

FAMILY PERCEPTIONS: MEASURING BELIEFS ABOUT WHETHER GENDER ROLES
ARE TRANSMITTED FROM PARENTS TO CHILDREN

By

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Abstract

Prior research has examined perceptions of adults who violate gender stereotypes and shown on numerous occasions that these adults are at risk for receiving social and economic repercussions in the form of perceptual evaluations. However, research has yet to address whether the negative judgements of and backlash against gender nonconforming adults will be transferred onto perceptions of their children. The current study investigates how adults perceive children belonging to non-traditional (i.e., gender non-stereotypical parental roles) and traditional households by showing adults illustrations of these ostensible children within the family context. Results show that parents belonging to non-traditional families were generally perceived in accordance with backlash theory. The non-traditional mother received higher rating of perceived success, but lower rating of perceived morality in comparison to their non-violating other. While the non-traditional father was perceived as more likable but less successful than the non-traditional mother and received lower rating of success in comparison to their non-violating other. These findings did not extend to children in the way that was originally hypothesized, and instead non-traditional children received ratings similarly to children with traditional parents but received a boost in perceived success and likelihood to pursue counter stereotypical occupations.

Introduction

Since the 1950's, societal and economical influences have doubled the number of women entering the paid workforce (Diekman & Eagly, 2000) and there has been a steady increase of stay-at home fathers as a result. According to a recent U.S. Census, the number of stay-at-home fathers has more than doubled from 76,000 to 190,000 from 1994 to the present (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). As gender roles continue to converge, children are more likely now than ever to be raised in a non-traditional family setting. Recent research has highlighted that when household labor is spread equally between the father and mother, their daughters are more likely to express interest in gender-neutral occupations as opposed to female-stereotypic ones (Croft et al., 2014). This suggests that children might be influenced by their parent's gender roles and when parents deviate from the norm, it could alter children's aspirations. As more and more children begin to aspire to go into non-stereotypic careers, it is important to understand the perceived repercussions of belonging to these families and whether these perceptions negatively or positively affect children's lives. With this in mind, no research has yet to address how adults perceive children who belong to households that deviate from gender stereotypical norms (non-traditional) versus households that are gender stereotypical (traditional). Our goal is to assess adults' perceptions of children who are raised in a traditional or non-traditional household setting.

Gender stereotypes reflect current occupational and societal trends and are connected to how we perceive social roles (Diekman & Eagly, 2000; Diekman & Goodfriend, 2006; Eagly & Diekman, 2003; Eagly et al., 2000). These gender expectations form what is called gender stereotypes (Ridgeway & Correll, 2004). When making judgements, people rely on stereotypes or contextual factors to infer information about others. This results in individuals making broad

accusations and generalizations which can negatively affect those being perceived (Cox, Devine, Bischmann, & Hyde, 2016). Forming impressions and making evaluations is a constant theme in people's lives. Imagine how difficult it would be to think critically about every decision or impression that you make about others. Individuals are complex and present a multitude of characteristics and stimuli that can be overwhelming to an observer. As a result, individuals use shortcuts, such as categorization, when forming impressions which allow perceivers to use prior experiences and knowledge about groups to create perceptions of new individuals (Allport, 1954).

Individuals who violate or are perceived as violating gender stereotypes are at risk of experiencing social backlash. According to backlash theory, individuals that engage in counter stereotypical behavior are at risk for receiving social and economic repercussions in the form of verbal, non-verbal behavior, and perceptual evaluations (Rudman, 1998). Building on past work, we aimed to evaluate adults' perceptions of parents violating occupational gender roles. Previous literature has shown that men and women who go into a counter stereotypical occupation receive subsequent penalties in the form of evaluations that affect how they are perceived on dimensions of morality, likability, and success. An individual's moral character is comprised of the moral dimensions of a person's personality. An individual's character determines how we think of that individual and whether that person will be harmful or helpful to ourselves (Goodwin, Piazza, & Rozin, 2014; Kupperman, 1991). According to research, moral character is a sub-component of warmth such that higher ratings of warmth correlate with higher rating of moral character (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2008). Groups such as housewives are generally rated as higher in warmth whereas groups such as businessmen are rated as low in warmth (Glick & Fiske, 1999). In a study that specifically looked at non-traditional parents (primary caregiving fathers and

primary breadwinning mothers), they found that these groups were rated less favorably on measures of personality, moral emotions, and marital emotions than their non-violating counterparts (Brescoll & Uhlmann, 2005; Coleman & Franiuk, 2011; Etaugh & Folger, 1998). Agentic women are perceived as competent but low in warmth and are subsequently penalized and perceived as less socially skilled than agentic men. For those women who are more agentic or portray themselves as such, they are thereafter perceived as interpersonally deficient thus legitimizing discrimination against nonconforming, competent women (Rudman, & Glick, 1999). Men and woman gender role violators are commonly rated as less likable than their non-violating counterparts. (Costich et al., 1975; Rajecki, De Graaf-Kaser, & Rasmussen, 1992) Other research has found that there is a negative correlation between non-traditional women and likability (Glick & Fiske, 1999). Additionally, research on violating gender role stereotypes found that aggressive women and passive men were perceived as less popular and as more in need of therapy. Aggressive women were also viewed as less popular in comparison to passive men (Costrich et al., 1975). In another study, stay-at-home fathers who take on the responsibility of childcare and housework were evaluated more negatively on a semantic differential scale than stay-at-home mothers and employed fathers. These evaluations were in large part driven by the targets economic standing such that lower income predicted negative evaluations (Rosenwasser, Gonzales, & Adams, 1985). Due to perceptions of counter stereotypical behavior, non-conforming men and woman experience hiring discrimination and are less likely to be hired for male stereotypic jobs compared to conforming men. According to the National Math and Science Initiative, as of 2008 only 23 percent of jobs in STEM fields were filled by woman. In addition, as of 2017 men's income was almost 20 percent more than women (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017).

