviors violate the female gender stereotype of being modest and putting others first. We expand this focus on a single social category and examine the joint effects of gender and age on reactions to high self-promotion/low modesty, as both gender and age stereotypes contain normative expectations regarding assertiveness and humility. Results of our experimental study point out two groups at risk of backlash, older women and younger men. While both older female and younger male candidates engaging in high self-promotion were seen as competent, they were regarded as less interpersonally warm, received lower interview performance ratings, and were less likely to be hired. These results provide evidence for the importance of applying an intersectional lens on the effects of self-promotion at hiring. Their implications for theory and practice as well as recommendations for future research are discussed.

KEYWORDS
age, gender, intersectionality, interview, selection, self-promotion

Practitioner points

- High intense self-promotion during the interview can be risky, and lead to backlash.
- We propose that age- and gender-stereotypical norms regarding modest behaviors increase the risk of backlash for certain candidates.
- Our research identifies two high-risk groups, older women and younger men: While both, older women and younger men are seen as competent when engaging in high self-promotion, they are both seen as lacking interpersonal warmth and are less likely to be hired.
- By applying an intersectional lens, our research reveals two unique groups that are at risk of unfair treatment in hiring. Because these groups would have gone unnoticed if applying a classical diversity & inclusion perspective, it encourages organizations to expand their D&I approach.

1 | INTRODUCTION

Selection interviews continue to be popular, among organizational decision makers and candidates alike. Candidates appreciate interviews as fair procedures, providing them with the opportunity to present their abilities, personal qualities, and ambitions (Hausknecht et al., 2004). Because interviews are high-stakes situations where candidates try to convey that they are the best person for the job, many engage in self-promotion, that is, a form of impression management that consists of pointing out and describing one's accomplishments and experience positively and taking credit for successes (Ellis et al., 2002). Often, the use of self-promotion is beneficial because it is generally associated with positive interview outcomes, including hiring decisions (Barrick et al., 2009; Gilmore & Ferris, 1989; Levashina et al., 2014; Stevens & Kristof, 1995). However, self-promotion can be risky (Jones & Pittman, 1982). Notably, engaging in high levels of self-promotion carries the risk of creating unintended negative impressions (e.g., appearing conceited or arrogant) and may negatively influence interview outcomes (Baron, 1986; Turnley & Bolino, 2001). This risk may be even higher for certain candidates. Several studies have shown that in certain situations, women who engage in high levels of self-promotion receive more negative reactions from others than men, also called backlash, because they deviate from the female gender-stereotypical norm of showing modesty and high interpersonal warmth (Rudman & Phelan, 2008). Thus, for women, high self-promotion during the interview may be more harmful than for men.

While this research shows that basic demographic characteristics of the candidates remain a key source of bias when evaluating candidates' behavior during the interview, it neglects the fact that candidates belong to multiple social groups simultaneously (e.g., Black women, older men). Isolating one characteristic (e.g., gender) and ignoring others (e.g., race or age) may oversimplify social reality, and ignore significant differences in evaluative outcomes within demographic groups as well as significant commonalities across demographic groups (Cole, 2009; Kulik et al., 2007).

In this article, we suggest that reactions to high self-promotion and low modesty depend on candidates' multiple group membership. We focus on the intersections between gender and age. In light of the rapid population ageing and increasing number of older adults, in particular older women (United Nations, 2020) on the labor market, it is utterly important to consider gender and age together when identifying barriers to fair treatment. Both women and older workers (defined as 50 years older), and continue to face discrimination at employment (Neumark, 2018). Moreover, they face similar stereotypical norms of staying humble and putting others first (North & Fiske, 2013), suggesting that aging may modulate recruiter reactions to the self-promotion of female candidates.

This research offers several contributions to the literature. Departing from a uniform conceptualization of identity, it contributes to a better understanding of the conditions under which high self-promotion may provoke unfair treatment. Moreover, by considering intersections between candidate gender and age, it sheds light on whether candidate age weakens or amplifies recruiter reactions to specific behaviors of male and female candidates. Thus, it can help clarify whether aging reduces or increases gender inequalities at hiring. This question is particularly important because women often need employment more urgently than men in the later stages of their professional lives, due to their typically intermittent careers and the fact that pension eligibility is related to the time spent in employment (Beehr & Bennett, 2015; Talaga & Beehr, 1995). Finally, this research helps identify specific groups for whom self-promotion at hiring leads to negative outcomes but that have gone unnoticed. Scholars have recurrently pointed out that intersections between social identities may constitute unique groups which are more than the sum of their parts (Cole, 2009; Hall et al., 2019). They are associated with unique characteristics and stereotypes and may therefore also provoke unique reactions and outcomes. Only by applying an intersectional lens can such groups be identified and rendered visible to organizations.

1.1 | Self-promotion at hiring

Candidates frequently engage in impression management to influence the way they are perceived by the interviewer. Motivated by the "desire to create a particular impression in others' mind" (Leary & Kowalski, 1990; p. 35), they aim to improve their attractivity among other candidates, using several verbal tactics such as self-promotion and ingratiation, and nonverbal behavior like smiling and nodding (Jones & Pittman, 1982; Stevens & Kristof, 1995). Self-promotion is particularly frequent during interviews, and comprises positively highlighting strengths and qualities, and taking credit for positive events like successes and accomplishments (Jones & Pittman, 1982; Kacmar et al., 1992). Overall, self-promotion is positively related to evaluations of interview performance and hiring decisions (Barrick et al., 2009; Levashina et al., 2014), primarily because it creates impressions of high competence (Amaral et al., 2019). Honest self-promotion, that is, describing strengths and skills in an attractive but honest manner, is more closely related to hiring outcomes than deceptive tactics like exaggerating skills or creating skills that one does not have (Bourdage et al., 2018).

However, self-promotion does not always lead to success. For example, the degree of interview structure (Barrick et al., 2009), or cultural context (Lievens & Peeters, 2008) can modulate the impact of self-promotion on evaluative outcomes. One important factor is the intensity and frequency of self-promotion. Theories of impression management have cautioned that self-promotion can create unintended negative impressions (Jones & Pittman, 1982). In particular, intense, high-levels of self-promotion (e.g., repeatedly attributing successes primarily to one's own capabilities, or primarily highlighting situations where one outperformed others) may be perceived as overly self-serving or conceited, lacking an appropriate level of humility, ultimately leading to negative evaluations by the interviewer and thus reduced returns for the candidate (Baron, 1986; Turnley & Bolino, 2001). Indeed, the relationship between the level of

honest impression management and interview outcomes is curvilinear: the extent to which candidates engage in honest impression management is related to better interview scores only to a certain point after which the relationship becomes negative (Robie et al., 2020). Similarly, high self-promotion in resumes leads to more negative overall impressions and lower outcomes than moderate self-promotion (Waung et al., 2015). One of the explanations is that recruiters may be put off by the immodesty associated with very high levels of impression management (Robie et al., 2020). Indeed, using a certain degree of modesty during the interview, that is, understating one's strengths and accomplishments (Cialdini & De Nicholas, 1989) can enhance interview outcomes, in particular, if candidates are clearly qualified and competent (Diekmann et al., 2022).

