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Uncovering the Multifaceted-Self in the Domain of Negative Traits: On the Muted Expression of Negative Self-Knowledge

Wing-Yee Cheung[1], Tim Wildschut[1], Constantine Sedikides[1], and Brad Pinter[2]

Abstract

The multifaceted-self effect is the ascription of more traits to self than others. Consensus is that this effect occurs for positive, but not negative, traits. We propose that the effect also occurs for negative traits when they can be endorsed with low intensity ("I am a little bit lazy"), thereby circumventing self-protection concerns. In Experiment 1, the multifaceted-self effect occurred for positive, but not negative, traits on a high-intensity trait-endorsement measure. However, it occurred irrespective of trait valence on a low-intensity trait-endorsement measure. In Experiment 2, the multifaceted-self effect occurred for positive, but not negative, traits on a strong trait-endorsement measure. However, it occurred irrespective of trait valence on a diminuted trait-endorsement measure—a finding conceptually replicated in Experiment 3. In Experiment 4, participants spontaneously adopted diminutive terms ("a little bit") when describing their negative traits. Individuals reconcile negative self-knowledge with self-protection concerns by expressing it in muted terms.

Keywords

self, self-knowledge, multifaceted-self, self-enhancement, self-protection

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People acknowledge having more personality traits than others, a phenomenon labeled the multifaceted-self effect (Sande, 1990). But do they acknowledge having more positive traits only? How about negative traits? These questions have stimulated debate and research since the 1970s. Scholarly consensus has been built around the notion that the multifaceted-self effect should be redefined as involving only positive traits. This consensus reverberates both in social psychology textbooks (e.g., Martin, Carlson, & Buskist, 2010) and Handbook chapters (e.g., Kernis & Goldman, 2003). The multifaceted-self effect, then, is thought to reflect self-enhancement motivation (as people over-utilize their positive traits in sculpting their self-image; Alicke, Guenther, & Zell, 2012) and self-protection motivation (as people unacknowledge or conceal their negative traits; Sedikides, 2012).

We argue that this consensus should be revisited. The consensus has neglected intricacies in the explicit admission of self-negativity and has been confounded by methodology that focuses merely on polarization (i.e., how strongly one endorses contrasting personality traits). We propose, alternatively, that people possess elaborate self-knowledge regarding *both* positive and negative traits. However, acknowledgment of negative traits threatens self-positivity and, therefore, only transpires when self-enhancement/self-protection concerns can be circumvented. We introduce a broader methodological approach, examining the multifaceted-self with divergent conceptualizations and measurements. In particular, we test how participants endorse traits at different polarity levels, from the extreme (e.g., very lazy) to the diminuted (e.g., a little bit lazy). This approach has the potential to uncover how individuals reconcile the potent self-enhancement/self-protection motives with the self-assessment (whereby people are motivated to form accurate self-views; Trope, 1986) and self-verification (whereby people are motivated to confirm existing self-views; Swann & Buhrmester, 2012) motives, which underlie admissions of self-negativity.

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Is the Self Trait-Free or Multifaceted?

Early approaches to the question of whether the self is trait-free or multifaceted maintained that individuals view themselves as relatively trait-free and perceive their behavior as caused by situational factors, whereas they view others as possessing many traits and perceive their behavior as caused by dispositional factors (Jones, 1976; Jones & Nisbett, 1971; Kelley & Michela, 1980; Nisbett & Ross, 1980; Watson, 1982). This viewpoint was supported in an influential study by Nisbett, Caputo, Legant, and Marecek (1973). They presented participants with 20 bipolar trait pairs and instructed them to indicate whether each of five persons (themselves and four others) was best described by a trait adjective, its polar opposite, or the phrase "depends on the situation." Participants selected more frequently the "depends on the situation" option for themselves than for others. Nisbett et al. interpreted the results as showing that people view others as "possessing more personality traits" (p. 160) than they possess themselves. Jones and Nisbett (1971) maintained that the belief that others possess more personality traits stems from people's greater familiarity with variability in their own behavior than in others' behavior. This line of research and theorizing concluded that the self is relatively trait-free.

The conclusion was challenged by Monson, Tanke, and Lund (1980). They proposed an alternative reason why participants in Nisbett et al.'s (1973) experiment selected the "depends on the situation" option more frequently for themselves than for others: Participants thought they possessed both traits rather than neither trait. Given that the question format did not allow participants to endorse both traits, they could indicate possession of both traits only by selecting the "depends on the situation" option. Monson et al. put this alternative hypothesis to test. They presented participants with the 40 separate traits that had comprised the original Nisbett et al. 20 trait pairs. They instructed participants to check all traits that applied to them and, on a separate sheet, all traits that applied to an acquaintance of the same sex. Participants endorsed a higher number of traits for themselves than for an acquaintance.

Sande, Goethals, and Radloff (1988; see also Sande, 1990) extended this work, using Nisbett et al.'s (1973) bipolar trait pairs with minor modifications. In Experiment 1, approximately half of participants indicated the extent to which they and an acquaintance possessed both traits of a bipolar trait pair, with each trait being rated separately (e.g., quiet, talkative). The remaining participants rated themselves and an acquaintance on several bipolar trait scales (e.g., quiet–talkative) instead of on each trait separately. Consistent with Monson et al.'s (1980) findings, the first set of participants were more likely to attribute both traits of bipolar trait pairs to themselves than to an acquaintance. However, the second set of participants rated themselves closer to the midpoint of the bipolar trait scales than an acquaintance. According to Sande et al., the latter results pattern showed that participants "resolved the dilemma of not being able to claim both traits by rating themselves close to the midpoint of the scale" (p. 14). In each of Sande et al.'s follow-up experiments (Experiments 2-4), participants indicated for several persons (themselves and others), which of four options best fit each person: a trait term, its polar opposite, both, or neither. Participants were more likely to select the "both" option for themselves than for others.[1] Sande et al. asserted, "Traits are not simply things that other people have. We have them too, and in greater number than other people do" (p. 20). This line of research and theorizing concluded that the self is multifaceted rather than trait-free.

The Self-Enhancement/Self-Protection Confound

How can the multifaceted-self effect be explained? It is possible that the effect is rooted in people's greater familiarity with variability in their own than in others' behavior (Andersen & Ross, 1984; Jones & Nisbett, 1971; McGuire & McGuire, 1986; Prentice, 1990; Sande, Goethals, & Radloff, 1988). If so, we would expect for the effect to manifest not only on positive but also on negative traits. As Locke and Horowitz (1997) pointed out, however, the traits used in all early studies were positively valenced. Hence, describing the self as more multifaceted than others was confounded with describing the self as more positive than others. Consider, for instance, the bipolar trait dimension energetic–relaxed. Although "energetic" and "relaxed" are contrasting traits, both are positively valenced. Suppose that Lisa thinks that she is both extremely energetic and relaxed, whereas she believes that Susan is extremely energetic but not relaxed. Because the traits "energetic" and "relaxed" are both positive, Lisa's response may indicate that she perceives herself as more multifaceted than Susan, that she has a more positive perception of herself than of Susan, or both.

