STATUS AS A BUFFER TO THE CONSEQUENCES OF BACKLASH FEAR: MODIFICATION OF THE BACKLASH AVOIDANCE MODEL

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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Despite advances toward equality, stereotypes still restrict the roles of individuals within society. Violation of these stereotypes results in backlash, in the form of social and financial penalties (Rudman, 1998), serving to discourage vanguards. Women specifically risk backlash for demonstrating agency, and in an effort to avoid this backlash, may mitigate their agentic expressions, compromising performance (Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Glick, & Phelan, 2012). The Backlash Avoidance Model (BAM; Moss-Racusin & Rudman, 2010) identifies low perceived entitlement as the mechanism through which backlash fear influences performance. Yet, with the rise of many prominent women in traditionally atypical domains, how do some women effectively express agency and attain success? I hypothesized that status—a perceived performance advantage (Fişek, Berger, & Norman, 2005)—protects women’s perceived entitlement, resulting in optimal performance on tasks requiring agency. This dissertation introduced the Modified-BAM (M-BAM), which incorporates the role of status in women’s backlash.
avoidance strategies to account for initial differences in perceived entitlement that allow some women to perform agentic tasks without disruption from fear of backlash. The study tested the outlined theory and the hypothesized M-BAM by manipulating women’s perception of status through a bogus aptitude measure. Although the M-BAM was not supported by the data, status did uniquely boost women’s interest to persevere in the relevant domain, suggesting that it does enhance self-efficacy. Larger implications of the results related to the advancement of vanguards in an array of atypical domains are discussed.

*Keywords*: backlash, backlash avoidance, gender stereotypes, status, advancement of women

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Status as a Buffer to the Consequences of Backlash Fear: Modification of the Backlash Avoidance Model

**Backlash**

Group membership, whether race, gender, religious, or educational, spontaneously provides observers with expectancies of traits, behaviors, roles, attitudes, and the beliefs of others (Schneider, 2004). These expectancies, or stereotypes, allow perceivers to conserve cognitive resources while navigating through their environment by producing predictable impressions on which to respond (Macrae, Milne, & Bodenhausen, 1994). When new information threatens these stereotypes (and thus the ease in observing and interacting with the world), perceivers often respond negatively. Individuals who actively disconfirm stereotypes (vanguards) may become the recipients of backlash, resulting in social and economic sanctions (J. E. Phelan & Rudman, 2010a; Rudman, 1998). This backlash may, at least in part, be motivated by psychological boosts on behalf of the perceiver for defending gender normative behavior (Rudman & Fairchild, 2004). Moreover, in an attempt to avoid the punishments associated with backlash, vanguards may reduce or conceal their counter-stereotypical traits or behaviors (Rudman & Fairchild, 2004), thus decreasing the visibility and saliency of disconfirming information as well as discouraging the development of skills in atypical domains. Therefore, backlash and backlash avoidance pose significant threats to the elimination of bias and the progression of society beyond stereotype driven assumptions and behaviors.

Although society has made great strides toward gender egalitarianism, violating gender stereotypes continues to remain taboo. Men and women who display behaviors or traits inconsistent with gender norms risk backlash as a consequence, defined as social
and economic penalties for behaving atypically (Rudman, 1998). For example, while men receive backlash for expressing modesty (Moss-Racusin, Phelan, & Rudman, 2010), for women, penalties arise for self-promotion (e.g., Rudman & Glick, 2001). In an effort to escape backlash, women may attenuate their behavior in domains traditionally considered masculine. Current backlash avoidance theory posits that perceived entitlement regulates this performance, as stigmatized individuals feel less entitled to the rewards of success and thus performance in atypical areas suffers (Moss-Racusin & Rudman, 2010; Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Glick, et al., 2012). Therefore, women who fear penalties for stereotypical masculine behaviors may feel less entitled to the rewards of those actions, and ultimately underperform. Although many women may experience backlash for violating feminine stereotypes, women in positions of leadership are particularly susceptible, as maintaining their power may require continually exhibiting behaviors proscribed for women. However, many prominent women have achieved substantial success in fields originally restricted to men. Vanguards such as Hilary Clinton and Condoleezza Rice in politics, or Tina Fey and Amy Poehler in comedy come easily to mind as examples of successful women in atypical domains. Therefore, the question remains, how do some women overcome fear of backlash, foster feelings of entitlement to achieving in masculine domains, and ultimately attain success and power?

This research builds upon the current literature on backlash avoidance theory by positing an answer to this question. Previous research on social status suggests that status may increase perceived entitlement among stigmatized individuals. Therefore, this study tests a modified version of the current backlash avoidance model (BAM; Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Glick, et al., 2012) to account for the potential entitlement boost high status
agentic women may receive. Taken together, this research advances backlash avoidance theory and sheds light on how women succeed in attaining and sustaining positions of power.

**Do traditional gender stereotypes still exist in the present day?**

To begin, I will first establish the foundation for the backlash literature by presenting evidence that gender stereotypes remain present and pervasive in modern society. I aim to demonstrate that while on the surface women have achieved significant advancements in recent decades, gender prejudice has by no means disappeared. As an example of women’s recent strides, in 2012 more U.S. women than men aged 27 years old earned bachelor’s degrees (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014a), and in 2013, women held 51% of all management, professional, and related occupations, indicating that they slightly outnumber the number of men in the professional workforce (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014b). Women seem to prepare themselves for careers and enter the workforce in greater numbers than their male counterparts. Moreover, the traditional stereotype among married heterosexual couples with the female partner as the primary “homemaker” and the male partner as the primary “breadwinner” as changed, with 53% of married couples receiving financial earnings from both partners in 2012 (compared to only 44% in 1967) and almost 30% of married women out earning their husbands, an increase from only 18% in 1987 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014b). These advancements along with the notoriety of incredibly successful women such as Hilary Clinton, Nancy Pelosi, or Sheryl Sandberg may suggest that the “glass ceiling” has been effectively shattered.
However, despite earning degrees and entering the workforce in increasing numbers, women make up only 4.6% of CEO’s at Fortune 500 companies (Catalyst, 2015). Women do not seem to rise up the corporate ladder at the same rate as their male counterparts. In the medical field, for example, women comprise half of all medical students (Jagsi et al., 2006); yet remain underrepresented in the higher medical positions (Reed & Buddeberg-Fischer, 2001). Female medical students will achieve lower levels of success than their male classmates (Buddeberg-Fischer, Stamm, Buddeberg, & Klaghofer, 2008), and ultimately earn less during their medical careers (Bashaw & Heywood, 2001). Therefore, while women may enter fields in similar numbers to men, their male counterparts will disproportionally receive more opportunities for advancement while also earning higher salaries. Moreover, in the still male dominated realm of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), research conducted by female scientists receives lower visibility and recognition than that of their male colleagues. For example, at a recent international conference for biological science, women represented only 23% of the invited speakers, despite making up 46% of junior faculty members in the UK Biosciences (Schroeder et al., 2013). Therefore, although women have succeeded in gaining entry into traditionally masculine fields, they still encounter impediments preventing them from accessing the opportunities available to their male counterparts that may lead to advancement into top positions. Among industrialized nations, women earn, on average, 23% less than men (UN Women, 2015), and despite entering the workforce in equal numbers, U.S. women in college expect to earn less than their husbands (Fetterolf & Eagly, 2011). The deficits in women’s career trajectories and earning potential suggest that women face unique barriers to their
advancement in the workplace. Therefore, while no longer encountering an unmovable glass ceiling, women must instead navigate through a “labyrinth” in order to reach the top of the corporate hierarchy (Eagly & Carli, 2007).

Why might women be distinctively disadvantaged in achieving success and advancement in the workplace? Although society has made significant shifts toward egalitarianism in both the workplace and home, implicit attitudes still link women to low authority roles and men to high authority positions (Rudman & Kilianski, 2000). This bias against women as high authority figures may contribute to the lack of female leadership and promotion in organizations. For example, in a study of academic science faculty members, professors rated female lab manager applicants as less competent and less hirable than identical male applicants (Moss-Racusin, Dovidio, Brescoll, Graham, & Handelsman, 2012). These findings suggest that faculty members hold competence biases against women, favoring men for leadership positions within the research laboratory. These preconceptions regarding the competence of female applicants may greatly impact their ability to attain jobs or promotions, thus disproportionately disadvantaging women who seek leadership positions. Furthermore, stereotypes of leaders and qualities required for leadership success may also play a role in the underrepresentation of women in top positions, as stereotypes overwhelming characterize leaders as masculine (Koenig, Eagly, Mitchell, & Ristikari, 2011). If the stereotype of an effective leader is masculine, this allows for men to more easily fulfill the anticipated qualities while also implying that women do not “fit” with the role of a leader (Heilman, 1983). If the role of manager conjures up the image of a male candidate, women remain at a disadvantage for initial consideration of high authority positions.
Moreover, the endorsement of gender prescriptions and proscriptions may fuel this leadership stereotype and resulting advancement decisions. Still widespread, gender prescription beliefs define what members of each gender should be, while proscriptions stipulate what they should not be. Despite societal steps toward egalitarianism, Rudman et al. demonstrated as recently as 2012 that college students still hold discrepant beliefs for what men and women should and should not be. For example, students indicate that men should be aggressive, assertive, and independent, while women should be emotional, warm, and sensitive to others. However, men should not be emotional, weak, or insecure, while women should not be assertive, intimidating, or dominant (Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Phelan, & Nauts, 2012; see Appendix A for the complete list of gender prescriptions and Appendix B for proscriptions). These conflicting prescriptions and proscriptions create different standards for members of each gender to meet. Men’s prescriptive traits relate specifically to leadership and authority, as the majority align with traits considered typical of high status individuals. Women’s prescriptions; however, encompass a mix of high status, low status, and predominately status neutral traits, suggesting that women should be neutral in status (Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Phelan, et al., 2012). Therefore, these gender prescriptions create stereotypes as to what members of each gender should be, while mapping onto high status roles for men and lower status roles for women. These stereotypes may bias judgements and decisions, facilitating men’s advancement while hindering women’s. Implicit and explicit stereotypes regarding gender norms and authority may interact to create expectations that women cannot perform as well as men in leadership roles (Heilman, 2012), influencing organizational decisions that disproportionately stall the careers of professional women. Therefore, although women
have achieved equality in preparing for and entering the workforce, these biases may serve as the driving force contributing to women’s underrepresentation at the top of the organizational ladder.

**Backlash as a penalty for gender stereotype violation**

Considerable research has shown that women who violate feminine gender stereotypes by demonstrating agency incur penalties for their behavior. The concept of agency (“self-reliance”) includes traits expected of leaders (Koenig et al., 2011) that are more prescribed for men than women (e.g., assertiveness, competitiveness, and independence; Rudman et al., 2012). Women who overtly display their competence (e.g., via self-promotion), compete for leadership, or assert themselves may suffer ostracism, negative evaluations, or other setbacks in their careers (Nieva & Gutek, 1980). Why? Research investigating the desirability of traits for members of each gender as well as that of high and low status finds that the traits most prescribed for men (career oriented, leadership ability, and aggressive) are also considered traits of high status individuals (Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Phelan, et al., 2012). Therefore, the stereotype of the ideal masculine figure aligns with that of high status authority. The traits most strongly prescribed for women (e.g. emotional, warm, and sensitive to others); however, remain either linked with low or neutral status. While women are not necessarily proscribed from all high status characteristics, the association between men and high status is stronger and more readily accessed. The incongruence between the norms for women and the qualities necessary for leadership results in an expectation violation, and observers administer backlash in an effort to restore their own psychological comfort (Rudman & Fairchild, 2004).
Backlash against vanguards may take the form of negative affect, reluctance to hire, or even sabotage, thus placing agentic women at a substantial disadvantage from their agentic male counterparts (Rudman et al., 2012). Although notable figures in society encourage women to “lean in” (Sandberg, 2013) in order to attain success, this analysis fails to consider backlash as an unintended consequence. For example, because women still earn, on average, less than men for the same job, conventional wisdom encourages them to negotiate for higher salaries reflective of their skillset. However, women who do initiate negotiations incur negative social (Amanatullah & Tinsley, 2013b) and financial (Amanatullah & Tinsley, 2013a) penalties, arising from the dominance penalty. This then highlights the double bind women face. Women who do not negotiate will earn a disproportionately low salary, while those who do risk triggering backlash in the form of social and economic reprisals. Women must therefore navigate through the labyrinth unique to their gender in order to advance and attain success in nontraditional domains.

**Role Congruity Theory**

As an extension of social role theory (Eagly, 1987) which proposes that perceivers hold stereotypes of the behaviors associated with members of other groups, as well as beliefs as to how others should behave, Eagly and Karau (2002) devised the role congruity theory of prejudice toward female leaders (RCT). Investigating discrepancies between gender roles and other social roles, RCT sought to explain the mechanism behind the double bind women face by suggesting that the social role of women (domestic caretakers) and the public role of leaders are at odds. RCT relies on the perceived incongruence of agency and communality since gender stereotypes portray women as communal while leadership stereotypes project the requirement of agency. The
violation of communal gender norms by women initiates negative expectations for observers, resulting in backlash and impairing women’s success in agentic tasks, such as salary negotiation (Kulik & Olekalns, 2012). Dissimilar beliefs about women and leaders create larger mental gaps between categories when considering “women leaders.” However, the categories representing “male leaders” are largely redundant and overlapping (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Therefore, women in leadership must occupy two inconsistent roles, while male leaders may simply express one coherent social role.

