

Dispositional and Situational Factors as Predictors of Impression Management Behaviors

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ABSTRACT

Employing social influence theory, we empirically examine four variables as predictors of impression management behavior enactment. Our findings, based on responses from 144 full-time state workers, suggest numerous significant relationships. Specifically, we offer evidence indicating the existence of negative relationships between core self-evaluations and the use of self-promotion, ingratiation, exemplification, intimidation, and supplication. Our findings also suggest a negative relationship between managerial support and the use of self-promotion. Finally, we report evidence of positive relationships between interaction frequency and exemplification, and between job strain and supplication. Implications of the findings are discussed and future research opportunities are suggested.

Introduction

Impression management (IM) research focuses on the ways individuals behave in order to create and manipulate images and perceptions of themselves in the minds of others (Bozeman & Kacmar, 1997). Formally defined, IM is the process by which individuals present information about themselves in order to appear as they wish others to perceive them (Rosenfeld, Giacalone, & Riordan, 1995). A variety of IM tactics can be employed in the workplace by subordinates to sway the perceptions, sentiments, and decisions made by organizational superiors (King, 2004). Ingratiation (i.e., complimenting others), self-promotion (i.e., talking highly about oneself), exemplification (i.e., serving as a role model), intimidation (i.e., acting in a threatening manner), and supplication (i.e., acting helpless) are five of the most researched dimensions of IM in the literature today (Bolino, Kacmar, Turnley, & Gilstrap, 2008; Bolino & Turnley, 1999). While ingratiation, self-promotion, and exemplification aim to shed a positive light upon the person enacting the behavior, intimidation and supplication most often have malevolent effects associated with a target's perceptions of the actor employing the tactic.

Researchers emphasize the importance of investigating the dispositional and situational predictors of IM usage (Kidd, 2004). Understanding the predictors of IM behaviors may help to identify some of the organizational conditions and day-to-day situations that make organizational members more likely to behave and react as they do (Nicholson,

1990). Moreover, the call and need to identify specific predictors of distinct organizational behaviors are not unique to the area of IM studies. Other work in the areas of organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) (Organ & Ryan, 1995) and organizational deviance behaviors (Bolin & Heatherly, 2001) supports the importance of understanding distinct predictor-behavior relationships as well as the need to study specific predictors that influence the enactment of certain organizational behaviors.

A number of situational and dispositional factors have been linked to IM behavior usage in organizational settings (Barsness, Diekmann, & Seidel, 2005; Bolino & Turnley, 2003; Fandt & Ferris, 1990; Snyder, 1974). Of most interest to this study is Kacmar, Carlson, and Bratton's (2004) investigation of the relationships among situational and dispositional factors and the use of ingratiating behavior. Their work created the avenue of inquiry this study follows. While their study was an important initial step, its focus was limited to only one type of IM, ingratiation. Thus, these researchers, as well as others (Bolino et al., 2008), have called for additional inquiry to further the understanding of the relationships among not only ingratiation, but all the IM behaviors, and their predictors.

Accordingly, the following study serves to enhance the understanding of the relationships among the five aforementioned IM behaviors and predictors of them. Highlighting the theoretical links between distinct predictors and IM tactics and then empirically testing them will inform future research efforts aimed at examining the many direct and indirect effects of workers' dispositions, organizational situations, and managerial behaviors related to IM usage. Our findings also continue the efforts to inform practitioners who supervise and lead organizational members who engage in IM.

Dimensions of IM Behaviors

The Jones and Pittman (1982) study was one of the first to highlight the importance of IM behaviors in organizational settings. Their taxonomy of IM behaviors includes five dimensions identified as tactics that can be performed to create images designed to enhance one's career. The first, self-promotion, involves highlighting one's abilities or accomplishments in order to be viewed as a competent employee. An example of this type of behavior might be when an employee broadcasts his/her completion of a company sponsored training program. The second is ingratiation, which occurs when one uses flattery to increase the target's level of liking. An attempt to complement the boss's attire serves as an example of this type of behavior. Exemplification is the third tactic noted in the taxonomy. Actors enact behaviors that make them appear like model employees, going above and beyond the requirements of their jobs when using this tactic. An example of this type of behavior is when employees volunteer for high-visibility, irregular, and undesirable job assignments such as jobs requiring heavy lifting (e.g. delivering boxes of office paper) or working in dirty working conditions (e.g. cleaning out the office microwave oven).

