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Effects of Attractiveness and Occupation Type on Attitudes toward Working Women and Men

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ABSTRACT
Extending previous research, we analyzed across two preregistered studies ($N = 761$) the differences in cognitive evaluations, emotional reactions, and behavioral intentions depending on the physical attractiveness (low vs. high) of a potential coworker (woman or men), which applies for a gender-neutral job (Study 1) or a male-typed occupation (Study 2). Studies 1 and 2 showed that attractiveness mainly influenced participants' attitudes toward female candidates. Pooled analyses confirmed that women's evaluations at work depended on their physical attractiveness as participants showed less positive attitudes toward less attractive women versus highly attractive women. Occupation also affected the evaluations of competence of women: they were considered more competent when applying for a computer science occupation than for an administrative occupation.

Despite the positive and revolutionary advances during the past decades, achieving full gender equality remains distant (Morgenroth & Ryan, 2018). Women are still underrepresented in the labor market, especially in high-prestige occupations, whereas they are overrepresented in informal work sectors such as food and accommodation services often linked to precarious working conditions, something especially evident during the COVID-19 pandemic (International Labor Organization [ILO], 2021). Women may be well-valued at their job, but numerous factors, not exclusively related to their work-related ability or competence, may influence how they are perceived and evaluated. Among them, some authors posit prejudice based on physical appearance as the new frontier of employment discrimination (Warhurst et al., 2009).

Extending the literature, this research analyzed whether there were differences in cognitive evaluations, emotional reactions, and behavioral intentions of facilitation at work depending on the physical attractiveness of women and men job applicants. We also explored whether there are differences in the evaluations, reactions, and tendencies toward men and women depending on the occupation for which they apply (i.e., a neutral vs. a male-typed activity) to disentangle some of the layers of work gender inequality.

Physical attractiveness and occupation type

A growing body of research has evidenced that those considered physically attractive are favored and have more prestigious occupations. One possible explanation of this type of prejudice is the "halo effect," that is, the tendency to generalize positive characteristics to a person who possesses one or some positive traits (Thorndike, 1920). The halo effect activates the intuitive heuristic "what is beautiful is good," leading people to believe that an attractive appearance is related to positive traits (e.g., sociability, honesty) and even better lives (e.g., having more competent partners, having more prestigious occupations) (Dion et al., 1972; Hamermesh, 2011). Confirming this premise, previous research has shown that compared to their less attractive counterparts, highly attractive people are judged and treated more positively, are attributed more positive traits (e.g., warmth, Lan et al., 2022; morality, Klebl et al., 2022), and are better evaluated in terms of a variety of job-related outcomes (Hosoda et al., 2003).

However, it is not clear how attractiveness affects the evaluation of women and men. Whereas in some studies the effect of attractiveness is independent of the sex of the target (e.g., Eagly et al., 1991; Hosoda et al., 2003; Langlois et al., 2000; Pireddu et al., 2022),

others suggest that attractiveness is always beneficial for men (e.g., Cash et al., 1977), or does not affect male targets (e.g., Heilman & Stopeck, 1985; Johnson et al., 2010; Sheppard & Johnson, 2019), while women are more likely to be discriminated against in the workplace based on their appearance and penalized if they are unattractive (Bar-Tal & Saxe, 1976; Turkmenoglu, 2020).

Regarding occupation, both women and men are rewarded when conforming to gender roles but penalized when deviating from them more often through subtle manifestations (e.g., cooperation, being ignored) than through overt actions (e.g., hiring, losing a job) (Eagly & Wood, 2012). When fulfilling the role assigned to them, women can be evaluated extremely positively, confirming the so-called "women-are-wonderful" effect (Eagly et al., 1991). Although this effect prevails across a wide array of countries, it seems to be less pronounced in egalitarian societies (Krys et al., 2018).

Despite this positive perception of women, the association with communal traits may keep being an obstacle to women's incorporation and progress in traditionally masculine areas (Eagly & Mladinic, 1994). Successful or leading women still elicit more negative reactions or are promoted less often in male-typed activities than men (Garcia-Retamero & López-Zafra, 2006; Heilman et al., 2004) probably because women, despite the gain in competence, are still perceived as less agentic than men (Eagly et al., 2020), and consequently not appropriate for prestigious, traditionally male-dominated, occupations (Cejka & Eagly, 1999; Glick et al., 1995; Heilman et al., 2004).

The present research

Traditionally, two dimensions of warmth and competence have been identified as underlying person and group judgments (e.g., Fiske et al., 2002). Warmth consists of two subdimensions (Leach et al., 2007): sociability (e.g., likeability, friendliness, kindness) and morality (e.g., trustworthiness, honesty, sincerity), playing morality a primary role in person and group perception (see Brambilla et al., 2021), especially when its negative traits are involved, that is, when immorality is evaluated (see Rusconi et al., 2020).

Recent research has analyzed the important and different impact of these core dimensions of social judgment on employment for men and women (e.g., Moscatelli et al., 2020). While competence has proven to be the main factor affecting decisions regarding the employability of male candidates, women candidates "have to have it all," as decisions about their

employability are influenced by the evaluation of all the stereotypical dimensions measured (morality, sociability, and competence; Moscatelli et al., 2020).

Our research will extend this line of work in several ways. In addition to the stereotype content dimensions of competence, sociability, morality, and immorality, in our studies, we will examine the perceiver's emotional reactions (i.e., admiration, contempt, envy, and compassion) toward a job candidate, as well as the behavioral intentions of active and passive facilitation at work. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study that focuses on the impact of the attractiveness of job applicants (men and women) on all these relevant variables.

Additionally, most studies have placed participants in a position of relative superiority regarding the evaluated target asking them to decide on employment-related outcomes such as hiring or contract renewal/termination. Extending previous research, and to increase participants' implication and the realism of the task, we will focus on examining attitudes toward men and women as prospective work colleagues.

Extending the literature about the impact of attractiveness and type of occupation on attitudes toward working women and men, we conducted two preregistered experiments aimed at analyzing whether the cognitive evaluations (i.e., [im]morality, sociability, competence), emotional reactions (i.e., contempt, admiration, envy, compassion), and behavioral intentions of facilitation (active and passive) at work manifested toward female and male candidates vary depending on their level of physical attractiveness (low vs. high) and the type of occupation for which they apply (a neutral vs. a male-typed activity). Preregistrations of the studies, Supplementary Information (SI), Materials, and Pooled data of Studies 1 and 2 are available online (Supplementary Information).

