



# Shame on Me?

## Examining Impression Management and Appearance-Related Shame

Nicole L. Beasley, Kala Jablonski, Fiona O'Malley

Advisor: Erin M. O'Mara Kunz, Ph.D.

### Introduction

#### Impression management (IM)

- Deliberately presenting oneself in a way to control the impression made on others
- IM is activated with goal-oriented behavior (Guadagno & Cialdini, 2007), including mating:
  - Women try to make a positive impression on others by enhancing their appearance at high fertility (Haselton & Gildersleeve, 2016)

#### Conception Risk or Fertility

- The probability of conception per act of sex on a given day of a woman's menstrual cycle; ranges from 0-9.4% (Wilcox et al., 2001)
- Women's highest conception risk occurs during ovulation, roughly days 12-14 of her menstrual cycle

#### Shame

- Unpleasant self-conscious emotion associated with wrongdoings
- Appearance-related shame arises from negative evaluations of one's body or dress from the self or others (Schooler, Ward, Merriwether, & Caruthers, 2005)

### Hypothesis

Appearance-related shame will vary by impression management and fertility:

- Higher levels of impression management will be associated with higher appearance-related shame at low fertility

### Method

#### Design & Participants

- Repeated-measures design with participants completing all measures at high fertility and at low fertility
- N = 83, cis-female UD undergraduate students

#### Measures:

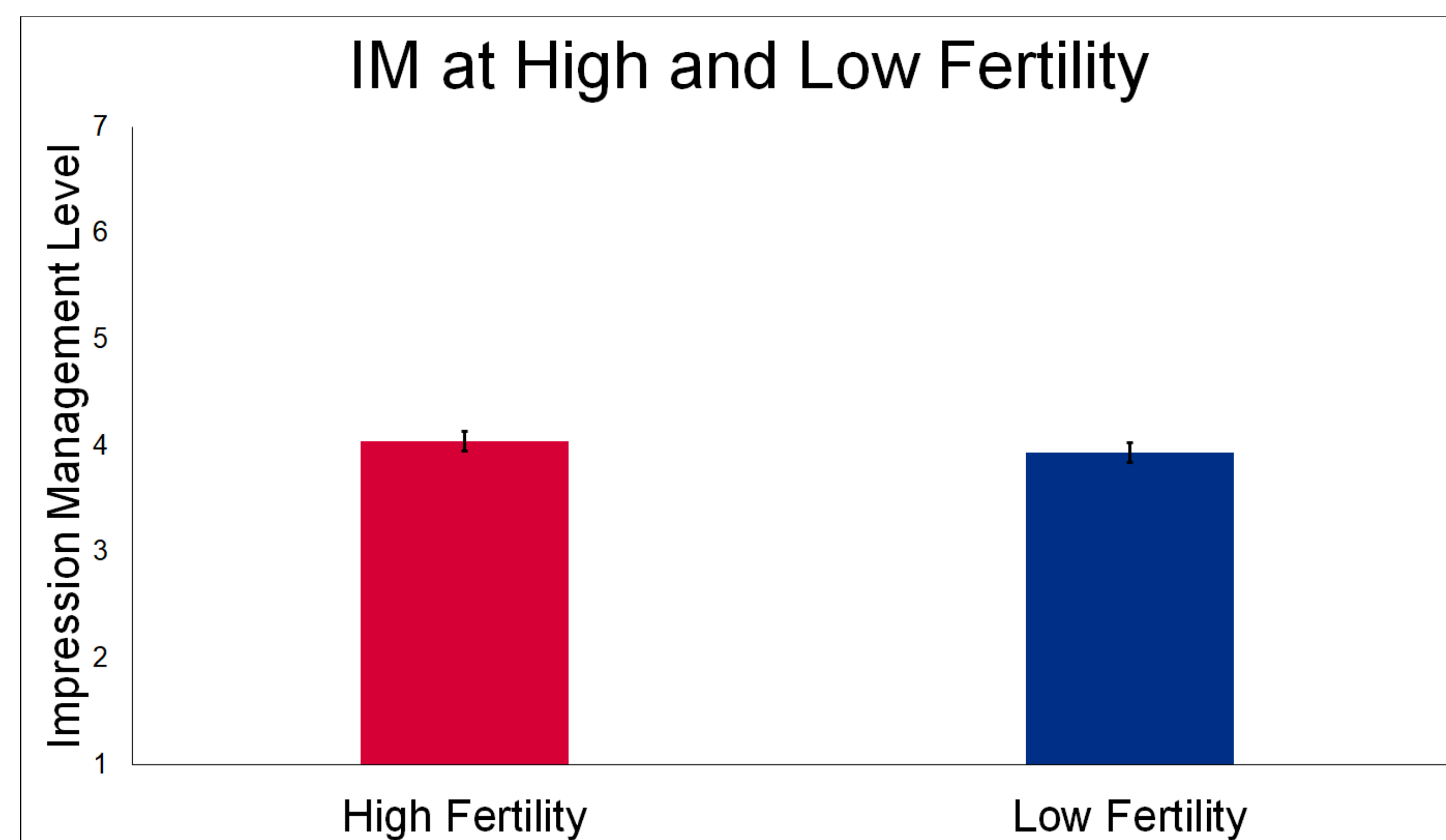
- Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding IM subscale (Paulhus, 1988)
- Objectified Body Consciousness Appearance-related Shame Subscale (McKinley & Hyde, 1996)

### Results

Impression management and fertility did not interact to predict appearance-related shame at high and low fertility.