Tactics four and five allow the actor to create negative perceptions of themselves in the minds of their targets. Jones and Pittman (1982) suggested actors can use intimidation, the fourth IM tactic in the taxonomy, to create the attribution of danger. Subordinates

might utilize both direct or indirect commands and innuendoes in an effort to change the balance of power in their relationships with supervisors and co-workers who may become fearful of the behaviors of seemingly unruly workers. The fifth IM tactic, supplication, also negatively affects the perceptions created by targets. Supplication allows actors to advertise their own limitations to targets in order to appear needy. Frequent requests for aid and advice on the grounds of lacking training and aptitude constitute examples of supplicatory behaviors that occur in organizational settings.

Social Influence Theory

We referenced social influence theory (Levy, Collins, & Nail, 1998) as a theoretical guide in order to identify potential predictors of IM tactics, offer logic for how these predictors might be related to IM, and to rule out other possible explanations for our findings. Social influence theory (also referred to as interpersonal influence theory) was introduced in the works of Goffman (1959). Goffman's work has influenced theory and investigations in the areas of interpersonal behavior, organizational behavior, self-presentation, impression management, and organizational politics, and provides the foundation of social influence theory. Goffman noted individuals will purposefully manage the impressions they convey while interacting with others. Goffman's arguably simple but insightful contention, coupled with the notion that some situations or dispositions will actually stimulate individuals to manage the impressions they convey, are the key tenets of social influence theory.

Higgins, Judge, and Ferris (2003) note that social influence theory is not as simple a theory as it may first seem, and state, "A number of contextual factors and individual differences determine which influence tactics an individual chooses to use, under what circumstances he or she chooses them, and how effective the tactic of choice will be (page 90)." That is, the choice of which influencing tactic to be used is a choice left up to the user (i.e. actor) to consider, and tactics may not be universally used in any given situation, and, in fact, may do more harm than good in certain instances (e.g., intimidation or bullying). However, the tenets of social influence theory may still be considered predictive. The theory provides indications of what behaviors may be enacted given certain situational elements present in the environment and dispositional characteristics occurring within an individual when the theory is considered, utilized, and tested in specific contexts like the organizational workplace (Jones & Pittman, 1982; Kipnis, Schmidt, & Wilkinson, 1980).

In terms of workplace behavior, social influence theory suggests social influencing actions in organizations sometimes arise out of the need for workers to intentionally create or change the perceptions of their superiors and co-workers (Levy et al., 1998). The source of the need to influence may stem from self-perception, such as when a worker notes deficiencies in his or her own skills and behaviors that may limit career success. Alternatively, the need may arise from the conscious and unconscious treatment of a subordinate by his or her superior. In this situation, the lack of praise, heightened levels of punitive behavior enacted by a superior, or stress resulting from the conditions of a job or task appointment may prompt a subordinate to engage in IM

behaviors in order to change or influence the treatment he or she receives. Using these two broad sources of deficiency as bases for our search, we were able to identify four potential predictors of influencing behaviors enacted in organizational contexts that may create the perceived need to change superiors' and co-workers' perceptions.

Predictors of IM Behaviors

The predictors previously referred to are the dispositional variable, 'core self-evaluations performed by the subordinate,' as well as the situational variables, 'interaction frequency with superiors,' 'managerial support from superiors,' and 'job strain.' Each of these antecedents is examined in more detail below.

Core Self-Evaluations

An individual's core self-evaluation, which is a broad personality trait, comprised of self-esteem, self-efficacy, neuroticism, and locus of control, is arguably best described as the introspective thoughts one has related to one's abilities and status (Judge, Erez, Bono, & Thoresen, 2003). Core self-evaluations tend to be stable and enduring self-conceptions that generally persist over time, and are activated across situations. The evaluations essentially lead to a person's cognitive orientations (e.g., capable, high status) and are sometimes referenced to help understand the meaning of circumstances, thereby facilitating the understanding of courses of action (Judge, Locke, Durham, 1997).

The core self-evaluation is a self-analysis of the abilities a person feels he or she possesses to complete tasks associated with daily life and long-term career success. In the realm of impression management behaviors, the core sense of self is thought to significantly influence the likelihood an actor will behave in a manner that will influence a target's perception and ensure an actor's success. Individuals with positive core self-evaluations have a heightened sense of self-reliance and believe they possess the ability to succeed at whatever is asked of them. Consequently, we contend that someone with a high (positive) core self-evaluation will have little need to engage in impression management behaviors designed to either place the actor in a positive light or manipulate the actor's target. Our argument is based on the fact that high core self-evaluators recognize that their normal behaviors will accomplish their goals thus reducing the need for them to engage in IM of any kind. However, individuals with low (negative) core self-evaluations recognize that they are unable to thrive based only on their own efforts and therefore may be willing to engage in IM to create positive outcomes for themselves. Our logic suggests a negative relationship between IM and core self-evaluations. Thus, we suspect that as core self-evaluations increase (are higher/more positive), the use of IM behaviors will decrease. Conversely, we suspect that as core self-evaluations decrease (are lower/less positive), the use of IM behaviors will increase. Formally stated, we suggest:

Hypothesis 1. Core self-evaluations will be negatively related to the use of self-promotion, exemplification, ingratiation, intimidation, and supplication.

