THE INFLUENCE OF NONCONSCIOUS AND CONSCIOUS GOALS ON IMPRESSION FORMATION

by Amanda M. Johnston

Previous research has demonstrated that nonconscious and conscious goals are more similar than different. Research has also demonstrated that active goals influence various processes and outcomes: accessibility of constructs, evaluations of goal-related objects, and information recall. The present research was designed to demonstrate that goals would be best considered in a dual-process framework, with nonconscious and conscious processes being identified as having different precursors and outcomes. The research examined how the impressions of an individual are influenced by the simultaneous possession of a nonconscious and conscious goal. It was predicted that implicit and explicit evaluations of the individual would vary based on the activated goals; however, the results were inconclusive. Limitations of the research, as well as proposed future directions, are discussed in terms of a dual-process model of goals.
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The Influence of Nonconscious and Conscious Goals on Impression Formation

While studying for an exam, a nonconscious goal of academic achievement is likely active. When a student from class, who regularly attends lectures, asks thoughtful questions, and has received high marks on previous exams sits down next to you, what will your impression be of this student? Perhaps your impression will be more positive on this particular day because you have a nonconscious achievement goal and this person is positively related to achievement. Further, as you study you may be considering the fact that the class is graded relatively (i.e., your grade depends partially on the grades of others)—that is, the class is a competitive environment. Perhaps your impression of this person will be more negative because of your conscious goal of competition.

I predict that both the nonconscious and conscious goals will influence impression formation, producing different evaluations of the target in a dual-process manner, similar to other dual-process models in social psychology (Chaiken & Trope, 1999) such as a dual-process model of attitudes (Smith & DeCoster, 2000). The questions of how nonconscious and conscious goals differ, how nonconscious and conscious goals interact, and the implications for the simultaneous activation of nonconscious and conscious goals remain understudied. The present research attempted to explore the impact of simultaneously holding a nonconscious and conscious goal; thus, I will argue that nonconscious and conscious goals can and should be considered in a dual-process framework.

Toward a Dual-Process Model of Goal Pursuit

Goals are frequently defined as desired end states that are actively sought until fulfillment (Gollwitzer & Moskowitz, 1996). Goals influence a variety of processes and outcomes; information recall (Hassin, Aarts, & Ferguson, 2005), affect (Fishbach, Shah, & Kruglanski, 2004), information accessibility (Forster, Liberman, & Higgins, 2005), and evaluations of targets (Ferguson & Bargh, 2004). Research has suggested that the pursuit and outcomes of conscious and nonconscious goals are similar (Chartrand & Bargh, 2002). For example, research has demonstrated that an impression formation goal, whether activated consciously or nonconsciously, influences the information people remember about another individual (Chartrand & Bargh, 1996).

Although it has been suggested that recent goal research is increasingly demonstrating the similarities between nonconscious and conscious goal pursuit (Ferguson, Hassin, & Bargh, 2008), some differences between nonconscious and conscious goals have been noted. Two crucial distinctions between nonconscious and conscious goals are awareness and deliberate action; nonconscious goals occur outside of awareness and without deliberate action, whereas conscious goals require awareness and deliberate action (Chartrand, Dalton, & Cheng, 2008). This distinction between the role of awareness for nonconscious and conscious goal pursuit is reminiscent of a distinction made between implicit and explicit attitudes. However, unlike the attitude domain, where researchers argue for a dual-process model, goal researchers frequently suggest that nonconscious and conscious goals are similar in processing and implications.

I would like to suggest that while nonconscious and conscious goals may be similar in various ways, it is also critical to consider the different processes involved in nonconscious and conscious goal pursuit, as well as the co-occurrence of nonconscious and conscious goals. The current research attempted to explore how nonconscious and conscious goals may best be considered in a dual-process framework, suggesting that each type of goal influences a different
impression formation process. I will posit that nonconscious goals are processes similar to implicit attitudes, whereas conscious goals are processes similar to explicit attitudes.