There was a main effect of impression management:

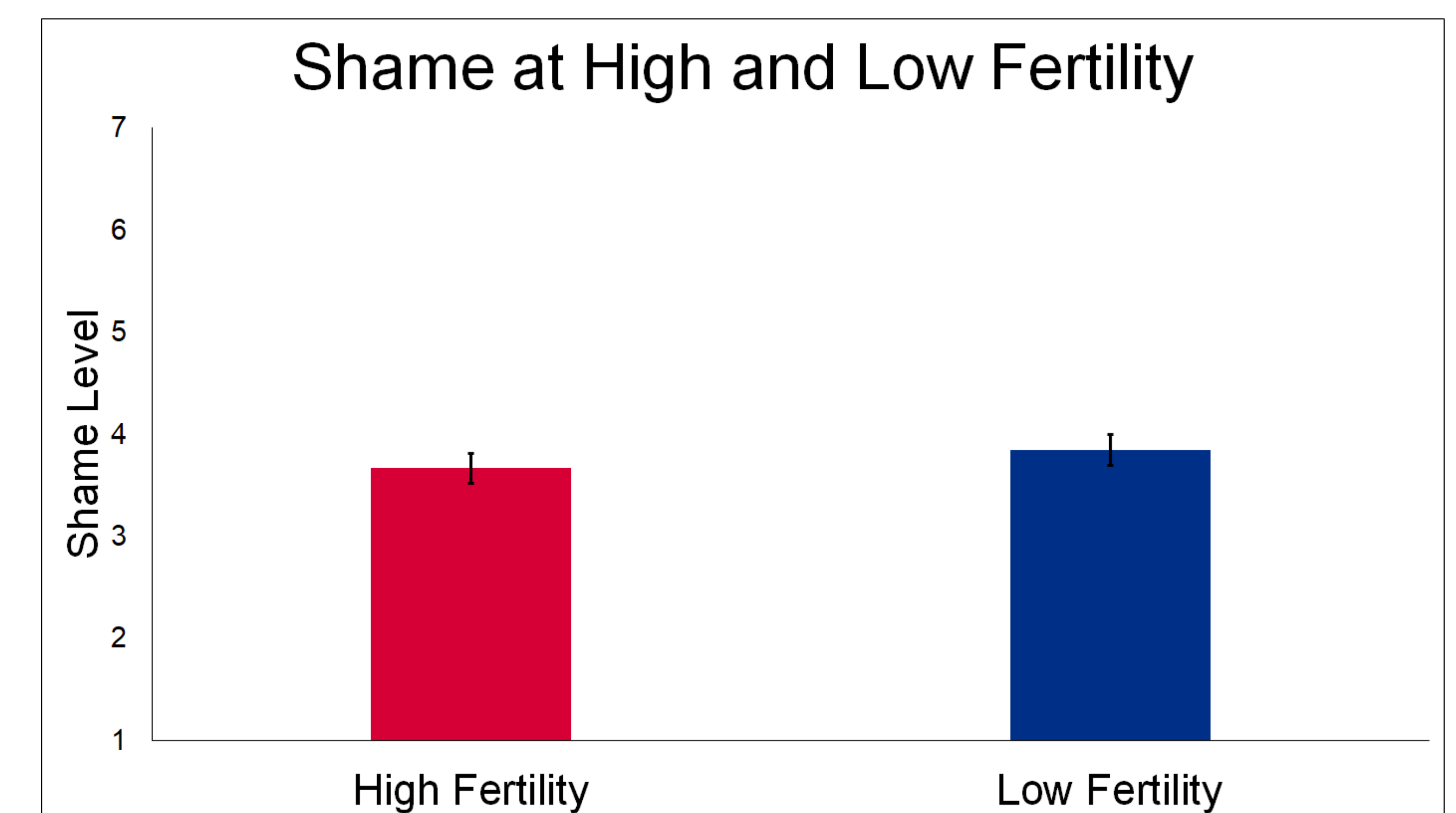
- IM was significantly higher at high fertility ( $M = 4.04$ ,  $SD = 0.82$ ) compared to low fertility ( $M = 3.94$ ,  $SD = 0.83$ ),  $F(1,82) = 5.33$ ,  $p = .02$ .



### Results

There was also a main effect of shame:

- Shame was significantly higher at low fertility ( $M = 3.84$ ,  $SD = 1.36$ ) compared to high fertility ( $M = 3.66$ ,  $SD = 1.34$ ),  $F(1,82) = 6.92$ ,  $p = .01$ .



### Discussion

- Impression management and fertility did not interact to predict appearance related-shame at high and low fertility.
- The main effects of appearance-related shame and impression management are consistent with previous research
  - Women feel better about their appearance at high fertility and try to make a more positive impression on potential mates (Haselton & Gildersleeve, 2016)

#### Conclusion

- The present findings support the cyclical nature of goal salience as a function of fertility
- Future research should seek to replicate these findings in a larger sample and verify the onset of ovulation