As these studies suggest, individuals who violate gender norms incur social and economic costs due to the influence of perceivers' behavior towards those being perceived.

Research on adult gender role violators has been investigated thoroughly but there is a lack of research that seeks to understand adult perceptions of children. The current study seeks to further the understanding of how perceptions of parents that deviate from occupational gender roles extend to their children. As of only recently, researchers have begun to examine adult perceptions of children. While there is little research within this area, children also face penalties for behaving counter stereotypically. In a world where gender stereotypes did not exist, children would be able to express behaviors and acquire skills based solely on their desired personalities. However, because of gender and societal expectations, children are identified as either male or female based on their biological sex from birth and are subsequently assigned into categories that follow them for their entire lives (Bem, 1983; Fagot & Leinbach, 1993; Kimmel, 2004). As children develop, their understanding and susceptibility to stereotypes shape their identity and beliefs. Experimental evidence has found that adults treat infants and children who identify as girls differently from those who identify as boys, such that participants shown a video of an infant reacting negatively were more likely to contribute the infant's reaction as anger if believed to be a boy, and fear if believed to be a girl (Condry & Condry, 1976). A study asking adult participants to rate children on desirability of characteristics in preschool children found that adults were more likely to rate stereotype-violating children as less likeable than their stereotype-conforming peers. These results were more robust for stereotype violating boys such that stereotype violating boys were more likely to be rated as less likable than stereotype violating girls (Sullivan et al., 2018). There is also some evidence that adults treat children who violate and conform to gender stereotypes differently and that these effects are largest when boys violate

gender role stereotypes, which is shown in teachers being more accepting of counter stereotypic gender role behaviors and aspirations from girls than boys (Cahill & Adams, 1997). Boys labeled as “sissies,” described as feminine, and who played with girls’ toys were less accepted by adult perceivers than gender non-conforming girls (Feinman, 1974). Stereotype-violating children were also more likely to be assumed as gay or lesbian by adults in comparison to their non-violating counterparts, and this finding was largest for stereotype-violating boys (Martin, 1990). In addition, a study that coded parental behaviors found that adults had more negative reactions when children engaged in “cross-sex-preferred” activities (Fagot, 1978).

In the current study we sought to understand how adults perceive parents and children from non-traditional (versus traditional) families. We expected to replicate previous research indicating that non-traditional parents will experience more social backlash than traditional parents, such that non-traditional mothers will be rated as more successful but less likable and moral than traditional mothers. Mirroring this pattern, we predicted that non-traditional fathers will be rated as less successful but more likeable and moral than traditional fathers. Extending previous research, we also tested hypotheses about social backlash towards the children of these families. Specifically, we predicted that children of non-traditional parents will experience social backlash (i.e. be rated similarly to their same-sex parent) and be rated as more likely to go into counter-stereotypic careers compared to children of traditional parents (e.g. girls will go into stereotypically masculine field and boys will go into stereotypically feminine fields).

Method

Participants

Prior to exclusions, participants were 426 Turk Prime users who were paid 75 cents to complete a survey. Twenty-nine participants who did not identify as male or female or other

were excluded from the sample. 54 participants who did not pass or complete a manipulation check were excluded from the sample. The final sample included 343 participants (111 men, 230 women, and 2 other). Participants had a mean age of 34.05, with a range of 18 to 71, with a majority being White or Caucasian (64.4%).

Procedure

Participants were told that researchers were interested in people's impressions of a family with the goal of understanding the factors that go into expectations for children's "best fit" future occupation. Based on random assignment, participants saw one of two versions of a family portrait illustration manipulating gender roles of the parents (see Appendix A). Both family portraits depicted a mother and father with their two children (a boy and a girl). The traditional family illustration showed the father in a suit holding a brief case and the mother in an apron holding a spatula. The nontraditional family illustration showed the father wearing an apron holding a spatula and the mother in a suit holding a brief case. All participants were given a vignette (see Appendix B) explaining that the children in the illustration were twins in fourth grade and providing the names of each family member. After viewing the image and description, participants were asked about their perceptions of each parent. Ratings assessed parents' perceived 1) morality, 2) likeability and 3) success. All three measures and items within those measures were counterbalanced. After completing all measures for both parents, participants were asked about their perceptions of each child (counterbalanced). Ratings included the same three measures as parents, but framed in the future tense (e.g., perceived future success), and we also asked how likely participants thought each child was to enter several occupations. All four measures and items within those measures were counterbalanced.

Measures

Sexual Double Standard Scale: In the current study we used three subscales of The Sexual Double Standard Scale (Marks and Fraley, 2005). These subscales measured likability, success and morality. The subscales were adapted such that questions pertaining to dating, marriage, and physical attractiveness were removed for both parents and children because we believed it would be difficult for participants to answer when involving parents already in a relationship and a child (see Appendix C).

Perceived Likability of Parents: The Sexual Double Standard Subscale for Likability (Marks and Fraley, 2005) was adapted to measure to what degree participants think they will like the parent in the illustration (e.g. Indicate how much you think each of the following statements applies to Tom according to the scale below). Participants will use a five-point Likert scale from one (Strongly Disagree) to five (Strongly Agree) to rate eight liking items. Responses were aggregated and form an index of future likability with higher scores indicating higher likability. This measure had good reliability $\alpha = .856$.

Perceived Success of Parents: The Sexual Double Standard Subscale for Success (Marks and Fraley, 2005) was adapted to measure to what degree participants think the parent in the illustrations will be successful at their occupation (e.g. Indicate how much you think each of the following statements applies to Tom according to the scale below). Participants will use a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) to rate 8 success items. Responses will be aggregated and form an index of future success with higher scores indicating greater belief of the parent being successful. This measure had good reliability $\alpha = .817$.

Perceived Morality of Parents: The Sexual Double Standard Subscale for Morality (Marks and Fraley, 2005) was adapted to measure to what degree participant think the parent in

the illustration will be viewed as moral (e.g. Indicate how much you think each of the following statements applies to Tom according to the scale below). Participants will use a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) to rate 7 morality items. Responses will be aggregated and form an index of morality with higher scores indicating higher morality. This measure had good reliability $\alpha = .875$.

