



## The Impact of Impression Management Tactics on Faculty Job Performance: A Study of Private Sector Universities of Peshawar

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### Abstract

Impression management (IM) is a conscious or subconscious process in which people attempt to influence the perceptions of other people about a person, object or event by regulating and controlling information in social interaction and which can also be used as a metaphor for human social interaction. Impression Management tactics are broadly categorized into five to help people, to understand and use IM tactics in an organizational setting: ingratiation, intimidation, self-promotion, supplication, and exemplification. Impression management has been associated with the positive performance in workplace. In this study, purposive-cum-snow ball sampling techniques are used to collect primary data from the targeted audience i-e, the faculty of the private university. According to literature studies, employees are pushed to comprehend impression management and the associated strategies by the competitive and dynamic atmosphere in educational sector, which has a favorable impact on their job performance. Analysis of the results revealed that ingratiation, self-promotion and exemplification has significant impact on job performance. In contrast to the hypothesis, exemplification show negative impact on the overall job performance, while intimidation has significant negative impact on employee's job performance. The supplication tactics of impression management were removed during factor loading because of its multifaceted nature. The findings will help to strengthen horizontal and vertical social interactions with particular focus on impression management tactics, which can have an impact on job performance.

**Keywords:** Impression Management, Ingratiation, Exemplification, Self-promotion, Intimidation, Supplication, Job Performance, Private Universities, Pakistan

### 1. Introduction

Human nature is very dynamic and flexible. Human intellectual behavior drive people to interact with others in society, and as a result, they are driven to create impression on their intended audience. Scholars are becoming more aware of how important impression management (IM) is and how they believe it to be a fundamental part of human nature (DuBrin, 2010). Goffman (1959) refers to impression management as, managing one's impressions in ways that are satisfactory given that they are connected to others' evaluations and the numerous interpersonal behaviors that are influenced by others' impressions. Everyone agree that Goffman's significant work, 1959, serves as the foundation for subsequent studies on impression management (Sun et al., 2021).

Jones and Pittman's (1982) listed five strategies are the most well-known, self-promotion (bragging about one's skills and achievements to be seen as competent), exemplification (going above and beyond to appear devoted), supplication (presenting oneself as weak to get help), intimidation (i.e., using threats to make oneself appear strong or dangerous). and ingratiation are all examples of how to appear likeable (Chawla et al., 2021).

Impression management (IM) tactics have been used in many areas within the organization's premises, including interviews, performance appraisal, leadership, career development & strategies, and cultural diversity (Rosenfeld et al., 2015). According to Goffman (1958), an individual's verbal and nonverbal cues reveal how the audience perceives them in social interactions within and outside the organization (Muniyandi, 2016).

According to the study by (Krieg et al., 2018), successful impression management has been linked to the possibility of being employed, positive performance, and a high organizational citizenship behavior rating. Goffman (1959) shared that information control is the foundation of impression management, in which individuals strive to influence the perceptions that others have of them by either disclosing or keeping information from certain audiences in front- and back-stage scenarios (Berkelaar, 2017). Being a beginner or a newcomer in the organization can be exciting for employees; they are excited about new career opportunities. However, new entrants are unfamiliar with their new work environment and are vulnerable to negative impressions, so they try to gain familiarity with the organizations' culture and environment first (Foulk & Long, 2016). The researchers mentioned that the key motives which impel individuals to engage in impression management are perceived competency and job performance. Furthermore, the researchers suggested that individuals with inadequate task competency sharply adopt impression management (IM) behavior to strengthen job performance. Past research indicates that impression management tactics positively impact individual job performance (Abbas et al., 2019).

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The impression management impact on job performance was measured more in the corporate sector than in the educational sector in Pakistan. In today's dynamic, technological, and competitive environment, the higher education institutions are getting more competitive day by day. To be flexible with the organizational changes, create a need for HEI employees to understand the importance of impression management tactics during job performance. The researcher sheds light and highlights the pressing need to investigate the impact of impression management tactics on job performance in Pakistan's higher educational institutions, i.e., academic staff. The findings of the research will explain and aid in understanding the social interaction process at work place between employees and its impact on job performance. The higher educational institutes in the current research study include private sector universities in Pakistan's KP province.