Relatedly, the disparate qualities associated with women and those required for leadership project the notion that women do not “fit” with the stereotype of a successful leader (Heilman, 1983). Beliefs about successful leaders have become linked with agency (Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Phelan, et al., 2012), creating performance expectations linked to agentic expression. Individuals perceived as more agentic, should therefore also perform more successfully in leadership duties. Gender stereotypes associating the characteristics and skills of women with communality prevent women from aligning with the qualities deemed necessary for leadership. This then creates a “lack-of-fit” illusion between the social roles of women and leaders (Heilman, 1983, 2001; Koenig et al., 2011). Therefore, the expectations for individuals of each gender, driven by gender stereotypes, create obstacles for women in the workplace. Perceived lack-of-fit or role incongruity with leadership puts women at a disadvantage when considering candidates for workplace management.

Additionally, because successful leadership requires agency, women who occupy positions of power inherently violate the social role ascribed to their gender. This violation often results in backlash against women in power. The perceived lack of fit
between communal expectations of women and the agentic skills necessary for leadership result in bias against women who defy their traditional social role (Heilman, 2012). As a result, it was assumed that agentic women are penalized for not being sufficiently communal (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Heilman & Okimoto, 2007; Rudman & Glick, 2001). This communality deficit could be overcome when female leaders emphasize their communal characteristics through leadership style (i.e. concern and caring for subordinates) or through lifestyle decisions (e.g. motherhood) (Heilman & Okimoto, 2007). Therefore, RCT and the “lack of fit” model propagated the implied communality deficit as the driving factor in backlash against agentic women. However, in direct tests of this assumption, research has found no difference in communality ratings for agentic men and women, suggesting that a communality deficit does not explain backlash directed specifically at women (Rudman et al., 2012). Upon reviewing recommendations letters describing otherwise identical agentic or communal male or female job candidates, participants did not characterize the agentic targets as differing on their perceived communality. While exhibiting a hiring bias against the agentic female candidate, no evidence suggested that the agentic female presented a communality deficit. However, participants rated the agentic female candidate as significantly more dominant than her agentic male counterpart, suggesting that the perception of dominance, rather than a lack of communality, motivates backlash against agentic women.

**Status Incongruity Hypothesis**

In contrast to RCT, the status incongruity hypothesis (SIH; Rudman et al., 2012) pinpoints the dominance penalty as culpable in backlash, and argues that backlash against agentic women stems from defending the status hierarchy. Because women are implicitly
linked with low authority (Rudman & Kilianski, 2000), when they display agency, people perceive them as encroaching on men’s territory (i.e., power). Female agency translates to a dominance penalty, such that they are perceived as more dominant (e.g., controlling, arrogant, and selfish) than comparable men. Therefore, while agency is more prescribed for men than women, it is not prohibited for women; instead, dominance is proscribed (Rudman et al., 2012). Women do not need to exhibit dominance to be perceived as such (although when they do, they are penalized more so than dominant men; Williams & Tiedens, 2016). Instead, high status displays that are required for leadership (Rudman et al., 2012), or merely occupying a high status role, result in the perception of dominance for women, but not for men (i.e., characterization as “dragon ladies”; Heilman, Wallen, Fuchs, & Tamkins, 2004). The dominance penalty allows observers to justify backlash against agentic women.

Exemplifying this encroachment, competent women in traditionally masculine fields receive greater backlash than successful women in more feminine areas (Heilman et al., 2004). Women who challenge the power structure that currently benefits men encounter sanctions against their actions perceived as threatening by those motivated to maintain the status hierarchy. The inconsistency between their behavior and their status triggers the dominance penalty, plausibly because dominance is high in status (i.e., aligned with leaders), and also reserved for men (Rudman et al., 2012). Women expressing agency are perceived as more dominant than equally agentic men. These women; however, do not differ from their male counterparts in perceptions of communality or agency, suggesting that the stronger depiction of dominance motivates backlash (Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Phelan, et al., 2012). Because status prescriptions cast
dominance as a high status trait, and gender stereotypes expressly proscribe women from dominance, observers use women’s transgressions against the status hierarchy to justify backlash against them. For example, women leaders who offer suggestions and proposals receive more negative verbal and nonverbal responses from subordinates than do comparable men. These subtle negative expressions eventually result in an overall devaluing of their leadership skills by colleagues (Butler & Geis, 1990). Moreover, female politicians incur backlash for speaking at length—an action necessary for leading and directing others (Brescoll, 2012). Women who assume the behaviors of leaders defy the expectations associated with their gender, and receive backlash as a penalty for their perceived dominance. Thus, women in supervisory positions remain targets for backlash simply for exercising behaviors crucial to successfully leading others.

The lower social status of women may further exacerbate the propensity for backlash, as status beliefs about groups drive associated stereotypes regarding competence, skill, and ability to maintain leadership, creating disparities between those of high and low status (Ridgeway, 2013). In general, status inconsistencies arise when low status targets exhibit behaviors characteristic of high status individuals. Women are automatically associated with low status (Rudman & Kilianski, 2000), and thus face the hurdle of overcoming an assumed lack of competency (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002). An example of this hurdle appears in workplace evaluations, as subordinates generally characterize female supervisors as less competent than male managers (Sidanius & Crane, 1989). To overcome this stereotype, women must overtly demonstrate their skills. However, high status behaviors (e.g. self-promotion, assertion of competence, etc.) by low status group members threaten the social status hierarchy (Rudman et al.,
This threat causes women’s agency to be interpreted as a display of dominance, ultimately triggering backlash as a means to maintain the hierarchy. Status incongruence serves to further explain the backlash against women politicians who speak at length, for example. Speaking at greater lengths nonverbally indicates high power and status (DePaulo & Friedman, 1998), and thus women who do so violate their low status role. Therefore, while women who promote their own successes may receive comparable competency evaluations to their male counterparts, in doing so they often engender interpersonal evaluations depicting hostility.

On average, people rate women managers as less competent than male managers. However, after making managerial success explicit, successful women receive equal competency ratings as men. Instead, these successful women become regarded as unlikeable and hostile to others (Heilman, Block, & Martell, 1995; Heilman et al., 2004). Thus, women encounter the “double bind” of having to choose between being perceived as incompetent or unlikeable (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Downstream consequences of both perceptions; however, can negatively impact an individual’s advancement and earning potential. Incompetent or unlikeable candidates do not receive the same salary and advancement opportunities as their competent or likeable colleagues (Heilman et al., 2004). Therefore, the aforementioned choice encountered by women may then ultimately result in the same undesirable outcome, highlighting the Catch-22 they face.

Thus, observers penalize women for violating gender norms and challenging existing power relations. By punishing transgressors—through financial, social, or other occupational consequences—the gender hierarchy remains secure. While not unique to women, as men also receive backlash for violating gender norms with displays of
modesty or agreeableness (Judge, Livingston, & Hurst, 2012; Moss-Racusin et al., 2010), backlash against men aims to reassert men’s superiority in the social status hierarchy. Therefore, men receive backlash for expressing low status traits, while women encounter backlash for high status behavior. Although women may demonstrate equal competency to their male colleagues, the desire to maintain the status hierarchy (by devaluing those who violate their low status role) may help explain the disproportionately low number of women at the top of the organizational ladder (Heilman, 2001). Women in leadership roles who exhibit agency remain vulnerable to backlash and the social and financial penalties associated with challenging the preconceptions of gender. This potential for backlash places women at a disadvantage for success and advancement in traditionally male dominated fields, hindering progress toward equality.

**Backlash Avoidance**

As a result of this anticipated backlash, research has documented performance impairments among women engaging in tasks requiring agency (Amanatullah & Morris, 2010; Atwater, Carey, & Waldman, 2001; Judge et al., 2012; Mazei et al., 2014; Moss-Racusin & Rudman, 2010). The Backlash Avoidance Model (BAM) demonstrates that these performance detriments result from attempts to avoid the consequences associated with gender stereotype violations (Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Glick, et al., 2012). Individuals who fear backlash attempt to avoid it (Rudman & Fairchild, 2004), and so women may restrain their expression of agency, even when essential to success, in order to evade the penalties associated with perceived dominance. For example, women asked to negotiate or endorse on behalf of others perform similarly to men. However, women required to advance themselves perform significantly worse than their male counterparts.
(Amanatullah & Morris, 2010; Moss-Racusin & Rudman, 2010). It is not that women cannot promote; they do so as effectively as men when promoting a peer. Why then are women equally capable at promoting others, but display deficiencies in their own endorsement?

**Fear of backlash**

Research on the BAM argues that because promoting the self requires the implication of agency (while promoting others suggests communality), women underperform in this area as a strategy (conscious or not) to avoid the dominance penalty and the backlash that ensues. Amanatullah & Morris (2010) find that fear of backlash influences women’s performance on an assertive negotiation task, such that women required to negotiate for their own salary indicate higher fear of backlash and thus achieve lower salaries than women advocating on behalf of another (who report lower backlash fear). Expanding beyond the domain of self-promotion, women speak less, on average, than men in organizational settings. Further investigation of this phenomenon demonstrates that women’s relative verbal restraint arises as a result of fearing consequences associated with the perception of being verbose (Brescoll, 2012).

Additionally, the gender-based rejection sensitivity model (Gender RS; London, Downey, Romero-Canyas, Rattan, & Tyson, 2012) demonstrates that women respond to the threat of gender-based rejection in traditionally male dominated domains by self-silencing. This act of self-silencing may prevent women from expressing their opinions, seeking out new opportunities, or demonstrating the competence necessary for leading and directing others. Therefore, in an effort to avoid backlash for violating female gender norms, women suppress their assertive behavior, resulting in a sacrifice of performance.
Women who express masculine or aggressive emotions at work may risk backlash as well. While the expression of anger may boost men’s perceived status, it serves to weaken the status of a similarly angry woman (Brescoll & Uhlmann, 2008). This perceived status in relation to emotional displays also translates into recommended salary, with angry women offered considerably lower salaries than equally angry men. With this potential backlash, women may mitigate their emotional expressions in the workplace. Indeed, women tend to convey more positive emotions to customers than do men (Rafaeli, 1989), and report suppressing negative emotions while at work to a greater degree (Simpson & Stroh, 2004). Conscious or not, the greater display of positive emotions by women in the workplace may represent an attempt to avoid backlash. While emitting positive affect, especially to avoid backlash, seems like a beneficial strategy, it may come at a cost to women’s personal wellbeing. People who report displaying more positive emotions while suppressing negative ones (the feminine display rule; Brody, 2000) at work also feel more personally inauthentic, an indicator of employee burnout and job dissatisfaction (Simpson & Stroh, 2004). Therefore, suppressing anger or other negative emotions in the workplace while presenting positive affect may buffer women from the potential for backlash; however, it may damage their wellbeing, willingness to persevere, and their overall performance.

Women who attempt to avoid the dominance penalty during negotiations by adopting a relational stance (e.g. concern for social relationships with colleagues) succeed in evading social sanctions; however, they ultimately obtain a lower salary than their assertive counterparts. Women who agentically legitimize their negotiation requests (e.g. mentioning a competing offer) may earn their requested salary; however, they risk
social backlash, with colleagues less willing to work with them (Bowles & Babcock, 2012). Yet, women perceived as masculine who temper their expressions of agency earn more promotions in the workplace than masculine women who do not self-monitor (O’Neill & O’Reilly, 2011). With the omnipresent threat of backlash, women must therefore navigate a labyrinth of channels in order to progress in the workplace.

Backlash avoidance strategies may negatively impact women’s advancement to a similar degree as does becoming a target of backlash. While women who express agency risk social backlash as a penalty for perceived dominance, women who suppress agency may fail to demonstrate the competence required for leadership—thus highlighting the Catch-22 faced by countless working women. In the larger context, women’s attempts to avoid backlash by monitoring their behavior or perceived image may interfere with their ability to adequately perform necessary workplace duties. This then not only impairs the functioning of individual female employees, but also reinforces gender stereotyped performance expectations of men’s and women’s abilities in the workplace. By falling victim to the threat of backlash, women who underperform on agentic tasks inadvertently validate gender beliefs that ascribe agency and leadership to men. Therefore, backlash, and backlash avoidance, ultimately strengthen the current status hierarchy and further disadvantage the potential for women’s advancement.

**Perceived entitlement**

While initial tests of the BAM explored the influence of self-regulatory mode via promotion or prevention focus as a mediator of gender atypical behavior and observed underperformance (Moss-Racusin & Rudman, 2010), subsequent inclusion of perceived entitlement in the model demonstrates that perceived entitlement most strongly mediates
the relationship between fear of backlash and performance on gender atypical tasks (Moss-Racusin, 2011). Therefore, later discussion of the BAM in the relevant literature focuses on the role of perceived entitlement in backlash avoidance (Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Glick, et al., 2012). Of importance, women who fear backlash do not feel entitled to the benefits associated with gender atypical behavior, and because individuals who feel entitled to rewards tend to attain them (Major, 1994), this depressed entitlement may help explain why women are less successful at agentic tasks than men (Babcock & Laschever, 2003; Moss-Racusin & Rudman, 2010; Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Glick, et al., 2012). Fear of potential consequences may undermine women’s ability to view themselves as deserving of the positive outcomes associated with assertive actions. Therefore, perceived entitlement may be directly diminished by women’s anticipation of backlash for violating gender prescriptions.