Interaction Frequency

A general assumption of social influence theory is that in the majority of instances individuals will intentionally change the perceptions of others through the course of interpersonal interactions in a manner that will create good will and affect, ultimately benefiting the actor. Thus, the likelihood a subordinate will use his or her frequent or even infrequent access to a superior or co-worker to establish a negative image by using intimidation and supplication IM tactics theoretically and intuitively seems unlikely, *ceteris paribus*. Therefore, we contend relationships between interaction frequency and intimidation, as well as interaction frequency and supplication, will likely not exist.

In terms of the relationship between interaction frequency and IM behavior enactment, the use of social influence theory is not limited to its underlying assumptions only serving as a foundation of the non-use of negative IM behaviors when interactions occur between the subordinate and superior, *ceteris paribus*. We contend that based on the central tenets of the theory, the more frequent the interactions between a superior and a subordinate the more likely the subordinate will enact IM behaviors designed to place a subordinate in a positive light, in order to make one's self familiar in the mind of the superior and ultimately better the relationship a subordinate has with a superior. Informing our contention is the work in the area of interpersonal trust completed by Lewis and Weigert (1985). In their discussion of trust and certainty in relationships, the researchers note trust and the minimization of uncertain are often necessary elements of interpersonal relationships due to limitations on time and resources. Trust and certainty often allow an interpersonal relationship to be operable. They duly note a necessary precondition of trust and certainty between two individuals is familiarity. Familiarity, the condition of being aware of a person's traits, qualities, and skills, is a condition dependent on an individual (e.g. a subordinate or a superior) being able to gain knowledge of another through interpersonal interactions. Familiarity is arguably contingent upon the existence of opportunities to, among other things, compliment and show one's liking, promote one's skills and positive attributes, and demonstrate willingness to work hard. Therefore, given the implicit goals of the formation of trust (McAllister, 1995) and familiarity (Lewis & Weigert, 1985) in a subordinate-supervisor relationship, and in alignment with the assumptions of social influence theory, we contend increased interaction frequency will increase the probability of use of all the positive IM behaviors by an employee that may ultimately lead to other beneficial situations. Thus, we predict:

Hypothesis 2: Interaction frequency will be positively related to the use of self-promotion, ingratiation, and exemplification.

Managerial Support

An employee may feel he or she is not getting the aid and attention deserved. Often, if a subordinate feels he or she is not being given adequate support for the attainment of his or her career goals or for the fulfillment of his or her physiological needs, he or she is

likely to react to the situation (Viswesvaran, Sanchez, & Fisher, 1999). One possible reaction is to use IM tactics to purposefully bring the situation to his or her manager's attention.

A subordinate may engage in self-promoting IM behaviors to call attention to the lack of managerial support. Self-promoting IM behaviors can be used to demonstrate one's effectiveness even when adequate support is not available. Successful self-promotion likely produces increased levels of self-assurance and self-reliance in addition to capturing the attention of one's superior.

The lack of support from a superior on whom a subordinate relies also may result in the subordinate attempting to use ingratiation and exemplification behaviors to garner supervisory attention. Ingratiation tactics may be invoked by a subordinate in order to wheedle a supervisor into realizing the lack of attention being paid to the subordinate. If a supervisor takes notice of and appreciates the compliments and friendly gestures, the needs of the subordinate may become more salient concerns in the mind of the supervisor. The supervisor may at the very least reciprocate the compliments and ingratiating behavior in an attempt to 'even the score,' thereby adhering to the reciprocity norms of the supervisor-subordinate relationship in most organizations (Gouldner, 1960). In the same vein, the use of exemplification tactics also is expected to be related to the lack of managerial support. By demonstrating one's abilities considered as core job elements, the subordinate may be able to redress supervisory oversights related to the worker's job performance.

Supplicating IM behaviors also may be used to bring to light the deficiency that exists due to a lack of support. Due to the hierarchical nature of organizations, a struggling subordinate may instinctively turn to a superior for help with job-related issues. When the issues include lack of support from superiors, the subordinate will often deem it necessary to highlight poor work performance and emphasize the need for training, mentoring, and guidance through supplication tactics such as appearing to need extra help and responding to questions in an unlearned and uninformed fashion.

