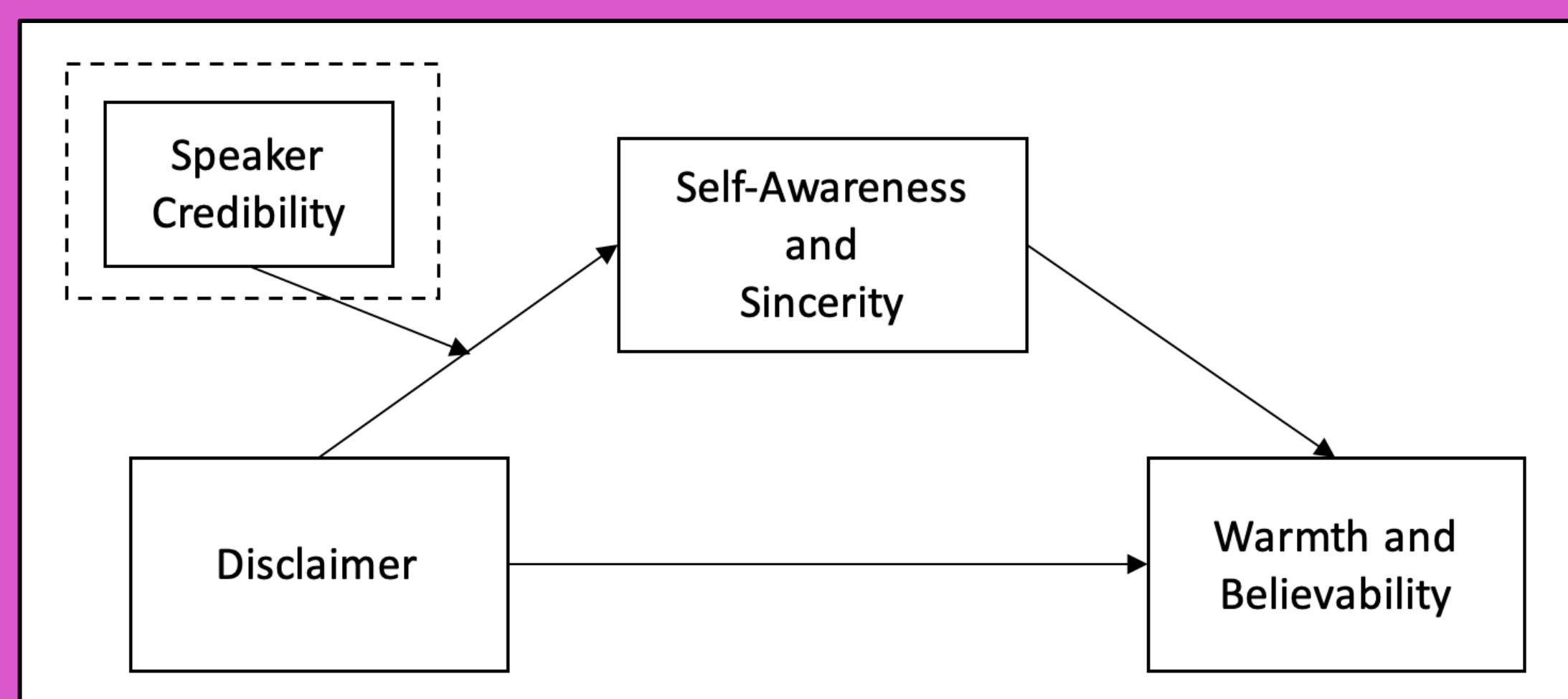


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## INTRO

- We investigate how people who are **already perceived negatively** on a given trait (e.g., low in competence) can communicate **self-promotional information** about their abilities on that trait most effectively, given that their statements are less likely to be believed in the first place.
- We propose that explicitly acknowledging one's perceived shortcomings with a **"credibility disclaimer"** prior to self-promoting leads one to be perceived more positively than self-promoting without one, via two mechanisms.