Further, the gender gap in entitlement affects women more broadly. For example, women generally report feeling less entitled to the rewards of aggressive salary negotiation, and thus tend to request lower salaries on average than equally qualified men (Barron, 2003). Similarly, in laboratory studies, when asked to choose a fair wage, women pay themselves less than men for comparable work (Major, McFarlin, & Gagnon, 1984). Even when independent evaluators blind to participant gender find no difference in performance quality, and thus no basis for salary disparity, women still request lower wages than men (Jost, 1997). Moreover, this trend persists after making the average earned salary salient (Martin, 1989), suggesting that dampened entitlement—rather than lack of awareness—contributes to the disparity. This discrepancy may impact women throughout their careers as women expect to earn significantly less at both the entry and
the peak of their careers (Fetterolf & Eagly, 2011; Iverson, 2000). Therefore, the fear of backlash combined with depressed entitlement may hinder women’s requests and negotiation for starting salaries, and this lower perceived entitlement may then continue to disadvantage women during the entirety of their careers, undoubtedly contributing to the gender gap in wages.

Further research investigating financial satisfaction finds that women are more satisfied with lower wages than are men (DePianto, 2011). Termed the “contented female worker paradox” (Crosby, 1982), women report equal job satisfaction as men despite lower wages, less autonomy, and less authority at work. Based on observed gender differences in pay and no gender difference in job satisfaction or attitudes toward the organization (J. Phelan, 1994), women consistently exemplify this paradox by indicating either equal or even more satisfaction with their jobs than their male counterparts in spite of workplace disadvantages (Crosby, 1982; De Gieter, Hofmans, De Cooman, & Pepermans, 2009; Iverson, 2000; Mueller & Kim, 2008; Mueller & Wallace, 1996). This pattern has been observed in at least 30 developed and developing countries, suggesting that this paradox affects working women worldwide (Mueller & Kim, 2008). While the challenges of entering traditionally male dominated fields could arguably depress women’s entitlement and garner feelings of satisfaction for those initial accomplishments, employment in conventionally female industries does not buffer women from this paradox (Buchanan, 2005). Women working in the human services industry—of which women make up 80% of the field—earn significantly less than their male colleagues; yet report no difference in job satisfaction. Therefore, the contented
female worker paradox affects not just women breaking into nontraditional fields, but women in various industries worldwide.

Although women do recognize their disadvantages in the workplace, they nonetheless report equal job and pay satisfaction (Mueller & Wallace, 1996). Why? While explanations for the paradox remains mixed, the literature points to perceived entitlement as the culprit. Women feel less entitled to high salaries, and thus feel that their disproportionately lower wages are justified. This perception of organizational justice accounts for women’s equal (or higher) job satisfaction in the face of workplace disadvantages (Mueller & Kim, 2008; Mueller & Wallace, 1996). Therefore, women’s depressed entitlement in comparison to men may not only hamper their willingness to negotiate for higher salaries, but also influence their perceptions of fairness in regards to payment in the workplace. If women feel that organizations are justified in offering them lower pay than male colleagues, they may lack the discontent necessary to demand systematic changes. Without perceiving the inherent injustice of equal work for lower pay, women may inadvertently allow the wage gap to persist by failing to challenge their employers. Dampened perceived entitlement as it relates to the fear of backlash thus presents tangible threats to the progress of women in both the workplace and society overall.

Satisfaction with low wages combined with their tendency to request lower salaries further disadvantages the potential for women’s career advancement. The BAM posits that low entitlement ultimately causes gender gaps in the performance of agentic tasks. On average, women report feeling less entitled to payment for their work than do men (Desmarais & Curtis, 2001), and this depressed entitlement may manifest in
women’s lower initial salary requests (Jost, 1997; Major et al., 1984) and failure to persist in salary negotiations (Mazei et al., 2014). As individuals who feel entitled to rewards tend to garner them (Major, 1994), women who feel less deserving may fail to exhibit gender atypical behavior necessary to seize opportunities for success, such as salary negotiation or self-promotion.

Therefore, increasing women’s self-entitlement should allow them to improve performance. The literature supports this assertion as women encouraged to feel entitled by considering past successes subsequently seek higher salaries—similar to those of their male counterparts (Desmarais & Curtis, 1997b). Women who focus on their achievements may overcome the entitlement barrier to assertive negotiation. In fact, the evidence suggests that perceived entitlement mediates the relationship between women’s fear of backlash and success in agentic tasks (Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Glick, et al., 2012). Yet the question remains, in the absence of laboratory manipulations, how do some women successfully navigate the shoals of backlash and feel entitled to reap the rewards of agency? The work by Desmarais & Curtis (1997) demonstrates that prompting women to consider their previously achieved successes serves to enhance feelings of entitlement. Reminding women of their accomplishments highlights their ability to perform well in that particular domain, thus asserting their high status (Ridgeway, 1987). This status then may ultimately drive the perception of entitlement, serving to buffer the detrimental effects of backlash fear, thus allowing women to feel deserving of the rewards stemming from assertive behavior. Therefore, status may moderate the relationship between fear of backlash and perceived entitlement.
Status & Gender Relations

Previous literature has identified an implicit association of women and low status (Rudman & Kilianski, 2000), and has provided evidence that the traditional role of women in society remains at odds with that of leadership (or any high status role) (Eagly & Karau, 2002). The status incongruity hypothesis (Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Phelan, et al., 2012) furthers this research by identifying the dominance penalty as the motivation for backlash against agentic women. While this points to the influence of status in backlash avoidance strategies, further investigation of the development of status, social hierarchies, and the implications of status within these social hierarchies remains necessary in order to account for the substantial impact the concept of status may play in gender relations.

Status and the creation of social structures

Although different disciplines embrace specific definitions of status, a general multidisciplinary conceptualization of status encompasses an agreed upon difference in which one individual or group holds an advantage or worth over others (Chen, Peterson, Phillips, Podolny, & Ridgeway, 2012; Fişek et al., 2005; Mark, Smith-lovin, & Ridgeway, 2009; Ridgeway, Backor, Li, Tinkler, & Erickson, 2009; Ridgeway, 1991). When society judges something (e.g. characteristic or resource) as important, people spontaneously create hierarchies along that dimension. Individuals or groups accumulate status to the extent that they have or represent the valued domain (Magee & Galinsky, 2008). Status assessments made by observers evaluate an individual’s potential general capabilities in the domain as well as expected performance in related situations (Berger, Cohen, & Zelditch, 1972). Therefore, what begins as a simple group difference (in traits,
resources, etc.) develops into the belief that one group holds an advantage over the other, associating that group with more social esteem (Ridgeway et al., 2009).

After the establishment of a valued domain, status arises from performance expectations of individuals (Fişek et al., 2005) on domain relevant tasks. Performance expectations create competency beliefs at both the individual and group level. Those assumed to hold superior competence become regarded as higher status. The extent to which perceived competence and actual performance align then serves to reinforce status (Magee & Galinsky, 2008). Status may be maintained or lost through the success or failure to meet competency expectations. Perceptions of status then arise from observed status cues which signal the level of competence for a particular domain. These cues may consist of nonverbal indicators such as body language, income, academic prestige, wealth, social ties, or verbal claims of possessing knowledge or experience in the relevant field. Individuals project these status cues to the degree that they believe they hold an advantage, and the most consistently representative cues generate stronger perceptions among observers (Fişek et al., 2005). Status cues help predict the high or low status group membership of others, as well as their level of status within their group (Mark et al., 2009).

Individuals may use status cues as a method of displaying objective resources in order to divide people into social class categories. Social class—an indicator of social status comprised of wealth, education, and occupational prestige—may serve as a categorical basis for estimating social status (Kraus, Piff, & Keltner, 2011). Status cues ultimately combine together to create status schemas for contextually specific situations, since the assignment of high status may change depending on the situation (e.g. a wealthy
businessman may be considered high status in one context, while an experienced nurse may be considered high status in a different scenario) (Rivera, 2010). Status cues and schemas may eventually form status beliefs—either implicit or explicit—which then serve as an underlying influence of behavior during intergroup interactions (Ridgeway, 1991). In order for the status hierarchy to persist, all members within a society must agree upon these status beliefs, and thus high and low status group members assume these roles during intergroup interactions. Inequalities in relevant domains that present during social interactions of high and low status members trigger a status organizing process, in which people become categorized by the status beliefs that represent their group (Berger, Rosenholtz, & Zelditch, 1980). Therefore, using status beliefs to guide behavior during intergroup interactions reinforces the social hierarchy and division between social groups. Originally based on perceived differences in valued resources or traits, status beliefs categorize people into an ordinal class structure, benefitting those belonging to the upper ranks and disadvantaging those at the bottom, regardless of an individual’s actual possession of the relevant skills. Moreover, as the illusion of status relies on the agreement of both high and low status individuals, social status creates systematic divides between societal groups that become reinforced and strengthened over time.

**Status and power**

While advantages leading to status initially represent domain or task specific expectations of performance potential (Ridgeway, 1987), these perceived advantages may generalize to valued worth within the larger social hierarchy (Ridgeway, 1991). An individual or group’s expected advantage may lead to eventual power and prestige within society (Fişek et al., 2005). Therefore, power arises from status. Status must be present
for power to be maintained and wielded successfully. Power achieved through dominance alone will likely encounter resistance or backlash from other groups (Ridgeway et al., 2009). However, expectations of superior performance in a valued domain help legitimize the power of one group over another (Ridgeway, 1987). Moreover, as status hierarchies become increasingly asymmetrical over time (Manzo & Baldassarri, 2014), the power differences between groups may grow exponentially, leading one group to eventually dominate the other. For example, the support of policies which promote economic inequality by higher status politicians (Kraus & Callaghan, 2014) serves to further divide American socioeconomic classes by allowing for the accumulation of wealth—and thus power—among those at the top of the hierarchy. Additionally, while factors like legal policies bolster high status individuals, other variables may further depress the status of already low status individuals. For example, low socioeconomic status (SES) individuals remain at risk for detrimental health outcomes related to lifetime stressors (Needham et al., 2013), including increased rates of hypoglycemia (Berkowitz et al., 2014) and depression (Hudson, Puterman, Bibbins-Domingo, Matthews, & Adler, 2013). These and other ailments that disproportionately afflict low SES individuals place them at an even greater disadvantage. Therefore, low status group members face additional challenges to moving up the social ladder than do high status individuals, serving to further widen the gap in the social hierarchy. As higher status groups earn additional status—and power—more easily, low status groups become increasingly stagnant, with fewer opportunities for improvement or growth. The power structure that develops parallel to the social hierarchy concentrates valued resources among the top, select groups, and reinforces barriers to the advancement of those low in status. Allowed
to continue unregulated, social status systems create a rigid class environment based on antiquated group differences, with little opportunity for individuals or groups to transition up the hierarchy.

Because power and dominance are legitimized through an agreed upon perceived social advantage, members of society are unlikely to challenge the social hierarchy—regardless of their current social standing. Therefore, what begins as a nominal group difference becomes enhanced through status cues and the development of status beliefs. Moreover, status beliefs which support the perceived advantage of high status groups may stem from essentialist beliefs, as high status individuals more strongly agree that social status represents biological or genetic differences between groups (Kraus & Keltner, 2013). Essentialist lay theories depict social groups as distinct, biologically based, unchangeable, and informative about group members (Haslam, Rothschild, & Ernst, 2000). These essentialist beliefs regarding status may allow group members to justify the current social order. For example, higher social class individuals more strongly endorse essentialist beliefs regarding social class categories. In turn, these individuals are less likely to support restorative justice (i.e. punishments aimed to rehabilitate) and opt for sanctions equivalent to the severity of the crime (Kraus & Keltner, 2013). While restorative justice allows for offenders to improve their standing, retributive discipline penalizes individuals and serves to further disadvantage already low status group members. Therefore, essentialist motivated status beliefs may influence interactions between individuals, political endorsements, or legal decisions that all serve to reinforce a rigid social hierarchy that grows more disparate over time.
Social status and gender

Social groups derive status and power from a perceived initial advantage on a valued trait, resource, or ability. The extent to which this advantage benefits the group however, depends on the worth of the particular domain (Mark et al., 2009). Because current society views the ability to lead others as a desired characteristic, those who possess the traits associated with leadership would likely earn higher status. The qualifications of a successful leader have become linked with agency (Koenig et al., 2011), and thus the group most believed to have the traits which make up agency may be regarded as an advantaged group in society. Therefore, the overwhelming endorsement of assertiveness, independence, and ambition as male prescriptions (Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Phelan, et al., 2012) may serve to support the view that men hold an innate advantage in the ability to lead others.