Specifically, we intend to answer the following research questions:

Research Question 1 (RQ1). Do the cognitive evaluations, emotional reactions, and behavioral intentions toward male and female candidates vary depending on their level of physical attractiveness (low vs. high)?

Research Question 2 (RQ2). Do the cognitive evaluations, emotional reactions, and behavioral intentions toward male and female candidates vary depending on the occupation for which they apply (a neutral vs. a male-typed activity)?

Study 1

To clarify how attractiveness affects the evaluations of female and male candidates (RQ1), we experimentally

tested the differences in cognitive evaluations, emotional reactions, and behavioral intentions triggered by men and women candidates for a gender-neutral occupation (administrative staff) depending on their level of attractiveness (low vs. high). Since it is not clear in the literature how attractiveness impacts the evaluation of women and men, we do not formulate specific hypotheses.

Method

Participants

After discarding incomplete surveys and duplicates, the sum of the participants who completed the study ascended to 331. According to the exclusion criteria pre-registered, 34 participants were not considered (i.e., 25 failing the attention checks, six failing the manipulation checks, and three failing both criteria). The final sample consisted of 297 participants (68% women, 93.6% born in Spain) with ages between 18 and 69 years old ($M = 35.14$, $SD = 12.15$). The 64% of the participants were active workers and the 25.3% were students. Most participants (78.5%) had completed university studies, and 72.4% did not have professional experience related to the field that framed the experiment. On a political ideology scale from 1 (*extreme left*) to 5 (*extreme right*), participants had a political orientation center-left ($M = 2.41$, $SD = 0.74$). Applying the a priori procedure (APP; Trafimow, 2019), the desired sample size to estimate a Cohen'$d = 0.5$ for a value of precision $f = 0.15$ and a confidence level $c = 0.95$ is $N = 176$ (Chen et al., 2021). After applying the exclusion criteria, 150 participants evaluated men candidates, and 147 evaluated women candidates.

Design and measures

We presented the CV of a 28-year-old person who had applied for an administrative job at a medium-sized Spanish company. To frame the job in the administrative context, we provided information in the candidates' CVs. Specifically, we indicated that they had vocational education and training in administration, intermediate English level, and experience as clerk worker and in customer service. Participants imagined that they worked in this company and had to evaluate the candidate as a possible coworker. Following a between-subjects design, participants were randomly assigned to evaluate one of four different CVs that varied depending on the sex (woman vs. man) and attractiveness (high vs. low) of the candidate. With the same background and professional experience, we manipulated the sex of the candidate with the name (María vs. Jose) and the photo, as well

as his/her attractiveness through standardized pictures from the Chicago Face Database (CFD; Ma et al., 2015, 2021) based on their level of attractiveness. The photos used for the high-attractiveness condition had a higher score in attractiveness (4.91/7) than the photos used for the low-attractiveness condition (2.35/7) according to the CFD.

Participants were asked to report their first impressions about the candidate in a series of measures using a five-point response scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very much*).

Cognitive evaluations. Participants were asked to express their opinion on the target: "To what extent do you think José/María, as a coworker, is?" They should indicate how honest, sincere, trustworthy (morality; $\alpha = .84$), likable, friendly, warm (sociability, $\alpha = .85$), competent, intelligent, skillful (competence, $\alpha = .84$) (Leach et al., 2007; adapted to Spanish by López-Rodríguez et al., 2013), malicious, treacherous, and false (immorality; $\alpha = .87$) (Sayans-Jiménez et al., 2017) was the candidate. The items were presented in random order.

Emotional reactions. Participants were instructed "Please think about José/María as a coworker and tell us to what extent you might feel each of the following emotions toward him/her": admiration, respect (admiration, $r = .37$), contempt, discomfort (contempt, $r = .68$), envy, jealousy (envy, $r = .52$) compassion, pity (compassion, $r = .42$). This is based on the four emotional dimensions of the stereotype content model (Fiske et al., 2002; adapted to Spanish by Cuadrado et al., 2016). The items were randomly presented.

Behavioral intentions of facilitation at work. We used the eight-item scale of behavioral intentions of facilitation at work developed by Cuadrado et al. (2023). Participants were asked to report: "To what extent would you be willing to perform the following actions toward José/María as a coworker?": promote him/her at work; recommend him/her for a job position; facilitate him/her professional training; facilitate his/her promotion at work, if possible (active facilitation; $\alpha = .85$); working with him/her on a team project; cooperating with her at work; carpooling to go to work in order to reduce expenses; partnering with him/her professionally (passive facilitation; $\alpha = .76$). The items were randomly presented.

Attention and manipulation checks. To guarantee the quality of the data, participants were instructed to select a specified number to assess their level of attention.

Participants were also asked to confirm the sex of the candidate and to judge his/her attractiveness from 1 (*not attractive*) to 5 (*very attractive*). Failing the attention check and an inadequate identification of the sex of the candidate were pre-registered as exclusion criteria.

Participants also reported their sociodemographic information including sex, age, level of education, occupation, experience in the administrative domain, birth country, and political orientation. Ambivalent sexism and prescriptive stereotypes were also measured for exploratory purposes (see Materials and Supplementary Information).

Procedure

The sampling plan included obtaining a sample of Spanish participants from the general population aged 18 years and older, following a non-probabilistic convenience sampling through social networks. We preregistered to exclude participants who did not finish the questionnaire, who failed the manipulation check regarding the identification of the gender of the target assessed, who failed the attention check questions or who were under 18 years old. The questionnaire was designed online via Qualtrics with an average time of 10 min to be completed. We assured the voluntary and anonymous participation and thanked and adequately debriefed our participants.

Data analyses

We calculated Cohen's *d* to test the effect size of the differences between candidates with low and high levels of attractiveness on the dependent variables (cognitive evaluations, emotional reactions, and behavioral intentions) in women and men separately. We calculated Cohen's *d* from both normal statistics (means and standard deviations) and skew normal statistics (locations and scales), since differences in locations might be in the opposite direction of differences in means (see Trafimow et al., 2019, 2023). We will interpret the results based on skew normal effect sizes (see Trafimow et al., 2023). The general guidelines for interpreting the effect size are as follows: 0.2 = small effect, 0.5 = moderate effect, and 0.8 = large effect (Cohen, 1988).