1.1.1 | Self-promotion, modesty, and gender

Research on backlash against women suggests that gender may further modulate recruiter reactions to high levels of self-promotion and low modesty. Drawing on theories of backlash and stereotype maintenance (Rudman & Fairchild, 2004; Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Phelan et al., 2012), it proposes that interviewer reactions depend on the alignment between candidate behavior and gender-stereotypical expectations. Gender stereotypes are culturally shared beliefs about men's and women's attributes, assigning men primarily agentic and self-oriented traits (e.g., assertive, ambitious, strong), and women primarily communal and relationship-oriented traits (e.g., warm, modest, caring) (e.g., Eagly et al., 2000; Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Phelan et al., 2012). These stereotypes also contain a prescriptive component, that is, men are expected to be agentic, and women are expected to be communal. Thus, for male candidates, high levels of self-promotion are well-aligned with male gender-stereotypical expectations of showing agency while for female candidates, engaging in high levels of self-promotion deviates from female gender-stereotypical expectations of showing communion and modesty.

Deviations do not go unnoticed. Because they challenge culturally shared beliefs that legitimize the existing social hierarchy, they tend to trigger backlash, that is, a form of discrimination against individuals who violate social stereotypical norms, with the goal to preserve stereotypes and put deviators in their place (Rudman & Fairchild, 2004; Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Phelan et al., 2012). Indeed, several studies found that in interview simulations, female candidates who engaged in high self-promotion appeared less likeable and interpersonally warm and were perceived as less hireable or promotable; however, they were perceived as equally competent, compared to their male counterparts (e.g., Rudman & Glick, 1999, 2001; Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Phelan et al., 2012). When using moderate, less intensive self-promotion, female and male candidates receive similar evaluations and outcomes (Rudman & Glick, 1999; see also Waung et al., 2015). Thus, despite being acknowledged for their competence, female candidates using high levels of self-promotion tend to be penalized socially, by appearing less likeable, and economically, by being more readily excluded at hiring or promotion (Rudman & Phelan, 2008; Williams & Tiedens, 2016).

However, results are not unequivocal, and several studies found no evidence for backlash against highly agentic women (e.g., A. B. Diekman, 2007) or even opposite tendencies (e.g., Bongiorno et al., 2014). One explanation for the heterogeneity in findings (for an overview, see Williams & Tiedens, 2016) may be the unique focus on one social category only, that is, gender. This focus neglects the fact that individuals simultaneously belong to multiple social groups based on other salient demographic dimensions like ethnicity/race (e.g., Black, White) or age (e.g., younger, older) (for a notable exception, see Livingston et al., 2012). Each group is associated with unique stereotypical expectations which may add to and interact with gender stereotypical expectations and in turn may influence evaluations and behaviors. We suggest that candidate age plays a crucial role for determining reactions to highly self-promoting female applicants. First, age discrimination is at employment is widespread, showing that recruiters systematically perceive candidates through the lenses of age stereotypes (Bal et al., 2011; Choi-Allum, 2022; Neumark, 2018). Indeed, age is, together with gender and race, one of the three basic social categories that have a uniquely high level of chronic accessibility such that they are automatically noticed and automatically activate stereotypical associations (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). Second, there is evidence that age discrimination rates differ between men and women (Neumark et al., 2019), suggesting that recruiter judgements are influenced by both candidate age and gender jointly. Finally, modesty and concern for others are a central element of age stereotypes and thus overlap with gender stereotypical expectations, which may in turn modulate the risk of backlash.

1.2 | Self-promotion and modesty at the intersection of gender and age

While older workers are associated with a set of unique stereotypes (e.g., being less flexible, more resistant to change than younger workers), some older worker stereotypes overlap with those targeting women. As outlined above, a central part of the female stereotype is communion or interpersonal warmth, expecting women to be caring, warm, and modest. Similar stereotype contents have been identified for older adults, including older workers. They are typically perceived as friendlier, warmer, and more caring than younger adults or younger workers (Fiske et al., 2007; Krings et al., 2011). Similarly, it has been shown that ascriptions of communal traits increase across the life span, that is, from adolescence to old adulthood (Andreoletti et al., 2015; Chan et al., 2012). Thus, like women, older adults are expected to display high interest in having good relationships with others, in other words, to put others first. These expectations are particularly strong for behaviors toward younger people, where older adults are expected to put aside their own interest, and step away to make way for the younger generation (North & Fiske, 2013).

Implications of such intersections between stereotypical norms for evaluative outcomes are still unclear. Researchers have long studied the impact of gender and age stereotypes on evaluative outcomes, however, mostly separately. From a theoretical point of view, propositions are not unequivocal either (Hall et al., 2019; Kulik et al., 2007; Petsko et al., 2022). Two competing hypotheses are at the center of the intersectionality debate. The so-called double jeopardy or multiple minority status hypothesis (Beale, 1970; Nelson & Probst, 2004) posits that stereotypes associated with multiple group membership add up or interact such that individuals who face multiple stereotypical norms (e.g., older women) are more likely to be discriminated. Based on this hypothesis, older women will be more likely to experience backlash for high self-promotion during the interview because they deviate from both stereotypical norms associated with being a woman and those associated with being older. The so-called intersectional invisibility or intersectional escape hypothesis (Martin et al., 2018; Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008) suggests the opposite, that is, that individuals who belong to more than one stereotyped group are not recognized as prototypical members of these groups, and therefore become socially invisible. The invisibility helps them escape from becoming targets of discrimination which is mostly directed toward prototypical group members. Moreover, due to prevailing androcentric ideology, this approach suggests that in general, women are considered less prototypical exemplars of a group than men (Navarrete et al., 2010). Similarly, in societies that value youth, older individuals are considered less prototypical of a group than younger individuals. Based on these arguments, older female candidates, will be less likely to receive backlash when engaging in high self-promotion and being less modest.

1.2.1 | Age and gender stereotypes across the lifespan: Content and impact at hiring

The empirical evidence for the double jeopardy and intersectional invisibility hypotheses offers a complex and sometimes incomplete picture. Few studies have examined age and gender stereotypical norms combined. Strinić et al. (2021) found stable gender stereotypical perceptions of warmth (i.e., communion) for younger (30-year-old) and older (55 years) adults, however, older women were perceived as particularly low on competence (i.e., agency), also in comparison to younger women. Covering a larger age range, with nine different age groups, Andreoletti et al. (2015) found that the gender stereotypical expectations regarding both communion and agency persist across the life span, from adolescence (15-year-old) to older adulthood (75 years). On the other hand, there is evidence that gender-stereotypical expectations change across the life course. Martin et al. (2018) found gender-stereotypical expectations regarding agency only for young (24 years) but not for older adults (74 years). Chan et al. (2012) found that ascriptions of big five personality traits, including communion (e.g., warmth) and agency (e.g., achievement orientation), to adolescents, adults (22–59-years-old), and older individuals (over 60 years)

depended more on target age than on gender. Finally, Kincaid (2022) found that while for men, perceived masculinity remains stable across the life span, for women, perceived femininity declines from middle adulthood (about 45 years) onward. Thus, older female candidates may be less likely to be categorized as women and thus less likely to be judged based on gender stereotypical expectations.