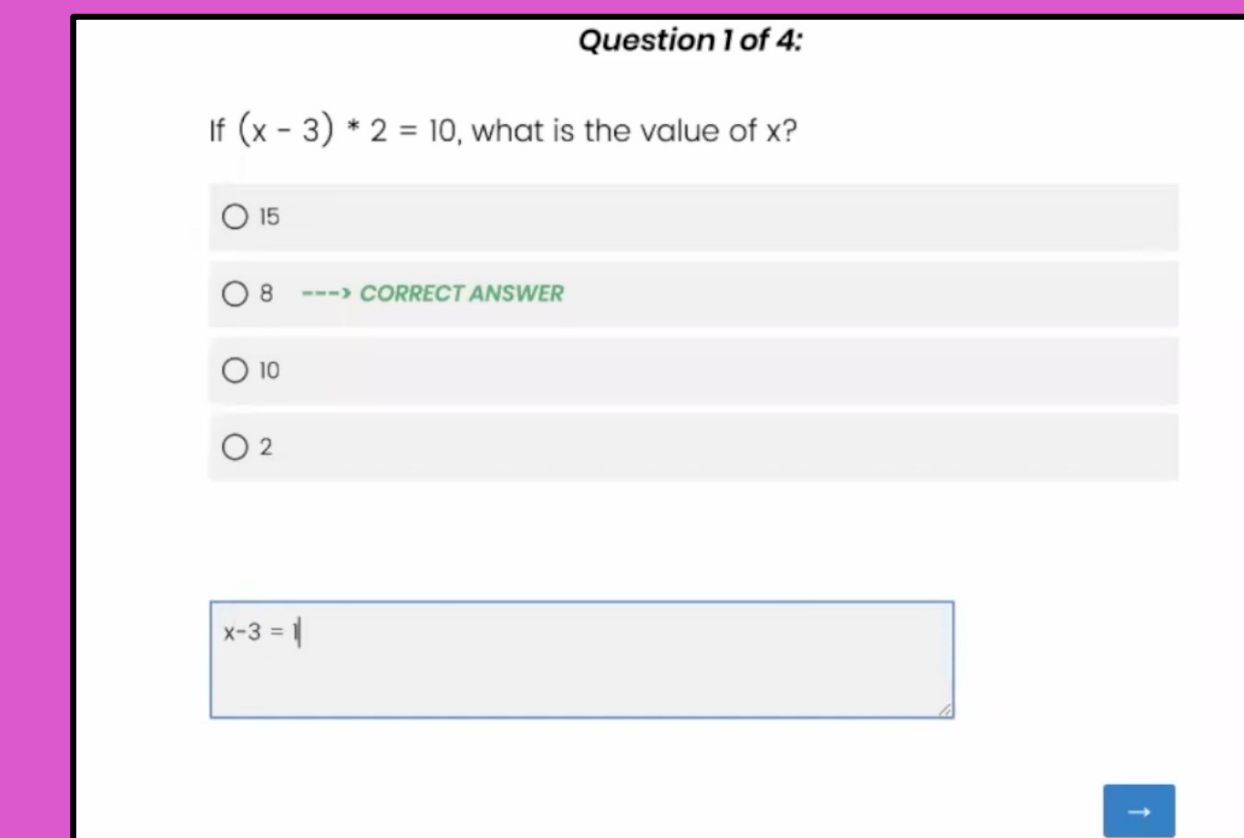
- First, disclaimers signal **self-awareness**, which should lead the speaker to be perceived more positively.
- Second, disclaimers signal **sincerity**, which again should lead the speaker to be perceived more positively.
- By these same mechanisms, we expect disclaimers to not help, and even backfire for, speakers who are **already perceived positively** ("high-credibility").

## ABSTRACT

- People who are judged negatively by others face a "credibility dilemma": They may especially want to self-promote, but worry their claims will seem unbelievable (i.e., not credible).
- Acknowledging this lack of credibility with a disclaimer (e.g., "I'm not that good at writing, but...") prior to self-promoting resolves this dilemma, because it signals self-awareness and sincerity.

## GENERAL METHOD

1. Manipulate initial impression of speaker's abilities (e.g., poor performance on a math or writing task, poor resume, etc.)



2. Speaker self-promotes, either with or without a disclaimer

*"I may not be that good at algebra, but I recently got a job in a top software engineering position."*

3. Measure perceptions of speaker (warmth, competence, brag believability, self-awareness, and sincerity)

## DISCUSSION

- We show that optimal self-presentation strategies depend on the speaker's characteristics—in this case, on the listener's existing impression of the speaker.
- Highlighting negative characteristics can be a good thing when it signals self-awareness and sincerity.
- Speakers should try to assess what their audience thinks of them prior to self-promoting.