To address this valence confound, Locke (2002; Locke & Horowitz, 1997) replicated Sande et al.'s (1988) research using both positively and negatively valenced traits. Locke used sets of 10 positive contrasting traits (e.g., energetic–relaxed) and 10 negative contrasting traits (e.g., stingy–wasteful). As in Sande et al., participants described themselves or an acquaintance by rating separately each of the 40 traits that comprised the 20 trait pairs. Locke then created sum scores by adding the separate ratings for contrasting traits. In the case of positive trait pairs, these sum scores were higher for ratings of the self (compared with ratings of an acquaintance). However, in the case of negative trait pairs, the sum scores were not higher for ratings of the self (compared with ratings on an acquaintance). The results suggested that "people describe themselves as more multifaceted than others only to the extent that it enhances their self-image" (Locke & Horowitz, 1997, p. 419). This quote captures succinctly the state of the multifaceted-self debate (e.g., Kernis

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& Goldman, 2003; Martin et al., 2010) before it entered a dormant state. The consensus is that the multifaceted-self effect reflects self-enhancement/self-protection motivation.

Assuaging Threat

The debate on the multifaceted-self effect revolves around the question of which self-evaluation motive influences self-description under what circumstances. Initially, scholars maintained that people view themselves as relatively trait-free (Jones & Nisbett, 1971; Monson et al., 1980; Sande et al., 1988). Eventually, research established that people ascribe more positive, but not more negative, traits to themselves than to others: People perceive themselves as multifaceted in the domain of positive traits but not in the domain of negative traits (Locke, 2002; Locke & Horowitz, 1997). This pattern is consistent with the action of the self-enhancement motive, which drives positivity in self-description, and the self-protection motive, which drives avoidance of negativity in self-description (Alicke et al., 2012; Sedikides, 2012).

Why do people not perceive themselves as multifaceted in the domain of negative traits? Acknowledging possession of negative traits would pose a prima facie threat to one's self-image (assuming one's self-image is at least somewhat positive, as is typically the case in non-clinical samples). Thus, a dilemma arises that requires one to negotiate the desire to avoid admission of negative traits with the knowledge of having them (Gregg, Sedikides, & Gebauer, 2011). Protecting oneself is of paramount importance and more imperative than enhancing oneself (Roese & Olson, 2007). For example, people regard themselves as more superior to others in the domain of lacking vices than in the domain of having virtues (Hoorens, 1996), and perceptions of having avoided one's undesired self predict psychological well-being better than perceptions of having attained one's ideal self (Ogilvie, 1987). Given the strength of the self-protection (and self-enhancement) motive, when attempting to reconcile the desire to disavow negative traits with the knowledge of possessing them, concern for self-protection/self-enhancement would often prevail over the self-assessment and self-verification motives that underlie admissions of self-negativity (Sedikides, 1993; Sedikides & Strube, 1997; Trope, 1986). What are the conditions, though, that would potentiate effective action of these latter motives? We argue that softening the blow of negative trait admission constitutes such a condition, and that this becomes evident when we consider methodological issues.

Reconceptualizing the Multifaceted-Self: Muted Expression of Negative Self-Knowledge

We contend that the consensus surrounding the multifaceted-self effect is the result of methodological limitations, and that the theoretical and empirical landscape changes when these limitations are addressed. We are in agreement with Jones and Nisbett's (1971) basic idea that people are more familiar with variability in their own behavior than with variability in the behavior of others, as well as the consensus in the literature that, as a result, people's self-views are more multifaceted than their views of others. However, where our perspective differs from the literature concerns negative traits.

We argue that, in fact, multifaceted self-views generalize to the domain of negative traits. But how can the self negotiate the desire to disavow negative traits with the knowledge of having them? We propose that people can solve this conundrum via the muted or moderate admission of negative traits. Muted, as opposed to full-throated, admission of negative traits softens the blow of negative self-knowledge. We further propose that, whereas classic methodologies for assessing the multifaceted-self are insensitive to muted admissions of negativity, simple modifications can address these methodological limitations and, by so doing, uncover the multifaceted-self in the domain of negative traits. We tested these ideas in four experiments.

Overview

We aimed to deepen understanding of the multifaceted-self and demonstrate its presence in the domain of negative traits. In Experiment 1, we followed Locke's (2002, Study 1) methodology whereby participants rate traits comprising contrasting pairs (e.g., energetic, relaxed). Locke concluded that the multifaceted-self is confined to the domain of positive traits. This conclusion was based on sum scores across ratings of contrasting traits (e.g., energetic, relaxed). In the case of positive (but not negative) trait pairs, sum scores were higher for ratings of the self (compared with ratings of an acquaintance). This conceptualization of the multifaceted-self, which we label *polarization*, focuses on the combined intensity with which a person endorses contrasting traits. For instance, suppose that Lisa believes that she is both extremely energetic and relaxed, whereas she thinks that Susan is moderately energetic and relaxed. Assuming the classic perspective on the multifaceted-self, one would conclude that Lisa's self-view is more multifaceted (i.e., more polarized) than her view of Susan.

In Experiment 1, we introduced another way of conceptualizing the multifaceted-self by also considering the *balance* of self-views (relative to views of others). Balance relates to how evenly contrasting traits are endorsed; the more evenly one endorses contrasting traits, the more balanced and, hence, multifaceted one's perceptions of a target are. A measure of balance is obtained readily by calculating the absolute difference between ratings of contrasting traits, with a smaller absolute difference indicating greater balance. Accordingly, the multifaceted-self effect is manifested by smaller difference scores (i.e., greater balance) for self-ratings than for ratings of another person. In the example above,

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Lisa's self-view is balanced, because she believes that she is both extremely energetic and relaxed (i.e., the opposing trait terms are endorsed evenly—"extremely"). Lisa's view of Susan is also balanced, however, because she perceives Susan to be both moderately energetic and relaxed (i.e., the opposing trait terms are endorsed evenly—"moderately"). Thus, the question whether Lisa's self-view is more multifaceted than her view of Susan does not have a simple answer; it depends on whether one conceptualizes multifacetedness in terms of polarization or balance. Whereas Lisa's self-view is more polarized than her view of Susan, it is not more balanced.