Perceived Future Likability of Children: The Sexual Double Standard Subscale for Likability (Marks and Fraley, 2005) was adapted to measure to what degree participants think they will like the child in the illustration when they are an adult. (e.g. Please indicate how much you think each statement below will apply to John when he is an adult). This measure was the analyzed and measured in the same way as the parent's ratings. This measure had good reliability $\alpha = .856$.

Perceived Future Success of Children: The Sexual Double Standard Subscale for Success (Marks and Fraley, 2005) was adapted to measure to what degree participants think the children in the illustrations will be successful at their occupation in the future (e.g. Please indicate how much you think each statement below will apply to John when he is an adult). This measure was the analyzed and measured in the same way as the parent's ratings. This measure had good reliability $\alpha = .946$.

Perceived Future Morality of Children. The Sexual Double Standard Subscale for Morality (Marks and Fraley, 2005) will measure to what degree participant think the children in the illustration be viewed as moral in the future. (e.g. Please indicate how much you think each statement below will apply to John when he is an adult). This measure was the analyzed and measured in the same way as the parent's ratings. This measure had good reliability $\alpha = .893$.

Perceived Future Occupation of Children: Participants were asked how likely each child is to go into each of six potential occupational roles when they grow up. The occupations were chosen to represent particularly masculine (police officer, surgeon, mechanic) and feminine (social worker, occupational therapist, stay-at-home parent) domains, as categorized in Shinar (1975). We deliberately chose these occupations because they paired evenly on relative level of education needed to pursue the occupation across gender type. Ratings of likelihood for each career will be made on a 5-point Likert scale (1 Not at all to 5 Extremely) and were coded such that higher scores represent more gender-consistent potential occupational roles (i.e., high feminine/low masculine for girls and high masculine/low feminine for boys). This measure had good reliability $\alpha = .755$.

Results

For the present study we sought to understand how adults perceive children belonging to non-traditional families. We first hypothesized that non-traditional parents will experience more social backlash than traditional parents, such that non-traditional mothers will receive higher ratings of perceived success, but lower ratings of perceived likability and morality in comparison to their non-violating counterpart. Non-traditional fathers will receive lower ratings of success but higher ratings of likability and morality in comparison to their non-violating counterpart. For hypothesis 2, we proposed that children of non-traditional parents will experience more social backlash and will receive similar ratings as their same-sex parent. Further, we expected that people will assume children of non-traditional parents will be more likely to go into counter-stereotypic careers compared to the children of traditional parents (e.g., girls will be more likely to go into male-dominated fields, boys will be more likely to go into female-dominated fields).

To examine whether members of non-traditional families will experience more social backlash than members of traditional families, we performed several 2 (family condition: traditional vs. non-traditional) x 2 (family member gender: male vs. female) mixed-model ANOVAs on all ratings of parents and children (i.e., likeability, success, morality, and expected occupation for children only).

Parent Ratings

For likability, the family condition X parent gender interaction was significant, $F(1, 339) = 11.882, p = .001$ (see Table 1, see figure 1). There was a main effect of gender, $F(1, 339) = 11.721, p = .001$, such that fathers ($M = 3.62, SE = .03$) were rated as more likeable than mothers ($M = 3.51, SE = .03$). Pairwise comparisons revealed a significant difference between the father and mother in the non-traditional condition, $p < .001$, such that fathers were rated higher in likability.

Table 1
Means and Standard Deviations on the Measure of Perceived Parent Likability

Gender	Condition	N	Perceived Likability	
			M	SD
Father	Traditional	190	3.56	.59
	Non-traditional	151	3.68	.66
Mother	Traditional	190	3.56	.56
	Non-traditional	151	3.46	.66

There was no significant difference in likability between the father and mother in the traditional condition, $p < .986$. There was no main effect of condition $F(1, 339) = .044, p = .834$.

For success, the family condition X parent gender interaction was significant, $F(1, 339) = 394.239, p < .000$ (see Table 2, see figure 2). There was no significant main effect for gender, $F(1, 339) = 2.823, p = .094$ or condition, $F(1, 339) = .018, p = .893$. Pairwise comparisons revealed a significant difference between parent ratings in the non-traditional condition, $p < .001$, such that, mothers were perceived as more successful than fathers. Conversely, in the traditional condition, fathers were perceived as more successful than mothers, $p < .001$. In addition, there was also a significant difference between the traditional and non-traditional father condition, $p < .001$, such that, the traditional father was rated higher in perceived success than the nontraditional father. Lastly, there was also a significant difference between the traditional and non-traditional mother condition, $p < .000$, such that, the non-traditional mother was rated higher in perceived success than the traditional mother.

Table 2
Means and Standard Deviations on the Measure of Perceived Parent Success

Gender	Condition	N	Perceived Success	
			M	SD
Father	Traditional	190	4.01	.69
	Non-traditional	151	3.0	.79
Mother	Traditional	190	3.08	.76
	Non-traditional	151	4.11	.70

For morality, the family role X parent gender interaction was significant, $F(1, 339) = 11.585, p = .001$ (see Table 3, see Figure 3). Main effects of gender emerged, $F(1, 339) = 11.585, p = .001$, such that fathers ($M = 3.95, SE = .04$) received higher ratings than mothers ($M = 3.843, SE = .04$). Pairwise comparisons revealed a significant difference between the father

and mother in the traditional condition, $p < .001$, such that the mother was rated higher in morality than the father. However, there was no significant difference in rating of the non-traditional mother and father, $p < 1$. There was no main effect of condition $F(1, 339) = .532, p = .466$, but pairwise comparisons revealed a significant difference between the traditional and non-traditional mother condition, $p < .042$, such that the traditional mother was rated higher in morality than the non-traditional mother.