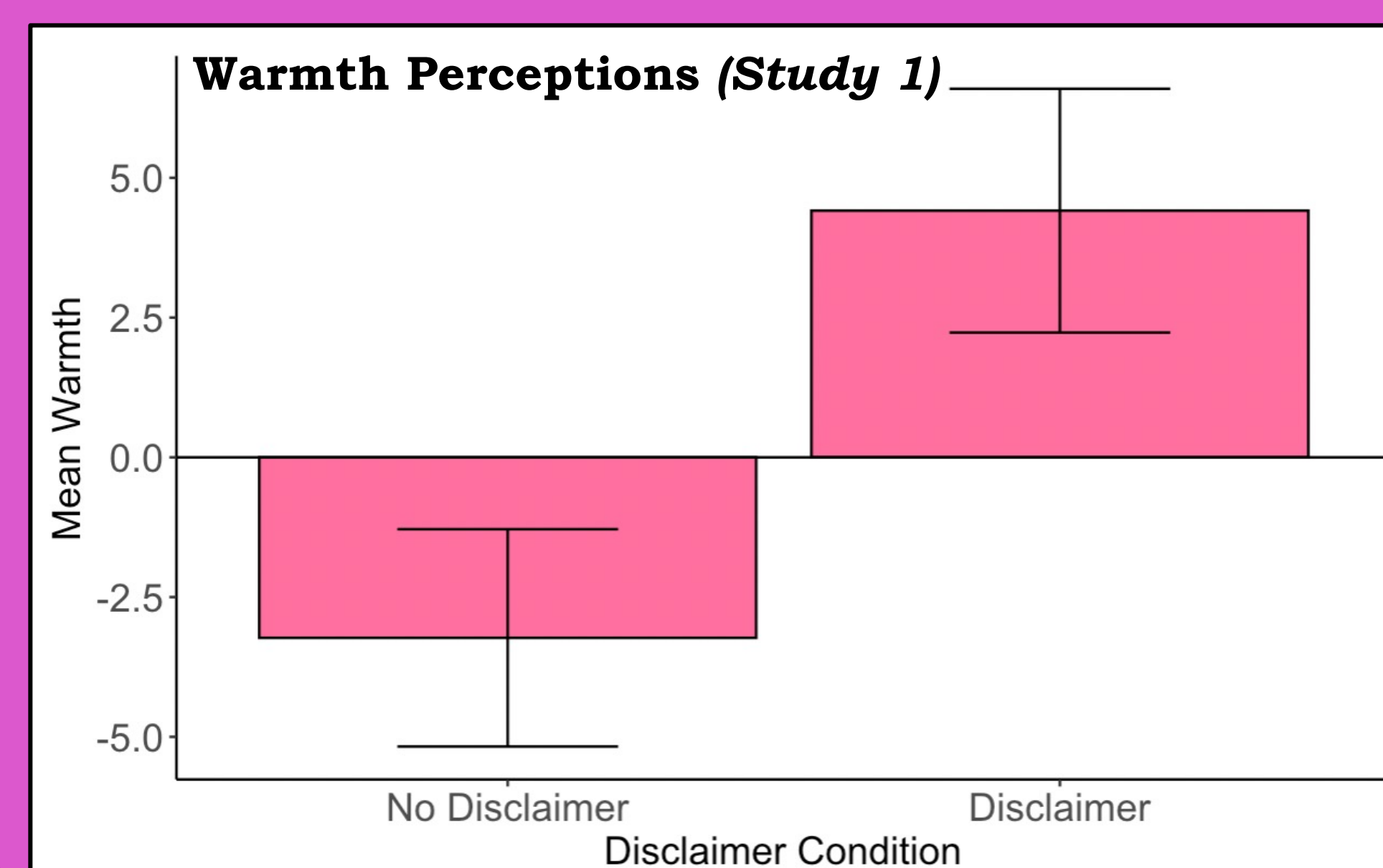
## OVERVIEW OF STUDIES

Study	Method	IV(s)	DVs	Finding
1	Online (non-hypothetical)	Disclaimer (Low-credibility speaker only)	Warmth, advice choice, self-awareness, sincerity, believability, competence	Disclaimers boost impressions of, and increase trust toward, low-credibility speakers
2a-b	Online (scenario)	Disclaimer & Speaker Credibility	Warmth, self-awareness, competence	Disclaimers do not boost impressions of, and can even lower impressions of, high-credibility speakers
3a-d	Online (scenario)	Disclaimer & Speaker Credibility	Warmth, self-awareness, believability, competence	The effect of disclaimers generalizes to different traits
4	Lab	Disclaimer & Speaker Credibility	Warmth, self-awareness, sincerity, competence, task choice, socializing	The effect of disclaimers replicates in realistic interactions
5a-b	Online & Field	Disclaimer (Low-credibility speaker only)	Warmth, hiring recommendation, self-awareness, sincerity, believability, competence	Disclaimers make low-credibility speakers seem more hireable