The use of intimidation is thought to be an unfortunate effect related to the subordinate receiving little supervisory support. Subordinates may enact intimidating behaviors out of frustration. Failure to receive adequate support for career needs and overall career goals may trigger retaliatory behavior in the forms of churlish innuendos and bullying requests, and may be perceived by the subordinate as a means to protect his or her self-interests. In all of these cases we are arguing a negative relationship between managerial support and the use of IM. That is, the lack of managerial support increases the likeliness of IM behavior enactment. We predict:

Hypothesis 3. Managerial support will be negatively related to the use of self-promotion, ingratiation, exemplification, supplication, and intimidation.

Job strain

Job strain has neither been well defined nor described in the organizational literature. Most definitions of the condition involve some description of the inability of a particular worker to cope with his or her job demands, resulting in feelings of angst and frustration, sometimes leading up to the low work performance levels (Weiman, 1977). The phenomenon of being strained is arguably the product of an individual realizing stress beyond a manageable level (Seyle, 1974).

Job strain may be better understood through the lens of the Demand-Control-Support (DCS) model (Karasek & Theorell, 1990). In the DCS model, job strain, the outcome of over-stressing an individual, is posited to be the product of an organizational member's perception of his/her work environment. The makeup of the work environment as it relates to job strain is thought to partially consist of the demands placed on the worker. The demands of the job and worker stress levels are thought to be positively related (Karasek & Theorell, 1990). Another element of job strain stemming from one's work environment is an employee's perceptions of control in the workplace, and those perceptions' alignment with the need for autonomy. For individuals who desire to control their work environment, placement in an organizational setting where they control very little may create stressful difficulties for the employee (Tansey, Mizelle, Ferrin, Tschopp, & Frain, 2004). The third facet of job strain as it relates to one's work environment is the amount of support granted by co-workers and supervisors. Organizational members who feel they are supported by their superiors and colleagues tend to feel tied to the larger organization or cadre group, believe they are valued, and may report higher levels of core self-evaluations than those who do not feel they are supported by organizational members (Storey & Certo, 1996).

Regardless of an exact definition or description of the phenomenon of job strain, social influence theory lends itself to predicting what may occur when organizational members experience it in their work environments through the demands placed on them, the control granted them, and the support given to them. In line with social influence theory, in order to counteract the general demands of the job that leave organizational members feeling strained and at times relatively powerless to control their career trajectory, employees may begin to resent individuals they feel are responsible for their frustration and angst. Moreover, employees may begin to engage in intimidating behaviors aimed at these individuals in order to feel more in control of their jobs, or intimidate their way out of work environments not of their liking (Jones & Pittman, 1982). Additionally, the employees may advertise inabilities and dependence on others, thereby giving up power and autonomy in hopes of changing environmental conditions in order to remove the job strain they are under. These supplication behaviors may allow for redistribution of power, as the employees are able to minimize organizational responsibilities and job tasks that will be redistributed among colleagues. These supplication efforts will likely make their work environments more pleasurable. Therefore, we predict the following:

Hypothesis 4. Job strain will be positively related to the use of intimidation and supplication.

Method

Sample

To aid our examination of the potential predictors of IM behaviors, all 192 full-time employees of a state agency were asked to complete our survey. The state agency is responsible for health and family services. The agency is directed by one person who has a management team responsible for implementing the initiatives managed by the agency. By way of example, some of the specific initiatives include immunization services, sexually transmitted disease control and awareness services, teen pregnancy services, and the management of the state's food stamp program. A total of 161 employees returned a survey. After eliminating surveys with missing data, our sample consisted of 144 (75% response rate). Of the 144 respondents, 17 (12%) are male. A total of 20 (14%) are African American, 4 (3%) are Hispanic, 1 (1%) is Asian, 114 (79%) are non-minority, and 5 (3%) who noted themselves as "other" were included in the sample. The average age of our respondents was 45 years (s.d. 8.66) and the average organizational tenure was 9.7 years (s.d. 4.24).

Procedure

Data were collected from respondents in the sample over a three-week period. Approximately one week prior to the beginning of the data collection, the director of a state agency sent an email to her division members introducing the study and requesting their participation. This email was followed by a personalized electronic correspondence from the researchers that explained the goals of the study, their rights according to Human Subjects Requirements, and a link to a website that housed the survey. Respondents were asked to follow the link and complete the survey at their earliest convenience within a three-week window.