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations on the Measure of Perceived Parent Reputation

Gender	Condition	N	Perceived Reputation	
			M	SD
Father	Traditional	190	3.82	.64
	Non-traditional	151	3.87	.64
Mother	Traditional	190	4.02	.65
	Non-traditional	151	3.87	.69

Child Ratings

For likability, the family role X child gender interaction was not significant, $F(1, 338) = .012, p = .913$. There were no significant main effects for gender, $F(1, 338) = 2.314, p = .129$ or condition $F(1, 338) = .000, p = .992$.

For success, the family role X child gender interaction was significant, $F(1, 339) = 64.358, p = .000$ (see Table 4, see Figure 4). Main effects of gender emerged, $F(1, 339) = 38.357, p = .000$, such that daughters ($M = 3.36, SE = .05$) received higher ratings than sons ($M = 3.10, SE = .05$). Pairwise comparisons revealed that there was a significant difference between sons and daughters in the non-traditional $p < .001$, condition, such that the daughter in the non-

traditional family were more likely to be perceived as more successful than the son in the non-traditional family. However, there was no significant difference in how the son and daughter were perceived in the tradition condition, $p < .170$. Main effects of family role emerged, Wilks' Lambda = .96 $F(1, 339) = 15.817, p = .000$, such that the non-traditional condition ($M = 3.42, SE = .07$) received higher ratings than the traditional condition ($M = 3.04, SE = .06$). Pairwise comparisons revealed that there was a significant difference between the traditional and non-traditional daughter, $p < .001$, condition, such that the non-traditional daughter was more likely to be perceived as more successful. There was no difference in perceptions of the non-traditions and traditional son, $p < .735$.

Table 4
Means and Standard Deviations on the Measure of Perceived Child Future Success

Gender	Condition	N	Perceived Success	
			M	SD
Son	Traditional	190	3.08	.97
	Non-traditional	151	3.12	.85
Daughter	Traditional	190	3.01	.93
	Non-traditional	151	3.72	1.03

For morality, the family role X child gender interaction was not significant, $F(1, 338) = 3.412, p = .066$. Main effects of gender emerged, $F(1, 338) = 28.166, p = .000$, such that daughters ($M = 3.81, SE = .04$) received higher ratings than sons ($M = 3.65, SE = .04$). Pairwise comparisons revealed that there was a significant difference between daughters and sons in the tradition, $p < .001$, family conditions, such that the daughter ($M = 3.80, SD = .70$) was rated higher in morality than the son ($M = 3.59, SD = .73$). Further, pairwise comparisons revealed that

there was a significant difference between daughters and sons in the non-tradition, $p < .021$, family conditions, such that the daughter ($M = 3.82$, $SD = .66$) was rated as more moral than the son ($M = 3.72$, $SD = .66$). There were no main effect of condition, $F(1, 338) = 1.187$, $p = .277$, but pairwise comparisons did reveal a non-significant difference, between men in the traditional and non-traditional conditions, $p < .092$, such that the son in the non-traditional condition ($M = 3.72$, $SD = .66$) was viewed as more moral than the tradition son ($M = 3.59$, $SD = .73$). There was no difference between daughters in both conditions.

For feminine occupation the family role X child gender interaction was significant, $F(1, 338) = 43.592$, $p = .000$ (see Table 5, see figure 5). A main effect of gender emerged, $F(1, 338) = 187.131$, $p = .000$, such that daughters ($M = 1.73$, $SE = .02$) received higher rating than sons ($M = 1.36$, $SE = .02$). Pairwise comparisons revealed that there was a significant difference between daughters and sons in the tradition, $p < .001$, family conditions, such that the daughter were more likely to be perceived as going into feminine occupations than the son. In addition, pairwise comparisons revealed that there was a significant difference between daughters and sons in the non-tradition, $p = .001$, family conditions, such that the daughter were more likely to be perceived as going into feminine occupations than the son. A main effect of family condition emerged, $F(1, 338) = 6.901$, $p = .009$ such that the non-traditional ($M = 1.59$, $SE = .03$) family condition, received higher rating than the traditional ($M = 1.50$, $SE = .02$) family condition. Pairwise comparisons revealed that there was a significant difference between conditions for sons, $p < .001$, such that the non-traditional son was more likely to be perceived as going into feminine occupations than the tradition son. In addition, pairwise comparisons revealed that there was a significant difference between conditions for daughter, $p < .036$, such that the traditional

daughter was more likely to be perceived as going into feminine occupations than the non-traditional daughter.

Table 5

Means and Standard Deviations on the Measure of Perceived Likelihood of going into Feminine Domain Occupation

Gender	Condition	N	feminine Occupation Domain	
			M	SD
Son	Traditional	190	1.22	.42
	Non-traditional	150	1.49	.42
Daughter	Traditional	190	1.77	.40
	Non-traditional	150	1.68	.37

For masculine occupation the family role x child gender interaction was not significant, $F(1, 338) = 3.189, p = .075$. Main effects of gender emerged, $F(1, 338) = 132.230, p = .000$, such that sons ($M = 1.58, SE = .02$) received higher ratings than daughters ($M = 1.28, SE = .02$).

Pairwise comparisons revealed a significant difference between the son and daughter in the traditional, $p < .001$, family condition. Such that the son ($M = 1.60, SD = .40$) received higher ratings of perceived likelihood of going into a masculine occupation than the daughter ($M = 1.25, SD = .42$). Pairwise comparisons revealed a significant difference between the son and daughter in the non-traditional, $p < .001$, family condition. Such that the son ($M = 1.57, SD = .39$) received higher ratings of perceived likelihood of going into a masculine occupation than the daughter ($M = 1.31, SD = .46$). There was no main effect of condition, $F(1, 338) = .149, p = .700$.