Results

Manipulation checks

Most of the participants correctly identified the sex of the target (150 or 96.8% for the male candidate condition; 147 or 98% for the female candidate condition). Those assigned to the high-attractiveness condition considered the candidate more attractive ($M = 2.85$,

$SD = .88$) than those assigned to the low-attractiveness condition ($M = 2.17$, $SD = .82$), Cohen's $d = .80$.

Differences in the dependent variables depending on the level of attractiveness of men and women candidates (RQ1)

As shown in Table 1, the results revealed that the level of attractiveness leads to differences of small-medium size in the cognitive evaluations, the emotional reactions, and the facilitation behavioral intentions toward the *man candidate* (the effect sizes ranged between 0.09 and 0.49).

Regarding the *woman candidate*, Table 1 shows that the participants attributed less sociability (Cohen's $d = -1.88$), morality (Cohen's $d = -1.50$), and competence (Cohen's $d = -0.70$) to the lowly attractive female applicant than to the highly attractive one. For the remaining variables, the differences were of small-medium size, ranging between 0.02 and 0.46.

Discussion

This study reveals that the perceived sociability, morality, and competence of women seemed contingent on their attractiveness, and this occurs to a lesser extent when evaluating male candidates as suggested in previous works (see Bar-Tal & Saxe, 1976; Turkmenoglu, 2020). Therefore, this study shows that the evaluation of working women is more dependent on their physical appearance than the evaluation working men.

Study 2

The main aim of this study was to replicate Study 1 in a different occupational field. Previous research has shown that women are penalized in male-typed occupations (Garcia-Retamero & López-Zafra, 2006; Heilman et al., 2004), whereas men are more positively evaluated in this kind of occupations (Heilman & Wallen, 2010). To explore the role of gender-typed occupation in how women and men are evaluated depending on their level of attractiveness, we change the framing of the manipulation from an administrative occupation to a computer science occupation. We regard computer science as a male-typed activity because 80% of information and communications technology professional positions are held by men, whereas administration can be considered a more gender-neutral activity because the presence of women and men in business and administration occupations

Table 1. Normal and skew statistics of Study 1 (administrative field) per candidate's sex and level of attractiveness, and effect size of low-high attractiveness comparison.

	Normal statistics							Skew statistics						
	Low attractive			High attractive				Low attractive			High attractive			
Man														
	M	SD	Skew	M	SD	Skew	Cohen's d	Locat.	Scale	Shape	Locat.	Scale	Shape	Cohen's d
Sociability	2.88	0.63	−0.16	2.93	0.69	−0.82	−0.08	3.32	0.77	−1.06	3.79	1.10	−4.54	−0.49
Competence*	1.18	0.22	−2.32	1.15	0.29	−2.57	0.12	0.89	0.36	27.85	0.77	0.48	27.85	0.29
Morality	3.19	0.59	−0.32	3.16	0.75	−0.92	0.05	3.73	0.79	−1.56	4.13	1.22	−7.16	−0.39
Immorality	1.89	0.69	0.25	2.03	0.72	0.03	−0.21	1.31	0.90	1.36	1.72	0.79	0.57	−0.48
Admiration	3.31	0.81	−0.56	3.14	0.79	−0.47	0.21	4.20	1.20	−2.42	3.96	1.14	−2.07	0.20
Contempt*	0.31	0.37	0.74	0.31	0.39	0.91	0.00	−0.13	0.58	3.55	−0.19	0.63	6.69	0.09
Compassion	1.94	0.84	0.33	1.96	0.80	0.04	−0.01	1.18	1.14	1.58	1.61	0.88	0.58	−0.42
Envy*	0.24	0.33	1.00	0.23	0.39	1.44	0.03	−0.20	0.55	27.85	−0.29	0.65	27.85	0.15
Active Facilitation	3.78	0.74	−0.12	3.37	0.84	−0.33	0.52	4.26	0.88	−0.94	4.14	1.14	−1.60	0.12
Passive Facilitation	3.81	0.81	−0.35	3.57	0.76	−0.40	0.31	4.56	1.10	−1.64	4.31	1.07	−1.82	0.23
n		81			69				81			69		
Woman														
	M	SD	Skew	M	SD	Skew	Cohen's d	Locat.	Scale	Shape	Locat.	Scale	Shape	Cohen's d
Sociability	2.97	0.70	0.29	3.43	0.78	−0.72	−0.63	2.36	0.93	1.47	4.36	1.20	−3.38	−1.88
Competence	3.56	0.55	0.25	3.92	0.67	0.04	−0.60	3.11	0.71	1.35	3.62	0.74	0.61	−0.70
Morality	3.48	0.60	0.10	3.64	0.74	−0.67	−0.24	3.11	0.70	0.87	4.51	1.14	−3.02	−1.50
Immorality	1.79	0.72	0.43	1.65	0.73	0.74	0.20	1.07	1.02	1.91	0.78	1.13	3.55	0.27
Admiration	3.54	0.81	−0.16	3.97	0.63	−0.35	−0.58	4.13	1.00	−1.08	4.56	0.87	−1.67	−0.46
Contempt*	0.27	0.36	1.02	0.22	0.36	1.36	0.14	−0.21	0.60	27.85	−0.26	0.60	27.85	0.08
Compassion	1.93	0.88	0.62	1.79	0.89	0.91	0.16	0.93	1.33	2.72	0.65	1.44	6.89	0.20
Envy*	0.15	0.30	1.72	0.24	0.36	1.19	−0.27	−0.25	0.50	27.85	−0.24	0.60	27.85	−0.02
Active Facilitation	3.79	0.73	−0.59	4.08	0.62	−0.16	−0.42	4.60	1.09	−2.57	4.53	0.76	−1.08	0.08
Passive Facilitation	3.87	0.74	−0.43	4.12	0.65	−0.23	−0.36	4.61	1.05	−1.91	4.65	0.84	−1.29	−0.04
n		81			66				81			66		

Note. When the data present a log skew normal distribution they have been logarithmically transformed [Y = ln (X)]. Such cases are marked with *.

is more balanced (49% men; 51% women) (ILO, 2020).