With the equal support of gender prescriptions by both men and women (Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Phelan, et al., 2012), this agreed upon group difference has gained status. Because people use nonverbal displays of performance potential to discern appropriate group leaders (Anderson, Srivastava, Beer, Spataro, & Chatman, 2006), status cues may drive the implicit association of men as high status and women as low status (Rudman & Kilianski, 2000). For example, low SES individuals are more likely to display socially engaging behavior—possibly in an attempt to signal dependence on others for resources—than high SES people. Observers readily pick up on status cues and use these to predict the SES of others with high accuracy (Kraus & Keltner, 2009). Incidentally, women are more likely than men to exhibit these same socially engaging behaviors (regardless of their SES) (Kraus & Keltner, 2009). The tendency for women to engage in
similar behaviors to low SES individuals points to their lower social status in the overall social hierarchy in comparison to men. Status cues may then influence interactions between men and women. Observers may perceive the high and low status displays by men and women, and use these to guide their behavior toward individuals of different genders.

Moreover, status cues, status beliefs, and resulting interaction behavior may all serve to reinforce traditional gender stereotypes, ultimately accounting for the perceived agentic-communal divide between men and women (Koenig et al., 2011). Research on social class (an indicator of social status) suggests that lower class individuals develop more communal self-concepts, while those of high status develop more agentic self-concepts. Potentially arising from parental endorsement of self-expression, lower social class individuals define the self through more interdependent and interconnected terms than high social class individuals (Kraus, Piff, Mendoza-Denton, Rheinschmidt, & Keltner, 2012). Therefore, expectancies of communality from women and agency from men may—at least in part—convey their social status. The lower social category of women in comparison to men may strengthen the anticipated link between women and communal expression. Over time as the gender-status hierarchy becomes more skewed, the association of men with agency and women with communality grows stronger. Since agency has become tied to ideal leadership, eventually the prototypical leader may become that of the advantaged (more agentic) group, essentially leading to the idea of “think manager, think male” currently prevalent in society (Heilman, 2012).

Because lower status groups are not likely to challenge the status quo if the power of the high status group is perceived as legitimate (i.e. based on an advantage, rather than
force), and if it provides a benefit to low status group members (e.g. attainment of resources otherwise not available) (Ridgeway, 1987), women may fail to question the current social order. Moreover, essentialist beliefs further justify the status disparity between men and women, as gender is an essentialized group category, considered informative and immutable (Haslam et al., 2000). With the concept of masculinity more strongly essentialized than femininity (Smiler & Gelman, 2008), observers may also endorse essentialist beliefs regarding the qualities of agency and high status linked with masculinity. This relationship may suggest that by virtue of their gender, men hold a biological advantage to leadership abilities over women. The perceived legitimacy of the power structure favoring men may help explain why the gender-status hierarchy has remained intact for so long.

**Status, gender, & modern society**

The rise of a few women to powerful positions such as former United States Secretary of State and current US presidential candidate Hilary Clinton, current Chancellor of Germany Angela Merkel, or current chair of the US Federal Reserve Janet Yellen, suggests an easing of the strict social hierarchy boundaries, which may allow women to increase their group status as a whole. While promising, these trends, however, may simply reflect the “talking platypus phenomenon,” in which the unlikely level of success attained by a few women becomes overly praised, but does not open the door for others to follow (Abramson, Goldberg, Philip, Greenberg, & Abramson, 1977; Sidanius & Crane, 1989). For example, women earning unquestionable success in highly male dominated fields receive greater evaluations of competence than their male counterparts. Yet, this trend remains unique to the context of undisputed skills in an atypical domain,
as women still on average engender lower competency expectations than men in domains perceived as masculine (Fiske et al., 2002; Moss-Racusin et al., 2012). Furthermore, implicit biases associating women with low status (Rudman & Kilianski, 2000) and the endorsement of female gender prescriptions as largely neutral in status (Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Phelan, et al., 2012), suggest that women have not in fact attained the regard of a high status group.

Moreover, although expectations of the role of women have expanded beyond that of the traditional housewife, women still lag behind men in their own expectations of workplace achievement (Fetterolf & Eagly, 2011). Research suggests that possibly as a result of their lower social status, women require more validation than men to act on new status beliefs (Ridgeway et al., 2009). Therefore, even if the social standing of women within society may currently be shifting upwards, women may need additional confirmation of this change before exercising the behaviors associated with high status. Further research demonstrates that attempts of status enhancements are often met with social rejection (Anderson et al., 2006). Women experience backlash for defying gender proscriptions with demonstrations of agentic behaviors such as self-promotion or asserting their competence (Rudman, 1998), arising specifically as a penalty for displaying traits reserved for high status individuals (Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Phelan, et al., 2012). Given that individuals who fear backlash attempt to avoid it (Rudman & Fairchild, 2004), women may feel particularly reluctant to express behaviors or characteristics reserved for high status groups members.

Additionally, the lack of entitlement experienced by women when compared to men regarding the rewards of agentic behavior (Jost, 1997; Major & Konar, 1984) stems
from the fear of backlash for violating gender stereotypes (Moss-Racusin, 2011; Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Glick, et al., 2012). This lack of entitlement becomes expressed as women’s underperformance on tasks requiring agency, and reports of feeling justified with disadvantaged working conditions (Mueller & Kim, 2008; Mueller & Wallace, 1996). In the face of significant accomplishments toward achieving equality in recent years, the lack of entitlement felt by women demonstrates that many may fail to acknowledge their earned status. For tasks requiring agency (of which women have traditionally been considered disadvantaged compared to men), women may need a reminder of their status in order to feel entitled to perform as effectively as a high status group member. The disposition for making one’s own status salient may function as the catalyst for successful women to feel entitled to their deserved rewards and thus demonstrate the behavior necessary for achieving further success. Therefore, the following section will investigate the potential impact of status on the relationship of backlash fear and perceived entitlement. Status—or making earned status salient—may act as a moderator to curb the detriments of fearing backlash, and thus allow women to feel empowered and deserving, enabling them to perform optimally and achieve success in atypical domains.

**Status as a Moderator of Backlash Fear and Perceived Entitlement**

Currently, the BAM demonstrates that perceived entitlement mediates the relationship between fear of backlash and performance on agentic tasks (Moss-Racusin & Rudman, 2010; Moss-Racusin, 2011; Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Glick, et al., 2012). While empirical research provides evidence for this relationship, the BAM omits moderators of women’s differing levels of perceived entitlement. If women on average fear backlash for
agentic behavior, such as negotiating for higher salaries (Amanatullah & Morris, 2010),
more so than men, how are some exemplary women able to overcome the hypothesized
depressed entitlement and earn substantial success in atypical areas? Women in
traditionally male dominated fields must continually assert themselves in order to earn
respect for their competence; however, such agentic displays risk the dominance penalty
and ensuing backlash (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Phelan, et al.,
2012). Research suggests that these women should mitigate their agency for fear of
backlash against them, resulting in underperformance and failure to advance at the same
rate as their male colleagues (Rudman & Fairchild, 2004). Yet, with the rise of some
women to the highest political, organizational, and STEM positions, their adherence to
the underperformance backlash avoidance strategy seems unlikely. How then, do these
women evade falling victim to the pressure of backlash?

With backlash toward agentic women in gender atypical domains an omnipresent
threat, these women must feel entitled to the rewards of their behavior in order to subdue
the predisposition for suppression. Women with strong feelings of entitlement may be
able to self-promote, negotiate, and perform other agentic tasks with the same efficiency
as men. Why might some women feel more entitled to the rewards of assertive behavior
than others? Because members of high status groups feel more entitled to rewards
(DePianto, 2011; Pelham & Hetts, 2001), women who consider their own earned high
status may overcome the typically observed depressed entitlement. With status defined as
an advantage or worth over others in a valued domain (Chen et al., 2012; Fişek et al.,
2005; Mark et al., 2009; Ridgeway et al., 2009; Ridgeway, 1991), women who focus on
their anticipated performance advantages—such as practiced skills, exceptional field
knowledge, etc.—should bolster their inherent status. Relying on their earned status in the relevant domain, rather than the status of their gender group, may increase their feelings of perceived entitlement for rewards. Therefore, the Modified Backlash Avoidance Model (M-BAM) adds status as a moderator to the original BAM to account for women’s previous training, knowledge, and achievements, which culminate into a predicted advantage for domain specific tasks. This anticipated performance advantage (status) (Fişek et al., 2005; Mark et al., 2009; Ridgeway et al., 2009; Ridgeway, 1991) then serves to break the link between fear of backlash and perceived entitlement, thus allowing women to feel entitled and perform unencumbered.

**Status and perceived entitlement**

Previous literature has investigated the influence of status on perceived entitlement independent of the BAM. In general, individuals in low status positions do not feel entitled to the rewards of their endeavors, such as wage increases (Pelham & Hetts, 2001). For example, individuals belonging to traditionally stigmatized groups report more satisfaction with low salaries and feel justified with poorer working conditions than non-stigmatized individuals (White men) (Crosby, 1982; DePianto, 2011; Mueller & Wallace, 1996; J. Phelan, 1994). This satisfaction may stem from strategic in-group comparisons (i.e., other disadvantaged group members) rather than with high status out-group colleagues (Major, 1989). Upward social comparisons in the workplace can trigger feelings of deprivation (Buunk, Zurriaga, Gonzalez-Roma, & Subirats, 2003), and thus threaten job satisfaction. Therefore the equal or increased job satisfaction by disadvantaged women observed in relation to the contented female worker paradox (Crosby, 1982) suggests that they compare to others similar in status in order to inform
these assessments (Festinger, 1954; Major, 1989). Low status individuals may then only feel entitled to the rewards observed for other low status group members. Thus, increased status may serve as a mechanism to entitlement.

Because women occupy a lower tier in the social hierarchy than men (Ridgeway, 2013; Rudman & Kilianski, 2000), their secondary status may depress their perceptions of entitlement for rewards. Women’s low status in comparison to men could account for the observed differences in performance on tasks requiring agency. For example, on average, women indicate deserving less pay than men do (Jost, 1997; Major & Konar, 1984). However, further research investigating self-pay entitlement finds that this difference disappears in payment for “easy” tasks, in which men and women should equally expect to perform (Pelham & Hetts, 2001). The majority of research identifying gender disparities in pay entitlement focuses on jobs or tasks which require agency (Bylsma & Major, 1992; Major, 1989), placing women at a performance disadvantage. Inferior anticipated performance expectancies (low status) may impair women’s entitlement, explaining their lower requests for payment on agentic tasks. The lack of payment disparities for status neutral tasks provides evidence that women rely on these performance expectancies to direct their feelings of entitlement. Furthermore, research investigating employed men and women finds that after controlling for most recent salary, men and women seek similar wages (Desmarais & Curtis, 1997a, 1997b). Women may use recent employment salary as an indicator of status and thus after equalizing status by controlling for expected advantages, feel just as entitled to income as men. For women who have attained success, status may help buffer the fear of backlash, allowing them to feel entitled to the rewards of their endeavors.
Making women’s status salient should also increase their feelings of entitlement. The literature supports this assertion as gender differences in reported deserved pay disappear when women consider their past successes (Desmarais & Curtis, 1997a). Attention to indicators of achieved status increases women’s feelings of entitlement to that of their male counterparts. When given social comparison information or performance feedback, the gender gap in wage requests also closes (Bylsma & Major, 1992; Major et al., 1984). After consideration of their organizational status, women feel equally as entitled to monetary benefits as do men. Moreover, boosting perceived in-group status by encouraging women to consider the strengths of the group to which they belong increases requests for starting salary. Women provided with group related performance expectancies (that either women or college students—both groups of which they self-identify—possess innate abilities for the required task) request payment equal to their male counterparts (Hogue & Yoder, 2003). With a lack of context, women appear to rely on the lower social status of their gender, thus depressing their feelings of entitlement. However, after emphasizing their anticipated performance abilities—and thus their status—women overcome this impaired sense of entitlement and report feeling equally as deserving as men. Nonetheless, an important caveat to this phenomenon is the legitimacy of status. In order to boost perceived entitlement, status must arise from women’s perceived capabilities of enhanced performance expectations; simply assigning women to a high power role with no justification does not appear to increase feelings of entitlement (Brescoll, 2012). For women to benefit from status, superior task performance must be a realistic possible outcome. Therefore, to overcome the detriments caused by backlash fear, women must rely on their own advantages to inspire entitlement.
to rewards. For already successful women, status may allow them to perform agentic tasks optimally, despite the pressure to avoid backlash.

**Status as a moderating variable in the BAM**

Therefore, the M-BAM introduces status as a moderator to the relationship between backlash fear and entitlement, such that high status buffers women against the detriments of fearing backlash. As not all women succumb to the pressures of backlash and may successfully advance in traditionally male dominated areas, the M-BAM seeks to reveal how these women engender the entitlement necessary to persevere. The M-BAM posits that women who focus on their anticipated performance advantages in a particular domain switch their perceptions of status from that of their gender to their own anticipated skills. By focusing on the status earned in a specific field and thus increasing perceptions of entitlement, women may overcome the pressure to avoid backlash, resulting in unimpaired performance. The increased tendency for women to behave agentically, unencumbered by backlash fear, will serve to further advance women in society, allowing even more women to attain the highest levels of success. Expanding upon the original model, the M-BAM aims to depict women’s responses to anticipated backlash for gender atypical behavior.

Specifically, this initial test of the M-BAM examined its application to the novel domain of criticism effectiveness. Given that not all women succumb to the pressures of backlash by succeeding in traditionally male dominated areas, the M-BAM seeks to reveal how female vanguards invoke the entitlement necessary to perform well. Ultimate goals of the M-BAM include developing interventions to increase women’s perceived entitlement through enhancing the saliency of status or performance advantages, in order
to boost women’s overall performance on agentic tasks. Reducing the pressure of backlash fear should allow women to succeed at similar levels as their male counterparts, thus further advancing women in society.

