Humblebragging

A Distinct—and Ineffective— Self-Presentation Strategy

In their paper, Humblebragging: A Distinct—and Ineffective—Self-Presentation Strategy, Sezer, Gino, and Norton conduct a number of are outlined here.

Created for Fundamentals of Social Psychology, Spring

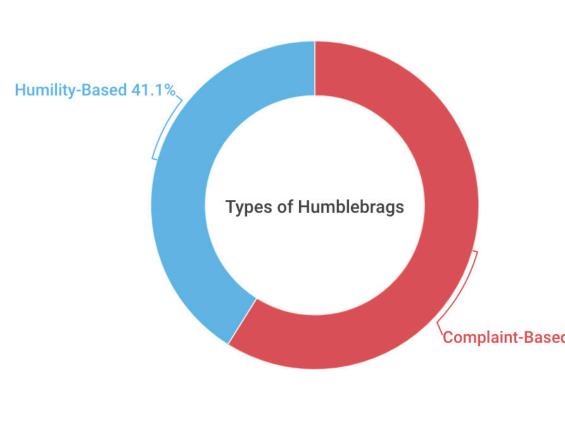
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Designed by Esther Klingbiel

Humblebragging is a type of self-presentation that attempts to conceal a brag in complaint or humility. Humblebragging is specifically utilized when we want to simultaneously impress and gain sympathy from others. Humblebragging has been found to be less effective than straightforward bragging, complaining, or humility because it is seen as insincere. There

experiments designed to measure the prevalence and effectiveness of humblebragging. Their studies and findings

70.1%



Intelligence 8.4% Looks 36.6% **Topics of Humblebrags** Achievements 11.3% Work Performance 13.7%

Personality 6.6%_

Consensus: Humblebragging exists in everyday life, and appears among many topics, most notably when one is commenting on their looks or wealth. Complaint-based humblebragging is more common than humility-based humblebragging.

Complaint-Based Humblebrags

Complaining (an expression of dissatisfaction or annoyance) is used to elicit sympathy, appear likable, and to receive help from others. Complaining may also reveal a level of interpersonal intimacy (e.g., people in close friendships or partnerships tend to complain to each other).

Humility-Based Humblebrags

Humility, or the act of appearing humble, is used to elicit liking by others. People who are humble are often seen as non-threatening and lacking in egoism and narcissism.

Study 1a: Documenting the Prevalence of Humblebragging in Everyday Life

are two kinds of humblebrags.

Participants (N = 646) were asked to indicate whether they had witnesse someone they knew humblebragging.