We propose that the balance measure is sensitive to the muted expression of negative self-knowledge and, hence, can uncover the multifaceted-self in the domain of negative traits. For example, Lisa may recognize that she is both submissive and domineering, but self-protection concerns prevent a full-throated admission. Nonetheless, she may express this negative self-knowledge through a muted admission to both negative traits, thereby reconciling the self-protection motive with motives that underlie admissions of self-negativity (i.e., self-assessment and self-verification). In this case, balance is high whereas polarization is not. We expected that sum scores (assessing polarization) would reveal self-ratings to be more multifaceted than ratings of an acquaintance in the domain of positive traits only (replicating Locke, 2002). We further expected that difference scores (assessing balance) would uncover the multifaceted-self in the domain of negative traits as well. Specifically, we predicted that difference scores would be smaller for self-ratings than for ratings of an acquaintance, irrespective of trait valence.

In Experiment 2, we followed the Sande et al. (1988) methodology, whereby participants are instructed to choose for themselves and other stimulus persons (in this case an acquaintance) the option that best fits the stimulus person: a trait term, its polar opposite, both, or neither (e.g., "energetic," "relaxed," "both," or "neither"). Using positively valenced trait pairs, Sande et al. found that participants more frequently selected the "both" option for themselves than for others. We propose that the "both" option represents a full-throated endorsement of trait pairs that leaves no room for the muted endorsement of the traits. To create such room, we modified Sande et al.'s methodology. We replaced the "both" option with "a little bit of both" and prefixed the trait terms with the phrase "a little bit" (e.g., "a little bit energetic," "a little bit relaxed," "a little bit of both," or "neither"). We expected that Sande et al.'s standard methodology would detect the multifaceted-self in the domain of positive traits only, but that the modified methodology would uncover the multifaceted-self irrespective of trait valence.

In Experiment 3, we extended our research by comparing self-perceptions to perceptions of a good friend (rather than an acquaintance, as in Experiments 1-2). By so doing, we offered a rigorous test of the multifaceted-self effect. Other persons are perceived as more multifaceted to the extent that they are familiar (compared with unfamiliar) and liked (compared with disliked; Locke, 2002; Locke & Horowitz, 1997; Sande et al., 1988), and both familiarity and liking should be higher for a good friend than for an acquaintance. Replicating the modified methodology of Experiment 2, which created room for the muted endorsement of traits, we expected that perceptions of the self would be more multifaceted than perceptions of a good friend, irrespective of trait valence.

Finally, in Experiment 4, we analyzed participant-generated descriptions of their own and an acquaintance's positive and negative personality traits. We examined whether people spontaneously consider themselves as having more positive *and* negative traits than an acquaintance, and whether they use more diminutive words (e.g., "a little," "a bit," "somewhat") when describing their own negative traits, manifesting the muted expression of negative self-knowledge.

Experiment 1

Experiment 1 represented our foray into the interplay of self-motives. We followed Locke's (2002, Study 1) methodology to replicate the classic multifaceted-self effect that manifests only via positive traits. Specifically, we calculated the sum across ratings of contrasting traits, which is sensitive to polarization of self- (and other) views. In addition, we computed the difference between ratings of contrasting traits. This measure reflects the extent to which contrasting traits are endorsed evenly and is sensitive to balance of self- (and other) views.

We hypothesized that the polarization measure (sum) would replicate the classic pattern, whereby the multifaceted-self effect (as manifested in larger sums for self- compared with other-ratings) emerges on positive traits only; this measure would evince the operation of self-enhancement/self-protection. In contrast, the balance measure (difference) would uncover the multifaceted-self effect (as manifested in smaller difference scores for self- compared with other-ratings) irrespective of trait valence; this measure would evince the increasingly potent action of motives that underlie admissions of self-negativity.

Method

Participants and design. Participants were 220 University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill undergraduate volunteers (159 women, 61 men) ranging in age from 17 to 22 years (M = 18.73, SD = 0.87).

We randomly assigned them to the conditions of a 2 (Target: self, other) × 2 (Valence: positive traits, negative traits) between-subjects design.

Procedure and materials. We seated participants at desks separated by partitions and presented them with a single booklet containing all materials. We used 14 contrasting trait pairs, 7 positive and 7 negative. Pilot testing established that

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Table 1. Sum and Difference Scores as a Function of Target and Valence in Experiment 1.

	Trait valence							
	Positive				Negative			
	Self		Acquaintance		Self		Acquaintance	
Measure	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Sum	9.33	0.96	8.81	1.05	6.96	0.95	7.09	1.33
Difference	1.92	0.61	2.18	0.78	2.10	0.57	2.28	0.96

participants (a) rated contrasting traits as opposites, (b) rated positive traits as positive and negative traits as negative, and (c) rated contrasting traits as similar in valence (i.e., equally positive or equally negative). The positive trait pairs were energetic, relaxed; serious, playful; calm, emotionally expressive; orderly, spontaneous; collected, passionate; dignified, casual; and future-oriented, present-oriented. The negative trait pairs were obsessed, unfocused; stingy, wasteful; naïve, shrewd; submissive, domineering; lazy, hasty; gullible suspicious; and arrogant, sheepish. Each trait was rated separately (14 positive traits or 14 negative traits). Participants rated the descriptiveness of either positive or negative traits for either themselves or an acquaintance (1 = *does not describe me [my acquaintance] at all*, 7 = *describes me [my acquaintance] very well*). We instructed participants who rated an acquaintance to "please call to mind a specific person of the same sex that you know fairly well but who is not a close friend" (following Sande et al., 1988). We then instructed these participants to write down the initials of the acquaintance they had brought to mind.

Sum. We calculated the sum variable by summing across ratings of contrasting traits. We first computed the sum for each pair of contrasting traits. Then, we averaged across all seven contrasting trait pairs (M = 8.05, SD = 1.50). This variable captures how strongly a person endorses contrasting traits (i.e., polarization).

Difference. We calculated the difference variable by taking the absolute difference between ratings of contrasting traits. We first computed the difference for each pair of contrasting traits. We then averaged across all seven contrasting trait pairs (M = 2.12, SD = 0.75). This variable captures how evenly a person endorses contrasting traits (i.e., balance). Consistent with the idea that they represent distinct conceptualizations of multifacetedness, difference and sum scores were uncorrelated, $r(220) = -.05$, $p = .46$.