Method

Participants
After discarding incomplete surveys and duplicates, the sum of the participants who completed the study ascended to 505. According to the pre-registered exclusion criteria, 41 participants were not considered because they were under 18 years old (1) or they failed either the attention check question (25) or the manipulation checks (15), resting a final sample of 464 participants (57.8% women, 95% born in Spain). With ages between 18 and 70 years old ($M = 31.64$, $SD = 12.80$), 58.8% of the participants were active workers and 33.4% students. Near half of the participants (53%) completed university studies, and 70% did not have professional experience related to the field that framed the experiment. On a political ideology scale from 1 (*extreme left*) to 5 (*extreme right*), the participants had a left political orientation ($M = 2.22$, $SD = 0.76$). Applying the a priori procedure (APP; Trafimow, 2019), the desired sample size to estimate a Cohen'$d = 0.5$ for a value of precision $f = 0.15$ and a confidence level $c = 0.95$ is $N = 176$ (Chen et al., 2021).

Two hundred and twenty-eight participants rated men candidates, and 236 rated women candidates.

Design, measures and procedure
We used the same procedure and experimental manipulation as in Study 1, but in this study the candidates were applying for a computer technician job. To frame the job in this context, we provided information in the candidates' CVs. Specifically, we indicated that they had vocational education and training in microcomputer systems and networks, intermediate English level, and experience as a computer technician.

The sampling plan included obtaining a sample of Spanish participants from the general population aged 18 years and older, following a non-probabilistic convenience sampling. The participants in this study were recruited among acquaintances of first-year students of different undergraduate degrees from the authors' university, who received a course credit (0.25 points) for their collaboration. We preregistered to exclude participants who did not finish the questionnaire, who failed the manipulation check regarding the identification of the gender of the target assessed, who failed the attention check questions, or who were under 18 years old. As in the previous study, we assessed participants' cognitive evaluations (sociability: $\alpha = .84$, competence: $\alpha = .80$, morality: $\alpha = .82$, and

immorality: $\alpha = .83$), emotional reactions (admiration: $r = .44$, envy: $r = .60$, compassion: $r = .39$, and contempt: $r = .54$), and behavioral intentions of facilitation (active: $\alpha = .86$, and passive: $\alpha = .83$), attention and manipulation checks, and sociodemographic information. Additionally, we assessed ambivalent sexism, subjective social status, neosexism, and feminist identification to explore its impact on the effect of the manipulation (see Materials and SI). The average time to complete the questionnaire was 15 min.

Results

Manipulation checks

Most of the participants selected the correct manipulation check option concerning the target's sex (228, or 97% when the candidate was a man; 236, or 96.7% when the candidate was a woman). Likewise, the participants considered the target more attractive in the high-attractiveness condition ($M = 2.83$, $SD = .91$) than in the low-attractiveness condition ($M = 2.03$, $SD = .81$), Cohen's $d = 0.93$.

Differences in the dependent variables depending on the level of attractiveness of men and women candidates (RQ1)

Participants evaluated the low attractive *man candidate* as more immoral than the high attractive

candidate (Cohen's $d = 1.35$). The evaluations reported for all the other variables toward male targets were slightly affected by their level of attractiveness. The effect sizes of the differences were lower than 0.36, and close to zero in four of the variables (see Table 2).

As shown in Table 2, participants perceived the lowly attractive *female candidate* as less sociable (Cohen's $d = -2.05$), competent (Cohen's $d = -0.87$), and more immoral (Cohen's $d = 1.52$) than the highly attractive candidate. Participants also reported less admiration (Cohen's $d = -0.99$) and manifested more passive facilitation intentions (Cohen's $d = 1.16$) toward the lowly attractive female target than toward the highly attractive woman. The effect sizes of the differences in the remaining variables were small-medium, ranging between 0.06 and 0.47.

Discussion

In the present study, contextualized in the computer science domain (male-typed activity), the level of attractiveness notably affected the evaluation of female candidates, whereas attractiveness hardly affected the evaluation of male candidates. Attractive women were better evaluated than less attractive ones in cognitive evaluations and the emotional reaction of admiration,

Table 2. Normal and skew statistics of Study 2 (computer science field) per candidate's sex and level of attractiveness, and effect size of low-high attractiveness comparison.

	Normal statistics							Skew statistics						
	Low attractive			High attractive				Low attractive			High attractive			
							Man							
	M	SD	Skew	M	SD	Skew	Cohen's d	Locat.	Scale	Shape	Locat.	Scale	Shape	Cohen's d
Sociability	2.84	0.75	−0.20	3.08	0.74	−0.35	−0.32	3.42	0.95	−1.18	3.77	1.01	−1.65	−0.36
Competence	3.50	0.76	−0.62	3.60	0.70	−0.70	−0.14	4.36	1.15	−2.75	4.42	1.08	−3.20	−0.06
Morality	3.29	0.70	−0.71	3.41	0.71	−0.73	−0.17	4.12	1.08	−3.27	4.26	1.11	−3.48	−0.13
Immorality*	0.56	0.38	−0.42	0.54	0.36	0.18	0.05	0.94	0.54	−1.88	0.27	0.45	1.14	1.35
Admiration	3.35	0.85	−0.70	3.31	0.77	−0.49	0.04	4.35	1.32	−3.20	4.12	1.12	−2.14	0.19
Contempt*	0.41	0.39	0.52	0.40	0.41	0.72	0.02	−0.01	0.57	2.25	−0.09	0.64	3.38	0.13
Compassion	2.17	0.88	0.36	1.97	0.84	0.46	0.23	1.34	1.20	1.69	1.11	1.20	2.02	0.19
Envy*	0.28	0.36	0.90	0.30	0.38	0.84	−0.05	−0.18	0.58	6.30	−0.18	0.61	4.79	−0.01
Active Facilitation	3.49	0.84	−0.51	3.54	0.89	−0.43	−0.05	4.38	1.23	−2.20	4.43	1.26	−1.90	−0.04
Passive Facilitation	3.61	0.85	−0.54	3.62	0.87	−0.47	−0.02	4.52	1.25	−2.34	4.51	1.24	−2.05	0.01
n		112			116				112			116		
							Woman							
	M	SD	Skew	M	SD	Skew	Cohen's d	Locat.	Scale	Shape	Locat.	Scale	Shape	Cohen's d
Sociability	2.60	0.78	0.19	3.35	0.79	−0.61	−0.95	2.00	0.99	1.18	4.23	1.19	−2.68	−2.05
Competence	3.54	0.59	−0.05	3.76	0.71	−0.76	−0.34	3.83	0.66	−0.65	4.62	1.11	−3.78	−0.87
Morality	3.18	0.66	−0.48	3.55	0.76	−0.40	−0.51	3.87	0.95	−2.10	4.30	1.07	−1.83	−0.43
Immorality*	0.60	0.41	−0.05	0.43	0.38	0.45	0.43	0.80	0.46	−0.66	0.04	0.54	1.99	1.52
Admiration	3.34	0.79	0.00	3.61	0.77	−0.70	−0.35	3.51	0.81	−0.28	4.51	1.18	−3.22	−0.99
Contempt*	0.43	0.40	0.40	0.25	0.37	1.19	0.47	0.04	0.56	1.81	−0.24	0.61	27.85	0.47
Compassion	2.02	0.88	0.56	1.91	0.84	0.55	0.14	1.06	1.30	2.42	0.99	1.24	2.38	0.06
Envy*	0.26	0.35	1.03	0.23	0.37	1.36	0.08	−0.20	0.58	27.85	−0.26	0.61	27.85	0.09
Active Facilitation	3.48	0.75	−0.36	3.82	0.73	−0.54	−0.47	4.18	1.03	−1.68	4.61	1.07	−2.32	−0.41
Passive Facilitation	3.53	0.87	−0.44	3.97	0.78	−1.01	−0.53	4.41	1.24	−1.96	2.95	1.28	27.85	1.16
n		123			113				123			113		