of participants reported humblebragging



Study 1b: Documenting the

Prevalence of Humblebragging

Over the Span of One Week

Participants (N = 113) were asked to

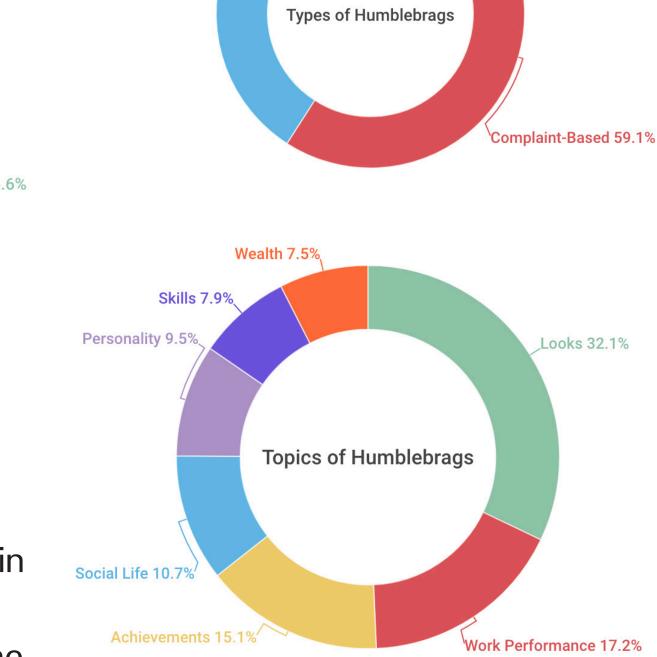
45.09%

of participants heard at least one humble-

brag over the course of a week

document the amount of humble-

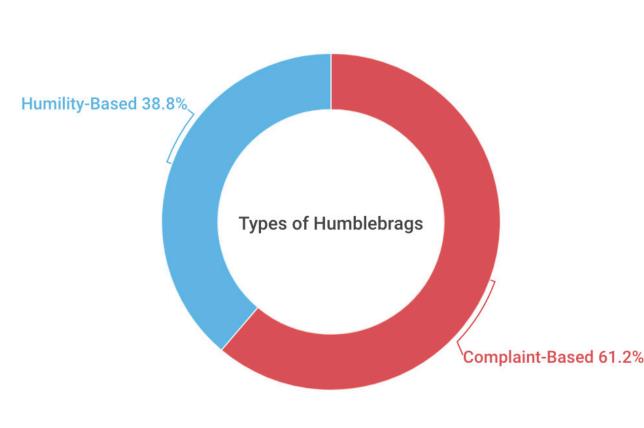
brags they witnessed over 7 days.



Consensus: These findings support Study 1a.

Study 1c: Documenting the Existence of Humblebragging Online

Researchers analyzed tweets (N = 740) and classified them as complaint-based or humility-based humblebrags.



Consensus: Humblebragging exists online. These findings also support Study 1a and Study 1b.

Study 2: The Behavioral Costs of Humblebragging in Face-to-Face Interactions

Participants (N = 113 college students) were approached by a confederate. The confederate struck up a brief conversation, either bragging straightforwardly ("I got my dream internship and got funding to travel to Paris") or humblebragged ("I got to travel to Paris. Ugh it's so hard to on the humility-based humblebrags. decide which one to choose"). The participants were then asked to sign a petition in support of a studentrun food truck.

87.5% of participants in the bragging condition signed the petition

64.9%

of participants in the humblebragging condition signed the petition

Consensus: In face-to-face interactions, humblebragging is received less positively than straightforward bragging. Straightforward bragging may result in better outcomes than humblebragging.

Study 3a: Complaint-Based Humblebrags Versus Humility-Based Humblebrags

Participants (N = 403) conducted online survey where they were aske to rate 5 statements based on one of four conditions: complaint-based humblebrags, straightforward brags based on the complaint-based humblebrags, humility-based humble-

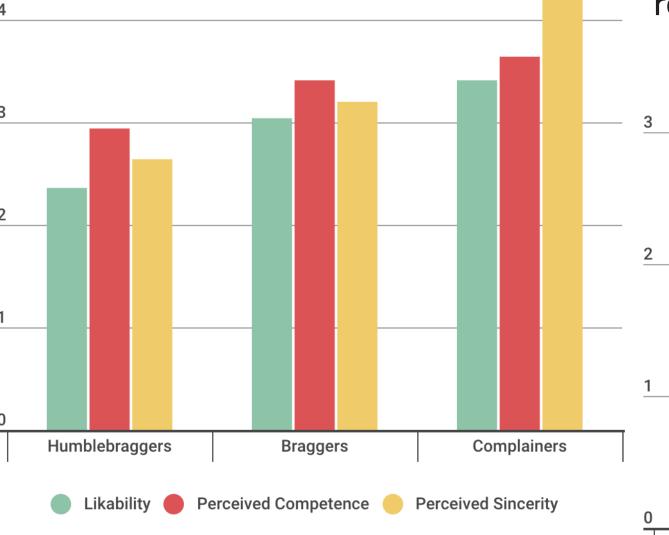
Participants then rated the statements very much) on likability, sincerity, and humblebragging. credibility, as well as to what extent the person was bragging, complaining, or being humble.

Consensus: People liked humblebraggers less than straightforward braggers, and also viewed humblebraggers as less competent and sincere than straightforward braggers. People liked complaint-based humblebraggers less than humility-based humblebraggers, and also viewed complaint-based humblebraggers as less competent and sincere than humility-based humblebraggers.

Study 3b: Complaint-Based Humblebrags Versus Straightforward Complaining

Participants (N = 301) conducted an online survey where they were asked to rate a statements based on one of three conditions: complaint-based humblebrags, straightforward brags. or straightforward complaints.