Various models exist for explaining implicit and explicit attitudes; however the different models are similar in their proposals that implicit and explicit processes vary in crucial ways and that these variations influence attitudes and behaviors. Smith and DeCoste (2000) suggest a dual-process model of attitudes in which implicit attitudes rely on effortless processing and explicit attitudes rely on effortful processing. A more recent theory of how the two types of attitudes operate identifies implicit attitudes as resulting from a slow-learning process and explicit attitudes from a fast-learning process (Rydell & McConnell, 2006). Another model of implicit and explicit attitudes is the associative-propositional evaluation (APE) model by Gawronski and Bodenhausen (2006). This model identifies implicit attitudes as influenced by associative processes, where associations are identified as automatic affective reactions toward a stimulus and independent of truth values. Explicit attitudes are based on propositional processes, but may also reflect automatic associations (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006). The APE model suggests that implicit and explicit attitudes may form from distinct processes, but that the associative and propositional processes may at times interact.

Unlike the dual-process attitude models, research on goals has suggested that nonconscious and conscious goals tend to result in similar outcomes. The current research utilized the APE model when making predictions, as I believe associative and propositional processes map closely to nonconscious and conscious goals due to the distinction between automatic and deliberate processing. Based on the APE model, predictions were made for how nonconscious and conscious goals would differentially influence impression formation. It was predicted that the nonconscious goal would influence the automatic impression of a target individual, and thus the individual would be evaluated consistent with the nonconscious goal on an implicit measure. It was predicted that the conscious goal would primarily influence the deliberate impression of the target individual; the explicit evaluations would be consistent with the conscious goal. However, the APE model suggests that explicit attitudes can be based on both associations and propositional reasoning; thus, the explicit attitudes toward the target in the present study could be influenced by both types of goals. For some co-activations of the nonconscious and conscious goals, it was predicted that the implicit and explicit evaluations would be consistent (e.g., both positive); however, it was predicted that for other co-activations of the nonconscious and conscious goals, the implicit and explicit evaluations would not be consistent (e.g., one positive and one negative). Therefore, it was predicted that in some instances of simultaneously holding a nonconscious and conscious goal, implicit and explicit evaluations would diverge, specifically when the associative and propositional processes were not in agreement.

When viewing goal pursuit as a dual-process it is important to consider not only how each type of goal pursuit results in different outcomes, but also how the two types of goals operate together, as also highlighted in the APE model (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006). Recent research has explored the dynamics of multiple goal pursuit; however, the focus has been on the simultaneous pursuit of conscious goals (Louro, Pieters, & Zeelenberg, 2007). These researchers suggest that emotions and goal proximity influence how competing goals are given attention and effort; positive emotions increase effort for distant goals, but decrease effort for close goals. Conversely, negative emotions decrease effort for distant goals, but increase effort for close goals. Research by Shah and colleagues (2002) demonstrated that participants high in goal commitment are slower to respond to alternative goals after being subliminally primed with
a focal goal compared to participants primed with a control word; such decreased responding to alternative goals when a focal goal is activated is known as goal shielding. Research on how people resist temptations has demonstrated that people automatically approach stimuli related to an active goal and avoid stimuli related to temptations (i.e., a competing goal; Fishbach & Shah, 2006). These studies show how people manage multiple goals, but do not discuss how multiple goals may operate simultaneously.

The research exploring goal shielding, temptations, and multiple goal pursuit utilizes paradigms where the competing goals are activated in a similar fashion to the focal goal (e.g., both nonconsciously). To the best of my knowledge there is no research examining the concurrence of nonconscious and conscious goals. Thus, an exploration of the simultaneous occurrence of nonconscious and conscious goals is informative for how goals may operate in a dual-process manner. Next I will discuss how goals generally influence evaluations of objects and people.

How and When Goals Influence Evaluations

Research has demonstrated that both nonconscious and conscious goals influence attitudes and behaviors (Bargh & Chartrand, 1999). Ferguson and Bargh (2004) illustrated that active goals result in more positive automatic evaluations of goal-relevant objects compared to goal-irrelevant objects. Other research demonstrated that when a goal is active constructs related to the goal are increasingly accessible, but after the goal is fulfilled (i.e., not active), constructs related to the goal decrease in accessibility below baseline (Forster et al., 2005).