## 2. Literature Review

Humans are social beings, who are in continuous interaction with their environment. During this social interaction (private or professional), the individual can create a positive impressions using impression management tactics. In other words, it is essential for an individual to continuously monitor their impressions, particularly in the organizational context, as people have to influence colleagues' thoughts and behaviors to reach their goals (Bozbayindir, 2020). Impression Management (IM) tactics are actions taken to build, maintains, or changes the perception that people have of you. These actions include ingratiation, self-promotion, exemplification, supplication, and intimidation, these strategies are employed not only in high stakes scenarios but also in regular interaction (Chawla et al., 2021). The concept of impression management is multidimensional. It works at the organizational level while individuals practice impression management both inside and outside the organization. Organizational Impression Management refers to the efforts taken by businesses to position their products and services in such a way that they are seen favorably by many shareholders and stakeholders. Contrary, the individual impression management refers to an individual's behavior of framing their image among peers to present a favorable impression to the target audience, i.e., supervisors and coworkers (Henderson, 2017).

(Choi et al., 2015) shared that the individual practices impression management to be rewarded and praised. Furthermore, impression management possesses a unique set of behaviors usually practiced by the individual to be in good books, whether inside the organization, dealing with the clients, or the family. Employees in the organizational setting utilize impression management tactics, particularly upward (ingratiation) IM tactic, to serve personal interests and obtain favor, which directly impacts their citizenship behavior, supervisor rating, and job performance (De Clercq et al., 2021). Impression management and supervisor-subordinate are vital social skills that influence job performance. Impression management is a social skill like other skills that highlight the strength of an individual and how efficiently they use it for a positive outcome (Cheng et al., 2013).

One school of thought on impression management, according to the study, claims that competent, skilled people who perform gracefully at work do not employ impression management techniques. Those who lack self-competence and perform poorly at work, on the other hand, rely on impression management strategies to avoid receiving unfavorable evaluations (Abbas et al., 2019). Impression management theories and models provide academics with knowledge and a framework for developing and maintaining an impression, theories describe the background and working regions, whereas models provide the researchers with a conceptual framework that allows them to focus on the variables (Bolino et al., 2016). The cybernetic model is core that describe the process of impression i-e, that how an individual create and maintain impression, the cybernetic model of impression management emphasizes the person's perception of the difference between the aim and feedback provided by the target (DuBrin, 2010).

The **cybernetic model** of impression management is based on the feedback received from external response and monitors discrepancies using comparators, suppose actors are active self-monitors; they can change and use the desired impression (IM) tactics to overcome the discrepancies in front of the target audience, e.g., job performance (Bozeman & Kacmar, 1997). Furthermore, the **cybernetic theory** refers to the notion of information, communication, and control. To put it another way, cybernetics is a self-regulating system that encompasses both behaviors and functions the main components of the cybernetic theory are reference standard or goal, feedback, a comparator, and effectors. The comparators detect the disparity between the aim (standard) and feedback. These inconsistencies can be positive, negative, or even zero. To overcome negative differences and manage positive impressions, a person should take corrective action (Bozeman & Kacmar, 1997). In impression management social role theory and social influence theory plays a vital role during social interaction at individual as well as at workplace. The **social theory** implies, that both genders perform duties according to their physical, biological, ecological, and social identity (Eagly & Wood, 2016). The **social influence theory** explains, how individuals can be influenced to modify their views and decisions (Harris et al., 2007).

The ability of an employee to achieve job-related objectives and expectations while maintaining set work standards is referred to as employee performance. The performance further categorized into two i-e, task performance and contextual performance (Yusoff et al., 2013). **Task performance** pertains to a formal incentive structure and describes a person's contribution to the overall success of the organization (technical core),

**contextual performance** is a voluntary extra-role action that is typically not recognized by a formal reward system since it is not enforceable (Sonnentag et al., 2008).