Research that examined how age and gender in conjunction influence evaluations and hiring outcomes is scarce. Moreover, the available results are mixed. Some field experiments report higher levels of age discrimination for women than for men at the initial stage of hiring (Carlsson & Eriksson, 2019; Neumark et al., 2019), supporting the double-jeopardy hypothesis. However, other laboratory studies find no gender differences in age discrimination (e.g., Kaufmann et al., 2015, 2017). In a series of correlational and experimental vignette studies, Martin et al. (2018) examined others' reactions to self-promotion in older men and women directly, and find less polarized reactions (e.g., ratings of respect, liking, promotion probability) toward older women who displayed high levels of agency compared to older men, providing support for the intersectional invisibility hypothesis. However, this research contrasted reactions to younger (28 years) with reactions to older individuals (68 or 74 years) who were above official retirement age which marks eligibility for state pension (in many countries, age 65). Applicants in this age group are less representative of the group of older workers and may even trigger reactions which are specific to this group only (e.g., they may be perceived as not being in need of a job). Reactions to, for example, a 56-year-old candidate may be quite different. Moreover, how self-promotion affects evaluations of middle-aged (between 30- and 50-year-old) men and women remains an open question.

1.3 | Research questions

While our understanding of the way intersections between age and gender influence evaluations is still incomplete, both theoretical and empirical research support the notion that candidate age and gender and their associated stereotypical norms jointly shape interviewer reactions to self-promotion and modesty. The question of how is still unanswered. While empirical evidence shows that age stereotypes remain salient, and sometimes even override gender stereotypes (Chan et al., 2012), when it comes to outcomes, empirical evidence does not clearly support either of the two hypotheses of double jeopardy or intersectional invisibility. Moreover, how high self-promotion affects evaluations of middle-aged men and women, that is, candidates between 30 and 50 years-old, remains an open question. While some evidence suggests that changes in age-related perceptions of women start earlier, that is, from mid-adulthood onwards, for women than for men (e.g., Duncan & Loretto, 2004; Kincaid, 2022), implications for interview and hiring evaluations of middle-aged men and women have rarely been investigated.

In light of these competing predictions and mixed or scarce empirical evidence, we explored the role of candidate age and gender

in reactions to different levels of self-promotion and modesty, with three open research questions. More specifically, we examined reactions toward male and female younger, middle-aged, and older candidates who use high versus moderate levels of self-promotion and modesty during the interview in an experimental study. Building on research on backlash against assertive women, we investigated reactions in terms of perceived interpersonal warmth, perceived competence, and hiring outcomes. Because backlash reactions typically comprise social penalties in the form of lower warmth perceptions, we formulated the first research question as follows:

Research Question 1: How do candidate gender and age jointly influence reactions to strong versus moderate levels of self-promotion and modesty in terms of perceived interpersonal warmth?

Previous research has shown that backlash occurs despite equal perceptions of competence, suggesting no differences in perceived competence as a function of candidate gender and self-promotion. Nevertheless, because intersectional effects of age and gender have not been investigated yet, we explored if differences in perceived competence between groups might occur, with the following research question:

Research Question 2: How do candidate gender and age jointly influence reactions to high versus moderate levels of self-promotion and modesty in terms of perceived competence?

Finally, because backlash reactions comprise economic penalties in the form of lower performance evaluations and hiring recommendations, we formulated the third research question as follows:

Research Question 3: How do candidate gender and age jointly influence reactions to high versus moderate levels of self-promotion and modesty in terms of perceived interview performance and hireability?

2 | METHODS

2.1 | Participants

We recruited 399 US-resident participants using the Cloud Research platform where they received $1.00 for their participation. After excluding participants who failed the attention or honesty checks, did not correctly identify the age or gender of the interview candidate, and/or did not indicate their own gender, the final sample consisted of 361 participants (M_{age} = 39.41, SD_{age} = 13.81; 50.4% women). The majority indicated that they identified mostly with being White (79.2%), followed by African American (8.3%; note that participants could choose multiple categories). Thirteen percent of participants had a high school diploma (13.3%), 25.5% had some college education, 43.5% had a Bachelor's degree, and 17.7% had Master's degree. Most participants were employed full-time (62.6%), 17.5% worked part-time, 17.2% were unemployed, and 2.8% were students. More than half (56.2%) indicated having conducted or participated in conducting job interviews. Of these participants, 63.4% indicated having conducted between 1 and 10 interviews, 21.6% 11–30 interviews, and 15.1% more than 30 interviews.

2.2 | Design and procedure

Participants were randomly allocated to 1 of 12 conditions in a 2 (candidate gender: male, female) × 3 (candidate age: younger, middle-aged, older) × 2 (candidate self-promotion/modesty: high self-promotion/low modesty, moderate self-promotion/high modesty) between-subjects experimental design. They were instructed to imagine themselves in the shoes of a recruiter who was looking for a person to hire for the position of bank clerk. The position was pretested to be gender and age neutral; that is, as equally fitting for both men and women, and for people of different ages, to isolate the effects of candidate age and gender.[1] After a short description of the main job responsibilities, participants were told that their assistant had conducted zoom interviews with the candidates who looked best on paper, and had also audio-recorded them so that participants could listen in and make their own impression. Then, they were instructed to listen to one of the recordings and informed of the candidate's gender (male, female) and age (25-, 40-, or 60-year-old). After listening, participants rated the candidate on various dimensions, including hireability. Finally, participants responded to a series of demographic questions, and questions about their employment situation and experience with conducting interview.

2.2.1 | Development of interview material

We first combed through popular job search advice websites to find 7 frequently asked interview questions (e.g., tell me about yourself; why are you interested in the position; what is the most difficult situation you have had to face and how did you tackle it). We created two candidate responses to each interview question, intended to convey impressions of high self-promotion/low modesty and of moderate self-promotion/high modesty when applying for a bank clerk position. All responses were constructed such that they were within 10 words of each other. For example, the answers to the question "Tell me a bit about yourself please" read as follows (identical parts are in normal font, parts that differed are in italics):

> High self-promotion/low modesty: "About myself, hmm? Well, okay. I've been working as a bank clerk. It is very important to me that I provide the best service possible to the customers and the bank. *I won the award for best employee last year* and *I am quite proud of my achievement*. I had the highest customer interaction efficiency *by far, among my colleagues*, there are many established structures and routines, *but they were not up to par, so I had to put in a lot of extra effort to be able to achieve efficiency, but the effort paid off*."