Research examining goals in a social context has predominately focused on how goal activation and pursuit are influenced by representations of significant others (e.g., relationship partners, friends, relatives; Fitzsimons, Shah, Chartrand, & Bargh, 2005). Goals have been shown to be triggered by thinking of a significant other and this thinking influences goal accessibility, goal pursuit, and goal attainment (Shah, 2003). Additionally, persistence and performance on goal-related tasks increase after being primed with a significant other who views the goal as valuable (Shah, 2006).

Fitzsimons and colleagues (2005) report data indicating that the process of significant others influencing goal pursuit can proceed in the opposite causal direction; the accessibility of significant others associated with a goal automatically increases when the particular goal is active. Thus, these researchers suggest the relationship between goals and significant others is bidirectional. Behaviors have also been shown to be influenced by activated interpersonal goals; priming a close individual (e.g., friend or mother) rather than a less close individual (e.g., coworker) activated interpersonal goals (e.g., helping behavior) to a greater extent (Fitzsimons & Bargh, 2003). The research illustrating relationships between goals and significant others demonstrates that active goals may have implications for how people view others in their social environment.

The Present Research

Previous research suggests that activated goals influence evaluations of goal-relevant objects (Ferguson & Bargh, 2004) and that primed interpersonal goals result in goal-related behavior (Fitzsimons & Bargh, 2003). However, research has yet to document how goals influence evaluations of individuals being encountered for the first time. Hassin et al. (2005) point out that goals have implications for behaviors in the social world. Thus, understanding how goals influence impressions of others may lead to a better understanding of how both social
interactions and goal-related processes take place in the social environment. In addition, the simultaneous activation of both nonconscious and conscious goals allows for the examination of a dual-process framework of goal pursuit.

The two central hypotheses of this research were in line with the proposed dual-process nature of goals, such that nonconscious and conscious goals were predicted to result in different evaluations of an individual. The first hypothesis centered on how the nonconscious goal of achievement would influence the implicit impressions of a target individual who is positively related to achievement. I hypothesized that participants with an active nonconscious goal would reflect more positivity in their implicit evaluations toward the target than participants with no active nonconscious goal.

The second hypothesis focused on how conscious goals influence explicit impression formation. I hypothesized that participants with a cooperative conscious goal would evaluate the target more positively explicitly than participants with a competitive conscious goal. It was expected that an individual positively related to achievement would appear more beneficial to participants under a cooperative mindset, resulting in a more positive impression, compared to participants in a competitive mindset where the target would appear as a hindrance to their own goal attainment. Thus, two main effects for the two types of goals, nonconscious and conscious, were predicted.

The inclusion of both implicit and explicit measures was a means to explore the dual-process nature of goals. Ferguson and Bargh (2004) implemented both implicit and explicit measures in their experiment exploring the influence of nonconscious goals on nonsocial objects, but found that only implicit measures illustrated an influence of goals. In other research, Shah (2003) used only explicit measures to explore how representations of significant others activate goals, whereas Fishbach and colleagues (2003) focused on implicit measures. The present research included the two types of measures also as a means to identify a possible discrepancy in the evaluation of a target due to the simultaneous activation of nonconscious and conscious goals.

The reasoning for the discrepancy predictions was based on the APE model (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006). The nonconscious goals were predicted to influence the implicit attitudes, which as the APE model suggests are based on automatic affective reactions. The conscious goals were predicted to influence the explicit attitudes—that is, those attitudes based on propositional processes. Thus, a discrepancy was predicted due to the expectation that in some conditions, the associative and propositional processes would lead to opposite evaluations. Specifically, it was predicted that when a participant possessed both an active nonconscious achievement goal and a cooperative conscious goal, both the implicit and explicit evaluations would be positive. However, when an active nonconscious achievement goal and a competitive conscious goal occurred together, it was expected that the implicit measure would indicate positivity, but the explicit measure would indicate negativity toward the target (see Figure 1).

Method

Participants. Seventy-nine Miami University undergraduates (27 female) drawn from the introductory psychology subject pool participated in the experiment. Participants were predominantly of European-American descent (93.5%) with a median age of 19 years (range of 18-30).
Procedure. Participants were randomly assigned to conditions in a 2 (nonconscious goal: goal vs. no goal) x 2 (conscious goal: cooperation vs. competition) x 2 (evaluative measure: implicit vs. explicit) mixed design, with the evaluative measure factor manipulated on a within-subjects basis. The nonconscious goal factor refers to whether participants had a nonconscious goal of achievement activated or if no nonconscious goal was activated. The conscious goal factor refers to whether participants had a conscious goal of cooperation or competition activated.