Discussion

We hypothesized that non-traditional parents would experience more social backlash than traditional parents, and our results partially supported this hypothesis. We found that adults

belonging to non-traditional families were generally perceived in accordance with backlash theory. According to our results the non-traditional mother received higher rating of perceived success, but lower rating of perceived morality in comparison to their non-violating other and non-traditional father. Non-traditional mothers were also perceived as less likable than non-traditional men. This means that women in non-traditional roles are being perceived as successful within their occupation, at the cost of being perceived as an immoral and less likable individual. These findings support previous literature on adults that showed that businesswomen were perceived as competent (highly correlated with success) but low in warmth (highly correlated with both morality and likability) (Fiske et al., 2002). In addition, we found that non-traditional fathers received lower rating of success in comparison to traditional men and were also rated as less successful than non-traditional mothers. While not significant, non-traditional men were perceived as more moral than traditional men and had similar likability ratings. These findings suggest that non-traditional men are being penalized for their deviation by being viewed as unsuccessful and are also not receiving any of the reciprocal benefits of being perceived in a feminine role. Previous literature has suggested that men are perceived more harshly than women. This could explain why non-traditional men are not being viewed as more moral and likable than their conforming other. Besides not finding any significant differences in fathers' likability and morality and the mothers likability ratings, these results support previous research on backlash theory. An alternate explanation for these null effects could be the lack of information present. Participants only saw a family portrait illustration manipulating gender roles of the parents (see Appendix A), and a vignette providing the names of each family member (see Appendix B). While the image suggests the parents' gender roles we do not indicate in the vignette each parent's role in the family or their occupation. Even with the lack of information,

we still found significant differences by just showing participants an illustration of a mother holding a briefcase, wearing a suit and a father holding a spatula, wearing an apron.

For hypothesis two, we proposed that children of non-traditional parents would experience more social backlash than children of traditional parents, and would receive similar rating as their same sex parent. Further, we believed participants would estimate that the children of non-traditional parents would be more likely to go into counter-stereotypic careers compared to children of traditional parents (e.g., girls will go into stereotypically masculine fields, boys will go into stereotypically feminine fields). Our results revealed that children of non-traditional parents were perceived similarly to children of traditional parents, but on some measures children from non-traditional families received some added benefits. Daughters in non-traditional families were perceived as more successful than all other children. This finding is surprising because both the non-traditional daughter and traditional son had a same sex role model whom was perceived as successful, yet people did not think that the traditional son would be anymore or any less successful then the traditional daughter and the non-traditional son, whom both had stay-home-parents as their same sex role model. This leads us to believe that people perceive having a successful woman same sex role model as a far more influential factor in a daughters perceived success. Our results did not support our original hypothesis and instead suggested that children belonging to non-traditional families may receive some positive evaluations. Further research is needed to replicate these findings and explain the mechanism behind why this is occurring.

We hypothesized that non-traditional children would be perceived as more likely to go into counter stereotypical occupations. Our results revealed that the non-traditional son was more likely to be perceived as going into counter stereotypical occupations, such as a stay-at-home

parent, in comparison with the traditional son but there was no significant difference in likelihood of going into masculine occupations, such as a surgeon, between the two conditions. The daughter in the non-traditional condition was less likely to be perceived as going into feminine occupations than the traditional daughter but were still perceived as more likely than the non-traditional son to go into feminine occupations. These results partially support our hypothesis. It is interesting to note that even though daughters were perceived as more successful than any other condition daughters were still not perceived as more or less likely to go into masculine occupations than non-traditional daughters. This suggests that even though participants think that the nontraditional daughter will be more successful than any other condition people still don't think they will be successful in masculine occupations, but instead be successful in feminine occupations. This potentially could be a result of societal constraints placed against women entering masculine fields. Participants may believe that because of societal constraints it is more likely for women to be successful in more feminine fields where there is less of a likelihood of experiencing hiring discrimination or pay differences.

Implications

Prior research has shown that violating stereotypes can have negative impacts on targets' social and economic lives through the backlash effect (Rudman, 1998). Individuals who violate stereotypes may be overlooked for leadership positions, have higher rates of turnover, and have larger wage gaps in comparison to their non-violating counterparts. According to previous research agentic female applicants are perceived as highly qualified but are also perceived as socially lacking and unlikable which could result in hiring discrimination. Communal men however are perceived as highly likable, but as less competent and hireable in comparison to agentic men. Previous literature has suggested that these penalties prevent gender deviants from

becoming successful and strong role models, which leads to the inability to change or undermine gender stereotypes (Rudman, & Fairchild, 2004). The current study however challenges this notion by showing that even though parents receive rating in line with backlash theory their children were evaluated no more negative than traditional children and, in some cases, received more positive ratings.

Limitations

All participants in this study were recruited via Turk Prime which may have limited how generalizable our study is to the how people perceive children belonging to non-traditional and traditional families. However, we did try to improve our external validity by limiting the study to individuals who participate in less than 57 percent of all studies on Turk Prime.

In addition, the Marks and Fraley Sexual Double Standard Subscale for success was limited to career and economic success and did not measure other forms of success such as family success or inner success. Understanding how people perceive these other forms of success can help us to understand the larger context of these evaluations.

Future Directions

In the current study, we were unable to tell which of the parents' gender roles influenced the perception of children in the nontraditional families. It could also be that having both parents in a non-traditional role could influence peoples rating of their children. Future studies could manipulate the parent roles individually (i.e., mothers alone in traditional versus non-traditional roles) to see whether having one non-traditional parent more strongly influences people's perceptions of their children. It may be possible that mothers could be a stronger influence given their typical status as primary caregivers. But then again, it could just be whichever parent is portrayed as the primary caregiver.

This study only investigates individuals' personal perceptions and does not assess participants' normative evaluations. Asking participants to think of how others would evaluate children belonging to non-traditional households may change their personal perception of the child, to be more in line with the rest of society. If people think that society would evaluate these children more harshly than they themselves could alter their original perception to be more aligned with others in order to fit in. Future directions of this study will investigate these perceptions in greater detail.

Other areas of areas of interest include understanding how the knowledge of these perceptions might influence children's aspirations to pursue counter stereotypic occupations and positions of power.