> Moderate self-promotion/high modesty: "About myself, hmm? Well, okay. I've been working as a bank clerk. It is very important to me that I provide the best

service possible to the customers and the bank. *My bank gave me an award for the best employee last year and I felt honored but actually, I think there are so many hardworking colleagues who would be equally deserving.* I had the highest customer interaction efficiency *but to be fair*, there are many established structures and routines *that make my job easier, so I have to give credit where credit is due."*

We conducted two pilot studies to validate the material. Participants were recruited through CloudResearch and had similar demographic characteristics to the participants of the main study (for details of the samples, see Appendix B). The goal of the first pilot study was to identify responses that would indeed convey high versus moderate levels of self-promotion and modesty but be perceived as equally qualified for the job. Participants read one of the two versions of the answers to the 7 questions. No information about age or gender of the candidate was provided. After each answer, participants rated the candidate on two items, "Having read the interview response, how well does this candidate fit the job profile?" and "Having read the interview response, how modest does this candidate appear to you?," on 7-point Likert scales ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very*). Results showed that candidate responses to 3 out of the 7 interview questions fulfilled our conditions ("Tell me about yourself," "Why are you interested in this position?," "Where do you see yourself in 5 years?"; see Appendix A) such that each of the responses intended to convey impressions of high self-promotion/low modesty, were perceived as less modest (all *M*s between 2.94 and 3.69) than each of the responses intended to convey moderate levels of self-promotion/high modesty (all *M*s between 4.54 and 5.19), all *t*s between 5.52 and 2.60, all *p*s ≤ .02, but were perceived as equally qualified (all *M*s between 5.13 and 5.78), all *t*s between 0.24 and 0.89, all *p*s > .38.[2]

To produce the audio-recordings used in the main experiment, we recruited a male and female professional voice actor who enacted the young, middle-aged, and older candidate by changing their voice so it contains typical age-related features (e.g., lower pitch). Aside from these features, actors were instructed to keep a neutral and professional tone across all conditions. To ensure that there were no differences in terms of perceived pleasantness and quality of the voice between the two levels of self-promotion, we conducted a second pilot study. Participants were randomly assigned to listen to 1 of the 12 recordings and rated the voice on three items, "How pleasant/natural/clear was the voice that you heard?," the quality of the recording, and the likelihood that the speaker was a native English speaker, on 7-point scales ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very*). Results of the *t*-test comparisons showed that there were no differences in perceived pleasantness, naturalness, and clarity of the voice, in the quality of the recording, and likelihood estimates that the speaker was a native English speaker, all *t*s < 1.81, all *p*s > .08, and that in both conditions, all ratings were above the midpoint of the scale (all *M*s between 4.73 and 5.96), all *t*s > 2.74, all *p*s < .00.[3]

2.2.2 | Final interview: Validation

To verify that the two final versions of the interview created the intended impressions of self-promotion and modesty, we conducted a third pilot study. Participants (for sample details, see Appendix B) read one of the two versions of the interview. No information about age or gender of the candidate was provided. Participants rated the extent to which the candidate engaged in self-promotion on a five-items measure (*α* = .73) and the extent to which the candidate appeared modest on a four-items measure (*α* = .83) adapted from previous research (e.g., Brosy et al., 2021; Proost et al., 2010; Schmid Mast et al., 2011; for all items and scales used in this Study, see Table B2, Appendix B). We added two items to measure perceived boastfulness. Responses on the items were highly correlated (*r* = .67, *p* = .00), and combined into a mean score. Moreover, we added a five-item measure of perceived ingratiation (*α* = .75; adapted from Proost et al., 2010; Stevens & Kristof, 1995), to verify that the interviews did not differ on another dimension of impression management known to have a crucial impact on interview outcomes. Ingratiation is frequent and positively related to interview and hiring outcomes (Bolino et al., 2008). Unlike self-promotion, it is not focused on the self but on others, through flattery and making positive comments about others (e.g., the organization; Jones & Pittman, 1982). All responses were indicated on 7-point Likert scales ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree/not at all*) to 7 (*strongly agree/very much*). We conducted three analyses of covariance (ANCOVA) with perceived self-promotion, modesty, and boastfulness as dependent variables. Moreover, we included participant gender, age, and interview experience as controls, as we did in the main study. Results of these analyses (see Tables B2 and B3, Appendix B) confirmed that candidates in the high self-promotion/low modesty condition were perceived as significantly more self-promoting (*M* = 5.79, *SD* = 0.67), less modest (*M* = 3.83, *SD* = 1.24), and more boastful (*M* = 4.05, *SD* = 1.63) than candidates in the moderate self-promotion/high modesty condition (*M* = 5.43, *SD* = 0.83, *M* = 4.91, *SD* = 1.08, and *M* = 2.90, *SD* = 1.52, respectively). Moreover, results revealed that there were no significant differences in perceived ingratiation between the two conditions (*M* = 3.61, *SD* = 1.31 and *M* = 4.03, *SD* = 1.25). In sum, results confirmed that our manipulations worked as intended.

2.3 | Measures

All responses were indicated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very*), unless otherwise specified.

We measured two aspects of *hiring outcomes*, interview performance evaluations and action recommendations (Gilmore & Ferris, 1989; Kacmar et al., 1992). Evaluations of interview performance were measured with the two items: "In your view, how well did the candidate answer the questions?" and "Overall, how well do you think the candidate performed in this interview?" (*r* = .79, *p* = .00). Hireability was measured with one item "How likely it is that you would hire the candidate for the job, based on the interview excerpts you listened to?." *Interpersonal warmth* and *competence* were assessed with two items each (Fiske et al., 2002): "How friendly/good-natured does this candidate appear to you?" (*r* = .85,

p = .00) and "How competent/skillful does this candidate appear to you?" (r = .85, p = .00). Participants' age (in years), gender (male, female), and experience in conducting interviews, "Have you ever conducted yourself or participated in conducting a job interview, to recruit someone?" (yes, no) were used as control variables in the main analyses.

3 | RESULTS

Before our focal analyses, we checked if participants were engaged in the study and if the manipulations were effective. Participants responses to the item "How engaged were you while participating in this study?" indicated that engagement was indeed high (M = 6.72, SD = 0.61; on a 7-point response scale). To check the effectiveness of the manipulation, we compared participants' responses to "Based on these interview excerpts, how modest does this candidate appear to you?." Results of the t-test comparison showed that candidates in the moderate self-promotion/high modesty condition were perceived as more modest (M = 5.62, SD = 1.23) than candidates in the high self-promotion/low modesty condition (M = 3.52, SD = 1.60), t(359) = 13.98, p < .01.

To investigate our research questions, we conducted four 2 (candidate self-promotion/modesty) × 2 (candidate gender) × 3 (candidate age) ANCOVAs with participant gender, age, and interview experience as controls, and with perceived interpersonal warmth, interview performance, perceived competence, interview performance, and hireability, as dependent variables. Means and correlations are presented in Table 1 and descriptives per condition in Table 2. Results of the four ANCOVAs are presented in Table 3.

3.1 | Research question 1: Interpersonal warmth

Results of the ANCOVA for interpersonal warmth (see Table 3, first column) revealed significant main effects of candidate self-promotion, gender, and age, indicating that candidates who used moderate self-promotion/high modesty, female candidates, and younger candidates were perceived as having higher levels of interpersonal warmth than

candidates who used high self-promotion/low modesty, male candidates, and older candidates respectively. None of the two-way interactions reached significance. However, there was a significant three-way interaction between self-promotion/modesty, gender, and age, further qualifying the main effects above (see Table 3).