Results

Sum. We entered the sum score into a Target × Valence ANOVA (Table 1). The target main effect was not significant, $F(1, 216) = 1.75$, $p = .19$, $\eta_p^2 = .008$. However, the valence main effect was significant, $F(1, 216) = 194.15$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .47$, indicating higher sum scores (i.e., greater polarization) for ratings of positive (M = 9.07, SD = 1.04) than negative (M = 7.03, SD = 1.16) traits. More important, this main effect was qualified by the Target × Valence interaction, $F(1, 216) = 4.96$, $p = .03$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$. Simple effects analyses indicated that, for positive traits, sum scores were higher for self-ratings (M = 9.33, SD = 0.96) than other-ratings (M = 8.81, SD = 1.05), $F(1, 216) = 6.29$, $p = .01$. For negative traits, self-ratings (M = 6.96, SD = 0.95) and other-ratings (M = 7.09, SD = 1.33) did not differ significantly, $F(1, 216) = 0.41$, $p = .52$. Overall, participants ascribed contrasting positive (but not negative) traits to themselves more strongly than to others. This pattern replicates past research (Locke, 2002) and is consistent with the operation of the self-enhancement/self-protection motives.

Difference. We entered the difference score into a Target × Valence ANOVA (Table 1). The Valence main effect was not significant, $F(1, 216) = 1.83$, $p = .18$, $\eta_p^2 = .008$, but the target main effect was so, $F(1, 216) = 4.62$, $p = .03$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$. As indicated by smaller difference scores, self-ratings (M = 2.01, SD = 0.60) were more balanced than were other-ratings (M = 2.23, SD = 0.87). This main effect was not qualified by trait valence; the Target × Valence interaction was not significant, $F(1, 216) = 0.14$, $p = .71$, $\eta_p^2 = .001$. In terms of balance, the multifaceted-self is manifested irrespective of trait valence. This pattern is consistent with the increasing potency of motives that underlie admissions of self-negativity.[2]

Discussion

The results replicated previous findings but, more important, revealed that the multifaceted-self only conditionally manifests via positive traits. As hypothesized, a measure relevant to polarization (sum) replicated Locke's (2002) findings that the self is more multifaceted on positive traits only, thus suggesting the operation of self-enhancement/self-protection. It is self-enhancing to state that positive traits "describe me very well" in the trait-endorsement task. However, it is threatening to state that negative traits "describe me very well." In the case of the polarization

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measure, self-enhancement/self-protection concerns leave no room for admissions of self-negativity (Gregg, Hepper, & Sedikides, 2011).

Also as hypothesized, the balance measure (difference) extended Locke's (2002) findings by uncovering the multifaceted-self irrespective of trait valence. This is consistent with the idea that people can reconcile the desire to disavow negative traits with the knowledge of possessing them via the muted or moderate admission of negative traits. Muted, as opposed to full-throated, admission of negative traits softens the blow of negative self-knowledge. Difference scores are sensitive to the muted expression of negative self-knowledge and, hence, can uncover the multifaceted-self in the domain of negative, as well as positive, traits. We built on these findings to examine the expression of the multifaceted-self effect when we create room for the muted expression of negative self-knowledge.

Experiment 2

In Experiment 2, we aimed to test the multifaceted-self in a context that allows for the muted or moderate endorsement of traits. To do so, we revisited Sande et al.'s (1988) work. In their studies, participants indicated for a variety of stimulus persons (including the self), which of four options best fit the stimulus person: a trait term, its polar opposite, both, or neither. In this design, the "both" option reflects the multifaceted-self, because participants admit having both of the opposite traits. However, admitting having both traits implies full endorsement of both traits and leaves no room for the muted or moderate endorsement of the traits. To address this, we modified Sande et al.'s methodology by replacing the "both" option with "a little bit of both" and prefixing the trait terms with the phrase "a little bit" (e.g., "a little bit energetic," "a little bit relaxed," "a little bit of both," or "neither"). In addition, unlike Sande et al.'s work, which mainly tested socially desirable traits, we incorporated both positive and negative traits. We expected that Sande et al.'s standard methodology would detect the multifaceted-self in the domain of positive traits only. This pattern will be consistent with the predominant influence of the self-enhancement/self-protection motives. In contrast, the modified methodology would uncover the multifaceted-self in the domain of negative traits as well. That is, when given the option of muted trait endorsement, participants will also admit having more negative traits than others. This pattern will be consistent with the increasing influence of motives that underlie admissions of self-negativity.

Another aim of Experiment 2 was to explore the cross-culturality of the multifaceted-self effect. Research so far has been conducted in individualistic cultures (Canada, United States). We sought to examine whether the self is also perceived as multifaceted in collectivistic culture. We therefore included samples from both the United States and India.

Pilot Study

We began by conducting a pilot study to test whether the full admission of negative traits indeed entails more threat than the muted admission of such traits. We recruited 96 U.S. participants (62 women, 33 men) ranging in age from 18 to 73 years (M = 33.79, SD = 13.00) via Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk). All participants had a track record of 95% or better job acceptance rate and were paid $ 0.10 for study completion. MTurk data quality is comparable with online and offline methods of participants recruitment (Paolacci, Chandler, & Ipeirotis, 2010). We randomly allocated participants to the full- or muted-admission conditions. Participants viewed a list of 14 negative traits (see Experiment 1) and indicated how threatened they would feel in admitting possession of each trait (1 = *not threatened at all*, 7 = *very threatened*). In the full-admission condition, we presented each trait in the form: "Admitting to having the trait [insert trait] makes me feel. . . ." In the muted-admission condition, we prefixed the phrase "a little bit" to each trait and, thus, presented each trait in the form: "Admitting to having a little bit of the trait [insert trait] makes me feel. . . ." We averaged threat ratings across the 14 negative traits ($\alpha = .83$, $M = 4.27$, SD = 0.99). Threat ratings were significantly higher in the full-admission (M = 4.57, SD = 0.94) than in the muted-admission ($M = 3.90$, $SD = 0.99$) condition, $F(1, 94) = 10.99$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .11$. Furthermore, one-sample t tests indicated that, whereas threat ratings in the full-admission condition were above the scale midpoint (4), $t(47) = 4.60$, $p < .001$, threat ratings in the muted-admission condition were not, $t(47) = -0.36$, $p = .72$. In all, whereas participants considered even muted admissions of negative self-knowledge moderately threatening (i.e., ratings around scale midpoint), they found full-throated admissions more threatening still.

Method

Participants and design. We recruited 449 participants (227 men, 222 women) ranging in age from 16 to 79 years (M = 31.22, SD = 10.85) via MTurk. Two hundred twenty-five participants were from the United States and 224 were from India. All participants had a track record of a 95% or better job acceptance rate and were paid $0.10. We randomly assigned them to the conditions of a 2 (Target: self, other) × 2 (Valence: positive traits, negative traits) × 2 (Methodology: standard, muted expression) between-subjects design.