Measures

Items were coded such that high values represent high levels of the constructs of interest. Unless otherwise indicated, the items were responded to on a 1-5 Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree).

Impression management

The 22-item scale developed by Bolino and Turnley (1999) and further validated by Kacmar, Harris, and Nagy (2007) was used to measure IM. The scale is composed of 5 subscales that tap the 5 dimensions of IM outlined by Jones and Pittman (1982). The anchors for this scale are (1) never behave this way; to (5) often behave this way. A sample item for self-promotion is "Talk proudly about your experience or education." A sample item for ingratiation is "Compliment your colleagues so they will see you as likable." A sample item for exemplification is "Arrive at work early to look dedicated." A sample item for intimidation is "Use intimidation to get colleagues to behave appropriately." Finally, a sample item for supplication is "Act like you need assistance so people will help you out." All

five subscales produced acceptable internal consistency estimates with alpha reliabilities for self-promotion = .88, ingratiation = .91, exemplification = .81, intimidation = .87, and supplication = .93.

Core self-evaluations

Core self-evaluations were measured with Judge et al.'s (2003) 12-item core self-evaluations scale (CSES) ($\alpha = .76$). Examples of sample items are "I am confident I get the success I deserve in life" and "I am capable of coping with most of my problems."

Interaction frequency

We measured frequency of interaction with the supervisor using McAllister's (1995) four-item scale. An example item from this measure includes "How frequently do you interact with your supervisor at work?" These items were anchored on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (once or twice in the past six months) to 5 (many times daily) ($\alpha = .86$).

Managerial support

Five items from the Greenhaus, Parasuraman, and Wormley's (1990) managerial support scale were utilized in this study ($\alpha = .89$). Sample items include "My supervisor takes the time to learn about my career goals and aspirations" and "This supervisor gives me helpful advice about improving my performance when I need it."

Job strain

Job strain was measured using House and Rizzo's (1972) ($\alpha = .88$) 7-item measure. Example items include, "I work under a great deal of tension" and "I have felt fidgety or nervous as a result of my job."

Statistical Analyses

We used the structural equation modeling capabilities and features in LISREL 8.80 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 2001) to test our hypotheses, assess the validity of our measures, and explore the impact of common method variance on our results.

Results

The means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations among the variables are presented in Table 1. The means for both supplication and intimidation were fairly low. However, these means were not unexpected as these variables fall into the "low base-rate" category (e.g., abusive supervision, Tepper, 2000). Further, the means reported in Table 1 compare favorably to those reported in extant research (Bolino & Turnley, 1999; Kacmar et al. 2007).

Three correlations were high enough (i.e., in the .60 range) to make us question the levels of discriminate validity among the measures we employed. These include the correlations between managerial support and interaction frequency, ingratiation and exemplification, and intimidation and supplication. Given that the magnitude of these correlations cast some doubt on the uniqueness of the measures of our variables, we began by estimating a measurement model (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988).

We ran a confirmatory factor analysis using LISREL 8.80 to confirm that the measured constructs in our study were independent. The model incorporated each of the nine variables as latent variables with the items used to tap the constructs as indicators. The measurement model produced acceptable fit statistics ($\chi^2_{(1139)} = 1736.73$, $p < .001$, CFI = .94, NNFI = .94, RMSEA = .055, SRMR = .072) and all of the path loadings were significant at the $p < .05$ level.

To further explore the discriminant validity of our scales we followed the procedure outlined by Fornell and Larcker (1981) and calculated the square root of the average variance explained for each of the variables in our study. This value, which we present on the diagonal in Table 1, represents the variance accounted for by the items that compose the scale. To demonstrate discriminant validity, this value must exceed the corresponding latent variable correlations in the same row and column. If this condition is met, then we have evidence that the variance shared between any two constructs (i.e., the correlation) is less than the average variance explained by the items that compose the scale. As shown in Table 1, this condition is met for all of our scales.