Results of the simple-main effects analyses to examine the interaction showed that self-promotion/modesty had an effect on all but two groups, young female and older male candidates. For all other groups, candidates engaging in high self-promotion/low modesty were perceived as less interpersonally warm than candidates using moderate self-promotion/high modesty, all Fs > 10.12, all ps < .01. For young female and older male candidates, level of self-promotion and modesty had no effect of perceptions of interpersonal warmth, both Fs < 1.91, ps > .16. Results of the simple main effects analyses also showed that young women engaging in high self-promotion/low modesty were perceived as warmer than young men showing the same behavior, while middle aged women were perceived as warmer than middle aged men independently of their level of self-promotion/modesty, all Fs > 3.93, all ps < .05. There were no gender differences in perceived warmth for older candidates, whether they used high or moderate self-promotion/modesty, and for younger candidates using moderate self-promotion/high modesty, all Fs < 3.59, all ps > .06. Finally, results showed an effect of age for female candidates using high self-promotion/low modesty only, F(2, 346) = 6.29, p = .00 (partial η^2 = 0.04), all remaining Fs < 2.42, all ps > .09. Results of the pair-wise comparisons using Sidak adjustments showed that when engaging in high self-promotion/low modesty, older and middle-aged female candidates were perceived as less interpersonally warm than their younger counterparts.

3.2 | Research question 2: Competence

Results of the ANCOVA for perceived competence are shown in Table 3, column 2. There were no main effects of candidates' level of self-promotion/modesty, gender, and age on perceptions of competence. Moreover, none of the interaction terms reached significance. Thus, candidates did not differ with respect to perceived competence.

TABLE 1 Means, standard deviations (in parentheses), and correlations of the main study variables

Variable	M (SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Candidate age	2.00 (0.80)	-					
2. Candidate gender	1.52 (0.50)	.02	-				
3. Candidate self-promotion/modesty	1.49 (0.50)	−.02	.01	-			
4. Interpersonal warmth	5.28 (1.44)	−.12*	.15**	−.31**	-		
5. Competence	5.67 (1.14)	−.09	.07	−.10	.65**	-	
6. Interview performance	5.07 (1.29)	−.06	.08	−.10	.64**	.70**	-
7. Hireability	5.01 (1.70)	−.12*	.11*	−.23**	.78**	.74**	.79**

Note: N = 361. Candidate age was coded as 1, younger; 2, middle-aged; 3, older. Candidate gender was coded as 1, male; 2, female. Candidate level of self-promotion/modesty was coded as 1, moderate self-promotion/high modesty; 2, high self-promotion/low modesty.
*p < .05; **p < .01.

TABLE 2 Means and standard deviations (in parentheses) of interpersonal warmth, competence, interview performance, and hireability, as a function of candidates' level of self-promotion/modesty, gender, and age

Candidate characteristics		Interpersonal warmth	Competence	Interview performance	Hireability
Moderate self-promotion/high modesty					
Younger	Male	5.94 (0.24)	5.98 (0.21)	5.40 (0.23)	5.74 (0.29)
	Female	5.79 (0.26)	5.82 (0.22)	5.00 (0.25)	5.62 (0.31)
Middle-aged	Male	5.31 (0.24)	5.66 0.21)	4.88 (0.23)	5.13 (0.30)
	Female	6.00 (0.23)	5.96 (0.20)	5.39 (0.22)	5.52 (0.28)
Older	Male	5.25 (0.26)	5.48 (0.22)	4.96 (0.25)	4.88 (0.31)
	Female	5.90 (0.23)	5.73 (0.20)	5.44 (0.22)	5.43 (0.28)
High self-promotion/low modesty					
Younger	Male	4.81 (0.26)	5.39 (0.22)	4.69 (0.25)	4.23 (0.32)
	Female	5.73 (0.24)	5.94 (0.20)	5.49 (0.23)	5.64 (0.29)
Middle-aged	Male	4.15 (0.24)	5.46 (0.21)	4.88 (0.23)	4.10 (0.30)
	Female	4.81 (0.23)	5.53 (0.20)	4.93 (0.22)	4.64 (0.28)
Older	Male	4.75 (0.25)	5.52 (0.22)	4.99 (0.24)	4.68 (0.31)
	Female	4.61 (0.25)	5.45 (0.22)	4.58 (0.24)	4.25 (0.31)

Note: N varied between 26 and 34. Estimated marginal means are shown.

TABLE 3 Overview of the ANCOVA results for interpersonal warmth, competence, interview performance evaluations, and hireability

	Interpersonal warmth			Competence			Interview performance			Hireability		
	F	p	η_p^2	F	p	η_p^2	F	p	η_p^2	F	p	η_p^2
Control variables												
Age	0.16	.69	.00	0.13	.72	.00	3.12	.08	.01	1.47	.23	.00
Gender	0.35	.56	.00	1.77	.18	.01	0.26	.61	.00	0.69	.41	.00
Interview experience	0.01	.92	.00	0.11	.74	.00	0.00	.99	.00	0.00	.98	.00
Main variables												
Cand. age	4.92	.01	.03	1.23	.29	.01	0.47	.63	.00	3.39	.04	.02
Cand. gender	9.57	.00	.03	1.68	.20	.01	1.55	.21	.00	5.09	.03	.02
Cand. self-p./mod.	39.67	.00	.10	3.38	.07	.01	3.55	.06	.01	21.53	.00	.06
Cand. age x self-p./mod.	1.45	.24	.01	0.23	.79	.00	0.44	.65	.00	0.22	.80	.00
Cand. gender x self-p./mod.	0.09	.77	.00	0.05	.83	.00	0.03	.86	.00	0.45	.50	.00
Cand. age x cand. gender	0.79	.46	.01	0.08	.93	.00	0.28	.76	.00	1.01	.37	.01
Cand. age x cand. gender x self-p./mod.	3.58	.03	.02	1.81	.17	.01	5.45	.01	.03	4.34	.01	.02

Note: N = 361. Age, participant age in years. Gender, participant gender, coded as 0, male; 1, female. Interview experience, participant experience in conducting interviews, coded as 0, no; 1, yes. Cand. Age, candidate, coded as 1, younger; 2, middle-aged; 3, older. Cand. gender, candidate gender, coded as 1, male; 2, female. Cand. self-p./mod. candidate level of self-promotion/modesty, coded as 1, moderate self-promotion/high modesty; 2, high self-promotion/low modesty.

Abbreviation: ANCOVA, analyses of covariance.

