**SUPPLEMENTAL STUDIES**

**Real Behavior Study**

This study sought to instantiate this effect in the context of a real decision, and control for different motivations for forming close friendships (e.g., social support versus more instrumental reasons).

**Participants**

We recruited 281 (206 female) paid participants from a large Midwestern university.

**Procedure**

Presenters were told that we were studying friendship formation and were asked if they would be willing to participate in a follow-up study for additional compensation (to underscore that their decisions would have real consequences). They read that we were planning to create profile pages of research participants, and then were asked, “If your goal is to make new, potentially close friends, which of the following cars would you post on your profile to attract such friends?” They chose between photos of a BMW and Honda.

Evaluators were told that we were studying friendship formation and that they might have the opportunity to meet one of the other participants online, as a new, potentially close friend (and were also asked if they were also available for the follow-up study). In a between-subjects design, they read that we had created profile pages of other research participants and were told, “Here is the car that one of the participants chose to use on their profile page” [the photo was either the BMW or Honda]. Friendship interest was measured with the identical composite measure as in Study 1, except for the phrase of “ideal” of new close friend was changed to “idea” of new close friend. Participants also provided their gender and rated the statements regarding friendship-making: “I am looking for people that would be fun to hang out and socialize with” (socialize) and “I am looking for people to help me in my career and other opportunities” (instrumental).

**Results and Discussion**

As predicted, a majority in the presenters condition (59%) chose the luxury car over the basic car (41%) in an effort to make new friends, *χ*2(1)= 3.90, *p* = .048. A MANOVA showed that there were no significant differences in participants’ motives to socialize or in their instrumental motives between their choices of cars, (*ps* > .240).

For the evaluators condition, we first created the friendship interest composite variable (*α* = .86). In contrast to those in the presenters condition, the would-be new friends, who were also looking to make new friends, expressed less friendship interest in the person with the luxury car image (*M* = 3.01, *SD* = 1.18) than the one with the basic car image (*M* = 3.46, *SD* = 1.30), 95% CImean diff = [-0.84, -0.06], *F*(1,156) = 5.19, *p* = .024, *ηp*2 = .032. This effect remained significant when controlling for socializing and instrumental motives, gender, and age, *F*(1,152) = 7.28, *p* = .008, *ηp*2 = .046. Thus, we not only observe the predicted effect by capturing real behavior but we also show that this effect can occur even when the high status signal is at no cost to the participant – merely a chosen image.

**Wealthy Hypocrisy Study**

This study seeks to rule out potential wealth or “similarity” effects. For example, if participant samples are not wealthy, then a luxury car may seem different from the average person in the evaluators condition, and that may instigate their lack of interest in the luxury car driver. Although Study 1 is based on data from upscale main street shoppers in a wealthy area, this additional study further addresses this issue in two ways: (i) by using a pre-selected wealth sample comprised of people with a personal household income above $100,000 and (ii) by additionally seeking to reveal a hypocrisy effect—i.e., showing that presenters who themselves have chosen a high status car in a first task would themselves still prefer to befriend a person with a neutral status (rather than a higher status) car on an immediate subsequent task.

**Participants**

We recruited 201 participants (111 female, age average= 40.05, range: 19-70) were recruited using the lab services of TurkPrime to recruit a sample of Amazon Mechanical Turks with a Household Income of $100k or greater (c.f., median US household income = $52K).

**Procedure**

At Stage 1, all participants read the presenter’s condition: “Imagine that you enjoy going to social events to meet new close friends, and you want to buy the car that will make you seem likeable. Assuming that cost is not an issue, which car would you take to social events to make some new close friends?” The options were a BMW-3-Series or a Honda Civic.

At Stage 2, all participants were then randomly assigned to 1 of 4 evaluators conditions: “Now imagine that you are at a social gathering. At the social gathering, you noticed a person who just arrived driving a [BMW 3-Series / Honda Civic / ‘top of the line’ BMW 7-Series / ‘top of the line’ Honda Accord]. Would you want to be friends with this person?” (yes/no).

**Results and Discussion**

Three participants incorrectly responded to the attention check and were dropped. In Stage 1 where they had the chance to choose their car, the majority of this high income sample (67.7%) chose the BMW 3-Series as being more effective than the Honda in making new close friends, *χ*2(1)= 24.75, *p* < .001. However, in Stage 2 which immediately followed, when these same high income participants were then placed in one of the four evaluator conditions, they more frequently indicated an interest in becoming friends with a person driving a Honda (Civic: 87.5%; Accord: 86.3%; average = 86.7%), compared to a person driving a BMW (3-Series: 68.8%; 7-Series: 52.9%: average = 60.6%), BMW vs Honda: *χ*2(1)= 17.63, *p* < .001. Interestingly, they are more willing to be friends with a neutral status Honda driver, regardless of whether this is a basic entry level Civic sedan or a top-of-the-line Accord.

We also see the same pattern when we focus only on the subsample of presenters who chose BMWs in Stage 1. When evaluating at Stage 2, there were no significant differences between the Civic and Accord Honda models (*p* = .898) or between the 3-Series and 7-Series BMW models (*p* = .279), so we collapsed across models. We observed, even among this subsample of BMW presenters, a hypocrisy effect: they were more willing to be befriend a Honda driver (88%) than they were a fellow BMW driver (73%), *χ*2(1)= 4.70, *p* = .030. Of course, this observation is particularly compelling given the design of the experiment and inherent consistency pressures (i.e., pressures not to be hypocritical) in such back-to-back choices. Taken together, this study shows that the status signals effect does not appear to be driven by a similarity matching explanation: even among people in a high income demographic—those who could afford a luxury car themselves—we observe the status signals paradox, even when people took both perspectives of the presenter and then evaluator.