**Application to the Delivery of Criticism**

Previous research has focused investigations of the BAM largely in the context of self-promotion (Moss-Racusin & Rudman, 2010; Moss-Racusin, 2011; Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Glick, et al., 2012). Because many other agentic behaviors incite the dominance penalty, and thus incur backlash against women, further application remains necessary in order to demonstrate the generalizability of the BAM. Specifically, the following study investigates the M-BAM in the domain of delivering criticism. Gender stereotypes prescribe women to be more friendly, supportive, and communal than men (Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Glick, et al., 2012), and delivering negative feedback violates these assumptions. Moreover, as with other agentic behaviors, providing negative evaluations casts women in a similarly status-inconsistent role. To criticize implies superior knowledge or skill, and thus higher status compared to the individual receiving the criticism. This inconsistency helps to explain why observers rate female critics as more dominant and less likeable (Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Phelan et al., 2012) than comparable men, as well as less competent (Sinclair & Kunda, 2000), and why women inspire more anger from recipients than do critical men (Atwater, Carey, et al., 2001). For example, female professors who negatively evaluate students engender lower ratings of competency than equally critical men, or diplomatic women (Sinclair & Kunda, 2000). Additionally, employees become more upset by discipline delivered by women managers, and in turn feel that such punishments are less effective for improving performance.
Subordinates also regard discipline from women managers as less fair (Atwater, Carey, et al., 2001), a perception which may lead employees to develop negative attitudes toward the organizational and lose respect for the disciplining supervisor (Atwater, Waldman, Carey, & Cartier, 2001). Thus, women leaders risk backlash from subordinates for providing negative feedback or criticism.

**Backlash avoidance & delivering criticism**

Fearing backlash, women may respond defensively by mitigating their performance while delivering critical feedback. However, tentativeness in delivering crucial negative feedback or discipline may jeopardize women’s effectiveness as leaders. Managers must provide evaluation reports to subordinates not meeting performance expectations. Providing direct, accurate feedback results in positive employee responses (Greer & Labig, 1987), which may lead to improved worker productivity. Therefore, reducing feedback effectiveness as a strategy to avoid anticipated backlash may have negative consequences for women managers, their employees, and the organization overall.

Perhaps in anticipation of backlash, women report more distress when giving negative feedback and they rate their own criticism skills as less effective (McCarrey, Piccinin, Welburn, & Chislett, 1990). Women may inadvertently underperform when delivering criticism in an effort to avoid backlash. While exploration of objective gender differences in the effectiveness of delivering criticism remains rare, the existing research assessing employee interpretations of feedback review sessions supports these assertions. Although female managers offer more supportive behaviors than male managers during disciplinary reviews (Cole, 2004), employees rate the discipline delivered by women
supervisors as less effective (Atwater et al., 2001). Adhering to the communal gender stereotype may impair women’s ability to deliver effective feedback to employees—potentially harming employee-manager relations (Atwater, Waldman, et al., 2001). Therefore, attempts by women to avoid backlash by dampening criticism effectiveness may have direct consequences to workplace productivity. However, when female managers express little communality during reprimand sessions, employees fail to improve their performance, compared to the employees of male managers exhibiting the same disciplinary style (Brett, Atwater, & Waldman, 2005). Thus, contesting female gender norms also negatively affects women’s ability to effectively administer discipline or criticism to subordinates. If employees decline to improve performance after negative performance review sessions, this failure may also directly impact workplace productivity. This paradox further highlights the Catch-22 faced by women leaders. Conforming to communal gender norms engenders doubts of effectiveness or competence of female managers by their employees. Yet, women who challenge gender stereotypes by minimizing communality become penalized with employee noncompliance, perhaps in response to the dominance penalty. As women encounter this same paradox for other agentic behaviors like self-promotion or negotiation (Amanatullah & Tinsley, 2013b; Rudman, 1998), of which they often respond by attenuating their agency in order to avoid backlash (Amanatullah & Morris, 2010; Moss-Racusin, 2011), delivering negative criticism should induce similar avoidance strategies. However, to my knowledge, no research to date has investigated women’s attempts of backlash avoidance in the context of delivering criticism. A key component of leadership responsibilities, the domain of criticism remains unexplored in the backlash avoidance literature.
Testing the Role of Status in Backlash Avoidance Strategies

While the BAM has explained deficits in performance for self-promotion (Moss-Racusin & Rudman, 2010; Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Glick, et al., 2012), it is important to investigate its validity in additional areas in order to extend it to other behaviors that may incite backlash. To date, research has not investigated delivering criticism in the context of the backlash avoidance. Thus, as an initial test of the M-BAM, the following study tested its predictions within the domain of delivering criticism (i.e. negative feedback). Specifically, participants will assume the role of tutors and provide critical feedback to students seeking tutoring assistance. Although the role of tutoring (i.e. teaching) does generally satisfy many female prescriptions (e.g. supportive, helpful, interested in children, etc.), providing necessary critical feedback to students violates these expectations, making female teachers particularly susceptible to backlash. While female professors may receive higher evaluations on student instructor rating surveys than men (Smith, Yoo, Farr, Salmon, & Miller, 2007), they are also rated as less agentic and perceived as having lower teaching ability (Basow & Silberg, 1987). Likely driven by gender prescriptions, research suggests that male and female professors are held to different expectations that they must meet in order to garner favorable student evaluations. Male professors are held to an “entertainer” expectation while female professors are held to a “nurturer” expectation (Sprague & Massoni, 2005). Upon failing to meet these expectations, students describe male professors simply as “boring,” while reserving the most hostile descriptions of “bitch, psychotic, and angry” (Sprague & Massoni, 2005) for women who do not meet expectations of “academic momism” (Rubin, 1981). Students also spend more time interacting one-on-one with female
professors than male professors, but paradoxically report women instructors as more inaccessible than their male counterparts (Bennett, 1982). Therefore while teaching may be regarded as a traditionally feminine domain, women instructors remain subject to the same narrow gender expectations as women in other nontraditional fields. Similarly, upon failure to meet these gender prescriptions, women encounter social backlash through harsh student evaluations, which may eventually lead to financial repercussion by compromising their ability to meet certain department criteria. Thus female instructors obliged to violate gender norms by criticizing student work should fear the potential for backlash, suggesting that female tutors in the study will engage in backlash avoidance measures observed for agentic women in other fields.

This research builds upon backlash avoidance theory by determining if status moderates the relationship between fear of backlash and perceived entitlement when women are obliged to give negative feedback. Because criticism does not incite backlash against men (but does for women) (Sinclair & Kunda, 2000), the following research focuses exclusively on boosting the perceived status of women, who have reliably demonstrated a negative relationship between backlash fear and performance (Amanatullah & Morris, 2010; Atwater, Carey, et al., 2001; Judge et al., 2012; Mazei et al., 2014; Moss-Racusin & Rudman, 2010; Moss-Racusin, 2011).

**Method**

**Pilot Study**

In order to select materials for the criticism task in the main test of the M-BAM, an independent sample of 44 participants (31 female) assessed potential stimuli materials for the following study. The pilot study presented participants with four ACT/SAT
prompts along with subsequent low scoring sample essays. Participants viewed all essays in randomized order. Participants rated each essay using 3 items: “Please rate the overall quality of the essay” on a scale of 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good), “How well do you feel the essay answers the question?” on a scale of 1 (very poorly) to 5 (very well), and “Please assign the grade you feel the essay deserves” on a scale of A-F (reverse scored).

Within-subjects ANOVAs were conducted to identify the two essays rated most similarly (i.e., that did not significantly differ on any items). These essays were chosen as the stimuli for the main study. Both selected essays scored below the midpoint (3.0) on all items assessed by participants, suggesting that they represented materials in need of improvement. These essays were randomized across participants in the main study in order to account for possible stimuli effects. See Appendix C for the selected essays.

Testing the M-BAM

To empirically test the effect of status, I manipulated perceived status through a bogus aptitude test prior to the completion of a criticism feedback task. Performance on the criticism task was evaluated as the main outcome variable. A secondary outcome included was willingness to be considered as a Rutgers tutor. To manipulate status, half of the participants received high aptitude scores, while others received low aptitude scores. In addition, half of the participants received feedback on a task-relevant skill (writing/written communication); the remainder received feedback on a task-irrelevant skill (ability to identify complex relationships). The latter manipulation was intended as a test of the discriminant validity of the feedback task. Further, the two criticism stimuli (i.e. the essays chosen from the pilot study) were randomized across participants. Therefore the study consisted of a 2 (feedback score: high vs. low) x 2 (aptitude type: 
task-relevant vs. task-irrelevant) x 2 (essay: essay 1 vs. essay 2) design. While all participants given positive bogus feedback may receive an esteem boost, based on the status literature stipulating that status derives from performance based advantage expectations (Fişek et al., 2005), I anticipated only those receiving the high writing communication (task-relevant) aptitude scores to report increased perceived entitlement to deliver criticism for the written essay, and thus demonstrate superior performance on the criticism task. Therefore, the high score/task-relevant group served as the focal group against which all other manipulations were compared.

Specifically I hypothesized that participants receiving positive task-relevant feedback (focal group) would report increased perceived entitlement and earn higher rated performance evaluations than all other participants. Further, women in all other manipulation groups would support the BAM by revealing a relationship between fear of backlash and critique effectiveness, mediated by low perceived entitlement. For women in the focal group, their status should ameliorate this process regardless of whether or not they fear backlash. These findings would help explain why some women feel more entitled to perform well on agentic tasks than others. Earned status may remind women of their anticipated performance advantages and buffer them from the pressure of backlash to conform to gender norms by underperforming on masculine tasks.

Participants

Using the Rutgers Introductory Psychology Subject Pool, I recruited female undergraduate students enrolled in General Psychology to participate in the study in exchange for partial course credit. A power analysis conducted using GPower (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007) for a 2 (feedback score: high vs. low) x 2 (aptitude
type: task-relevant vs. task-irrelevant) x 2 (essay: essay 1 vs. essay 2) Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) recommended a sample size of 128 in order to detect a medium effect. In order to compensate for potential participant or experimenter error, I aimed to recruit 158 participants in order to reach sufficient power to test the hypotheses.

In total, I recruited 455 participants for the study. One participant was removed from analyses for identifying as male during the study, despite identifying as female in the psychology prescreen survey. Seven participants were removed for concerns stated by research assistants (e.g. failure to follow essay feedback directions, using a cellphone during the study, or noticeable English language difficulties). Finally, fourteen participants were removed for failing to recall both their skill type and percentage score outlined in the study manipulation. These exclusions resulted in a final sample size of 433 participants, suggesting that the study was sufficiently powered.

All participants in the final sample identified as female between ages 18-61 ($M = 19.16, SD = 3.27$), with 34% identifying as White, 31% Asian, 16% Black, 16% Latino, and 4% as Multiracial (note: percentages are rounded and therefore sum to 101%).

**Procedure**

In order to assess baseline levels of tutoring interest and aptitude as possible covariates, two items were included in the psychology subject pool prescreen survey, administered when students registered (typically the beginning of the semester). Participants were asked, “How interested would you be in becoming a paid writing tutor for the Rutgers center?” on a scale of 1 (*not at all*) to 10 (*very*) ($M = 4.45, SD = 3.24$), and “What was your Verbal SAT score?” ($M = 648.36, SD = 532.08$). However, several issues affected the responses of the Verbal SAT score item. Since the SAT format has
changed multiple times in recent years, reported scores were not on a consistent scale. Further, the SAT Verbal section was renamed “Critical Reading” in 2005, causing further confusion among participants who had taken the SAT more recently. Because of the frequency of incorrect responses (Range: 0-5500), the Verbal SAT score item was not used in the final analyses.

In the lab, participants completed the study independently on computers in separate rooms. As a cover story, participants were informed that the research lab had coordinated with the campus tutoring center to examine how people with different “types of intelligence” perform as tutors. The campus tutoring center was purportedly interested in identifying possible future tutors. Participants were asked to act as writing tutors during the study; however, before they began the task they completed a tutoring aptitude test to determine their particular tutoring strengths—a test ostensibly administered by the campus tutoring center as part of the hiring process.

The specific text of the cover story was as follows:

_Our research lab is partnering with the Rutgers campus tutoring center to investigate how people with different types of intelligence perform as tutors. Current theories in cognitive psychology suggest that there are multiple types of intelligence, leading to strengths in many different areas. We are interested in how unique types of intelligence affect tutoring and teaching performance._

_Additionally, the campus tutoring center is interested in identifying possible future tutors from the study. Based on your performance today, you may be eligible to apply to the tutoring center. Those who qualify will be asked_
to provide their contact information at the end of the study so that the tutoring center may contact them about potential tutoring positions.

Today you will assess an essay submitted to the tutoring center by a student seeking tutoring in writing. During the study, please act as a writing tutor, and do your best to provide the student with constructive feedback that they may use to improve the quality of the essay.

Press the arrows at the bottom of the screen to begin the study.