Table 1. Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Core self-evaluation	3.85	0.51	.56								
2. Managerial support	3.67	1.05	0.23**	.80							
3. Interaction frequency	3.59	0.88	0.20*	0.64***	.79						
4. Job strain	2.52	0.87	0.38***	-0.25**	-0.25*	.58					
5. Self-promotion	2.74	0.81	-0.03	0.16	0.15	0.09	.87				
6. Ingratiation	2.55	0.98	-0.18*	0.11	0.18*	0.28**	0.49**	.85			
7. Exemplification	1.83	0.79	-0.19*	0.02	0.12	0.15	0.40**	0.63**	.68		
8. Intimidation	1.37	0.56	-0.18*	-0.18*	-0.15	0.27**	0.13	0.18*	0.32**	.73	
9. Supplication	1.25	0.49	-0.31***	-0.08	-0.08	0.16	0.15	0.22**	0.39**	0.63**	.86

Note: Values on the diagonal are the square root of the average variance explained which must be larger than all zero-order correlations in the row and column in which they appear to demonstrate discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

N=144. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$

A final test prior to testing our hypotheses was to examine the degree of common method variance inherent in our data. This was an important step to undertake since all the data were collected from the same respondents at the same time. Specifically, we followed the suggestion of Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, and Podsakoff (2003) and controlled for the effects of an unmeasured latent method factor. To implement this technique, we estimated a model that included a tenth latent variable that represented an uncorrelated method factor and allowed all the items to load on this factor. The goal

of our analysis was to see if a model that included a latent factor designed to represent variance due to collecting our data using a common method was superior to one without such a factor. According to Williams, Cote, and Buckley (1989), if the fit of the measurement model is significantly improved by the addition of an uncorrelated method factor then CMV may be an issue. Fit statistics after adding an uncorrelated method factor improved slightly (CFI = .95, NNFI = .94, RMSEA = .048, SRMR = .061). The χ^2 difference test between the two models was significant ($\chi^2_{\text{diff}(51)} = 214.56, p < .01$). These results indicate that adding a method factor improves the measurement model and therefore CMV may be an issue in this particular study.

In addition to an overall comparison test between these two models, the amount of variance explained by the method factor can be calculated by squaring and summing the loadings on this factor (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Williams et al., 1989). In our case, CMV accounted for only 4% of the total variance, which is much less than the 25% observed by Williams et al. (1989). The results of these analyses suggest that the model tested does benefit from the addition of a method factor. However, the gain in fit is quite small and more importantly the method factor appears to account for very little variation in the data. Therefore, we submit that CMV is not a pervasive problem in this study and that the relationships reported below represent substantive rather than artifactual effects.