Note. When the data present a log skew normal distribution they have been logarithmically transformed [$Y = \ln (X)$]. Such cases are marked with *.

supporting the hypothesis "what is beautiful is good" (Dion et al., 1972), specially for female candidates.

Although both attractive men and women were perceived to be less immoral than their less attractive counterparts, this difference was more pronounced for female participants, who were also evaluated as more sociable and competent when their level of attractiveness was high than when it was low (as in Study 1).

Pooled analyses

Study 2 shows to a greater extent than Study 1 that working women's evaluation seems more dependent on their physical appearance than working men's evaluation. Applying an approach based on integrative data analysis (Curran & Hussong, 2009), data were pooled to offer insights about the robustness of the previous differences (RQ1), guarantying more statistical power through different occupations (Study 1: administrative and thus gender-neutral activity; Study 2: computer science and thus male-typed activity). We also wanted to test whether the evaluation of women and men varies as a function of the occupation for which they apply (administrative vs. computer science) (RQ2). Additionally, we will explore whether the cognitive evaluations, emotional reactions, and behavioral intentions of high attractive and low

attractive candidates vary depending on the occupation for which they apply (a neutral vs. a male-typed activity).

Method

Participants
The sample of the pooled data ascended to 761 participants ($n1 = 297$; $n2 = 464$).

Results

Differences in the dependent variables depending on the level of attractiveness of men and women candidates (RQ1)
As shown in Table 3, the evaluations toward a *male candidate* were weakly affected by their level of attractiveness. The effect sizes of the differences were lower than 0.39, and close to zero in several of the variables.

Table 3 also shows that, in the case of *female candidates,* there were differences in cognitive evaluations: Less attractive women were perceived as less sociable (Cohen's $d = -1.94$) and less competent (Cohen's $d = -1.54$) than highly attractive women. Participants also reported less admiration (Cohen's $d = -0.76$) toward less attractive female applicants

Table 3. Normal and skew statistics of pooled data per candidate's sex and level of attractiveness, and effect size of low-high attractiveness comparison.

	Normal statistics							Skew statistics						
	Low attractive			High attractive				Low attractive			High attractive			
							Man							
	M	SD	Skew	M	SD	Skew	Cohen's d	Locat.	Scale	Shape	Locat.	Scale	Shape	Cohen's d
Sociability	2.85	0.70	−0.20	3.02	0.72	−0.47	−0.24	3.40	0.88	−1.19	3.77	1.04	−2.06	−0.39
Competence	3.42	0.71	−0.58	3.48	0.73	−0.78	−0.08	4.20	1.05	−2.53	4.36	1.15	−3.99	−0.15
Morality	3.25	0.66	−0.55	3.32	0.73	−0.79	−0.10	3.96	0.97	−2.38	4.22	1.16	−4.12	−0.24
Immorality	1.89	0.71	0.75	1.90	0.71	0.85	−0.02	1.04	1.11	3.64	1.01	1.14	4.89	0.02
Admiration	3.33	0.83	−0.64	3.25	0.78	−0.48	0.10	4.28	1.26	−2.81	4.06	1.13	−2.09	0.18
Contempt*	0.37	0.39	0.60	0.37	0.40	0.78	0.00	−0.07	0.59	2.62	−0.12	0.63	3.95	0.09
Compassion	2.07	0.87	0.35	1.96	0.82	0.31	0.13	1.26	1.19	1.66	1.22	1.11	1.54	0.03
Envy*	0.26	0.35	0.94	0.27	0.38	1.04	−0.03	−0.19	0.57	8.42	−0.23	0.63	27.85	0.06
Active Facilitation	3.61	0.81	−0.42	3.47	0.87	−0.37	0.16	4.42	1.15	−1.90	4.31	1.21	−1.72	0.10
Passive Facilitation	3.69	0.83	−0.47	3.60	0.83	−0.44	0.11	4.55	1.20	−2.06	4.43	1.17	−1.93	0.10
n		193			185				193			185		
							Woman							
	M	SD	Skew	M	SD	Skew	Cohen's d	Locat.	Scale	Shape	Locat.	Scale	Shape	Cohen's d
Sociability	2.75	0.77	0.14	3.38	0.78	−0.65	−0.81	2.22	0.93	1.01	4.28	1.19	−2.87	−1.94
Competence	3.55	0.57	0.05	3.82	0.70	−0.51	−0.43	3.27	0.64	0.65	4.56	1.02	−2.20	−1.54
Morality	3.30	0.65	−0.33	3.58	0.76	−0.49	−0.40	3.90	0.88	−1.58	4.38	1.10	−2.15	−0.48
Immorality	1.91	0.78	0.70	1.66	0.70	0.96	0.34	0.99	1.21	3.24	0.74	1.15	10.63	0.21
Admiration	3.42	0.80	−0.06	3.74	0.74	−0.68	−0.42	3.83	0.90	−0.70	4.60	1.13	−3.08	−0.76
Contempt*	0.36	0.39	0.62	0.24	0.37	1.23	0.32	−0.08	0.59	2.72	−0.25	0.61	27.85	0.28
Compassion	1.99	0.88	0.57	1.86	0.86	0.68	0.14	1.01	1.31	2.50	0.87	1.32	3.06	0.11
Envy*	0.22	0.33	1.26	0.23	0.37	1.29	−0.03	−0.22	0.55	27.85	−0.26	0.61	27.85	0.07
Active Facilitation	3.60	0.76	−0.43	3.92	0.70	−0.50	−0.43	4.36	1.07	−1.90	4.65	1.01	−2.17	−0.28
Passive Facilitation	3.66	0.84	−0.50	4.03	0.73	−0.85	−0.46	4.55	1.22	−2.18	4.95	1.18	−5.01	−0.34
n		204			179				204			179		

Note. When the data present a log skew normal distribution they have been logarithmically transformed [Y = ln (X)]. Such cases are marked with *.