3.3 | Research question 3: Interview performance evaluations and hireability

For evaluations of interview performance, results of the ANCOVA revealed no main effects of level of self-promotion/modesty, gender, and age and no two-way interactions between these variables (see Table 3, third column). However, there was a significant three-way interaction between self-promotion/modesty gender, and age. Results of the simple-main effects analyses to examine this interaction revealed an effect of self-promotion/modesty for young
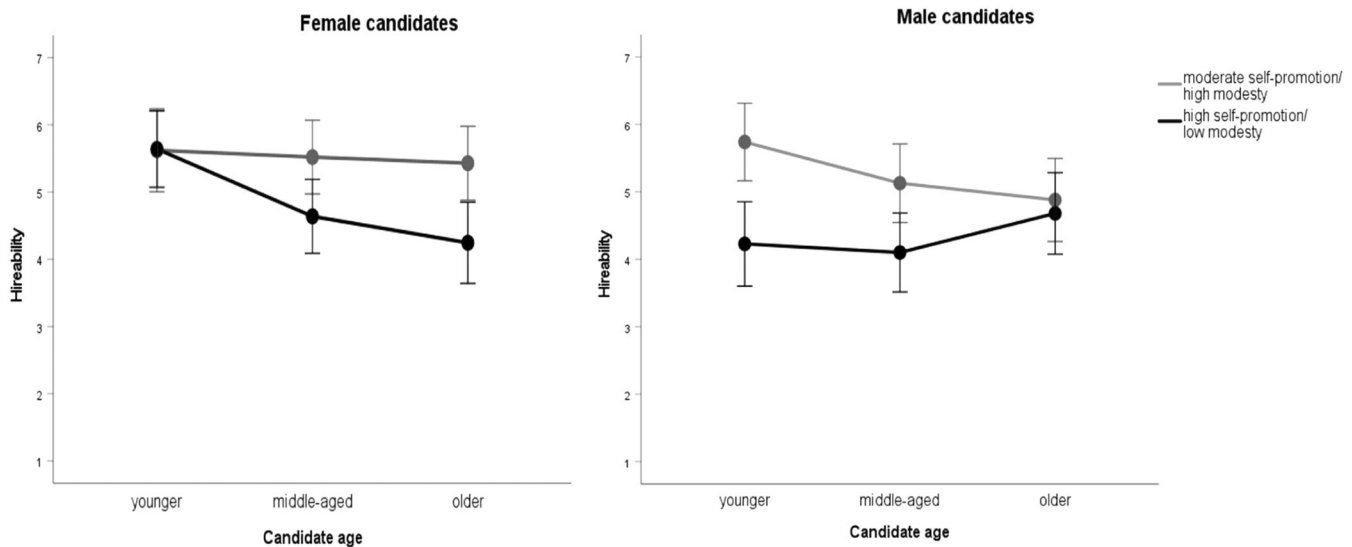
FIGURE 1 The interactive effects of candidate age, gender, and level of self-promotion/modesty on hireability (means and 95% confidence intervals)

male, $F(1, 346) = 4.43$, $p = .04$ (partial $\eta^2 = 0.02$), and older female candidates only, $F(1, 346) = 7.03$, $p = .01$ (partial $\eta^2 = 0.02$), indicating less positive perceptions of young male and older female candidates' interview performance when they engaged in high compared to moderate self-promotion and modesty. Self-promotion/modesty did not affect interview evaluations in the other candidate groups, all Fs < 2.17, all ps > .13. Moreover, there was a main effect of gender for young candidates in the high self-promotion/low modesty condition only, $F(1, 346) = 5.58$, $p = .02$ (partial $\eta^2 = 0.02$), indicating than young male candidates' interview performance was perceived less positively than young female candidates' performance, when engaging in high self-promotion/low modesty. No other gender differences emerged, all Fs < 2.56, all ps > .11. Finally, results revealed a main effect of age for female candidates in the high self-promotion/ low modesty condition only, $F(2, 346) = 3.92$, $p = .02$ (partial $\eta^2 = .02$), all remaining Fs < 1.48, all ps > .23. Results of the pairwise comparisons using Sidak adjustments for multiple comparisons showed that when engaging in high self-promotion/low modesty, older female candidates' interview performance was perceived less positively than younger female candidates' performance.

Results for hireability revealed a main effect of level of self-promotion/modesty, indicating that hiring likelihoods of candidates engaging in high self-promotion/low modesty were lower compared to candidates using moderate levels of self-promotion (see Table 3, last column). Moreover, there was a main effect of candidate gender, and of candidate age, indicating higher hiring likelihoods of female compared to male candidates and of younger candidates compared to middle-aged and older candidates. None of the two-way interactions reached significance.

However, similar to interview performance evaluations, there was a significant three-way interaction between candidate age, gender, and level of self-promotion/modesty on hireability (see

Table 3, last column). The pattern of this interaction is displayed in Figure 1.

Results of the simple-main effects analyses showed an effect of level of self-promotion and modesty for all but two groups, young female and older male candidates. For all other groups, hiring likelihoods of candidates engaging in high self-promotion/low modesty were lower, compared to candidates using moderate levels of self-promotion/high modesty, all Fs > 5.01, all ps < .03. For young female and older male candidates, level of self-promotion/modesty did not influence hiring likelihoods, both Fs < 0.21, both ps > .64. Moreover, results of the simple main effects analyses showed a main effect of gender for young candidates in the high self-promotion/low modesty condition only, $F(1, 346) = 10.81$, $p < .00$ (partial $\eta^2 = 0.03$), indicating that, as observed for interview performance, when engaging in high self-promotion/low modesty, hiring probabilities of young men were lower than those of young women. No other gender differences emerged, all Fs < 1.75, all ps > .18. Finally, results showed a main effect of age for female candidates in the high self-promotion/ low modesty condition only, $F(2, 346) = 6.01$, $p = .01$ (partial $\eta^2 = 0.04$), all remaining Fs < 2.18, all ps > .11. Results of the pairwise comparisons using Sidak adjustments showed that when engaging in high self-promotion/low modesty, hiring probabilities of older and middle-aged women were lower than hiring probabilities of younger women.

4 | DISCUSSION

Previous research identified intensity of self-promotion and candidate gender as important boundary conditions of the effects of self-promotion on hiring outcomes, showing that intense, high self-promotion can lead to lower hiring outcomes, in particular for female

candidates because it deviates from female gender-stereotypical norms that expect women to be modest and show concern for others. Results of our study suggest that this view is limited by its sole focus on gender. While our results confirm that the use of high self-promotion and low modesty during the interview is risky because it can lead to negative evaluations and lower hiring outcomes (Robie et al., 2020; Waung et al., 2015), they demonstrate that both candidate gender and age jointly shape evaluator reactions. In what follows, we discuss our results and their implications in detail.

Results showed that reactions toward women's, but not men's level of self-promotion depended on their age. More specifically, we found consistent age effects for female candidates only: Older female candidates who engaged in high self-promotion and showed lower levels of modesty were perceived as less interpersonally warm, received lower interview performance ratings and were less likely to be hired than their younger female counterparts, despite being perceived as equally competent. The same pattern emerged for middle-aged female candidates, except for interview performance ratings. These findings show that for women, the risk of backlash for high self-promotion/low modesty increased as they became older, starting from mid adulthood onwards. This pattern is in line with the double jeopardy hypothesis, suggesting that reactions to high self-promotion of older female candidates are particularly harsh, presumably because older women deviate from both gender and age-stereotypical norms of being modest. Moreover, they corroborate evidence form field experiments showing increasingly higher rates of age discrimination against women than men, starting from about age 45 onwards (e.g., Carlsson & Eriksson, 2019).