Each participant was seated at a computer in a private cubicle and signed an informed consent document prior to beginning the experiment. Participants in the no nonconscious goal condition first completed a filler task and participants in the nonconscious goal condition first completed a word creation task (Ferguson & Bargh, 2004). To activate the nonconscious achievement goal participants were given 15 letter tiles and asked to make as many words as possible. Participants were told that certain types of words amounted to different point values and were asked to record the words they formed on the computer. Participants were also told that one round of the game would take place for 5 minutes; they would then complete an unrelated computer task, and then play a second 5 minute round of the word game.

All participants moved to the next tasks after 5 minutes had passed, thus ending the nonconscious goal task or the filler task. All participants completed a word-completion task where some word fragments could be completed with achievement related words (e.g., go__). This task served as a manipulation check for the nonconscious goal manipulation; participants who received the nonconscious goal manipulation were expected to complete more word fragments with an achievement-related word than participants who did not receive the nonconscious goal manipulation.

Before learning about the impression formation target, Kevin, all participants received a conscious goal manipulation. Participants were lead to believe the target individual (Kevin) was currently in the laboratory and had provided statements about himself while they were completing the first task. In order to increase the believability that another participant was in the lab, research assistants were instructed to place their own backpack outside one of the closed cubicle doors. Research assistants also refrained from giving participants any indication they were alone in the session (e.g., research assistants were instructed not to say phrases such as, “I’ll go ahead and start you because you are the only participant today”).

The conscious goals utilized in the present research were the social motives of competition and cooperation. Research on cooperation and competition has demonstrated how different reactions are evoked under the two different mindsets. A cooperation task induces feelings of working together whereas competitive tasks create a situation involving rivalry and struggle (Kline, 1995). Research regarding competition and cooperation has also shown that people have higher levels of interpersonal enthusiasm when working under cooperative conditions rather than competitive (Tauer & Harackiewicz, 2004).

For the conscious goal manipulation, participants were randomly assigned to receive one of the following instructions:

Competition Condition: The person you will learn about is going to be your competition on a later task. You and this person will compete against each other on the task that will take place after the learning stage.

Cooperation Condition: The person you will learn about is going to be your partner on a later task. You and this person will cooperate with each other on the task that will take place after the learning stage.
After receiving this information, participants read behavior statements about the target individual, Kevin. Twenty behavioral statements were presented individually on the computer screen for an unlimited amount of time. Having participants read at their own pace allowed for the recording of reaction times for each type of behavioral statements. The presented behaviors consisted of 12 goal-irrelevant behaviors (e.g., “Kevin likes to watch movies”) and 8 goal-relevant behaviors (e.g., “Kevin is a Dean’s Scholar”). These statements were pretested for goal relevance with a separate sample (n=100). The goal-relevant behaviors were rated as more achievement related ($M=5.85$, $SD=.82$) than the goal-irrelevant behaviors ($M=1.77$, $SD=.75$), $t (99) = 41.14$, $p < .0001$.

After reading the behavior statements, participants completed the implicit and explicit measures. The order of the measures was counterbalanced. The implicit measure was an Implicit Association Test (IAT; Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998) requiring participants to pair the name Kevin (target) or other male names (nontarget) with positive or negative words. An IAT discrepancy score was calculated by subtracting the reaction time for the consistent trials (Kevin and positive) from the inconsistent trials (Kevin and negative). A larger positive score indicates a more positive implicit evaluation of Kevin.

The explicit measures were trait inference items related to positive interpersonal qualities (e.g., likeable, kind) and positive achievement qualities (e.g., intelligent, articulate). The ratings were made on Likert scales ranging from one to seven (e.g., very unlikeable to very likeable). The interpersonal subscale was computed by averaging eight variables (alpha=.81) and the achievement subscale was computed by averaging seven variables (alpha=.76). However, a total explicit attitude scale with 15 items also showed high internal consistency (alpha=.85).