Procedure and materials. Participants completed materials online. We used the same 14 pairs of contrasting traits (7 positive pairs, 7 negative pairs) as in Experiment 1. Following the standard methodology (Sande et al., 1988, Studies 2-4), participants indicated which of four options best described a target person: a trait term, its polar opposite, both, or neither (e.g., "energetic," "relaxed," "both," or "neither"). The muted-expression methodology entailed that we

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Table 2. Multifacetedness Scores as a Function of Target, Valence, and Methodology in Experiment 2.

	Methodology							
	Standard				Muted expression			
	Positive traits		Negative traits		Positive traits		Negative traits	
Target	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Self	2.93	1.50	0.79	1.11	3.10	1.97	2.13	1.71
Acquaintance	2.00	1.73	0.89	1.37	2.73	1.94	1.54	1.72

replaced the "both" option with "a little bit of both" and prefixed the trait terms with the phrase "a little bit" (e.g., "a little bit energetic," "a little bit relaxed," "a little bit of both," or "neither"). Participants made these judgments for either themselves (self target) or an acquaintance (acquaintance target) and for either seven positive traits pairs (positive valence) or seven negative traits pairs (negative valence). Our focal dependent variable was the number of times participants selected the "both" (in the standard condition) and "a little bit of both" (in the muted-expression condition) option (multifacetedness). The theoretical range of this variable is 0 to 7 ($M = 1.95$, $SD = 1.84$).

Results

We entered the multifacetedness score into a Target × Valence × Methodology ANOVA (Table 2). Preliminary analyses revealed no gender or country of residence effects, and we thus excluded these variables from further analyses. A significant target main effect, $F(1, 441) = 8.35$, $p = .004$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$, indicated that participants perceived the self ($M = 2.18$, $SD = 1.85$) as more multifaceted than an acquaintance ($M = 1.73$, $SD = 1.80$). A significant trait valence main effect, $F(1, 441) = 75.36$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .15$, indicated that participants perceived targets to be more multifaceted in the domain of positive traits ($M = 2.68$, $SD = 1.84$) than in the domain of negative traits ($M = 1.30$, $SD = 1.57$). Also, a significant methodology main effect, $F(1, 441) = 21.33$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$, indicated that the muted-expression methodology registered higher multifacetedness scores ($M = 2.38$, $SD = 1.92$) than the standard methodology ($M = 1.55$, $SD = 1.66$).

The key Target × Valence × Methodology interaction was significant, $F(1, 441) = 4.08$, $p = .04$, $\eta_p^2 = .009$. In the standard-methodology condition, the Target × Valence interaction was significant, $F(1, 441) = 5.70$, $p = .02$. Simple effect analyses showed that, for positive traits, participants perceived the self ($M = 2.93$, $SD = 1.50$) as more multifaceted than an acquaintance ($M = 2.00$, $SD = 1.73$), $F(1, 441) = 8.30$, $p = .004$. This result replicates Sande et al.'s (1988) original findings. However, for negative traits, participants did not perceive the self ($M = 0.79$, $SD = 1.11$) as more multifaceted than an acquaintance ($M = 0.89$, $SD = 1.37$), $F(1, 441) = .13$, $p = .72$. This pattern is consistent with Experiment 1 results for sum scores and replicates conceptually Locke's (2002) finding that the multifaceted-self is confined to the domain of positive traits.

In contrast, when using the muted-expression methodology, the Target × Valence interaction was not significant, $F(1, 441) = 0.24$, $p = .62$. Only the main effects of valence and target were significant, $F(1, 441) = 23.51$, $p < .001$, and $F(1, 441) = 4.78$, $p = .03$, respectively. Participants perceived targets to be more multifaceted in the domain of positive traits ($M = 2.68$, $SD = 1.84$) than in the domain of negative traits ($M = 1.30$, $SD = 1.57$), and they perceived the self ($M = 2.18$, $SD = 1.85$) as more multifaceted than an acquaintance ($M = 1.73$, $SD = 1.80$), irrespective of trait valence. This pattern is consistent with Experiment 1 results for difference scores and further corroborates the idea that the multifaceted-self can be uncovered in the domain of negative traits. People can reconcile the desire to disavow negative traits with the knowledge of possessing them via the muted expression of negative self-knowledge. These findings generalized across U.S. and Indian samples.

Discussion

The Pilot Study and Experiment 2 findings contributed to understanding of the multifaceted-self. The Pilot Study results confirmed that possible muted (compared with full) admission of negative traits induced less threat. If threat induced by muted expressions of negative self-knowledge is lowered, self-protection concerns will lay relatively dormant, thus potentiating motives that underlie admissions of self-negativity. The experimental findings produced the classic positivity-driven multifaceted-self effect when traits were endorsed at the full extent (i.e., polarized level). However, the effect emerged irrespective of trait valence when we created room for the muted expression of negative self-knowledge. Muted trait endorsement obviated self-protection concerns and created room for the admission of negative qualities.

Experiment 3

Thus far, we have examined the multifaceted-self effect by comparing participants' self-perceptions to their perceptions

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Table 3. Multifacetedness Scores (Muted Expression) as a Function of Target and Valence in Experiment 3.

	Positive traits		Negative traits	
Target	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Self	3.20	1.69	2.03	1.60
Good friend	2.43	1.39	1.24	1.49

of an acquaintance. Prior research has demonstrated, however, that other persons are seen as more multifaceted to the extent that they are familiar (compared with unfamiliar) and liked (compared with disliked; Locke, 2002; Locke & Horowitz, 1997; Sande et al., 1988). Assuming that one usually lacks a level of familiarity with or liking for acquaintances, the preceding experiments provided a liberal test of the multifaceted-self effect. A more conservative test would require a comparison between self-perceptions and perceptions of a familiar and well-liked other, such as a good friend. We made this more rigorous comparison in Experiment 3. The key objective of this experiment was to corroborate the novel finding that the multifaceted-self effect emerges irrespective of trait valence when there is room for the muted expression of negative self-knowledge. Accordingly, we compared self-perceptions with perceptions of a good friend using the muted-expression methodology developed in Experiment 2.