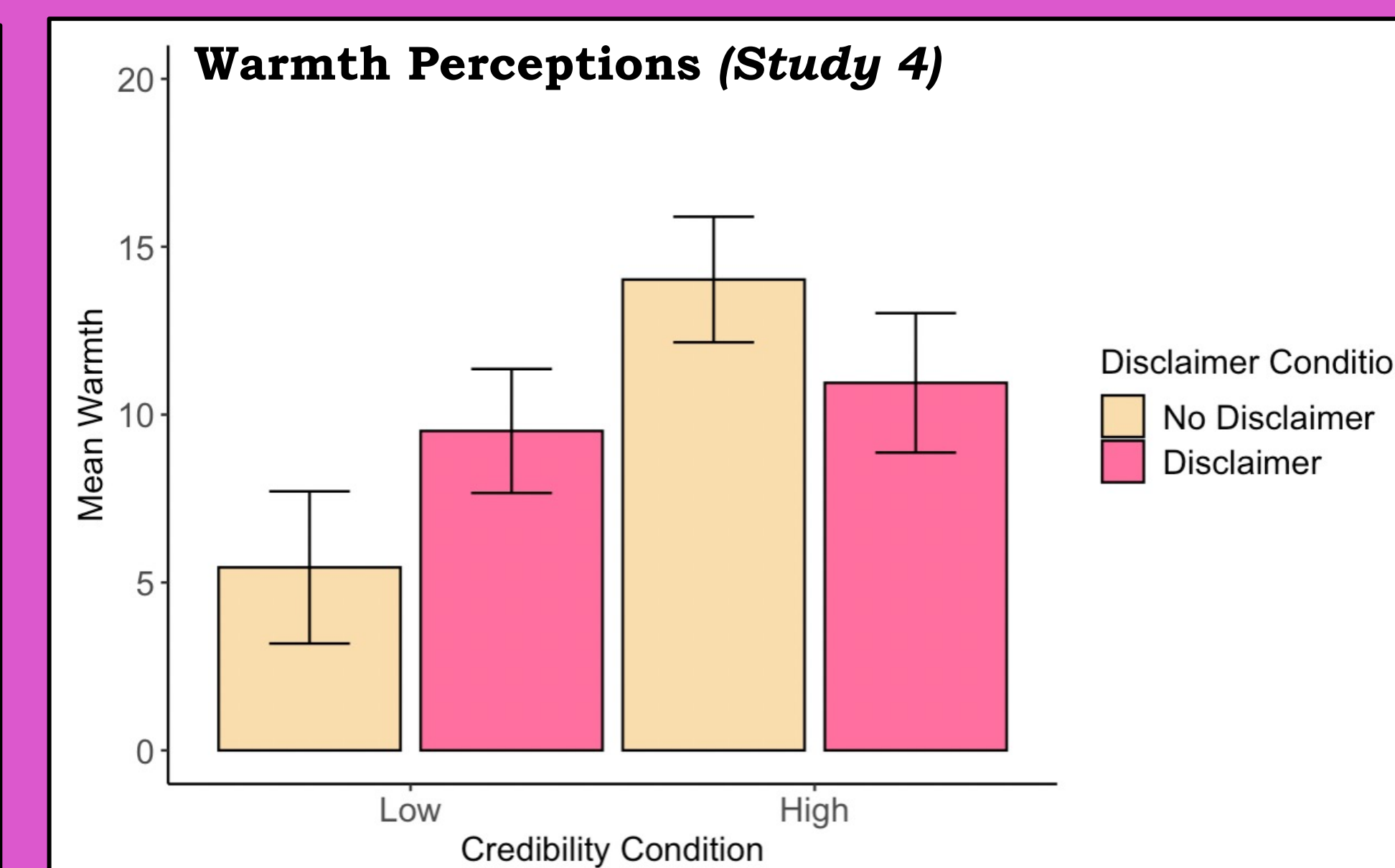
## SUMMARY OF MAIN RESULTS

Using a credibility disclaimer prior to self-promoting boosts warmth perceptions of low-credibility speakers (by signaling self-awareness and sincerity):

But credibility disclaimers do not boost warmth perceptions of speakers who are *already* perceived positively (i.e., high-credibility speakers):



$t(391) = 5.17, p < .001, d = 0.52$



$F(1,391) = 12.29, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .03$

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