Before you continue with the main task, we would like to learn a little more about you. Specifically, we would like to assess your potential skills as a tutor at the campus tutoring center. Current theories in cognitive psychology suggest that there are multiple types of intelligence, leading to strengths in many different areas. The following test is designed to assess an individual’s particular intelligence, and so the tutoring center administers it to applicants interviewing for employment in order to measure tutoring aptitude. Individuals who hold particular types of intelligence may have tutoring skills in a multitude of areas, and the following test is used to assess specific tutoring abilities. Those who score highly on it for desired skills are strongly considered for hiring.

**Status Manipulation.** All participants completed the Remote Associates Test (RAT; Mednick, 1968), in which participants identified a word that linked three other related words together. Sample items include, “sea, lick, table; answer: salt” (see Appendix D for full list). In order to avoid non-responses on the task, participants completed a forced-choice version of the RAT (Case & Maner, 2014). To manipulate anticipated ability, half of the participants were told that they scored in the 90th percentile
for their respective skill (high score) while others were told that they scored in the 40th percentile for their skill (low score). In order to bolster the validity of their bogus score, participants receiving positive feedback completed an easy RAT while those who received negative feedback completed a difficult RAT.

To manipulate the relevance of their feedback to tutoring, participants in the task relevant condition were told that their scores indicated linguistic intelligence (i.e., writing/written communication skills). Linguistic intelligence was described as purportedly translating into skills related to writing tutoring. Those in the task-irrelevant conditions learned that their scores indicated existential intelligence (i.e. ability to understand complex relationships and make connections). Existential intelligence was indicated as translating into skills related to tutoring students in psychology (and thus irrelevant to the following writing critique task). All bogus feedback responses are listed in Appendix E. Since status arises from a perceived performance advantage in a contextually specific domain (Rivera, 2010), the high score/task-relevant condition served as the enhanced status manipulation in the study that was compared against all other manipulations.

Participants were then presented with one of the two essays (randomized across participants) selected from the pilot study, ostensibly submitted by a student seeking writing assistance from the campus tutoring center. Participants did not receive any other (e.g., demographic) information about the student. Participants were informed that their task was to perform as if they were assigned to tutor the student in college-level writing. After reading the essay, participants delivered feedback to the author of the essay with the goal of improving the submission. Instructions encouraged participants to be as direct
as possible so that the student may effectively use the feedback to improve the essay and earn a satisfactory grade. Upon completion of the main task, participants then rated the effectiveness of their own feedback, as well as indicated how much they felt they deserved to be paid based on the helpfulness of their feedback (if payment were to be given). Participants then completed the Fear of Backlash and Perceived Entitlement indexes, in that order. Finally, participants were asked if they would be willing to be contacted by the tutoring center as a potential tutoring hire. Additional items assessed the extent to which participants believed the cover story, and whether they understood the scores of their aptitude tests, followed by a debriefing of the true purposes of the study.

Materials

Measures were administered in the following order.

**Subjective performance.** Participants rated the effectiveness of their own feedback using 5 items adapted from a measure of perceived self-promotion success (Moss-Racusin & Rudman, 2010). Sample items included, “Overall, how effective do you think the feedback is that you provided during the feedback writing task today?” and “Overall, how helpful do you think the feedback is that you provided during the feedback writing task today?” on a scale of 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very much*). All items of the measure included in the study are provided in Appendix F. Items were presented to participants in random order. The scale was found to be reliable (*α* = 0.88).

**Deserved pay.** Participants indicated the amount they believed they deserved to be paid for their performance on the task. Adapted from Jost (1997), participants were asked to report how much they would pay themselves for their feedback to the student if
they were responsible for paying tutors at the campus tutoring center, on a range of $1-$15 ($M = 8.99, SD = 2.96). Instructions are available in Appendix G.

**Fear of backlash.** Participants completed an adapted version of the 10 item Fear of Backlash (FOB) inventory (Rudman & Fairchild, 2004) in order to assess the extent to which they anticipated backlash for delivering criticism. Items were adapted to consider backlash from the remedial student to whom the criticism was ostensibly delivered. Participants were asked to imagine that the student read their feedback and respond to items like, “Would you worry that the student thought you were too assertive?” and “Would you be concerned that the student wouldn’t like you because you had acted out of character for someone of your gender?” on a scale of 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very much*) ($\alpha = 0.84$). All items are provided in Appendix H. The order in which the items were presented was randomized.

**Perceived entitlement.** In order to assess how entitled participants felt, they completed an adapted version of the Perceived Entitlement (PE) Index. Originally the PE index was employed in the context of self-promotion with items such as, “Right at this minute, do you feel... That you have the right to praise yourself publicly?” and “… that you are more entitled to be awarded a National Graduate Fellowship than other applicants?” on a scale of 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very much*) (Moss-Racusin, 2011). Because the current study focused on the behavior of delivering criticism, items were adapted to be domain specific. The adapted PE consisted of 3 criticism-specific items: “Right at this minute, do you feel... you have the right to criticize others?”, “…that you are more entitled to be hired as a tutor at the campus tutoring center than other applicants?”, and “...that you are justified when you criticize others?” ($\alpha = 0.72$). Additionally, I used the 3
item general perceived entitlement index from Hammond, Sibley, & Overall (2013): “Right at this minute, do you feel… entitled to more of everything?” “…that you deserve more things in life?” “… that you demand the best because you are worth it?” (α = 0.77).

Therefore, the PE index used in the study consisted of 3 criticism specific entitlement items and 3 general entitlement items, presented in random order, and assessed on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much) (α = 0.77). While these measures were significantly correlated, r(431) = 0.47, p < .001, a factor analysis determined that they loaded on two separate factors. Therefore, they were retained as independent measures of perceived entitlement.

**Willingness to be a tutor.** Participants indicated their interest in being hired as a tutor using two items on scales ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much). The items were, “Would you be interested in serving as a Rutgers writing tutor?” and “Would you be willing to be contacted by the tutoring center as a potential hire?” In prior research, people who feared backlash resisted pursuing atypical talents (J. E. Phelan & Rudman, 2010b; Rudman & Fairchild, 2004). The two items were significantly correlated, r(431) = 0.85, p < .001, and combined into one measure.

**Objective performance.** Two independent female judges blind to the hypotheses of the study assessed the effectiveness of the feedback submitted by participants. Judges rated the feedback on how helpful the participant feedback would be to them if they were asked to personally revise the essay using two subjective ratings of effectiveness and helpfulness. Inter-rater reliability was high for both helpfulness (α = 0.76) and effectiveness (α = 0.79) between judges. Moreover, the variables strongly correlated, r(421) = 0.93, p < .001, and were thus combined as a single measure for objective
performance of the feedback writing task. Because participants’ subjective performance
ratings did not correlate with objective performance \((r = .04)\), I retained them as separate
measures.

**Potential mediators.** If participants high on status (positive score + score
relevancy) were perceived by themselves or others as performing better than all other
groups, results could be due to high status women spending more time on their criticism,
or writing a longer critique. Therefore, I timed their criticism and counted word
frequencies as potential mediators of the expected condition effect.

**Results**

**Preliminary Analyses**

**Stimuli Effects.** Independent \(t\)-tests of essay effects revealed that participants who
evaluated Essay 1 feared backlash less \((M = 1.63, SD = 0.55)\) than participants who read
Essay 2, \(M = 1.75, SD = 0.58; t(367) = -2.240, p = .026\). Similarly, independent judges
determined that the feedback provided by participants responding to Essay 1 was less
effective \((M = 3.30, SD = 1.08)\) than participants responding to Essay 2, \(M = 3.60, SD =
1.15; t(359) 2.782, p = .006\). Although essay effects did not emerge for any other
variables, essay number was included as a covariate in the main analyses because of these
two key effects.

In order to determine if essay stimuli interacted with manipulated aptitude score or
skill type, 2 (score: high vs. low) x 2 (skill type: relevant vs. irrelevant) x 2 (essay:
number 1 vs. number 2) ANOVAs were performed for each variable of interest. No
significant interactions involving essay number arose for any variables, suggesting that
essay stimuli did not interact with the study manipulations.
Manipulation check. Participants’ RAT accuracy scores supported my manipulation. As intended, the difficult RAT was significantly harder ($M = 83.71\%, SD = 14.86$) than the easy RAT, $M = 91.50\%, SD = 10.65$; $t(431) = 6.268, p < .001$.

Main Analyses

Separate one-way ANCOVAs contrasting the focal condition (high score/task relevant skill) with the remaining three conditions (high score/task irrelevant skill, low score/task relevant skill, and low score/task irrelevant skill) including essay number and prior tutoring interest as covariates were conducted for objective performance, subjective performance, deserved pay, backlash fear, perceived entitlement (both general and specific), and willingness to be a tutor. Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations for each condition.

Results revealed that judges did not find a difference in objective performance between participant responses in the different conditions, $F(3, 414) = 1.808, p = .15$. However, analyses did demonstrate a significant effect of condition on participants’ subjective performance, $F(3, 424) = 2.809, p = .039$. Planned contrasts comparing the focal group (high score/relevant skill) to all other groups revealed that the focal group believed their feedback to be significantly more effective ($M = 3.85, SD = 0.73$) than the low score/relevant skill condition, $M = 3.63, SD = 0.76$; $t(213) = 2.101, p = .046$, and low score/irrelevant skill condition, $M = 3.60, SD = 0.76$; $t(205) = 2.378, p = .017$, but not the high score/irrelevant skill condition, $M = 3.82, SD = 0.78$; $t(213) = 0.252, p = .10$. These results suggest a main effect of bogus positive feedback, despite skill relevancy.

No other significant findings arose for the remaining variables of primary interest, all $ps > .22$, with one notable exception. Analysis for willingness to tutor revealed a
significant influence of condition on participants’ interest in future tutoring, \( F(3, 424) = 16.983, p < .001 \). Planned contrasts demonstrated that the focal group was significantly more willing to work as a tutor in the future \((M = 3.42, SD = 1.26)\) compared with participants in the (a) high score/irrelevant condition, \( M = 3.24, SD = 1.29; t(213) = 1.084, p = .05 \), (b) low score/relevant skill condition, \( M = 2.48, SD = 1.38; t(213) = 5.062, p < .001 \), and (c) the low score/irrelevant skill condition, \( M = 2.64, SD = 1.41; t(205) = 4.079, p < .001 \). This increased interest for future tutoring among the focal group was the only outcome that supported my reasoning that manipulating status (high score + task relevant skill) would increase women’s tutoring efficacy. Instead of emerging on performance, it was shown on their willingness to pursue tutoring job opportunities.

**Potential mediators.** Follow up analyses examining participant essay responses found no difference in word count across conditions, \( F(3, 421) = 0.865, p = .46 \). However, a planned contrast ANCOVA for time spent writing the critical feedback demonstrated a significant effect of condition, \( F(3, 424) = 16.983, p < .001 \). Simple contrasts indicated that the focal group spent more time writing their essay \((M = 458.82\) seconds, \(SD = 140.72)\) than those in the low score/relevant skill condition, \( M = 402.46, SD = 152.95; t(213) = 2.870, p = .005 \), or the low score/irrelevant skill condition, \( M = 415.79, SD = 141.53; t(205) = 2.264, p = .027 \). Consistent with subjective performance findings, the focal group did not differ in time spent writing from the high score/irrelevant condition, \( M = 434.05, SD = 146.79; t(213) = 1.180, p = .17 \), suggesting a main effect of bogus positive feedback, rather than the effect of status (high score + task relevancy).
In summary, my hypothesis that status would improve women’s tutoring performance was not supported. Instead, it improved only their interest in tutoring, relative to all other conditions. Unexpectedly, receiving bogus positive feedback led women to rate their performance more favorably compared with negative feedback, and to spend more time on their essay, but these main effects of feedback occurred regardless of task relevancy. Since prior research suggests that perceived status is context dependent, this subjective boost for both task-relevant and irrelevant high scores indicates that these women may have experienced an esteem increase, rather than a boost in status. Finally, objective judges did not agree with women’s ratings of their own performance; instead, judges perceived no differences in the quality of women’s criticism across conditions. Interpretations and implications of these initial results are considered in the Discussion section.

Model Evaluation

Prior to testing the model shown in Figures 1 and 2, a correlation analysis was conducted to reveal if fear of backlash, perceived entitlement (specific and general), and performance ratings (subjective and objective) significantly covaried (see Table 2). Replicating Moss-Racusin and Rudman (2010), fear of backlash covaried negatively with both subjective and objective performance ratings. Unexpectedly, fear of backlash was unrelated to either specific or general entitlement. Instead, specific entitlement was positively related to subjective performance as expected, whereas general entitlement was negatively related to objective performance. For this reason, I used subjective performance when testing the model. Further, because specific and general entitlement
covaried, I combined them into a single index for the sake of parsimony. Nonetheless, I tested them separately and results did not differ from those reported in Table 3.

The model was tested using SPSS and PROCESS (Model 7), a bootstrapping macro (Hayes, 2013). PROCESS provides 95% confidence intervals for all direct and indirect (mediated) effects as well as for conditional (moderated) effects at the different levels of the moderator variable. Confidence intervals that do not contain 0 are significant ($p < .05$).