Table 4. Normal and skew statistics of pooled data per candidate's sex and occupation, and effect size of Study 1 (administrative field)-Study 2 (computer science field) comparison.

	Normal statistics							Skew statistics						
	Study 1 administrative field			Study 2 computer science field				Study 1 administrative field			Study 2 computer science field			
Man														
	M	SD	Skew	M	SD	Skew	Cohen's d	Locat.	Scale	Shape	Locat.	Scale	Shape	Cohen's d
Man														
Sociability	2.90	0.66	−0.49	2.96	0.75	−0.27	−0.08	3.59	0.95	−2.13	3.60	0.99	−1.41	−0.01
Competence	3.29	0.66	−0.95	3.55	0.73	−0.67	−0.37	4.15	1.08	−9.34	4.40	1.12	−3.02	−0.22
Morality	3.18	0.66	−0.73	3.36	0.71	−0.70	−0.26	3.97	1.03	−3.46	4.20	1.10	−3.23	−0.21
Immorality*	0.60	0.39	−0.31	0.55	0.37	0.07	0.13	0.95	0.52	−1.53	0.35	0.42	0.75	1.30
Admiration	3.24	0.80	−0.50	3.33	0.81	−0.60	−0.11	4.08	1.16	−2.17	4.24	1.22	−2.62	−0.13
Contempt*	0.31	0.38	0.81	0.41	0.40	0.62	−0.25	−0.16	0.60	4.32	−0.04	0.60	2.72	−0.19
Compassion	1.95	0.82	0.20	2.07	0.86	0.41	−0.14	1.31	1.04	1.20	1.22	1.21	1.85	0.08
Envy*	0.23	0.36	1.25	0.29	0.37	0.86	−0.16	−0.25	0.60	27.85	−0.18	0.60	5.19	−0.12
Active Facilitation	3.59	0.81	−0.30	3.51	0.87	−0.45	0.09	4.31	1.08	−1.50	4.39	1.24	−1.99	−0.07
Passive Facilitation	3.70	0.79	−0.33	3.61	0.85	−0.50	0.11	4.42	1.07	−1.59	4.50	1.23	−2.17	−0.07
n		193			185				193			185		
Woman														
	M	SD	Skew	M	SD	Skew	Cohen's d	Locat.	Scale	Shape	Locat.	Scale	Shape	Cohen's d
Sociability	3.18	0.77	−0.12	2.96	0.87	−0.13	0.26	3.68	0.92	−0.94	3.54	1.05	−0.98	0.14
Competence	3.73	0.63	0.28	3.65	0.66	−0.38	0.12	3.18	0.83	1.44	4.28	0.92	−1.75	−1.24
Morality	3.55	0.67	−0.29	3.36	0.73	−0.29	0.27	4.14	0.89	−1.47	4.00	0.97	−1.47	0.15
Immorality	1.73	0.72	0.55	1.83	0.77	0.95	−0.13	0.95	1.06	2.38	0.83	1.26	9.34	0.10
Admiration	3.73	0.76	−0.37	3.47	0.79	−0.32	0.33	4.45	1.05	−1.72	4.19	1.07	−1.56	0.25
Contempt*	0.25	0.36	1.15	0.34	0.39	0.72	−0.24	−0.23	0.60	27.85	−0.12	0.61	3.38	−0.17
Compassion	1.86	0.88	0.74	1.97	0.86	0.56	−0.13	0.80	1.37	3.55	1.03	1.27	2.43	−0.17
Envy*	0.19	0.33	1.45	0.24	0.36	1.19	−0.14	−0.25	0.55	27.85	−0.24	0.60	27.85	−0.02
Active Facilitation	3.92	0.69	−0.52	3.64	0.76	−0.42	0.38	4.66	1.01	−2.25	4.39	1.07	−1.88	0.25
Passive Facilitation	3.98	0.71	−0.41	3.74	0.86	−0.68	0.30	4.68	1.00	−1.85	4.74	1.32	−3.09	−0.05
n		204			179				204			179		

Note. When the data present a log skew normal distribution they have been logarithmically transformed [Y = ln (X)]. Such cases are marked with *.

than toward highly attractive ones. For the remaining variables, the effect size of the differences ranged from 0.07 to 0.48.

Differences in the dependent variables depending on the occupation of women and men candidates (RQ2)

Participants attributed to *men candidates* less immorality in the computer science occupation than in the administrative occupation (Cohen's $d = -1.30$). For the remaining variables, the effect size of the differences ranged from 0.01 to 0.22 (see Table 4).

Regarding *women candidates,* the participants considered them more competent in the computer science occupation than in the administrative occupation (Cohen's $d = 1.24$). The effect sizes of the differences for the other variables were small, ranging from 0.02 to 0.25 (see Table 4).

Differences in the dependent variables depending on the occupation of high attractive and low attractive candidates

As shown in Table 5, the effect sizes of the differences according to the occupation on the variables in the low attractiveness conditions were small, ranging from 0.06 to 0.33, while the participants rated as more immoral (Cohen's $d = 1.17$) to highly attractive candidates in the administrative occupation than in the computer science occupation, ranging the differences in the other variables between 0.01 and 0.16.

Discussion

These findings confirmed that the level of attractiveness mainly affects the perception of female work candidates, supporting the idea that physical attractiveness is more relevant for attitudes toward working women than toward working men, as previously suggested (see Bar-Tal & Saxe, 1976; Turkmenoglu, 2020).