**Results**

IAT discrepancy scores were computed by subtracting the mean response time for the consistent trials (i.e., Kevin and positive) from the mean response time for the inconsistent trials (i.e., Kevin and negative). Incorrect responses were excluded and extreme reaction times were recoded; responses slower than 2000 ms were scored as 2000 ms and responses faster than 200 ms were scored as 200 ms. The data from two participants were excluded from the analyses due to their IAT scores being identified as outliers; these participants had discrepancy scores more than three standard deviations from the sample mean. A final sample of 77 participants was used for the remaining analyses. No systematic effects emerged for participant sex¹ or measure order²; therefore, the reported results are collapsed across these variables. The results for the two explicit dimensions, interpersonal and achievement, did not differ from the results of the overall explicit measure, so for simplicity only the results for the overall explicit measure will be discussed.

Prior to conducting the analyses the scores from both the implicit and explicit measures were standardized in order to directly compare the effects of the goal manipulations on the two measurement types. The main analysis of interest was the 2 (nonconscious goal: goal vs. no goal) X 2 (conscious goal: cooperation vs. competition) X 2 (measure type: implicit vs. explicit) mixed-model analysis of variance (ANOVA) with the between-subjects factors of nonconscious goal and conscious goal and the within-subject factor of measure type.

It was predicted that a three-way interaction would occur suggesting that the effects of the two types of goals were different for the two types of measures. However, no effects related to the central hypotheses were significant. The predicted three-way interaction was not significant, $F (1, 73) = .01$, $p = .90$ (see Table 1). Further, I examined the separate two-way
interactions of nonconscious goal X conscious goal for both the implicit and explicit measures, but these interactions were also nonsignificant, \( p = .80 \) and \( p = .55 \), respectively. No main effects of nonconscious or conscious goal were significant for the implicit and explicit measures, all \( ps > .40 \). I also examined the hypothesized interaction contrast: The discrepancy between the implicit and explicit evaluations for participants in the nonconscious goal—competitive conscious goal condition was predicted to be different than the other conditions (see Figure 1; Keppel & Wickens, 2004). However, the interaction contrast comparing the nonconscious goal—competitive conscious goal condition to the other three conscious/nonconscious goal conditions across measures was not significant, \( F (1, 73) = 0, p = .96 \).

Prior to conducting an alternative analysis, I computed the number of goal-related words completed by all participants on the word-completion task and used a median split to divide the participants into high and low goal-related words completed. I viewed this factor as an alternative to using the nonconscious goal factor, due to the awareness of possible limitations associated with the nonconscious goal manipulation. Five participants who completed the nonconscious goal manipulation failed to complete any goal words in the subsequent task, thus demonstrating that some participants did not have a nonconscious goal activated. I felt that participants high in goal-related word completion could be viewed as having a nonconscious goal of achievement activated, whereas those low in goal-related word completion did not have a nonconscious goal of achievement, regardless of whether they completed the nonconscious goal manipulation.

I conducted a 2 (goal-related words: high vs. low) X 2 (conscious goal: cooperation vs. competition) X 2 (measure type: implicit vs. explicit) mixed-model analysis of variance (ANOVA) with the between-subjects factors of goal-related words and conscious goal and the within-subject factor of measure type. I predicted that evaluations on the implicit and explicit measures would differ based on goal-related words completed and the conscious goal manipulation. The three-way interaction \( F (1, 73) = .06, p = .80 \) was not significant. The two-way interactions of goal-related words X conscious goal for the implicit and explicit measures also failed to reach significance, \( p = .58 \) and \( p = .67 \), respectively. No main effects of goal-related words or conscious goal were significant for the implicit and explicit measures, all \( ps > .40 \). I also examined an interaction contrast: the discrepancy between the implicit and explicit evaluations for participants in the high goal-related words—competitive conscious goal condition was compared to the other conditions. However, this interaction contrast was not significant, \( F (1, 73) = .51, p = .48 \).

**Discussion**

The goal of this research was to demonstrate the influence of simultaneous conscious and nonconscious goal activation on implicit and explicit attitudes, illustrating how goal processes can be considered in a dual-process framework. Previous research has illustrated that nonconscious goals influence the implicit evaluations of goal-related objects (Ferguson & Bargh, 2004). In this research I hoped to expand on past research by exploring how simultaneously holding both a nonconscious and conscious goal influences evaluations. Further, this research attempted to demonstrate the importance of considering nonconscious and conscious goals in light of a dual-process model. However, the results of the current research do not clearly demonstrate the combined influence of a nonconscious and conscious goal on impression
formation. This research did not find any differences for implicit or explicit evaluations of a target regardless of the activated goals, nonconscious or conscious.