However, results revealed also negative reactions against men. More specifically, young male candidates who engaged in high self-promotion and showed less modesty were perceived as less interpersonally warm, received lower interview performance ratings and were less likely to be hired than their female counterparts, despite being perceived as equally competent. While middle-aged men were also perceived as less interpersonally warm than their female counterparts, there were no gender differences in hiring outcomes for this age group. Thus, for middle-aged men, being considered as less interpersonally warm than women seem to have little impact on final hiring decisions. For older candidates, there were no overall gender differences for any of the outcome variables. Thus, less favorable reactions to high self-promotion/low modesty as a function of candidate gender were only observed for the young age group, revealing more negative reactions toward male compared to female candidates. This finding cannot be explained by the double jeopardy nor the intersectional invisibility hypothesis. Additionally, it runs counter to the predictions derived from the stereotype maintenance model which predicts backlash against women but not men, positing that high self-promotion runs counter to female gender norms. Nevertheless, some studies have observed a similar pattern (e.g., Bongiorno et al., 2014), indicating that it is not an isolated finding. Moreover, it is in line with a growing body of research that finds hiring discrimination against young men, not women, across a broad range of occupations (e.g., Ahmed et al., 2021; Carlsson &

Eriksson, 2017; for an overview, see Birkelund et al., 2022). For example, Birkelund et al. (2022) conducted a comparative field experiment in six countries and found significantly lower callback rates for young men compared to young women in four out of the six countries, independently of the specific sector or occupation.

In sum, results of this research uniquely point out two high-risk groups, older women and young men, for whom high self-promotion and low modesty provoke backlash reactions at hiring. These results highlight the need to adopt an intersectional perspective for understanding the potentially detrimental effects of high self-promotion at hiring.

4.1 | Theoretical implications

Adopting an intersectional perspective and considering multiple candidate characteristics, this research expands the literature on the boundary conditions of intense self-promotion and backlash for displays of assertiveness at hiring. By underlining the crucial role of evaluators' normative expectations, based on candidates' identity, it highlights the need to integrate social identity and stereotyping into models of impression management in interviews. The recently proposed cross-cultural model by Arseneault and Roulin (2021) may be a good starting point, as it integrates the role of cultural preferences and expectations of applicants and evaluators on interviews. Moreover, by pointing out two unique, high-risk groups, younger men and older women, our research supports the notion that intersectionality cannot be fully captured by additive versus weakening effects of the stereotypes associated with the basic social categories, but that intersectionality creates unique groups that are associated with unique traits and characteristics (Cole, 2009; Hall et al., 2019).

Gender stereotypes have been stable for a long time but changed considerably over the last decades (Eagly et al., 2020). For example, attitudes regarding the role men and women should play in society have become more egalitarian (e.g., Sweeting et al., 2014). Also, support for the full integration of women into the labor market and awareness for women's disadvantaged position have largely increased (Fernández, 2013). Thus, for women, being assertive and promoting one's competences to increase one's chances at hiring may not necessarily be perceived as a violation of female gender stereotypes but as a fair strategy to get ahead. Moreover, possibly, even if such behaviors trigger negative initial reactions in recruiters, these reactions may be attenuated by recruiters' concern to respond without prejudice (Pierre-Brossolette et al., 2022; Plant & Devine, 1998; Richeson & Trawalter, 2008). However, results of our study show that this is only true for young women. For older women, from mid adulthood onwards, traditional expectations to show modesty and refrain from self-promotion seem to prevail, possibly due to the strong age-stereotypical expectations for older adults to refrain from putting oneself in the spotlight.

Societal norms regarding men's display of assertiveness have also changed, and thus, possibly gender normative expectations toward male candidates' behavior. The tendency to see competence and intelligence as particularly characteristic of men has decreased

considerably (Eagly et al., 2020). Thus, high self-promotion and low modesty in men may be perceived as less justified. Moreover, in recent years, men's displays of assertiveness, dominance, and masculinity, in particular at work, have been criticized and become the object of a vibrant public debate (Maricourt & Burrell, 2021; Nilsson & Lundgren, 2021). Male assertiveness and dominance have been put more and more into question and sometimes even described as toxic (e.g., Goodwin, 2018). Thus, today, particularly high self-promotion in male applicants may be less tolerated and even lead to repercussions, as the results of our study suggest. However, our findings also suggest that this is only true for young men. Displays of high levels of assertiveness seem to be considered intolerable in young but not in older men. One explanation is that attitudes toward young adults tend to be particularly tainted by negative stereotypes about the current young generation (Francioli & North, 2021). Millennials, that is, the generation of young adults today, are often described as "generation me," and perceived as narcissistic and entitled (Stein, 2013). Those perceptions and stereotypes may thus reinforce negative reactions to displays of assertiveness and low modesty in young men, also at hiring.

4.2 | Practical implications

While the findings of this research rely on experimental data and should first be replicated with real interviews before formulation firm recommendations for practice, they nevertheless encourage organizations to consider intersectional identities of applicants and employees. Our findings demonstrate intersections between age and gender produce significant differences in outcomes that go unnoticed by applying a classical diversity and inclusion perspective that typically focuses on one dimension only. Identifying these groups would allow designing more targeted measures that may be more impactful in creating fairness and supporting diversity and inclusion.

4.3 | Limitations and directions for future research

We manipulated levels of self-promotion and modesty together, and thus our study design does not allow disentangling their potential unique effects. Self-promotion and modesty overlap but are also distinct impression management tactics (Diekmann et al., 2022; Turnley & Bolino, 2001). Future research may therefore assess their unique effects on hiring, taking candidates' intersectional identities into account. In addition, it could expand this study's focus on the intersection between gender and age. While most research has focused on dual group membership, in social reality, individuals belong to more than two salient social groups and may be categorized as such by recruiters (e.g., White young men). For example, backlash for high self-promotion may be particularly pronounced against older women of Asian descent as they are stereotyped as shy and quiet and thus expected to refrain from displaying assertiveness (Rosette et al., 2016).

Future research should corroborate the results of our lab study using actual job interviews. Even though lab and field studies on

reactions to men's and women's self-promotion tend to produce similar results (Williams & Tiedens, 2016), it is important to replicate our finding with actual applicants and recruiters. Recruiters' professional experience, for example, may attenuate bias and backlash (Marlowe et al., 1996). Moreover, interindividual differences in recruiters' adherence to gender and age stereotypes may further moderate their responses (Rupp et al., 2006). Finally, future research might want to examine reactions to high self-promotion of older and younger men and women in different cultural contexts. While there are surprisingly few cross-cultural differences in gender and age stereotypes (Cuddy et al., 2009), assertiveness and modesty are valued differently, depending on the cultural background of the recruiter (Arseneault & Roulin, 2021; Schmid Mast et al., 2011). In light of continuing globalization, recruiters' cultural background is likely to become more and more important, and further research is needed to understand how it influences reactions to specific candidate behaviors and outcomes.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon request.