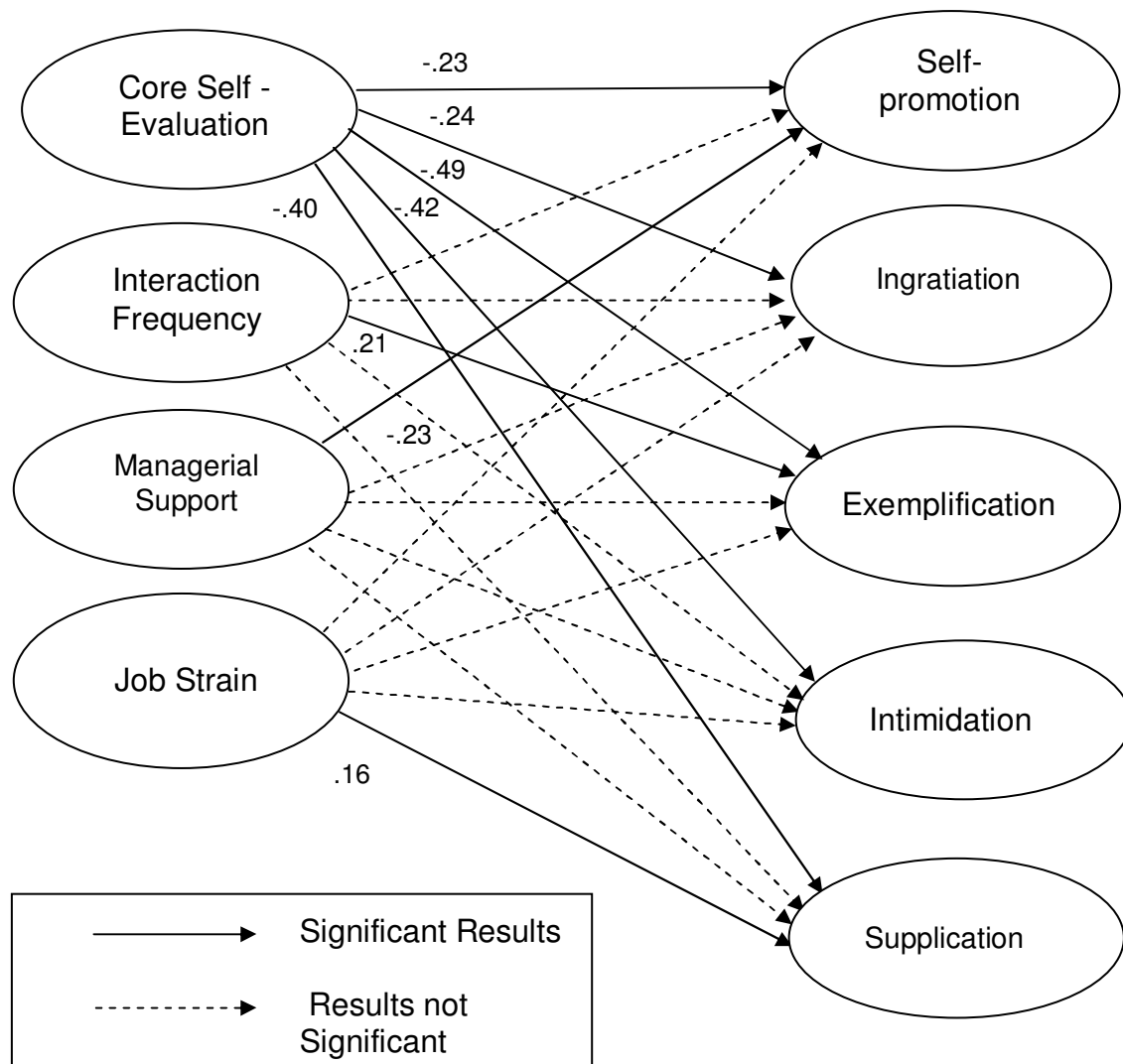
Hypothesis Testing

Deeming the fit of our measurement model was acceptable, we moved on to testing our hypotheses by estimating the structural model shown in Figure 1. Our structural model also produced acceptable fit statistics ($\chi^2_{(1157)} = 2017.89, p < .001, \text{CFI} = .92, \text{NNFI} = .92, \text{RMSEA} = .066, \text{SRMR} = .12$) and provided support for the majority of our hypotheses. Each of the predictors significantly related to at least one IM tactic, and each IM tactic was significantly predicted by at least one of the predictors.

Hypothesis 1, which predicted that core self-evaluations would be negatively related to the IM tactics of self-promotion, ingratiation, exemplification, intimidation, and supplication, was supported. As predicted, these results suggest that as individuals' core self-evaluations increase the use of impression management tactics designed to self-promote and manipulate superiors and coworkers decreases. Hypothesis 2 was partially supported. We found evidence to suggest that interaction frequency encourages exemplification usage. However, we found no evidence to suggest increased levels of interactions with superiors led to organizational members enacting self-promotion and ingratiation tactics at higher rates than at when interactions take place less frequently. Similarly, Hypothesis 3 was partially supported. Evidence to support the contention that a negative relationship exists between managerial support and self-promotion tactics was found when considering all the variables in the model. Despite this, no evidence was found to suggest managerial support predicts intimidation, ingratiation, exemplification, and supplication. Finally, Hypothesis 4 also was partially supported. Evidence to suggest as job strain increases so does the use of supplication tactics was found. However, the hypothesized relationship between job

strain and intimidation tactics was not statistically supported by the data when all variables were included in the structural equation model.

Figure 1. Completely standardized path loadings for the predictor model.



Discussion

Our research highlights and partially supports the essential contention of social influence theory, arguing that social influencing actions, such as impression management behaviors, arise out of the need for an individual to intentionally change the perceptions of another, due to a surmised deficiency in perceptions (Levy et al., 1998). Our exploration of predictors of the five IM tactics indicates first that the predictors acted uniquely. That is, the predictors did not relate in the same way to each

of the individual IM tactics. Our findings provide initial support for the notions that these five IM tactics and four potential predictors of IM behavior are not interchangeable and that each may be utilized in organizational settings. Though limited by our use of only three specific work conditions and one type of personal disposition, these results lend some credence to our hypotheses and begin to uncover how specific phenomena and work conditions might predict the use of impression management behaviors.

Our study and its findings extend the work of other empirical efforts that have tested potential predictors of impression management behaviors (Kacmar et al., 2004). Consistent with our predictions, evidence was discovered to suggest core self-evaluations are negatively related to the use of all impression management tactics. The finding suggests that some organizational workers with high levels of introspective thoughts related to their own abilities and status may have little need to manipulate their superiors who rate and manage them. In addition, our results lead us to conclude the relationship between interaction frequency between a subordinate and his/her superior and the use of exemplification tactics is likely positive. Individuals who have access to their bosses may use that access to make their worth known through behaviors that highlight their value. The significant negative relationship between managerial support and self-promotion demonstrates that subordinates also may tout their virtues to their managers when they feel a lack of support. Finally, the finding that the heightening of job strain may predict the use of supplication tactics by subordinates suggests that asking supervisors and co-workers for help and demonstrating the willingness to quit may be a strategy for lifting some of the demands of their jobs.