(Gwal, 2015) explore that impression management strongly influences the job performance of the employee within the organization. Researches show that ingratiation and self-promotion has positively impact job performance (M. Bolino et al., 2016). The exemplification tactic, has positive impact on employees job performance (Bozbayindir, 2020). Despite its distinctive traits, supplication receives significantly less academic attention than popular impression management techniques like ingratiation, exemplification, and self-promotion. Supplication is a risky impression management method in which supplicants put themselves in a vulnerable position, and as the risk of not obtaining any assistance to complete the assignment is always there so, sometimes supplication and job performance are negatively correlated, research findings support earlier investigation that suggests supplication has a negative impact on job performance (Lai et al., 2010).

(Arif et al., 2011) explore that employees who use intimidation tactics may receive higher performance ratings, but they may also receive less favorable responses, particularly from their subordinates. The intimidation strategies for impression management have both positive and negative effects on performance evaluations.

In the light of literature review and earlier studies, it is critical to emphasize the multidimensional nature of the impression management tactics over job performance. In order to better comprehend the relationship between impression management tactics and job performance in HEI's, it is predicted that each of the impression management tactics ingratiation, self-promotion, exemplification, and intimidation has a significant positive impact on job performance, while the multifaceted nature of supplication tactics, it will have a significant impact on job performance. On the basis of literature review, following hypotheses are developed by this research:

**H1:** Impression Management tactics have significant impact on Job Performance

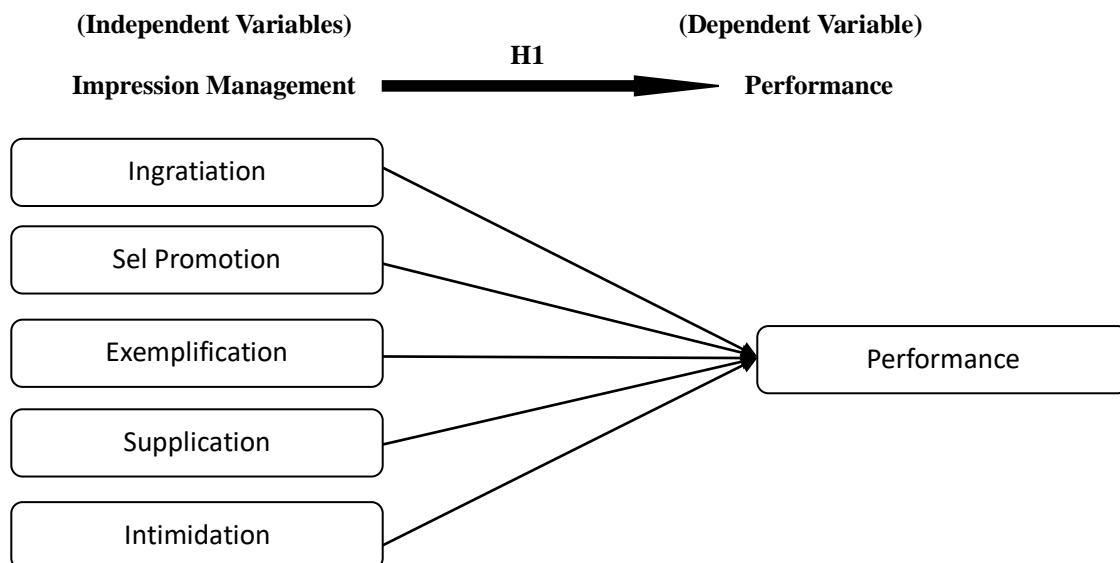
**H1a:** Ingratiation has a significant positive impact on Job Performance

**H1b:** Self Promotion has a significant positive impact on Job Performance

**H1c:** Exemplification has a significant positive impact on Job Performance

**H1d:** Supplication has significant impact on Job Performance

**H1e:** Intimidation has a significant positive impact on Job Performance



**Figure1.** Research Model

### 3. Research Methodology

This exploratory research is mostly quantitative, relying on statistical applications and quantitative tools. The target population for the current quantitative study is faculty members (academia) from KP private sector higher educational institutions in the KP province of Pakistan. Quantitative data gathering methods were used via questionnaires.

The sample for this study was drawn via purposive-cum-snowball sampling of regular faculty members of private sector universities in Peshawar. For this study, the researcher preferred to use previously tested instruments and a survey instrument/questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale. A simplified version of the 41 items impression management tactics scale for this study was chosen, developed by Jones & Pittman (1980) & used by many researchers (M. C. Bolino & Turnley, 1999). The faculty job performance was assessed using nine items scale developed & used by many researchers (Goodman & Svyantek, 1999).