(on a scale of 1–7, 1 = not at all, 7 = ging statements and told to choose 3very much) on sincerity and credibility, as well as to what extent the (on a scale of 1–7, 1 = not at all, 7 = person was bragging, complaining, or

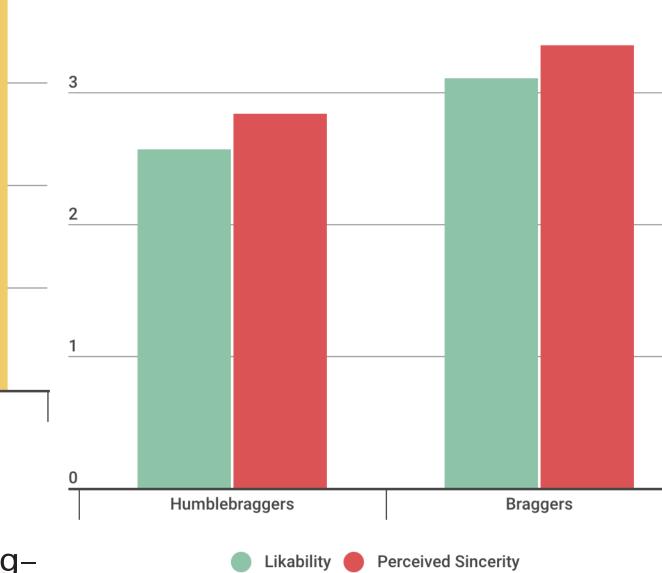


Consensus: People liked humblebraggers less than straightforward braggers and complainers, and also viewed humblebraggers as less competent and sincere than straightforward braggers and complainers.

Study 4a: Humblebragging and Hypothetical Monetary Generosity

Participants $(N_{phase} = 154, N_{phase} = 619)$ conducted an online survey. Phase participants were assigned a "partner" who was tasked with allocating a hypothetical amount of \$5 among each player. Participants were randomly assigned to humblebragging my dream internship and got funding brags, or straightforward brags based Participants then rated the statements statements or straightforward bragstatements that reflected who they were to send to their partners.

> Phase 2 participants were given the same task, but were assigned the role of allocating the money.



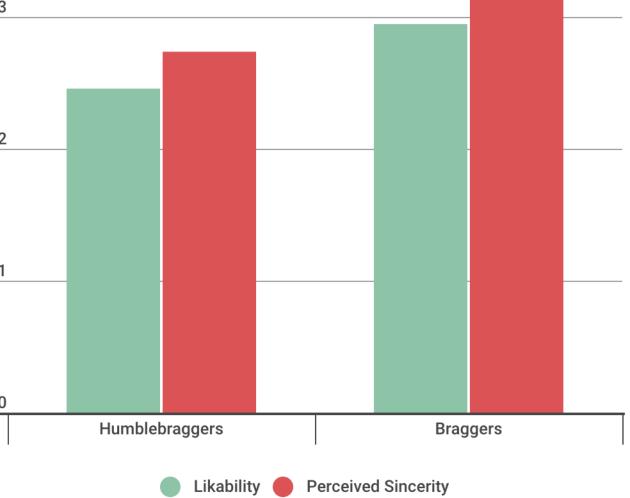
\$1.03 average amount of hypothetical money participants allocated to humblebraggers

\$1.11 average amount of hypothetical money participants allocated to straightforward braggers

Consensus: Consistent with the previous studies, humblebraggers were less likable and perceived as less sincere than straightforward braggers. However, these perceptions did not significantly differ in the allocation of hypothetical money.

Study 4b: Humblebragging and Actual Monetary Generosity

The design of this study was identical to Study 4a, except this time, a real amount of \$5 was allocated.



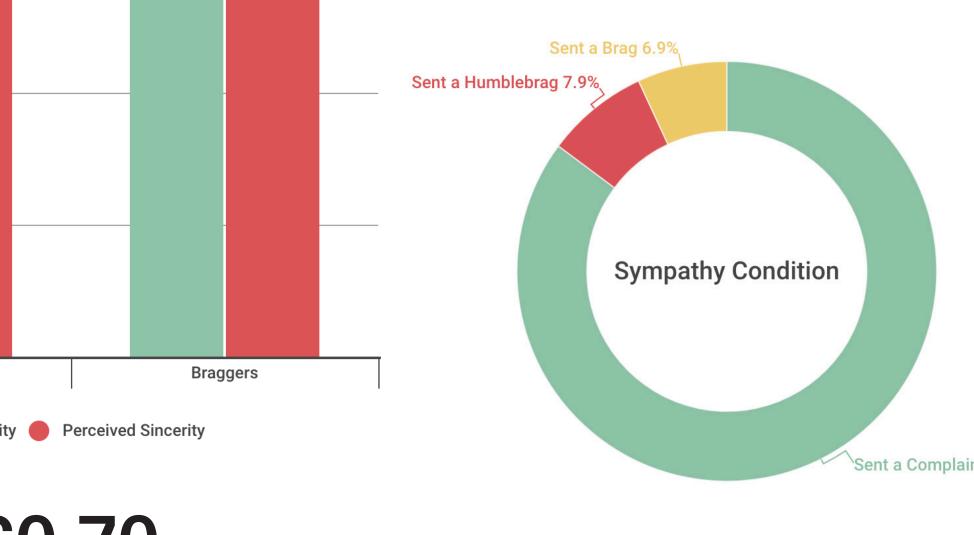
\$0.70 average amount of money participants allocated to humblebraggers