The research, although unsuccessful, is considered the first step in investigating multiple important questions remaining unstudied within the goal literature. The question of how nonconscious and conscious goals combine to influence the impressions people form of other people remains to be answered. This research question is important due to the implications for increasing the understanding of how goals influence both attitudes and behaviors. The current research attempted to demonstrate the combined influence of nonconscious and conscious goals on evaluations, but limitations exist in regards to the goal manipulations and experimental design.

Limitations

First, the goal manipulations utilized in the present research may have contributed to the null results. In reference to the conscious goal, no pretesting occurred prior to the experiment, and thus it is possible that the manipulation was insufficient. No differences were detected between the competitive and cooperative conditions, suggesting that these manipulations did not differentially influence the implicit or explicit evaluations. In the future these manipulations should be pretested to ensure that they are activating the appropriate conscious goal.

The nonconscious goal manipulation may have contributed to the null results as well. First, the manipulation failed to activate a nonconscious goal in multiple participants; five participants in the nonconscious goal condition did not show any accessibility of achievement constructs in the word completion task. Second, it is possible that for at least some participants, a conscious rather than nonconscious goal was activated by the nonconscious goal manipulation. The nonconscious goal manipulation has successfully been used in the past (Ferguson & Bargh, 2004), but the instructions emphasize that points are earned based on the number of words completed; these instructions might be activating a conscious rather than nonconscious goal in participants. The complications of the nonconscious goal manipulation are general conceptual concerns; if I cannot say with confidence that the simultaneous activation of a nonconscious and conscious goal is occurring, it is impossible to answer the question of how the goals operate in a dual-process manner. In the future, nonconscious goal manipulations used in previous research that are arguably more nonconscious in nature than the manipulation in the present research, such as word-search and sentence unscrambling tasks (Bargh & Chartrand, 1999; Bargh, Gollwitzer, Lee-Chai, Barndollar, & Trotschel, 2001), should be utilized.

Second, aspects of the experimental design were flawed; no counterbalancing of the two goals occurred and a nonconscious goal only condition did not exist. Without counterbalancing the activation of the two types of goal it is possible that the evaluations were based entirely on the most recent goal (i.e. the conscious goal). Counterbalancing the activation of the two goals may be irrelevant; if the two types of goals can be held simultaneously and influence processes differently the order of activation may not matter for evaluations. However, counterbalancing goal activation may matter if the two types of goals interact in different ways. The APE model suggests that propositions utilize associations; thus, the conscious goal may utilize the nonconscious goal. Associations are less influenced by propositions; thus, the nonconscious goal may not utilize the conscious goal. Thus, activating the nonconscious goal prior to the conscious goal could result in evaluations being influenced by both goals; whereas activating the conscious goal prior to the nonconscious goal may result in distinct evaluations.
The absence of a nonconscious goal only condition prevents the comparison of evaluations from participants with both types of goals to participants with only a nonconscious goal. The present research included conscious goal only conditions; these conditions provided baselines for comparisons in order to identify how evaluations based only on conscious goals were different from evaluations based on both types of goals. A similar baseline is necessary for nonconscious goals; by including a nonconscious goal only condition it is possible to see the additive or subtractive effects of conscious goals on implicit and explicit evaluations.

**Future Directions**

The current research included various flaws, but the purpose of the research—exploring the dual-process nature of goals—remains a critical question. Various future directions exist for furthering the understanding of how nonconscious and conscious goals can be thought of in terms of a dual-process model. From the present research, a relatively straightforward follow-up is thinking about how a target negatively related to the goal (e.g., a target with low achievement motivation) is evaluated based on both conscious and nonconscious goal manipulations. It is predicted that a target negatively related to a nonconscious goal would be a hindrance to goal pursuit, thus resulting in a negative implicit evaluation. However, a target negatively related to a goal of achievement could be viewed as a preferred partner in a competitive situation, thus leading to a positive explicit evaluation. As predicted in the present research, a discrepancy between the implicit and explicit evaluations would be expected for the target. This predicted discrepancy would demonstrate the dual-process nature of goals; nonconscious and conscious goals influence different processes, thus resulting in different impressions.