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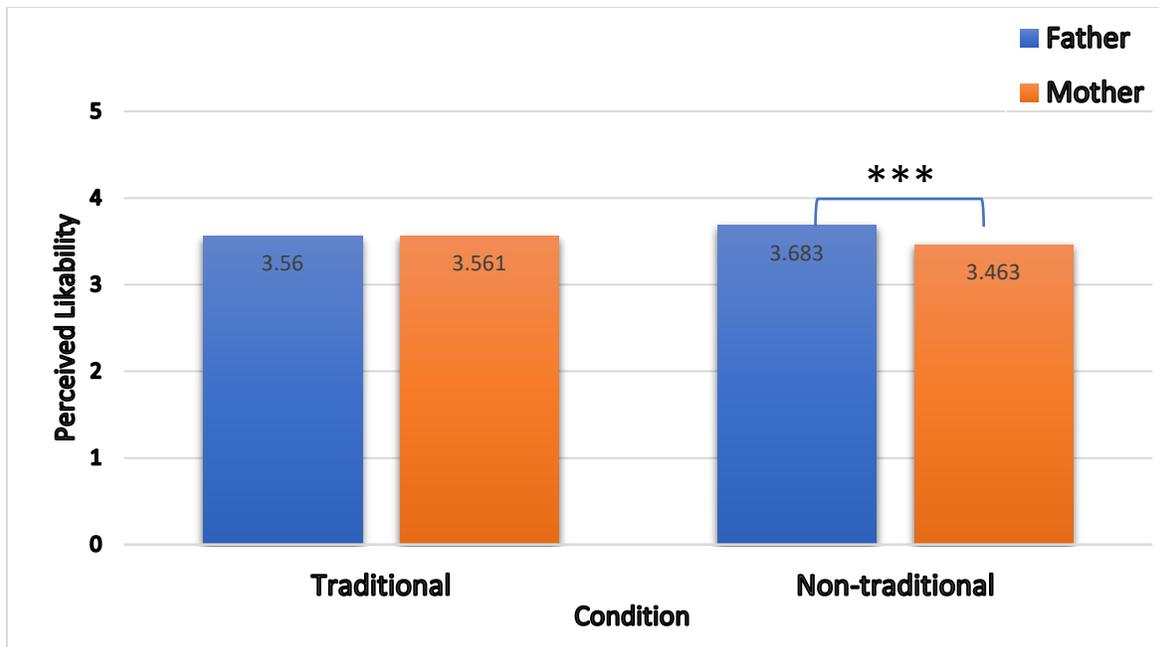


Figure 1. Perceptions of Parent Likability. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

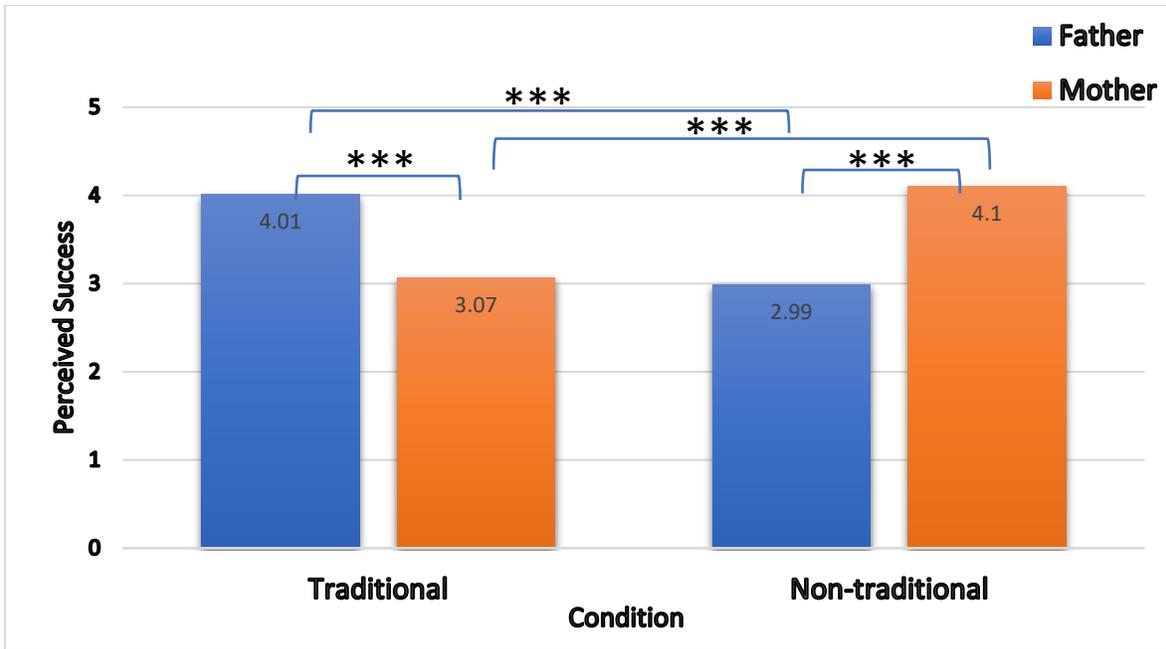


Figure 2. Perception of Parent Success. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