Limitations and Strengths

As with all empirical research, limitations are associated with this particular study. Two limitations of the study were unavoidable considering the design of the study. First, the data were collected from only one group of individuals who self-reported their sentiments. This limitation has the potential to lead to problems associated with common method variance. However, the results of our tests for CMV alleviate this concern to some degree. Second, the results might be viewed as limited in terms of their generalizability, as only one group of employees from one organization was surveyed in order to complete the sample.

The study contributes to the body of impression management research in a number of ways. First, the study makes use of all five IM dimensions outlined in the Jones and Pittman (1982) typology, where most other IM studies do not. Second, the study is one of the first studies in the field linking predictors to the five dimensions of IM. This particular study also contributes to the practical knowledge in the field by discussing and testing situations where IM behaviors are enacted and can be managed.

Implications and Future Research

Our analysis related to a number of hypothesized relationships unfortunately resulted in some statistically insignificant findings. For instance, no statistically-derived evidence

was found to suggest the positive relationships between interaction frequency and ingratiation, and interaction frequency and self-promotion. Through study replication, these and many other relationships we hypothesized to exist may be able to be confirmed. Moreover, utilizing additional theory and developing new hypotheses related to relationships not mentioned in our work (e.g. interaction frequency possibly being negatively-related to ingratiation and self-promotion because of a rush to make a good impression) may further researchers' efforts to uncover and describe additional dispositional and situational predictors of IM behaviors.

Also, the use of this particular sample may have led to the low base rates related to a number of the variables tested. Governmental agencies tend to lack an element of competitiveness, and arguably, are populated by less opportunistic employees than organizations in the private sector (Boyne, 2002). Ideally, the study should be replicated in an organization operating as a for-profit entity, utilizing a cross-sectional sample of subordinates, and securing supervisors' assessments of subordinates' impression management and job-related behaviors.

Next, although we included a variety of theoretically relevant variables in our study, other potential predictors exist. Key constructs that also might serve as predictors of IM behaviors include social desirability, the need for power, self-monitoring, and co-worker support. Based on the tenets of social influence theory we expect social desirability, the need for power, and self-monitoring tendencies are likely to be positively related to the use of impression management tactics. In addition, we would expect the results to be mixed in terms of the relationships among co-worker support and the need to manipulate one's supervisors. Whereas affect generated through collegial support might serve as a reason to refrain from the use of tactics that place the employee in a positive light, support from co-workers may spur or bolster the decision of a subordinate to change the supervisor-subordinate balance of power through the use of intimidation tactics.

Additionally, expanding the line of inquiry from what predicts IM behaviors to what the effects of these behaviors are is also necessary. The logical consequences of using IM behaviors such as performance and promotability should be examined to further understand the effects of these organizational behaviors. Further, exploring the effects of the use of positive tactics related to IM behaviors, such as exemplification and self-promotion, might lead to evidence to suggest using these types of behaviors enhances the superior-subordinate relationship and improves key bottom line organizational outcomes such as team and organization performance. Likewise, testing negative dimensions such as supplication and intimidation might lead to evidence suggesting these behaviors directly or indirectly hamper the supervisor-subordinate relationship, thereby negatively affecting overall team and organizational performance. Including hard measures of variables related to performance consequences (e.g., pay raises) also would allow researchers to determine the unique aspects of the IM dimensions by studying their effects, thereby continuing the efforts to more fully understand IM's nomological network.

Conclusion

IM behaviors are the instruments and catalysts used to elicit a desired image to further one's career (Gordon, 1996; King, 2004; Liden & Mitchell, 1988). Researchers and practitioners who are able to identify and measure IM behaviors will be better equipped to study and manage these behaviors. Thus, the identification and measurement of IM behaviors as well as the attainment of higher levels of understanding related to the phenomena predicting their usage are important issues related to researchers and practitioners alike.

In their original empirical study summary, Kacmar et al. (2004) initiated the investigation of the effects dispositional and situational factors serving as predictors might have on the propensities to enact distinct IM behaviors. Since then, researchers have called for the inquiry to continue in order to further understand what drives organizational members to enact IM tactics (Bolino et al., 2008). Our study is a solid step on the road of inquiry and understanding. In a practical sense, the need for investigating the predictors related to the use of impression management behaviors is evident in order to better understand the many contexts where these behaviors are employed in the workplace. We hope these findings will inform both practicing managers and researchers in the field of management about the impact these dispositional and situational factors can make on organizational members.

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