Method

We recruited 170 U.S. participants (88 men, 81 women, 1 unreported) ranging in age from 18 to 73 years (M = 31.95, SD = 12.11) via MTurk. All participants had a track record of a 95% or better job acceptance rate and were paid $0.40. The design was a 2 (Target: self, good friend) × 2 (Valence: positive traits, negative traits) between-subjects factorial. We randomly assigned participants to conditions. We used the same procedure and materials as in the muted-expression condition of Experiment 2. For each of seven contrasting trait pairs (positive vs. negative), participants indicated which of four options best described a target person (self vs. good friend; for example, "a little bit energetic," "a little bit relaxed," "a little bit of both," or "neither"). We instructed participants who rated a good friend to "please call to mind a good friend of the same sex that you know well." Participants then wrote down their friend's initials.

Results and Discussion

We entered the multifacetedness score (i.e., the number of times participants selected "a little bit of both") into a Target × Valence ANOVA. We present relevant means in Table 3. Preliminary analyses revealed no gender effects, and we thus excluded this variable from further analyses. A significant target main effect, $F(1, 166) = 10.73$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$, indicated that participants perceived the self (M = 2.65, SD = 1.74) as more multifaceted than a good friend (M = 1.85, SD = 1.55). A significant trait valence main effect, $F(1, 166) = 24.87$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .13$, indicated that participants perceived targets to be more multifaceted in the domain of positive traits (M = 2.82, SD = 1.59) than in the domain of negative traits (M = 1.62, SD = 1.59). The Target × Valence interaction was not significant, $F(1, 166) = 0.002$, $p = .97$, $\eta_p^2 < .001$. Consistent with Experiment 2, when using the muted-expression methodology, participants perceived the self as more multifaceted than a good friend, irrespective of trait valence.

In all, Experiment 3 provided further evidence that the multifaceted-self effect generalizes across trait valence when there is room for the muted expression of negative self-knowledge and offered new evidence that this overall multifaceted-self effect emerges even when the self is compared with a familiar and well-liked other (i.e., a good friend).

Experiment 4

The prior experiments uncovered the multifaceted-self within the domain of negative traits. It is possible, however, that these findings are confined to a limited set of experimenter-provided negative traits. In Experiment 4, we aimed to test the ecological validity of these findings. We examined the presence of terms indicating diminution (e.g., "bit," "somewhat," "little") in people's narrative descriptions of their own and others' positive and negative traits. The presence of diminutive terms would signal muted expressions of self- (and other) knowledge. We analyzed these narratives using both the Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count software (LIWC; Pennebaker, Chung, Ireland, Gonzalez, & Booth, 2007) and manual coding. The coder also counted the number of traits that participants reported in their narrative descriptions. This provided a further measure of the multifaceted-self within the domains of positive and negative traits.

Method

Participants and design. Participants were 151 University of Southampton undergraduate volunteers (127 women, 22 men), who completed the experiment in a class setting. Their age ranged from 18 to 50 years (M = 20.34, SD = 4.80). The

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Table 4. Coded Diminution Expressions (LIWC and Manual) and Number of Described Traits as a Function of Target and Valence in Experiment 4.

	Trait valence							
	Positive				Negative			
	Self		Acquaintance		Self		Acquaintance	
Dependent variable	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Diminution: LIWC	1.75	1.85	1.18	2.18	3.90	2.62	1.56	2.00
Diminution: Manual	0.15	0.43	0.06	0.24	1.79	1.54	0.19	0.52
Number of traits	5.18	2.22	4.15	1.60	3.37	1.73	3.08	1.89

Note. The LIWC diminution score reflects the percentage of words assigned to the diminution category.

design was a 2 (Target: self, other) × 2 (Valence: positive traits, negative traits) between-subjects factorial. We randomly allocated participants to conditions.

Procedure and materials. We instructed participants to describe either their own positive traits, their own negative traits, the positive traits of an acquaintance, or the negative traits of an acquaintance. Instructions read,

> Please take 5 minutes to describe your own [an acquaintance's] positive [negative] personality traits. What is positive [negative] about you [your acquaintance]? Provide a narrative account (i.e., do not simply list traits). Again, please do not use bullet points; instead, write a narrative about your [your acquaintance's] positive [negative] traits or characteristics.

We analyzed the narratives in two ways. First, we used LIWC to assess the occurrence of diminutive words. The relevant words included in the list were "bit," "somewhat," "sometimes," "little," "might," "seem," "probably," "occasional," "possibly," "if," "can," "like," and "tend." LIWC computed a diminution score, expressed as the percentage of words in each narrative that corresponded to our diminution word list. Second, a judge coded manually the total number of diminutive words and phrases, with the consideration of context. The manual coding aimed to supplement the computerized analyses of LIWC, which falls short on considering the context and overall meaning of sentences. For example, two narratives included the word "can." One narrative stated, "I can be argumentative at times but not too often." The other narrative stated, "She can keep a secret." The judge coded the word "can" as an instance of diminution in the former, but not the latter, narrative. Finally, the judge counted the number of traits mentioned in the narratives. To assess the reliability of the manual coding, a second judge independently coded 32% of the narratives, selected evenly (and randomly) from each of the four conditions. Agreement between the two coders for the diminutive word coding and trait coding were substantial, $r(48) = .76$, $p < .001$, and $r(48) = .86$, $p < .001$, respectively. After applying the Spearman-Brown correction, the interrater reliabilities for diminutive word coding and trait coding were $\alpha = .86$ and $\alpha = .92$, respectively.

Results

To examine the prevalence of diminution expressed in the four types of narrative, we entered the LIWC-based diminution score into a Target × Valence ANOVA. Relevant means are presented in Table 4. A significant target main effect, $F(1, 144) = 16.48$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .10$, indicated higher use of diminutive words in self-descriptions ($M = 2.81\%$, $SD = 2.49$) than in other-descriptions ($M = 1.38\%$, $SD = 2.08$). A significant valence main effect, $F(1, 144) = 12.54$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .08$, indicated higher use of diminutive words in descriptions of negative traits ($M = 2.75\%$, $SD = 2.60$) than in descriptions of positive traits ($M = 1.48\%$, $SD = 2.01$). More important, these effects were qualified by a significant Target × Valence interaction, $F(1, 144) = 6.07$, $p = .02$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$. When describing negative traits, use of diminutive words was higher for self-descriptions ($M = 3.90\%$, $SD = 2.62$) than for other-descriptions ($M = 1.56\%$, $SD = 2.00$), $F(1, 144) = 21.61$, $p < .001$. However, when describing positive traits, use of diminutive words did not differ for self-descriptions ($M = 1.75\%$, $SD = 1.85$) and other-descriptions ($M = 1.18\%$, $SD = 2.18$), $F(1, 144) = 1.25$, $p = .26$.