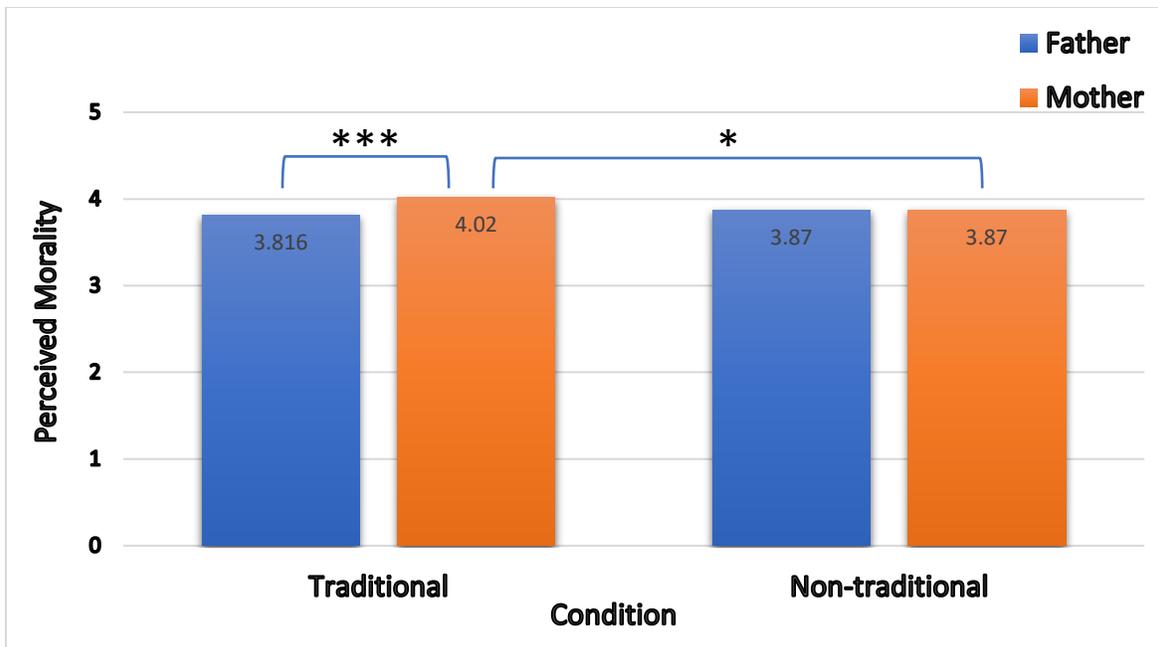


Figure 3. Perceptions of Parent Morality. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

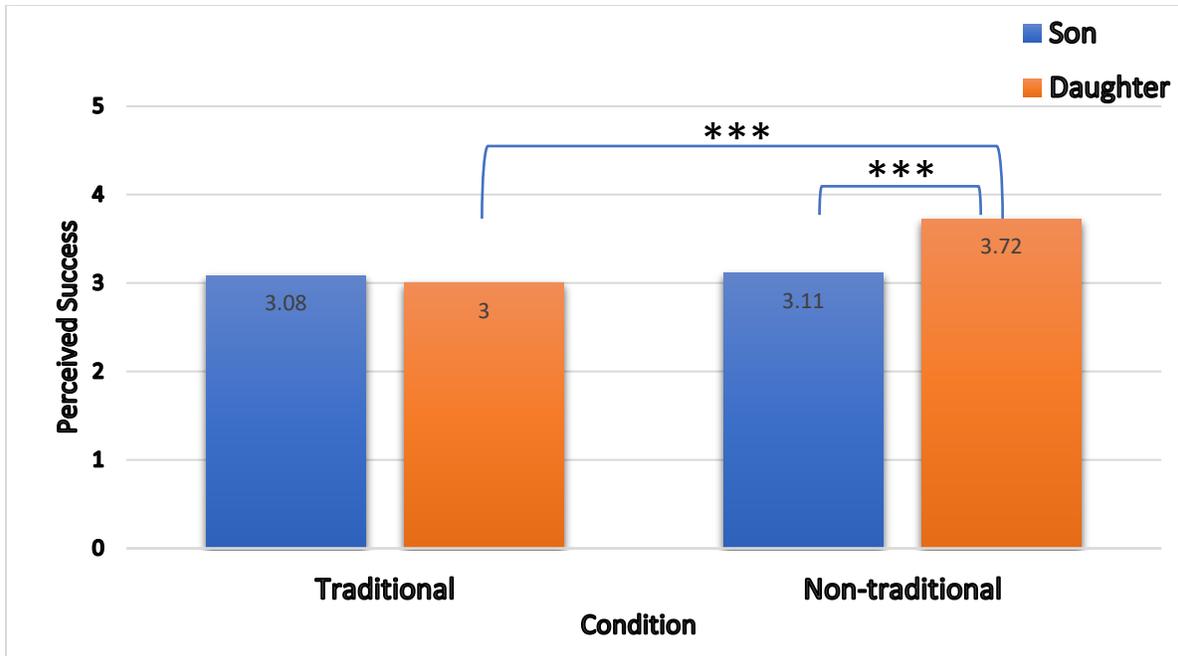


Figure 4. Perception of Child Success. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