In order to test the effect of status, the focal group (high score/task relevant skill) was coded as 1 and all other groups were coded as 0 when status was entered as the moderating variable. Results (see Table 3) revealed that the cross-product term between FOB (X) and status (W) on PE (M) was not significant ($B = -0.05$, $t = -.29$, $p = .78$). While these results do not support the moderated mediation hypothesis, they do not directly test the hypothesis that perceived entitlement mediates the relationship between FOB and performance for low status but not for high status women. Therefore, I examined the conditional indirect effect of FOB on performance (through entitlement) at each level of the moderator (i.e. the focal group vs. all other groups). Contrary to hypotheses, the focal manipulation (high score/relevant skill) did not significantly differ from the other manipulations. Further, each confidence interval contained 0, suggesting no significant conditional indirect effects. Taken together, these results indicate that status may not moderate the relationship between backlash fear and perceived entitlement, leading to a boost in women’s performance on agentic tasks.
Discussion

The current research had two major aims: to replicate the original BAM (Moss-Racusin, 2011), and to employ status as a moderator by which women might overcome the pressures of backlash avoidance. Unexpectedly, the study showed only partial replication of the BAM. Specifically, fear of backlash was negatively associated with women’s performance (both subjective and objective). However, perceived entitlement did not mediate the relationship between fear of backlash and performance (these correlations were negligible; see Table 2). Further, there was no support for the M-BAM. Specifically, providing women with positive, relevant feedback prior to obliging them to criticize a fellow student’s essay did not increase perceived entitlement or enable them to perform well.

Nonetheless, the present study showed a promising result. Women high in status (high score/task relevant) were significantly more interested in pursuing future tutoring opportunities than all other groups. This finding indicates that status may boost women’s interest and desire to pursue gender atypical domains, despite the potential for backlash. Of course, it's also possible that status increased their self-efficacy, which is known to promote relevant achievement goals (Eccles, 1994). Future research is needed in order to determine whether status manipulations encourage women and minority group members to engage in counter-stereotypical talents and activities. Because individuals who fear backlash often refuse to pursue atypical talents (J. E. Phelan & Rudman, 2010b), boosting perceptions of status may allow nonconforming individuals to overcome this observed pattern and persevere in areas that defy stereotypes. Future research should attempt to conceptually replicate this finding in order to determine whether status manipulations
encourage women and minority group members to engage in counter-stereotypical talents and activities.

Despite failing to support the M-BAM, the current research also revealed that, regardless of skill relevance, women given positive feedback on the aptitude task spent more time writing their criticism and were more likely to rate their performance as effective. However, objective judges did not confirm the quality of their performance. The pattern suggests that although women given prior positive feedback may think they do well on a subsequent task, those assumptions may not translate into actual performance boosts. Although speculative, receiving positive feedback of any kind may have triggered the better-than-average effect (BTA effect; Alicke, 1985). Because prior research has demonstrated that “easy” tasks stimulate the BTA effect (Larrick, Burson, & Soll, 2007), participants who completed the easy RAT (and thus earned a high score) were likely overconfident in their performance on the subsequent criticism task. Moreover, because participants in the high scoring groups to spent more time writing their critical feedback, they may have assumed their writing was also high in quality, further enhancing their positive illusion (BTA). Notably, high-scoring participants did not actually write more than low scoring manipulation groups.

Limitations and future directions

Investigation into the failure to replicate the BAM revealed that participants in the study indicated relatively low levels of backlash fear ($M = 1.69, SD = 0.57$) across all conditions. Evidently, the criticism task utilized in the experiment did not arouse a strong fear of backlash, suggesting that the tutoring task did not compel women to violate gender stereotypes. Although participants were asked to be critical of others—an action
which inspires backlash against women (Sinclair & Kunda, 2000)—because the goal of
their feedback was purportedly aimed at improving the original author’s grade,
participants may have felt that they were performing a helpful, communal behavior. With
this possibility in mind, the lack of backlash fear then becomes unsurprising, as women
who perform agentic tasks on behalf of another individual do not fear backlash to the
same extent as women acting for themselves (Rudman, 1998). Future research should
adjust the criticism task so that women are made to directly violate feminine stereotypes,
perhaps by evaluating similar essays for a final grade rather than the opportunity to
revise. Additionally, employing the status manipulation in different domains remains
essential to determining when women fear backlash, as well as when status may assuage
the effects of that fear. Therefore, future researchers should examine the status
manipulation in a traditionally masculine domain (e.g., mathematics) to establish if
women are more likely to fear backlash for criticizing in an entirely atypical domain, and
if boosting their perceived status ameliorates the pressure to underperform.

As noted, women informed that they scored well on the bogus aptitude test—
regardless of the relevancy of their score—believed they wrote more effective criticism
than those told they scored poorly. Although the high scoring manipulation participants
spent more time writing and believed their feedback was more effective, independent
judges found no performance differences to support these expectations, suggesting that
the manipulation inadvertently inspired the BTA effect. Alternatively, my reliance on
non-expert judges may have limited the study, as the research assistants employed to
evaluate the essays were not professional tutors or writing instructors. Professional tutors
may have evaluated participant responses differently (and perhaps more similarly to
participant perceptions), and so future research should seek to employ judges with expertise.

Another limitation of the study was the irrelevant domain (psychology) used. As all participants were general psychology students, earning a high score in a self-relevant domain may have inadvertently boosted participants’ esteem and perceived performance on the task. Future research should employ a different irrelevant domain in order to tease out this possible esteem effect. Subsequent explorations should also investigate the effect of participants’ need to belong and how status cues may satisfy this need. Because merely assigning women to leadership fails to increase entitlement (Brescoll, 2012), other factors, such as the need to belong, may influence women’s responses to backlash in addition to those outlined in this research. Future researchers should explore the potential relationship of other related variables within this undoubtedly complex system.

Additionally, the relatively young age of the subject pool may help to explain the low rate of backlash fear. Young women yet to enter the professional work environment may have little first-hand experience of backlash. While participants were most likely aware that women typically receive backlash for violating feminine stereotypes, without much personal experience, they may have felt that they represented an exception to the norm (Taylor, Wright, Moghoddam, & Lalonde, 1990). Moreover, their professional inexperience may have prevented these women from receiving many of the potential benefits of status. Since women typically need stronger validation of earned status in order to act on an increased status position (Ridgeway et al., 2009), the current status manipulation may not have been strong enough to elicit confidence in a realistic performance advantage. Therefore, future research may aim to recruit older women who
have already attained some success in a nontraditional field in order to more effectively examine the influence of perceived status on backlash fear and agentic performance.

Moreover, the absence of men in the study presents a noteworthy limitation, as no gender comparisons can be drawn for the effect of status. Although the women in the study did not confirm the M-BAM, perhaps the influence of status on their performance or willingness to persevere significantly differs from that of men. Future directions of this research should recruit both male and female samples in order to evaluate the scope of status benefits.

Since this study represented an initial venture into ameliorating backlash effects on women’s agentic performance, and the target of the criticism task remained abstract and unspecified. Future research should investigate the potential influence of individual target variables—specifically that of gender. Do women perform equally when criticizing male and female targets? Because prior research demonstrates that men and women equally penalize women who violate gender prescriptions (Heilman et al., 2004; Rudman & Phelan, 2008), and that gender atypical actors anticipate backlash for their behavior (Rudman & Fairchild, 2004), women may respond similarly to male and female targets. However, without explicitly manipulating the gender of the criticism target, this notion remains speculative. Therefore, future research should examine the buffering effect of status in a variety of contexts that women may regularly encounter.

Finally, understanding what types of status reminders elicit the greatest buffer from the negative impact of backlash fear remains necessary in order to develop interventions that promote women’s success in masculine domains. The widespread abundance of aptitude tests to explicitly prompt women to consider their performance
advantages in such domains seems unlikely outside of the laboratory. Fortunately, as suggested by Hogue and Yoder (2003), the benefits of status may not be limited to the performance expectations of the individual. Simply reminding women of performance expectations for groups to which they belong may boost perceived entitlement, regardless of backlash fear. Therefore, the rising prominence of many successful women to the forefront of society may promote the growth of even more women to achieve prominence in atypical domains. The maxim, “Nothing breeds success like success” is true for groups as well as individuals. Thus, future research should further test this potential application of perceived status to expand upon its currently limited scope.

Conclusion

As workers in gender atypical fields experience backlash when they represent only a token minority (Ely, 1994), increasing the number of individuals entering and excelling in areas not typical for their gender may reduce the likelihood and severity of backlash for violating gender stereotypes. Unfortunately, this presents a vicious cycle: in order to reduce backlash, more successful vanguards are needed; however, vanguards are discouraged from persevering by the threat of backlash. The present research aimed to address the first part of the paradox. By sheltering women from the fear of backlash and diminishing the tendency to suppress their skills as a strategy to avoid anticipated consequences, women may feel free to fully demonstrate their agentic potential. While the study did not support the effect of status in women’s backlash avoidance for performance, it did demonstrate that boosting perceived status increases women’s interest and desire to persevere in atypical domains. If more women continue to persevere in the organizational labyrinth (Eagly & Carli, 2007) in spite of the potential for social or
financial backlash, their increasing numbers may serve to normalize this higher status and thus reduce the overall propensity for backlash.

Ultimately backlash, and the fear of anticipated backlash, serves to reinforce divisions between members of different groups. While women receive backlash for agency (Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Phelan, et al., 2012; Rudman, 1998), men may also incur backlash for portraying behaviors perceived as feminine (Moss-Racusin, Phelan, & Rudman, 2010). Thus, vanguards of either gender risk backlash for stepping outside of traditional domains, discouraging the development of skills, experiences, and interests in activities considered gender atypical. Additionally, as potential targets of backlash suppress their behavior (Rudman & Fairchild, 2004), the resulting underperformance only confirms gender stereotypes. For example, women who censor their self-promotion as a reaction to the threat of backlash inadvertently reinforce the belief that women are inherently less capable at self-promotion than men. Because backlash presents a threat for expressing counter-stereotypical behavior in a variety of domains beyond just that of gender (Moss-Racusin et al., 2010; Phelan & Rudman, 2010b; Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Glick, et al., 2012), it may ultimately function to perpetuate cultural stereotypes, allowing them to continue to persist. This research focused on gender stereotypes—those particularly pertaining to women—however, backlash threat and subsequent avoidance strategies remain a pervasive issue facing society at large. Ultimately, developing tactics to use status as a means of boosting feelings of entitlement to rewards may allow people to succeed in a variety of nontraditional domains. With the goal of breaking down stereotypes that restrict the expression of talents or interests in counter-stereotypical fields, this research aims to contribute toward the societal progression of equality.
References


and Social Psychology, 102(2), 390–407. doi:10.1037/a0026021


Larrick, R. P., Burson, K. a., & Soll, J. B. (2007). Social comparison and confidence: When thinking you’re better than average predicts overconfidence (and when it does


Appendix A

Prescriptive Traits for Men and Women (Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Phelan, et al., 2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait</th>
<th>Prescriptive $d$</th>
<th>Male $M$</th>
<th>Female $M$</th>
<th>Typicality $d$</th>
<th>Status $d$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Men’s Prescriptions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>career oriented</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>7.74</td>
<td>5.74</td>
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<td>1.57</td>
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<td>5.89</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>1.45</td>
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<td>.43</td>
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<td>assertive</td>
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<td>independent</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td>7.67</td>
<td>5.57</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>1.23</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>7.95</td>
<td>6.28</td>
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<td>6.78</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.91</td>
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<tr>
<td>works well under pressure</td>
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<td>7.39</td>
<td>6.05</td>
<td>.65</td>
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<tr>
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<td>-.04</td>
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<tr>
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<td>6.71</td>
<td>5.83</td>
<td>.02</td>
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<td>high self-esteem</td>
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<td>6.56</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>emotional</td>
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<td>6.51</td>
<td>-1.49</td>
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<td>6.07</td>
<td>7.99</td>
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<td>7.82</td>
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<td>-.47</td>
<td>.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Positive $d$ scores reflect stronger prescriptions or typicality for men than women, or stronger typicality for high than low status people. Negative $d$ scores reflect the reverse.
Conventional small, medium, and large effect sizes for $d$ are .20, .50, and .80, respectively (Cohen, 1988).
Appendix B

Proscriptive Traits for Men and Women (Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Phelan, et al., 2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait</th>
<th>Proscriptive</th>
<th>Male M</th>
<th>Female M</th>
<th>Typicality d</th>
<th>Status d</th>
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<td><strong>Men's Proscriptions</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>6.51</td>
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<td>-.78</td>
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<td>-1.32</td>
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<tr>
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<td>4.08</td>
<td>-1.06</td>
<td>-.96</td>
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<td>gullible</td>
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<td>2.80</td>
<td>4.67</td>
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<td>-1.22</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>dominating</td>
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<td>3.54</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>1.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1.24</td>
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<td>4.41</td>
<td>2.96</td>
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<td>.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>3.82</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>-.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>controlling</td>
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<td>3.88</td>
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<td>1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>4.74</td>
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<td>.42</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cold toward others</td>
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<td>3.43</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self-centered</td>
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<td>3.21</td>
<td>.14</td>
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<td>cynical</td>
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<td>3.94</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.12</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Positive $d$ scores reflect stronger proscriptions or typicality for men than women, or stronger typicality for high than low status people. Negative $d$ scores reflect the reverse. Conventional small, medium, and large effect sizes for $d$ are .20, .50, and .80, respectively (Cohen, 1988).
Appendix C

Essays Selected from Pilot Study

1. Prompt: In your opinion, should high school be extended to five years?

Educators debate extending high school to five years because of increasing demands on students from employers and colleges to participate in extracurricular activities and community service in addition to having high grades. Some educators support extending high school to five years because they think students need more time to achieve all that is expected of them. Other educators do not support it because they think students would lose interest in school and attendance would drop in the fifth year. In your essay, take a position on this question. You may write about either one of the two points of view given, or you may present a different point of view on this question. Use specific reasons and examples to support your position.