We turned to the manual coding of diminutive words and phrases, entering the counts into a Target × Valence ANOVA. The results pattern was identical to that of the LIWC analysis. The target main effect was significant, $F(1, 144) = 35.70$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .20$, indicating higher use of diminutive words in self-descriptions ($M = 0.96$, $SD = 1.39$) than in other-descriptions ($M = 0.13$, $SD = 0.41$). The valence main effect was also significant, $F(1, 144) = 38.74$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .21$, indicating higher use of diminutive words in descriptions of negative traits ($M = 1.00$, $SD = 1.40$) than in descriptions of positive traits ($M = 0.11$, $SD = 0.36$). The Target × Valence interaction was also significant, $F(1, 144) = 28.14$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .16$. When describing negative traits, use of diminutive words was higher for self-descriptions ($M = 1.79$,

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SD = 1.54) than other-descriptions (*M* = 0.19, *SD* = 0.52), $F(1, 144) = 64.62$, $p < .001$. However, when describing positive traits, use of diminutive words did not differ for self-descriptions (*M* = 0.15, *SD* = 0.43) and other-descriptions (*M* = 0.06, *SD* = 0.24), $F(1, 144) = 0.22$, $p = .64$.

Finally, we analyzed the number of traits mentioned in the descriptions by entering the count into a Target × Valence ANOVA. The target and valence main effects were significant. Participants mentioned more traits in self-descriptions (*M* = 4.29, *SD* = 2.18) than in other-descriptions (*M* = 3.59, *SD* = 1.83), $F(1, 144) = 4.52$, $p = .04$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$.Also, participants described more positive (*M* = 4.70, *SD* = 2.01) than negative (*M* = 3.23, *SD* = 1.81) traits, $F(1, 144) = 21.49$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .13$. Importantly, participants mentioned more traits in self- than in other-descriptions irrespective of trait valence; the Target × Valence interaction was not significant, $F(1, 144) = 1.44$, $p = .23$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$. These findings are consistent with the idea that, when there is room for the muted expression of negative self-knowledge, the multifaceted-self is manifested irrespective of trait valence.[3]

Discussion

Narrative descriptions of traits revealed that people strategically implicate linguistic diminution when they express their shortcomings. The LIWC analysis showed that use of diminution is more prevalent in descriptions of one's own negative traits than in descriptions of others' negative traits. When describing positive traits, however, the use of diminutive terms did not differ for self- and other-descriptions. The complementary manual coding reproduced this same pattern: People couch their own (but not others') shortcomings in diminutive words and phrases. Finally, people ascribed more traits to themselves than to another person irrespective of trait valence, suggesting that multifaceted-self effect manifests via both positive and negative traits. In all, expression of negative self-knowledge was facilitated by use of diminutive terms.

These findings raise a legitimate question whether one can still speak of traits when they are hedged with words such as "occasional" and "can." Whereas scholarly approaches to personality typically adopt Allport and Odbert's (1936) definition of traits as "consistent and stable modes of an individual's adjustment to his environment" (p. 26), there is evidence that people do not perceive traits as rigid and stable. Allen and Potkay (1981) reported that individuals describe themselves with different traits on different occasions, and Fleeson (2001) demonstrated that traits can be viewed as density distributions of states whereby an individual's behavior varies around a central tendency across situations. Such evidence is consistent with the possibility that lay persons view traits as potentials that can be manifested in particular circumstances ("occasional," "can") rather than as rigid tendencies that are enacted unconditionally.

General Discussion

Whether the self is perceived differently than others has been a topic of persistent interest in social and personality psychology. A theoretical and empirical approach to this topic has focused on whether self-perceptions are more multifaceted than other-perceptions. Is the self seen as possessing more traits than other persons? We will briefly review answers to this question, summarize the contribution of the present research, and consider its implications.

The Vagaries of the Multifaceted-Self

Scholarly rejoinders to the question "Is the self seen as more multifaceted than others" have themselves been multifaceted. The pioneering research on the topic suggested that the self possesses fewer traits than others (Jones & Nisbett, 1971; Nisbett et al., 1973). Correcting for some methodological limitations, the next empirical wave reversed this conclusion and highlighted the multifaceted nature of self- (compared with other-) perceptions (Monson et al., 1980; Sande et al., 1988). The third set of empirical findings proceeded to qualify this multifaceted-self effect by improving on past methodologies. The self now emerged as multifaceted within the domain of positive traits only (Locke, 2002; Locke & Horowitz, 1997). People ascribe more positive traits, but not more negative traits, to themselves than to others.

The redefined multifaceted-self effect was deemed an instance of self-enhancement/self-protection motivation. People perceive themselves to possess more positive traits than others, as a way to indulge their self-image. They refrain from perceiving themselves to be more complex than others on negative traits, as a means to shelter their self-image. These findings and interpretations represent the state-of-the-art on whether the self is considered to be more multifaceted than others. This scholarly consensus is reflected in social psychology textbooks (e.g., Martin et al., 2010) and Handbook chapters (e.g., Kernis & Goldman, 2003).

A New Conceptualization and Measurement of the Multifaceted-Self

We revisited this classic topic by offering new conceptualizations and an expanded methodological repertoire. We proposed that, because people are more familiar with variability in their own behavior than with variability in the behavior of others (Jones & Nisbett, 1971), their self-views are more multifaceted than their views of others, irrespective of trait valence. However, because acknowledging negative traits poses a threat to one's self-image, one has to negotiate the desire to avoid admission of negative traits with the knowledge of having them. We hypothesized that people solve this dilemma by means of the muted expression of negative self-knowledge. Because classic methodologies for assessing the

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multifaceted-self are insensitive to such muted expressions of negative self-knowledge, we introduced new methodologies to uncover the multifaceted-self in the domain of negative traits.

We designed these new methodologies to have increased sensitivity to, or create room for, the muted expression of negative self-knowledge. By weakening self-protection concerns, we sought to uncover the multifaceted-self in the domain of negative traits. In Experiment 1, we assessed the multifaceted-self in terms of polarization (i.e., the sum of ratings across two contrasting traits) and balance (i.e., the difference between ratings of two contrasting traits). Balance is more sensitive than polarization to muted expressions of negative self-knowledge. For example, someone who sees herself or himself as both "somewhat lazy" and "somewhat hasty" has a balanced (but not polarized) self-view. Sum scores (i.e., assessing polarization) provided evidence for the multifaceted-self in the domain of positive traits only (replicating Locke, 2002), but difference scores (i.e., assessing balance) uncovered the multifaceted-self irrespective of trait valence.