The pooled analyses also allowed us to test whether the type of occupation (gender-neutral vs. male-typed) could explain the differences between the results of Study 1 (administrative occupation) and Study 2 (computer science occupation). The findings showed that the participants perceived as more competent to a female candidate applying for a computer science than for an administrative occupation. They also perceived as less immoral a male candidate applying for a computer science than for an administrative occupation. Qualifying the role congruity theory's predictions

Table 5. Normal and skew statistics of pooled data per candidate's level of attractiveness and occupation, and effect size of Study 1 (administrative field)-Study 2 (computer science field) comparison.

	Normal statistics							Skew statistics						
	Study 1 administrative field			Study 2 computer science field				Study 1 administrative field			Study 2 computer science field			
Low attractiveness														
	M	SD	Skew	M	SD	Skew	Cohen's d	Locat.	Scale	Shape	Locat.	Scale	Shape	Cohen's d
Sociability	2.92	0.66	0.13	2.72	0.77	0.00	0.28	2.48	0.80	0.96	2.60	0.78	0.19	−0.15
Competence	3.44	0.59	−0.40	3.52	0.68	−0.46	−0.13	4.01	0.83	−1.81	4.22	0.97	−2.01	−0.22
Morality	3.34	0.61	−0.08	3.24	0.68	−0.57	0.16	3.69	0.70	−0.80	3.99	1.01	−2.49	−0.33
Immorality	1.84	0.71	0.33	1.94	0.77	0.91	−0.13	1.19	0.96	1.60	0.95	1.26	6.84	0.22
Admiration	3.43	0.81	−0.35	3.34	0.82	−0.37	0.11	4.19	1.11	−1.64	4.12	1.13	−1.72	0.06
Contempt*	0.29	0.37	0.86	0.42	0.40	0.45	−0.34	−0.18	0.60	5.19	0.01	0.57	1.99	−0.33
Compassion	1.94	0.86	0.48	2.09	0.88	0.46	−0.18	1.04	1.24	2.09	1.19	1.26	2.01	−0.12
Envy*	0.20	0.32	1.31	0.27	0.35	0.96	−0.21	−0.22	0.53	27.85	−0.19	0.58	10.63	−0.06
Active Facilitation	3.79	0.73	−0.35	3.48	0.79	−0.44	0.39	4.47	1.00	−1.64	4.28	1.13	−1.94	0.17
Passive Facilitation	3.84	0.77	−0.39	3.57	0.86	−0.49	0.33	4.58	1.07	−1.77	4.46	1.24	−2.12	0.10
n		162			235				162			235		
High attractiveness														
	M	SD	Skew	M	SD	Skew	Cohen's d	Locat.	Scale	Shape	Locat.	Scale	Shape	Cohen's d
Sociability	3.18	0.77	−0.54	3.21	0.77	−0.44	−0.05	4.01	1.14	−2.32	3.99	1.10	−1.94	0.02
Competence	3.59	0.77	−0.49	3.68	0.71	−0.71	−0.12	4.40	1.12	−2.14	4.52	1.10	−3.27	−0.11
Morality	3.40	0.78	−0.68	3.48	0.74	−0.52	−0.11	4.31	1.20	−3.10	4.27	1.08	−2.26	0.03
Immorality*	0.53	0.42	−0.04	0.48	0.37	0.28	0.13	0.72	0.46	−0.60	0.16	0.49	1.44	1.17
Admiration	3.55	0.83	−0.53	3.46	0.78	−0.56	0.11	4.43	1.21	−2.29	4.31	1.16	−2.44	0.10
Contempt*	0.26	0.38	1.10	0.33	0.39	0.92	−0.18	−0.24	0.63	27.85	−0.17	0.64	7.15	−0.11
Compassion	1.87	0.85	0.49	1.94	0.84	0.50	−0.08	0.99	1.22	2.13	1.06	1.22	2.17	−0.05
Envy*	0.23	0.37	1.32	0.27	0.38	1.07	−0.11	−0.26	0.61	27.85	−0.23	0.63	27.85	−0.04
Active Facilitation	3.72	0.82	−0.53	3.68	0.83	−0.55	0.05	4.59	1.19	−2.28	4.58	1.22	−2.38	0.01
Passive Facilitation	3.84	0.76	−0.42	3.79	0.84	−0.71	0.05	4.59	1.07	−1.89	4.79	1.30	−3.30	−0.16
n		135			229				135			229		

Note. When the data present a log skew normal distribution they have been logarithmically transformed [Y = ln (X)]. Such cases are marked with *.

(Eagly & Karau, 2002), women were more positively evaluated in competence when applying for a male-typed job that requires numerical and technological skills (computer technician) than for a job that requires communication skills and being kind (administrative). In other words, the counter-stereotypical nature of the job influences only the dimension of competence when women are judged.

General discussion

Extending previous literature, this research aimed to analyze the differences depending on the physical attractiveness and occupation of a woman or a man job applicant (based on a CV), in attitudes toward a potential work colleague in terms of cognitive evaluations, emotional reactions, and facilitation intentions at work. Across two studies, physical attractiveness was found to affect more strongly the evaluations of female job applicants than those of male job applicants. The pooled data analyses confirmed this pattern of results more consistently and robustly and revealed that female candidates were evaluated as more competent and male candidates as less immoral when applying for a computer science job than for an administrative occupation.

The fact that in this research attractive female targets were better evaluated than less attractive ones shows that positive evaluations of women are attractiveness-dependent. The results confirmed that highly attractive women were perceived as more sociable and competent, and elicited more admiration than their less attractive counterparts, in line with the "halo effect" (Thorndike, 1920) and with the premise that "what is beautiful is good" (Dion et al., 1972). This finding supports the notion that physical appearance is important in the impression formation process (Langlois et al., 2000; Turkmenoglu, 2020). However, the fact that attractiveness had a differential impact when evaluating working women and men alerts us about the perversity and persistence of gender inequality at work. Whereas highly attractive female candidates were more positively evaluated than their less attractive counterparts in terms of cognitive evaluations and emotional reactions, the level of attractiveness generated only minor differences in the evaluation of male candidates, supporting the idea that physical attractiveness is more important when evaluating women than men (see Bar-Tal & Saxe, 1976; Turkmenoglu, 2020).