#### 4. Results and Discussion

##### 4.1. Qualitative Data Analysis

During the preliminary data analysis, missing values, aberrant values, outliers, normality, homoscedasticity, multicollinearity issues were analyzed. Except for supplication, the results for other variables were normal. The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) is a widely used measure to identify the degree of multi-collinearity in regression models and VIF more than 4.0 requires further investigation. In current study there was no issue of multi-collinearity as the VIF values were less than 4. Our initial exploratory factor analysis on the items of the impression management scale generated a five-factor solution. However, there were a few items which had multiple factor loadings on some other factors. Moreover, most of the items of supplication overlapped with intimidation, and a few other items of the supplication were not clearly loaded. Thus, the variable supplication was removed from this study in the initial phase. The reliability analysis revealed that the Cronbach alpha values were higher than .70 for all the variables (other than supplication).

**Table 1: Rotated Component Matrix – Impression Management Variable**

Rotated Component Matrix (Final)				
	Component			
	1	2	3	4
INGR01			.905	
INGR02			.894	
INGR03			.744	
INGR04			.927	
SP01		.730		
SP03		.811		
SP04		.762		
SP05		.802		
SP07		.748		
EXEMP01				.801
EXEMP02				.681
EXEMP08				.685
EXEMP09				.808
INTIM01	.830			
INTIM03	.851			
INTIM04	.717			
INTIM05	.853			
INTIM06	.707			
INTIM07	.746			

Note: The factor loadings equal and less than 4 are suppressed

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

##### Correlation

The results from the correlation table show that there are no issues pertaining to multi-collinearity. The highest significant positive correlation was found between ingratiation and performance (0.410). The highest significant negative correlation was between exemplification and performance (-0.289)

**Table 2: Correlation Analysis**

Variables	Ingratiation	Self-promotion	Exemplification	Intimidation	Performance
	1	.126	-.138	-.010	.410**
Ingratiation		.166	.129	.917	.000
Self-promotion		1	.118	.273**	.209*
Exemplification			1	.002	.021
Intimidation				1	-.289**
Performance					1

## 5. Regression Analysis

Normality, homoscedasticity, multicollinearity (VIF) issues were analyzed in prior. Except for supplication, the results were normal. The principal component analysis also revealed that supplication was not clearly loaded so supplication was removed from the regression analysis. The regression results are as presented in table:

**Table 3: Regression Analysis**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.522a	.272	.247	.74858

a. Predictors: (Constant), INTIMIDATION, INGRATIATION, EXEMPLIFICATION, SELF-PROMOTION, b. Dependent Variable: Performance

**Table 4: Beta Coefficients**

Model		Standardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
		Beta	T	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)		7.563	.000		
	Ingratiation	.346	4.299	.000	.960	1.042
	Self-promotion	.226	2.714	.008	.900	1.112
	Exemplification	-.251	-3.106	.002	.950	1.052
	Intimidation	-.114	-1.386	.168	.912	1.096

Dependent variable: Performance (Significance level < 0.05)

## 6. Conclusion, Recommendation and Future Directions

In the 1<sup>st</sup> phase, the impact of IM strategies on job performance was analyzed. The result revealed that ingratiation and self-promotion have a highly significant positive impact on employee performance. The impact of exemplification and intimidation tactics on performance was also investigated, and the results revealed that exemplification has a significant negative impact on job performance, while intimidation has a negative impact on performance but is insignificant. The Global Hypothesis (H1-G) of this research study stated that impression management tactics have a significant impact on job performance. The Global Hypothesis was further segmented into sub-hypotheses (H1a–H1e) and the results from the regression model confirmed the sub-hypotheses H1a and H1b, but H1c and H1d were not confirmed. Key results related to the sub hypotheses are summarized in table 7.