In Experiment 2, we modified Sande et al.'s (1988, Studies 2-4) methodology whereby participants are instructed to choose for themselves and other stimulus persons the option that best fits the stimulus person: a trait term, its polar opposite, both, or neither (e.g., "energetic," "relaxed," "both," or "neither"). To create room for the muted endorsement of traits, we replaced the "both" option with "a little bit of both" and prefixed the trait terms with the phrase "a little bit" (e.g., "a little bit energetic," "a little bit relaxed," "a little bit of both," or "neither"). The standard methodology revealed the multifaceted-self in the domain of positive traits only, but the modified methodology uncovered the multifaceted-self irrespective of trait valence. Experiment 3 provided further evidence that the multifaceted-self effect generalizes across trait valence when there is room for the muted expression of negative self-knowledge, and it demonstrated that this generalized multifaceted-self effect emerges even when the self is compared with a familiar and well-liked other (i.e., a good friend).

Finally, in Experiment 4, we analyzed participant-generated descriptions of their own and an acquaintance's positive and negative personality traits. Participants spontaneously considered themselves as having more traits than an acquaintance (irrespective of trait valence), and they used more diminutive words (e.g., "a little," "a bit," "somewhat") when describing their own negative traits than when describing their own positive traits. Only by focusing on the muted expression of negative self-knowledge can the multifaceted-self be revealed fully.

Implications

Interest in self-motives has a long history in the field (Sedikides & Strube, 1997; Swann & Buhrmester, 2012; Trope, 1986). Our research adds to this body of literature in the context of trait ascription to self versus others. The research showcased the intricate interplay between the self-motives in terms of the conditions under which they are likely to guide self-perception.

Self-protection motivation exerts powerful effects on self-perception. Research has consistently demonstrated how difficult or rare direct admission of self-negativity is. For example, negative (compared with positive) memories about the self are less accessible, harder to retrieve, less often retrieved, and fading faster across time (Sanitioso & Niedenthal, 2006; Sedikides & Green, 2009; Walker, Skowronski, & Thompson, 2003). To admit to transgressions is uncommon (Exline, Baumeister, Zell, Kraft, & Witvliet, 2008). When it occurs, it typically pertains to low-severity offenses (Sedikides & Gregg, 2008) and is followed by comparisons to worse offenses that others have committed or by denials of culpability and external blame (Campbell & Sedikides, 1999; Wills, 1981; Wood, Taylor, & Lichtman, 1985). Admission of self-negativity is threatening (vanDellen, Campbell, Hoyle, & Bradfield, 2011).

And yet, we demonstrated that, when the prospects of threat ease, admission of negative characteristics becomes more likely. People even value negative self-knowledge, as long as it is palatable or amicable to psychological equanimity (Gregg, Hepper, et al., 2011; Sedikides, 1993). After all, self-enhancement/self-protection may be linked to intrapersonal and interpersonal benefits (e.g., well-being, optimism, resilience, determined pursuit of goals; Alicke & Sedikides, 2009; Bonanno, Field, Kovacevic, & Kaltman, 2002; Bonanno, Rennicke, & Dekel, 2005) but so, researchers propose, are self-assessment (e.g., self-clarity, self-acceptance, self-improvement, other-acceptance; Sedikides & Hepper, 2009; Wilson & Dunn, 2004) and self-verification (e.g., psychological coherence, stable social interactions; Swann & Buhrmester, 2012). Future research may link admission of self-negativity, as uncovered with our novel methodologies, to intrapersonal or interpersonal benefits. Such research could also examine whether admissions of self-negativity flow primarily from the self-assessment motive, the self-verification motive, or both. These promising directions illustrate the utility of our novel approach to the multifaceted-self for addressing pivotal theoretical questions.

Concluding Remarks

The multifaceted-self is equated with self-positivity in the current body of knowledge. We showed, by implementing different methodologies, that this state-of-the-art is in need of revision. Our findings not only indicate that, under specified circumstances, the multifaceted-self entails both self-positivity and self-negativity but also demonstrate the value of methodology in the close relation between data and theory (Greenwald, 2012).

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Notes

1. There was one exception to this general finding. In Experiment 4 of Sande, Goethals, and Radloff (1988), participants did not select the "both" alternative significantly more frequently for themselves than for a liked well-known other.
2. A potential limitation of the balance measure is that responses indicating the absence of both contrasting traits in a pair (e.g., rating a target as "not at all lazy" and "not at all hasty") nonetheless result in a low balance score, suggesting high multifacetedness. To address this, we recalculated the difference scores, omitting instances where participants assigned a rating of "1" (i.e., *not at all*) to both contrasting traits in a pair. In total, there were 11 such instances, affecting difference scores for eight participants. We recalculated the difference scores for these participants and then repeated the Target × Valence ANOVA. This analysis also revealed a significant target main effect only, $F(1, 216) = 5.14$, $p = .02$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$.
3. In Experiment 4, the Target × Valence interaction on trait count was not significant, but it is prudent to note that the simple target effect (self vs. acquaintance) was numerically larger in the positive- than in the negative-valence condition (Table 4, row 3). In Experiment 3, the Target × Valence interaction on multifacetedness scores ("a little bit of both") was not significant, and the magnitude of the simple target effect (self vs. close friend) was nearly identical in the positive- and negative-valence condition (Table 3). Within the muted-expression condition of Experiment 2, the Target × Valence interaction on multifacetedness scores ("a little bit of both") was not significant but the simple target effect (self vs. acquaintance) was numerically larger in the negative- than in the positive-valence condition (Table 2, under Muted Expression). Finally, in Experiment 1, the Target × Valence interaction on difference scores was not significant, but the simple target effect (self vs. acquaintance) was numerically larger in the positive- than in the negative-valence condition (Table 1, row 2). In all, when methods were sensitive to the muted expression of negative self-knowledge, there was no systematic trend for the multifaceted-self effect to be more pronounced in the domain of positive (compared with negative) traits. We confirmed this by meta-analyzing the four above-referenced Target × Valence interaction effects (using an *F*-to-Hedges's *g* transformation, with higher values indicating a relatively stronger multifaceted-self effect with positive, compared with negative, valence): $g = 0.03$, $SE = 0.07$, $z = 0.41$, $p = .685$. To examine whether the multifaceted-self effect was significant within the separate domains of positive and negative traits, we also meta-analyzed the above-referenced simple target (i.e., multifaceted-self) effects separately for the positive- and negative-valence conditions. For the positive-valence conditions, the overall multifaceted-self effect was significant, $g = 0.38$, $SE = 0.10$, $z = 3.68$, $p < .001$. For the negative-valence conditions, the overall multifaceted-self effect was also significant, $g = 0.31$, $SE = 0.10$, $z = 2.96$, $p = .003$.

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