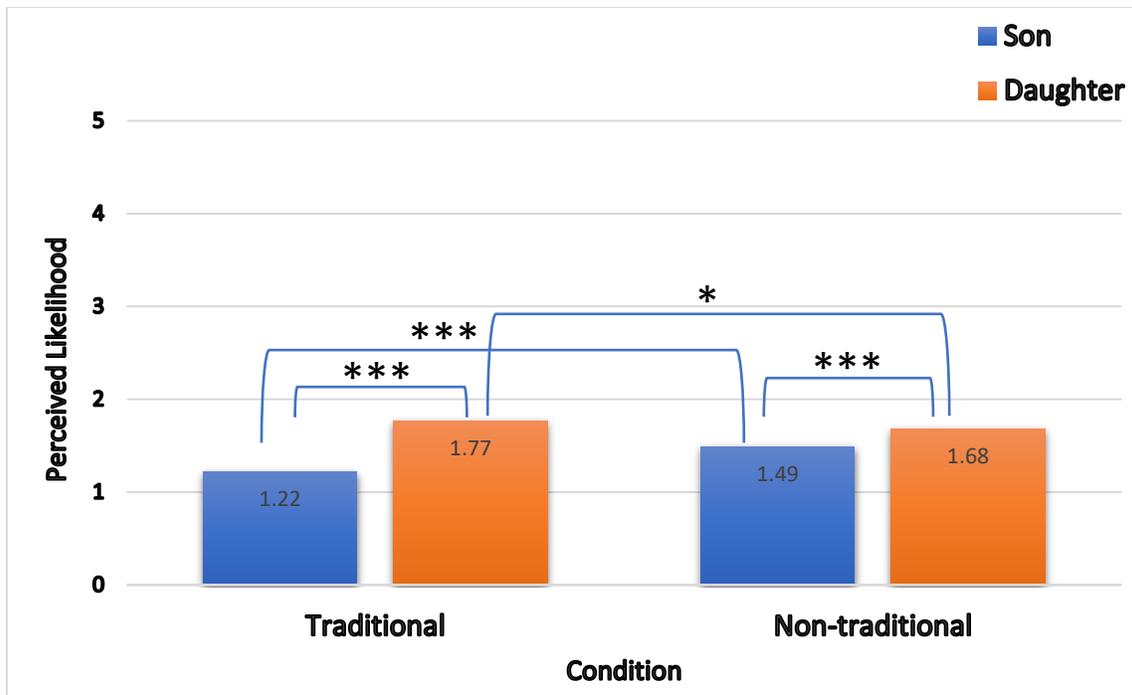
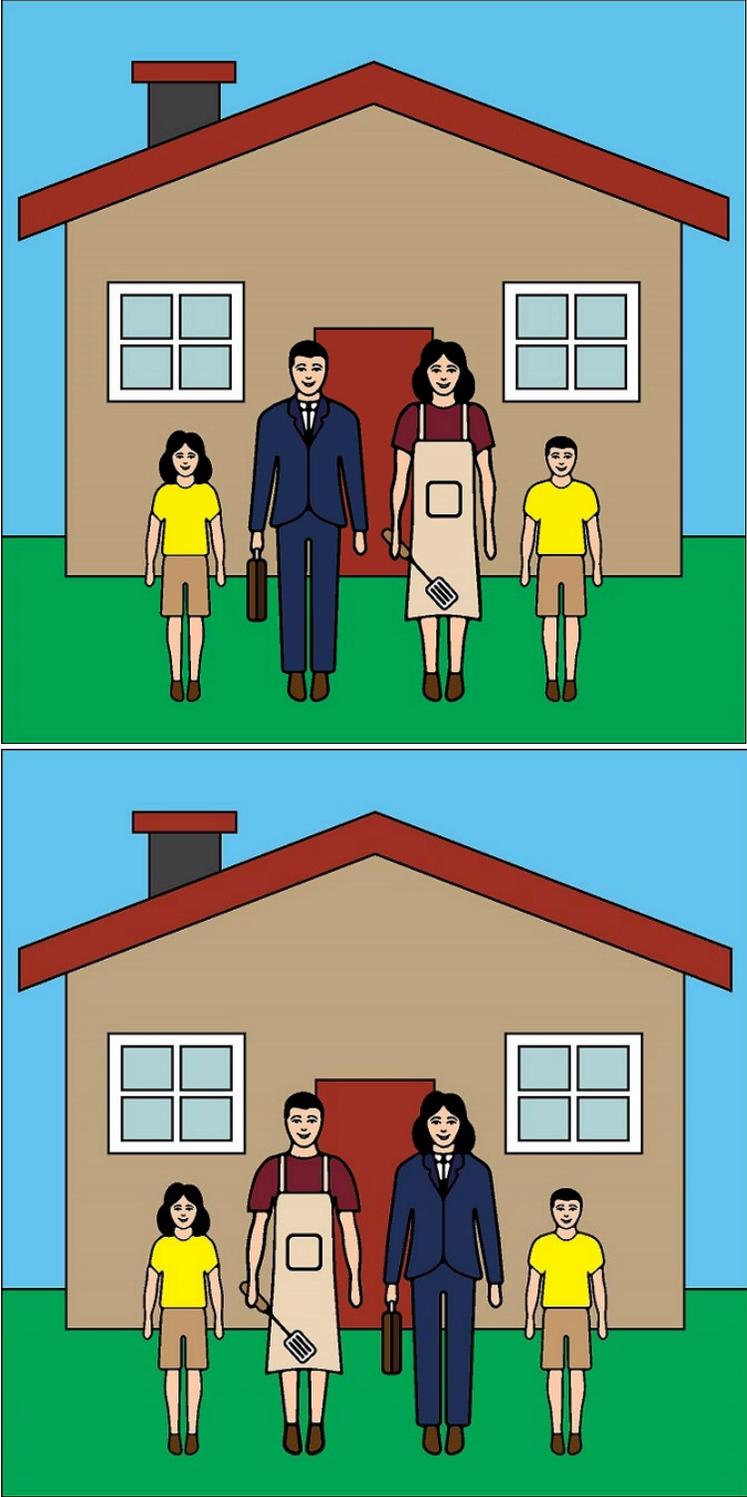


Figure 5. Perceptions of likelihood of children going into a feminine occupation. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

(APPENDIX A)

Family Portrait Illustration Manipulating Gender Roles of the Parents



(APPENDIX B)

Vignette Describing Family

“The illustration below accurately depicts the parents' roles within the household. Please take a couple of minutes to form an impression of each family member.

As a reminder, the father is Tom, the mother is Tina, the son is John, and the daughter is Jane. The twins, John and Jane, are in fourth grade.

On the following pages, you will be asked to report your impressions of each family member (four questionnaires in total).”

(APPENDIX C)

Marks and Fraley Sexual Double Standard Measure (Adapted)

Indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Participants will rate each item on a 5 point scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

Subscale 1: Morality

This person is trustworthy.

This person is respectful.

This person is immoral.

This person is dishonest.

This person is careless.

I could be friends with this person.

I would not like to know this person.

Subscale 2: Likability

This person is popular.

This person has lots of friends.

This person is fun at parties.

People like this person.

This person would be fun to hang out with.

This person is physically attractive.

People listen to this person.

No one likes this person.

Subscale 3: Success

This person makes a lot of money.

This person will hold a job with lots of power.

This person is in charge of many people.