**Table 5: Key Results Summary**

Impression Management Tactics	Job Performance	Remarks
<i>H1a: Ingratiation has a significant positive impact on Job Performance</i>		Supported
<i>H1b: Self Promotion has a significant positive impact on Job Performance</i>		Supported
<i>H1c: Exemplification has a significant positive impact on Job Performance</i>		Reverse
<i>H1d: Supplication has significant impact on Job Performance</i>		Not Tested
<i>H1e: Intimidation has a significant positive impact on Job Performance</i>		Not Supported

This research contributes theoretically in impression management tactics and job performance of employees in context of KP. According to researcher's knowledge, a few studies have been conducted in higher education institutes in this domain. This research endeavor demonstrated the impact of IM strategies on job performance in the context of academics. It was hypothesized that ingratiation, intimidation, supplication, exemplification, and intimidation have a significant impact on faculty performance. However, in the context of higher education, this study offered a new approach to studying impression management tactics (ingratiation, intimidation, exemplification, and self-promotion,) and job performance.

This study also has a managerial importance and its ramifications. From a practitioner's perspective, the importance of this study is clear because the positive and negative consequences of using IM tactics (as discussed previously) which is not only important for the faculty performance but also for the university's performance. Faculty in Higher Education Institutes is regarded as a nation's "intellectual capital," and they perform a dual role in knowledge generation (through research) and knowledge transmission (via teaching). The negative repercussions of teachers' impression control practices eventually lead to a poor work performance, with the negative ramifications affecting society as a whole particularly the students who are the main recipients of their service. As a result, research focusing on faculty impression management techniques is critical to academic productivity and, as a result, student learning, which leads to nation-building.

## 7. Managerial Recommendations

Two of the impression management tactics (i.e. ingratiation and self-promotion,) revealed to have a significant positive impact on faculty performance, as indicated earlier in the findings and discussion portion of this study.

This implies that ingratiation as an impression management tactic i.e. an attempt to increase and strengthen ones' attractiveness in the eyes of others should be used within limits. Too much of ingratiation can be coupled with "flattery" or "battering" so it is recommended that the faculty should avoid as these may have negative consequences in the long run.

As discussed earlier, self-promotion is a very powerful impression management tactic using which a faculty member can portray himself as self-competent and capable of knowledge, skills, experience, intellect, and qualities which may have a positive impact on his performance. The results also confirmed the same and it is recommended that the faculty should the also focus on self-promotion with an intention to put one's self in positive light. In self-promotion, the faculty member should promote his/her general aptitude and specific skills with a goal to show competence. Self-promotion does not mean self-praise (which should be avoided by the faculty) and as it colors someone as negative instead of positive so it is recommended that the faculty should be careful in this regard. Moreover it is recommended that supplication may be harmful for faculty because it can result in poorer performance outcomes. As the colleagues may perceive the supplicant (fellow teacher) as weak or sluggish, or they may disregard their social responsibilities to assist and offer resources so it should be avoided.

### **8. Limitations and Recommendation for Future Direction**

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Despite of the precautions steps, there are few limitations of this study and it has revealed a number of areas which require further attention. Based on the experience from this humble effort (and past researches as well) in the area of impression management, the following limitations and recommendations are put forward:

- This study was conducted at a point in time rather than a longitudinal study (over a period of time), which is one of the study limitations for this research. For the future researchers it is suggested that employ a longitudinal research design and experimental designs to determine the directionality of the association between IM tactics and job performance.
- Self-reported research tools (questionnaires) and quantitative techniques were used in this study, which have been criticized for a variety of reasons, including subjective judgment and cross-cultural differences. It is suggested to employ a mixed method approach in which researchers should conduct in-depth interviews to provide a "inside image" of IM techniques, job performance, and various dimensions of IM.
- Based on the preliminary literature investigation, personal observations and pilot survey (interviews), only five IM approaches for this study were chosen, with a special focus on the performance element in academia. Other variables e.g. demographic variables, personality dimensions etc., not chosen/used as control variables which is one of the study limitations needed to be addressed in future. For the future researchers, in order to further elaborate different aspects of IM, it is proposed to use few other control, mediating and moderating variables.
- Because of the nature of the sample (non-probability sampling from private sector university), the generalizability of the results of this study is limited. The future researchers should go for probability sampling and include the public sector universities as well so that the results can be inferred upon the population of higher education institutes of Pakistan as a whole.

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