In your essay, take a position on this question. You may write about either one of the two points of view given, or you may present a different point of view on this question. Use specific reasons and examples to support your position.

Essay:

If you ever ask a highschool student whether they would want to go one more year very few would say yes. I would have, not because I like school, not because I enjoy spending six hours cooped up inside, but because I could have used one more year to just be sure I was completely prepared for college. Along with this I feel that because we were required to take tenth grade graduation test and most of our tenth grade year was spent preparing for this test. Highschool students today are highly prepared for the world, but that one extra year in high school could possibly be spent taking time on preparatory
courses in college type setting. Students get thrown into the college setting which is a major shock to them due to the major differences. Maybe if we went to school for five years, we could have learned what we needed to learn so that we would have been ready. Maybe doing this our freshmen’s first quarter wouldn’t be as much of a change. Because we had to take the graduation test in tenth grade we didn’t learn anything that year. We need another year due to that, so we should go one more year to make sure we are ready.  

2. Prompt: Write a unified, coherent essay in which you evaluate multiple perspectives on the increasing presence of intelligent machines.

Many of the goods and services we depend on daily are now supplied by intelligent, automated machines rather than human beings. Robots build cars and other goods on assembly lines, where once there were human workers. Many of our phone conversations are now conducted not with people but with sophisticated technologies. We can now buy goods at a variety of stores without the help of a human cashier. Automation is generally seen as a sign of progress, but what is lost when we replace humans with machines? Given the accelerating variety and prevalence of intelligent machines, it is worth examining the implications and meaning of their presence in our lives. Write a unified, coherent essay in which you evaluate multiple perspectives on the increasing presence of intelligent machines.

Essay:

Should machines be used to do good and services instead humans? I believe they should not for many reasons. Machines can not be smart unless a human is controlling it. So it would not matter if its an intelligent machine or not a human is still controlling it to do everything. When using a machine it could easily malfunction and it could be hard to fix the problem or it will just take a while to fix it. If a human is taking over instead of the machine there may be fewer problems. Machines have so many problems that it would not be worth having. Also, the more machines you have the less jobs there are for people because everyone thinks it would be better to have machines instead of people. When less people are out of work that means less money for those people and sometimes
they will lose their homes or cars because they can not afford anything. Sometimes working with machines can be very stressful because they may not work at times or they could be running extremely slow and won’t get anything done. Machines are not smart at all, only when people are controlling them they are but not all the time. It may seem smart but its really not.

Source: Sample Essay (Score = 2). (n.d.). Retrieved: June 6, 2015, from:

http://www.actstudent.org/writing/sample/two.html
Appendix D

RAT EASY

For the skills assessment, you will be asked to find one word that links three other words together.

You will be presented with three semantically linked words, and will need to choose the word that links all three together from the list provided.

Example words: sea, lick, table

Answer: salt

Press the arrows at the bottom of the page to begin.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Falling, Actor, Dust</th>
<th></th>
<th>Blood, Music, Cheese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>STAR</td>
<td></td>
<td>BLUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HEAD</td>
<td></td>
<td>BEER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>COLD</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Broken, Clear, Eye</td>
<td></td>
<td>Playing, Credit, Report</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GLASS</td>
<td></td>
<td>CARD</td>
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<td>CANDLE</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Room, Blood, Salts</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SPIDER</td>
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<tr>
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<td>LION</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Salt, Deep, Foam</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>SOUR</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Chocolate, Fortune, Tin</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BLOSSOM</td>
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<td>STICK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DULL</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
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</table>
11. Color, Numbers, Oil
   a. PAINT
   b. SHOPPING
   c. BUMP

12. Mouse, Sharp, Blue
   a. CHEESE
   b. STALK
   c. NOTE

13. Big, Leaf, Shade
   a. TREE
   b. CLOTH
   c. ZONE

14. Hall, Car, Swimming
   a. POOL
   b. NOTCH
   c. CHERRY

15. Thread, Pine, Pain
   a. NEEDLE
   b. GIN
   c. CARPET

16. Note, Dive, Chair
   a. HIGH
   b. LUMP

17. Blank, White, Lines
   a. PAPER
   b. GREEN
   c. TAPE

18. Stick, Light, Birthday
   a. CANDLE
   b. STREET
   c. MATCH

19. Surprise, Wrap, Care
   a. GIFT
   b. BEER
   c. PARTY

20. Strap, Pocket, Time
   a. WATCH
   b. BOX
   c. PIPE
MODIFICATION OF THE BACKLASH AVOIDANCE MODEL

Note: Correct answers for each item are listed as A. During the experiment, answer choices were randomized.

RAT HARD

For the skills assessment, you will be asked to find one word that links three other words together.

You will be presented with three semantically linked words, and will need to choose the word that links all three together from the list provided.

Example words: sea, lick, table

Answer: salt

Press the arrows at the bottom of the page to begin.
<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
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<td>6. Silk, Cream, Even</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. CABBAGE</td>
<td>a. SMOOTH</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. WINDOW</td>
<td>b. JUMP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. LUMP</td>
<td>c. INCH</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Time, Hair, Stretch</td>
<td>7. Speak, Money, Street</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. LONG</td>
<td>a. EASY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. QUIET</td>
<td>b. FOOT</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. STREET</td>
<td>c. COTTON</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Cracker, Union, Rabbit</td>
<td>8. Ache, Hunter, Cabbage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. JACK</td>
<td>a. HEAD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. WATCH</td>
<td>b. DEEP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. TOP</td>
<td>c. BAR</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Off, Trumpet, Atomic</td>
<td>9. Chamber, Staff, Box</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. BLAST</td>
<td>a. MUSIC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. PARTY</td>
<td>b. TABLE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. WATER</td>
<td>c. WHITE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Sandwich, Golf, Foot</td>
<td>10. High, Book, Sour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. CLUB</td>
<td>a. NOTE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. MAGIC</td>
<td>b. CITY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. JUMP</td>
<td>c. TOP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11. Lick, Sprinkle, Mines
c. TREE
   a. SALT
   b. WATER
   c. BLOSSOM
12. Square, Telephone, Club
c. CARD
   a. BOOK
   b. RED
   c. BLACK
13. Ticket, Shop, Broker
c. BLUE
   a. PAWN
   b. BEER
   c. HARD
c. WINDOW
   a. DULL
   b. FOOT
   c. TIME
15. Lapse, Vivid, Elephant
c. FOOT
   a. MEMORY
   b. THIEF
   c. NEEDLE
16. Zone, Still, Noise
   a. QUIET
   b. POOL
17. Cloth, Sad, Out
   a. SACK
   b. SILVER
18. Foot, Collection, Out
   a. STAMP
   b. GLASS
19. Inch, Deal, Peg
   a. SQUARE
   b. JOY
20. Stalk, Trainer, King
   a. LION
   b. LUMP
Note: Correct answers for each item are listed as A. During the experiment, answer choices were randomized.
Appendix E

Bogus Aptitude Feedback

**High task relevant aptitude results (writing tutor skills)**

The results of your tutoring aptitude test indicate that you have Linguistic Intelligence. Linguistic intelligence refers to language usage and understanding, suggesting that you have tutoring skills in the area of writing and written communication. You scored in the 90th percentile for this category, indicating that you have very strong abilities in using written language to express complex meanings, are able to make literary associations easily, and would make a very effective writing tutor at the campus tutoring center!

Based on your aptitude test results, you might be strongly considered for employment as a writing tutor, depending on the quality of the feedback you provide today.

**Low task relevant aptitude results (writing tutor skills)**

The results of your tutoring aptitude test indicate that you have poor Linguistic Intelligence. Linguistic intelligence refers to language usage and understanding. People high in this type of intelligence typically have tutoring skills in the area of writing and written communication. You scored in the 40th percentile for this category, indicating that you possess low tutoring abilities in using written language to express complex meanings and making literary associations, and so may not make a very effective writing tutor at the campus tutoring center.

**High task irrelevant aptitude results (complex relationships skills)**

The results of your tutoring aptitude test indicate that you have Existential Intelligence. Existential intelligence refers to seeing interconnections among different concepts and drawing conclusions from them, suggesting that you have tutoring skills in the area of
theoretical reasoning. You scored in the 90th percentile for this category, indicating that you have very strong abilities in recognizing patterns, solving abstract associations, and would make a very effective psychology tutor at the campus tutoring center! Based on your aptitude test results, you could be strongly considered for employment as a psychology tutor for the campus tutoring center, depending on the quality of the feedback you provide today.

**Low task irrelevant aptitude results (complex relationships skills)**

The results of your tutoring aptitude test indicate that you have poor Existential Intelligence. Existential intelligence refers to seeing interconnections among different concepts and drawing conclusions from them. People high in this type of intelligence typically have tutoring skills in the area of theoretical reasoning. You scored in the 40th percentile for this category, indicating that you possess low tutoring abilities in recognizing patterns and solving abstract associations, and so may not make a very effective psychology tutor at the campus tutoring center.
Appendix F

Perceived Feedback Effectiveness

Please answer the following questions using the scale:

1  2  3  4  5
   Not at all          Very much

1. Overall, how well do you think you performed on your feedback writing task today?
2. Overall, how hard did you try on your feedback writing task today?
3. Overall, how effective do you think the feedback is that you provided during the feedback writing task today?
4. Overall, how helpful do you think the feedback is that you provided during the feedback writing task today?
5. Overall, how valuable do you think the feedback is that you provided during the feedback writing task today?
Appendix G

Deserved Pay

If you were a supervisor in charge of paying tutors at the campus tutoring center for essay feedback based on their quality, how much (from $1 to $15) would you pay the author of the feedback you provided today?

$_______
Appendix H

Fear of Backlash

Imagine that the student whose essay you reviewed were to read the feedback you wrote.

Please respond to the questions using the following scale:

1  2  3  4  5

Not at all       Very much

1. Would you worry that the student might think you were odd?
2. Would you be concerned that the student might dislike you?
3. Do you think you would feel proud?*
4. Do you think you would feel embarrassed?
5. Would you worry that the student thought you were too confident?
6. Would you worry that the student thought you were too assertive?
7. Would you worry about being called vain by the student?
8. Would you worry that someone of your gender should not be critical?
9. Would you worry that the student might think you had acted out of character for someone of your gender?
10. Would you be concerned that the student wouldn’t like you because you had acted out of character for someone of your gender?

*Note. Item 3 is reverse-scored.
Figure 1. Hypothesized Modified-Backlashed Avoidance Model.
Figure 2. The M-BAM as tested using PROCESS.

X= Fear of Backlash; M= Perceived entitlement (specific and general combined); Y= Subjective performance; W= Status (1= focal group, 0= all other groups)
Table 1. Means and standard deviations of main variables by condition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High score/relevant</th>
<th>High score/irrelevant</th>
<th>Low score/relevant</th>
<th>Low score/irrelevant</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prior tutoring interest</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>4.76</td>
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<td>Objective performance</td>
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<td>3.44</td>
<td>1.16</td>
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<td>Subjective performance</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>3.63</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deserved pay</td>
<td>9.10</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>9.42</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>8.55</td>
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<tr>
<td>Backlash fear</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>1.71</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perceived entitlement-Specific</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>2.02</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perceived entitlement-General</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.33</td>
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<tr>
<td>Willingness to tutor</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>2.49</td>
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Table 2. Correlations

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<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Prior tutoring interest</td>
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<td>2. Fear of backlash</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>--</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Specific entitlement</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>--</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. General entitlement</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.47***</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Combined entitlement</td>
<td>-.00</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.83***</td>
<td>.88***</td>
<td>--</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Subjective performance</td>
<td>.15**</td>
<td>-.24***</td>
<td>.14**</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.10*</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Objective performance</td>
<td>.12*</td>
<td>-.13**</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-.11*</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.27***</td>
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<td>8. Future tutoring interest</td>
<td>.58**</td>
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<td>.07</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.39***</td>
<td>.26***</td>
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*p < .05.  **p < .01.  ***p < .001.
Table 3. Results of the moderated mediation analyses used to test the M-BAM

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<th>Estimate</th>
<th>SE</th>
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<th>p</th>
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<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>10.49</td>
<td>&gt;.001</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fear of backlash</td>
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<td>0.08</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status</td>
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<td>0.06</td>
<td>.95</td>
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<td>FOB x status</td>
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<td>-0.29</td>
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<td>Essay number</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td>.89</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prior Tutoring interest</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>.99</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjective performance (dependent variable model)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perceived entitlement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fear of backlash</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay number</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prior Tutoring interest</td>
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</table>

<table>
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<th>Conditional effects</th>
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<td>Bootstrap indirect effect</td>
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<td>Bootstrap SE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95% CI bias corrected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High score/relevant skill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All other groups</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N= 430. Number of bootstrap samples for bias corrected bootstrap confidence intervals: 1,000.