Another future direction is considering the complementarity of the nonconscious goal and conscious goal. For instance, two goals might fit together in a way that pursuing one allows for the pursuit of the other, or the two goals might be conflicting, such that pursuing one does not allow for the pursuit of the other. In the present research, the nonconscious goal of achievement and the conscious goal of cooperation/competition were anticipated to fit together; however, other situations could exist where the two types of goals are less complementary. For instance, a nonconscious goal of affiliation and a conscious goal of social rejection could co-occur. It is expected that in situations where the goals are conflicting an even greater discrepancy between the implicit and explicit evaluations would result.

Considering the complementary and conflicting nature of nonconscious and conscious goals is another method of exploring the dual-process nature of goals. If goals are entirely unrelated processes, even in instances where the two goals are competing, the subsequent evaluations based on each type of goal should not be influenced by the other goal. However, if the two processes are intertwined in some fashion, the subsequent evaluations should be based on a combination of the two types of goals.

Another future direction is considering how the combination of a nonconscious goal and conscious goal influences the interpretation of ambiguous behavior by a target. Is ambiguous behavior interpreted in line with the nonconscious goal, conscious goal, or some combination of the two goals? Previous research has demonstrated that people interpret ambiguous behavior in terms of primed concepts and stereotypes (Devine, 1989; Higgins, Rholes, & Jones, 1977). It is predicted that in situations of only a nonconscious goal or conscious goal, ambiguous behavior would be interpreted in line with the active goal. Exploring how ambiguous behavior would be interpreted in situations with both a nonconscious and conscious goal activated would add to the understanding of how nonconscious and conscious goals operate in a dual-process manner. For
example, investigating this question may demonstrate which process—nonconscious or conscious goal pursuit—is more powerful.

As suggested, numerous avenues for future research exist based on the basic question explored in this research: that is, how the simultaneous activation of a nonconscious and conscious goal influences implicit and explicit impressions. Previous research has demonstrated the influence of both conscious and nonconscious goals on evaluations; however, little work has considered the combination of the two goals. It is important to understand not only how the combined influence of nonconscious and conscious goals influence evaluations, but also how the two types of goals influence different (or the same) processes. I have suggested that nonconscious and conscious goals can be considered in terms of a dual-process model, where the two types of goals may lead to different evaluations of targets. Future research should continue to explore how nonconscious and conscious goals operate in a dual-process manner and the different implications for attitudes and behaviors that occur as a result of these different types of processing.
References


relationships. In K. D. Vohs & E. J. Finkel (Eds.), *Self and relationships: Connecting intrapersonal and interpersonal processes* (pp. 387-406). New York: Guilford Press.


Footnotes

1. A marginal main effect of participant sex occurred for the implicit measure, $F(1, 69) = 3.31, p = .07$. Female participants ($M=134.95, SD=161.80$) were more positive toward the target than male participants ($M=70.99, SD=98.21$). A marginal interaction of participant sex X conscious goal occurred for the explicit measure, $F(1, 69)=3.60, p = .06$. Under cooperation, female participants ($M=5.44, SD=.54$) were similar to male participants ($M=5.67, SD=.83$); under competition, female participants ($M=5.88, SD=.53$) were more positive than male participants ($M=5.31, SD=.76$).

2. A three-way interaction of conscious goal X nonconscious goal X measure order occurred for the explicit measure, $F(1, 69)=3.92, p = .052$. Decomposing this interaction within measure order resulted in no significant effects.
Table 1

*Implicit and Explicit Evaluations of Target by Goals*

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<td>131.35</td>
<td>5.65</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>68.61</td>
<td>132.69</td>
<td>5.60</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Nonconscious Goal</td>
<td></td>
<td>108.10</td>
<td>145.82</td>
<td>5.47</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>90.86</td>
<td>96.47</td>
<td>5.63</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Unstandardized means are given. Higher numbers on both the implicit and explicit measures indicate greater positivity.
Figure 1. Predicted Implicit and Explicit Evaluations of Target by Conscious and Nonconscious Goal Manipulations
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