We argue that the impact of attractiveness on the evaluations of women can be considered a form of

subtle discrimination against women in the workplace, since a woman's value seems to depend on her physical appearance, which will contribute to perpetuating gender inequality by reinforcing traditional gender roles, such as the assumption that women must always be beautiful. One might argue that attractiveness is something that can entail a benefit (not a disadvantage) for women. However, attractiveness represents a double-edged sword charged with expectations that links the value of women to other aspects not related to their working abilities, subjected to interpretation and subjectivity, and that, at some point, can be counterproductive (Sheppard & Johnson, 2019). For example, some studies have revealed that makeup influences the social perception of women in facial attractiveness, competence, and sociosexuality (Aguinaldo & Peissig, 2021). Etcoff et al. (2011) showed that facial makeup had effects on the ratings of female targets at brief and longer inspection times. Specifically, evaluations of competence increased with makeup look both at the first glance and the longer inspection. The effects on likability and trustworthiness were weaker and more variable, although generally positive. Relatedly, Dellinger and Williams (1997) found that appropriate makeup use is strongly linked to qualities associated with professional success, such as assumptions of health and credibility in the workplace. Indeed, some women indicated the use of makeup as necessary to gain credibility and as a way to reinforce their confidence at work. Research has also revealed that for women being tall results in a higher probability of being a leader, regardless of their education and position, whereas height offers no advantage to men in leadership when educational degrees and position in the labor market are taken into account (Bittmann, 2020). All this shows that biases not explicitly related to women's working abilities but related to their physical appearance come into play when judging them at work. Future research should explore whether the pattern of results obtained in our studies is replicated in other categories based on physical appearance (e.g., sexy women and men; fat and thin people) as well as the consequences of these perceptions in women's lives.

Previous empirical support for the interaction between the sex and the attractiveness of workers on their outcomes is mixed, some even showing that men can enjoy the "beauty premium" more than women (Ruffle & Shtudiner, 2015). Methodological aspects can account for the mixed results and inconsistencies with previous studies. Specifically, in the present research, the participants evaluate the candidates as coworkers on three components of attitudes (cognitive, emotional, behavioral intentions), while in most studies participants are in a position of relative superiority regarding the target evaluated and decide on employment-related outcomes (e.g., salaries, hiring, promotion). Therefore, this is a contribution of the present research, since different motivational goals may underlie the evaluation of a potential coworker (Neuberg et al., 2020).

Regarding the role of occupation, the data show that women were evaluated as more competent when applying for a job in a male-typed than in a gender-neutral occupation. That is, the participants did not evaluate women worse when they were applying for occupations that challenge traditional gender roles, as predicted by social role theory (Eagly & Wood, 2012), but instead, they awarded women with judgments of higher competence. This could be because participants consider women working in computer science (associated with agency and intelligence) to be counter-stereotypical and, therefore, highly competent. Considering the promotion of gender-equalitarian values in Western societies, this finding could also be explained by self-monitoring in order to avoid appearing prejudiced (Crandall et al., 2002) against women who aspire to male-typed occupations. Finally, we know that during the first stages of social perception, when information regarding a target is limited as in the present studies, people base their perceptions on the standard of the social category of the target. According to the hypotheses established by the shifting standards model (e.g., Biernat et al., 1991), as the competence for women in male-typed occupations tends to be lower than for men, it might be easier to judge them as highly competent in these occupations during the first stages of evaluation. However, at the latter stages of the process of impression formation, evidence will be required for women to confirm their competence, to a greater extent than that required for male candidates (Levin et al., 2005).

Practical implications

From an applied perspective, this work has highlighted the importance of attractiveness in the formation of first impressions about women in the workplace. This finding has several implications, especially for decision-making in organizations. For example, one affected aspect might be the evaluation of candidates for a specific job during the recruitment process. Although some countries do not allow pictures on application materials, this practice is only a

recommendation in others, such as in the country where this research was conducted. Our findings reinforce the need to implement such cost-efficient measures to prevent discrimination and promote equal opportunities in accessing the labor market.

Beyond the phase of access to the labor market, findings also suggest the importance of addressing the prejudicial and persistent effects of attractiveness on the relationships with (potential) work colleagues. Based on the results obtained in this investigation, it would be necessary to conduct training and aware-ness-raising programs in organizations to underline that physical attractiveness induces notably more dif-ferences for female employees than for male employ-ees in terms of cognitive evaluations and emotional reactions. Awareness of biases may constitute the first step to reduce their impact on individuals' behavior. The procedure of this research may be used to develop specific activities for training/interventions to decrease gender biases among workers. These activities can contribute to making workers aware of the unconscious biases to which humans are subject to.

To address the impact of attractiveness on the evaluation of women, an exercise could be conducted in which employees evaluate two female candidates for their company using the tools of this research. Half would be presented with the image of an attract-ive woman, and the other half with the image of a less attractive woman. The results would be discussed and compared with those obtained in our research. In case of bias in favor of the attractive woman, possible implications for the persistence of inequalities in the labor market would be discussed. In this regard, the following should be highlighted: attractiveness remains a challenge that women have to deal with in their daily lives, as it may determine how they are evaluated and judged by their coworkers.

Regarding the effects of job gender typing, an exer-cise could be implemented in which the participants would choose the name of a woman or a man as the ideal candidate to carry out tasks considered typically masculine and typically feminine in their company. The results would be discussed and compared with those obtained in our research.

Conclusion

The present work has shown three main findings: (1) highly attractive female candidates are more positively evaluated than their less attractive counterparts, even in competence; (2) the level of attractiveness generates only minor differences in the evaluation of male

candidates; and (3) women are evaluated as more competent when applying for a job in a male-typed occupation than in a gender-neutral occupation. In sum, women are more positively evaluated when they are attractive and apply for a computer science job (vs. an administrative job).

The findings invite us to reflect on how first impressions still influence the different expectations held for women and men in the workplace, and how actions are necessary to reverse this situation. They also confirm that women's discrimination at work is complex and multilayered, that gender inequality at work persists despite the progresses made, and that the positive views toward working women (especially regarding competence) mainly occur if they are attractive and work in male-typed occupations. Therefore, more than ever before, we need to know where and how to look at to avoid being misled by an apparent gender equality at work.

Ethics approval

The current work has been conducted in a manner con-sistent with the American Psychological Association's Ethical Principles in the Conduct of Research with Human Participants (2010). Approval from the University of Almería Ethics Committee was obtained before data collection (Ref: UALBIO2019/016).

Informed consent

In all studies, the participants gave their consent to participate in the research.

Disclosure statement

The authors report there are no competing interests to declare.

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