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ENDNOTES

[1] We tested 34 different jobs to identify a position that is seen as equally fitting for both men and women, and for people of different ages. Participants ($n = 84$ US-residents recruited through CloudResearch; $M_{age} = 35.98$, $SD_{age} = 5.17$; 57.4% men, 80.9% employed) were randomly assigned to 17 jobs and evaluated them on the following items: "To what extent you think this job is typically held by younger or older workers?," "Please indicate to what extent you think this job is typically held by women or men," on 9-point Likert scales (1 = *typically held by younger workers/women*, 5 = *neither nor*, 9 = *typically held by older workers/men*). Results of the comparisons of the ratings to the midpoint of the scale to identify gender and age-neutral jobs showed that job of bank clerk fulfilled our conditions. *T*-test comparisons with the midpoint of the scale showed that the job was perceived as gender-neutral ($M = 5.15$, $SD = 2.20$, $t(45) = 0.47$, $p = .64$) and age-neutral ($M = 5.41$, $SD = 1.81$, $t(45) = 1.55$, $p = .13$). Moreover, there was no relationship between respondent age and age typicality ratings, $r = -.23$, $p = .13$, and respondent gender and gender typicality ratings, $r = .10$, $p = .52$.

[2] Full results are available from the corresponding author upon request.

[3] We conducted a post hoc power analysis using G*Power, with a medium effect size of 0.25, and an α-level of .05 ($n = 361$; $df = 14$). Results revealed a sufficient level of statistical power of 88% (Wilson Van Voorhis & Morgan, 2007).

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APPENDIX A

Interview used in the main study

(1) Tell me a little about yourself please

Moderate self-promotion/high modesty: About myself, hmm? Well, okay. I've been working as a bank clerk. It is very important to me that I provide the best service possible to the customers and the bank. My bank gave me an award for the best employee last year and I felt honored but actually, I think there are so many hardworking colleagues who would be equally deserving. I had the highest customer interaction efficiency but to be fair, there are many established structures and routines that make my job easier, so I have to give credit where credit is due.

High self-promotion/low modesty: About myself, hmm? Well, okay. I've been working as a bank clerk. It is very important to me that I provide the best service possible to the customers and the bank. I won the award for best employee last year and I am quite proud of my achievement. I had the highest customer interaction efficiency by far, among my colleagues, there are many established structures and routines, but they were not up to par, so I had to put in a lot of extra effort to be able to achieve efficiency, but the effort paid off.

(2) Why are you interested in this position?

Moderate self-promotion/high modesty: Okay, sure. Well, while I have enjoyed working at my current bank, I wanted to work in a more challenging position. I know that your bank reviews a lot of loan applications and you have put in a new process that could potentially help poorer clients. I've always wanted to participate in a program like this, but I've never had the chance to until now. It sounds very promising, and I would love to be a part of this. I understand that this is a more demanding environment, but it would also be so much more rewarding.

High self-promotion/low modesty: Okay, sure. Well, while I have enjoyed working at my current bank, I think I have more to offer. I actually feel like my workplace does not take full advantage of my abilities. I know that your bank reviews a lot of loan applications and you have put in a new process that could potentially help poorer clients. It sounds very promising, and I have a lot of ideas that will make it even better. I understand that this is a more demanding environment, but I believe that I have what it takes.

(3) Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

Moderate self-promotion/high modesty: I think the banking industry could do more to attract new customers. In the past year, we have been working on simplifying our terms and conditions so our customers can understand them more easily. As you know, these can be very complicated. This was rather successful when we tried it out on a small scale, so I would be interested in expanding this further. If I contribute toward making banking a little more transparent and approachable, I would be quite satisfied.

High self-promotion/low modesty: I think the banking industry should do more to attract new customers. In the past year, I have been working on simplifying our terms and conditions so our customers can understand them more easily. As you know, these can be very complicated. This was very successful at my previous bank, so I am eager to expand this further. It is high time we made banking more transparent and approachable, so this is my primary goal for the next 5 years.

APPENDIX B

Table B1

TABLE B1 Sample characteristics (pilot studies 1–3)

	n	Mean age (*SD*)	% female	% employed
Study 1	71	40.10 (12.20)	52.1	80.3
Study 2	102	38.31 (10.32)	40.2	77.5
Study 3	103	36.76 (8.56)	61.2	89.3

TABLE B2 Means, standard deviations, and correlations (pilot study 3)

		M (SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	Age	36.76 (8.56)	-						
2.	Gender	0.36 (0.48)	.15	-					
3.	Interview experience	0.61 (0.49)	.02	−.03	-				
4.	Level of self-promotion/modesty	1.43 (0.50)	.07	.05	−.04	-			
5.	Perceived self-promotion	5.59 (0.78)	.06	.09	.18	.23*	-		
6.	Perceived ingratiation	3.85 (1.29)	−.13	.08	.26**	−.17	−.03	-	
7.	Perceived modesty	4.45 (1.27)	−.05	.00	.14	−.43**	.02	.34**	-
8.	Perceived boastfulness	3.40 (1.66)	−.06	.16	.10	.34**	.04	.17	−.38**

Note: N = 103. Age, participant age in years. Gender, participant gender, coded as 0, male; 1, female. Interview experience, participant experience in conducting interviews, coded as 0, no; 1, yes. Level of self-promotion/modesty of the candidate was coded as 1, moderate self-promotion/high modesty; 2, high self-promotion/low modesty. Perceived self-promotion was measured with the following four items: "To what extent did the candidate demonstrate his or her knowledge and expertise/described his or her skills and abilities in an attractive way/took charge during the interview to get his or her points across/described his or her skills and experience/used self-promotion tactics when answering?." Perceived ingratiation was measured with four items: "To what extent did the candidate discuss non-job related topics with the interview/discuss interests he or she shared in common with the interviewer/praise the organization/compliment the interviewer or the organization/used ingratiation tactics when answering?." Perceived modesty was measured with four items: "To what extent do you perceive the candidate as modest/moderate/humble/unpretentious?." Perceived boastfulness was measured with two items: "To what extent do you perceive the candidate as conceited/boastful?." All responses were indicated on 7-point scales.
*p < .05; **p < .01.

TABLE B3 Overview of the effects of levels of self-promotion/modesty and control variables on perceptions of self-promotion, ingratiation, modesty, and boastfulness (pilot study 3)

	Self-promotion			Ingratiation			Modesty			Boastfulness		
	F	p	η_p^2	F	p	η_p^2	F	p	η_p^2	F	p	η_p^2
Age	0.08	.76	.00	2.76	.18	.02	0.08	.78	.00	1.18	.28	.01
Gender	0.63	.43	.00	1.22	.28	.01	0.09	.78	.00	2.82	.10	.03
Interview experience	3.92	.05	.04	7.08	.01	.07	1.70	.20	.02	1.47	.23	.02
Self-promotion/modesty	5.59	.02	.06	2.60	.11	.03	21.67	.00	.18	13.80	.00	.13

Note: N = 103. Age, participant age in years. Gender, participant gender, coded as 0, male; 1, female; Interview experience, participant experience in conducting interviews, coded as 0, no; 1, yes. Self-promotion/modesty, level of self-promotion/modesty of the candidate during the interview, coded as 1, moderate self-promotion/high modesty; 2, high self-promotion/low modesty.