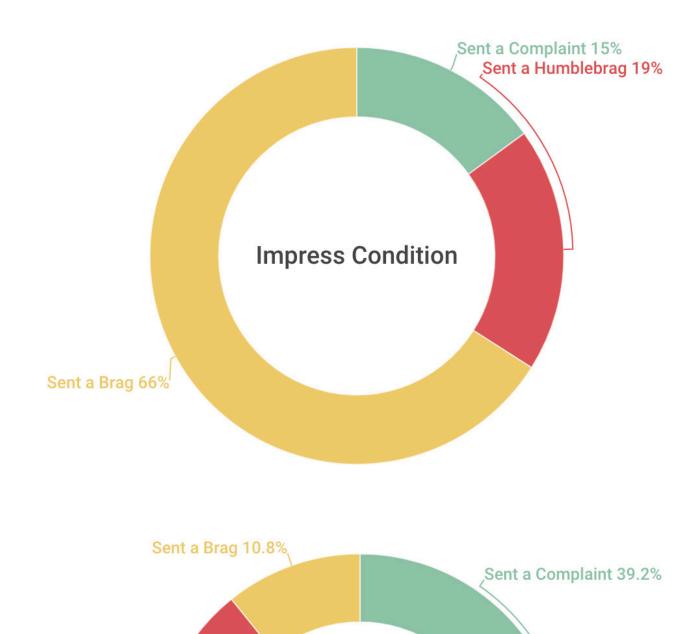
\$1.05 average amount of money participants allocated to straightforward braggers

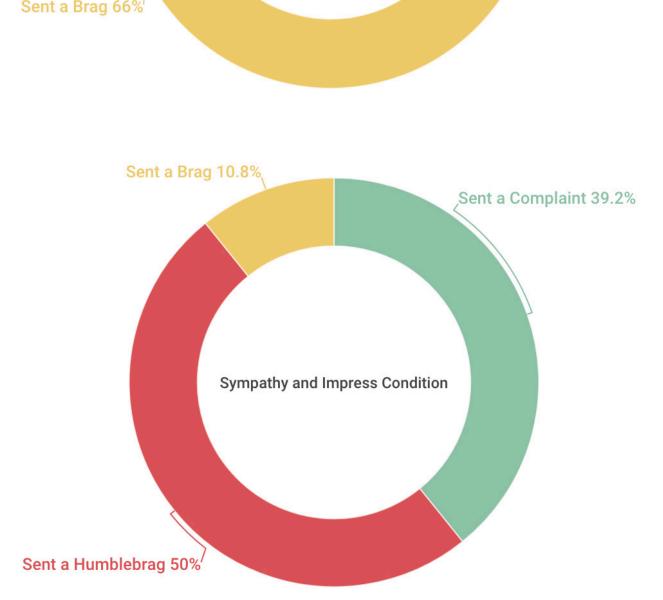
Consensus: Consistent with the previous studies, humblebraggers were less likable and perceived as less sincere than straightforward braggers. In the case of real money, there may be negative financial consequences to humblebragging, but the authors concede this should be studied further.

Study 5: Why do People Humblebrag?

Participants (N = 608), in three randomly assigned conditions, were asked to self-present as eliciting sympathy, to impress, or to elicit sympathy AND to impress. by sending one of three statements (a complaint, a brag, or a humblebrag).







Consensus: When people want to simultaneously gain sympathy from others as well as impress them, they utilize humblebragging.