

IMPACT OF IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT ON ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE: A REVIEW ANALYSIS

Dr. Bhatari

Associate Professor, Hindu Girls College, Sonipat, Haryana, India

Abstract: Impression management (IM) refers to the strategic behaviors adopted by individuals and organizations to influence how others perceive them. In today's organizations, IM plays a key role in success of the employee, leadership effectiveness, reputation of the organization, and, overall organizational performance. This review consolidates the main theoretical foundations, empirical findings along with the emerging trends related to IM in organizational contexts. Drawing on a multidisciplinary literature in organizational behavior, psychology, and management science, this review explores the impact of IM on the performance at the individual, team as well as organizational levels. Both positive and negative outcomes are examined, including increased trust, improved performance reviews, enhanced reputation, and risks such as unethical behavior, burnout, and performance skewed indicators. The review encompasses a qualitative research methodology that involves a systematic, peer-reviewed analysis of the scientific literature. The results highlight that impression management (IM) contributes significantly to organizational outcomes. Future research directions and their implications for managers are also discussed.

Index terms: Impression management, strategies, organizational performance, tactics, organizational behavior

1. Introduction

Organizations work culture exists within complex social systems where perceptions often influence decision-making more than objective performance of the individuals alone. Impression management (IM) initially visualized by Erving Goffman in 1959 and has become an important area of research in organizational behavior. IM incorporates the strategic tactics used by individuals and organizations to control how others perceive them. Employees may use it to get promotions, favourable evaluations, or in order to improve their interpersonal relationships. Moreover, leaders, use it to influence their team members so that credibility can be enhanced and legitimacy established. At a macro level, organizations implement IM through their brand image, corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, and public communication to shape stakeholder perceptions.

Because organizational life is inherently social, print management has become inextricably linked to organizational performance: it influences team collaboration, leadership, and organizational competitiveness. This review article analyzes the impact of print management on organizational performance by summarizing existing research, highlighting key themes, and identifying research gaps.

2. Conceptual Foundation of Impression Management

Impression management is an attempt by individuals or groups to influence how they are perceived by others (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). It includes verbal and non-verbal behaviors, self-presentation strategies, performance claims, and defensive tactics.

2.1 Theoretical Background

According to Goffman's Dramaturgical Theory individuals play "roles" in social interactions, crafting impressions based on context. As per the Social Identity Theory people manage impressions to support identity goals related to group membership. Self-Determination Theory says that IM strategies can be driven by intrinsic or extrinsic motivation. Whereas, Signaling Theory explains that Individuals and organizations send signals to reduce information asymmetry. And according to Attribution Theory Impression management influences how others attribute causes to behaviors or outcomes.

3. Forms and Strategies of Impression Management

IM occurs in various forms, namely:

3.1 Individual-Level Strategies

At individual level first comes the Self-promotion (Highlighting accomplishments), Ingratiation (using flattery or favors to win approval), Exemplification (demonstrating dedication or morality), Supplication (appearing needy to receive assistance) and Intimidation (Creating an impression of power).

3.2 Leadership-Level IM

At the leadership level, leaders use IM to influence how followers perceive competence, charisma, and trustworthiness.

3.3 Organizational-Level IM

At the organizational level, impression management is the organizational practices namely: CSR campaigns, Sustainability reporting, Crisis communications, Branding and marketing and Recruitment messaging

4. Impact of Impression Management on Organizational Performance

There are certain effects (both positive as well as negative) of impression management on the organizational performance, which are discussed as under:

4.1 Positive Impacts

The positive effects are elaborated as under:

a. Increased Employee Performance Evaluations

It is depicted from the literature that employees who use moderate IM tactics namely; self-promotion and ingratiation, often receive better performance ratings (Harris et al., 2007).

b. Enhanced Leader-Follower Relationships

It is found from the literature that leaders who use IM in a right way can build trust and inspire their followers. Impression management strategies like exemplification, credibility building and transparency can enhance perceptions of leadership effectiveness.

c. Reinforced Organizational Reputation

Organizational impression management through sustainability practices; corporate social responsibility and positive public messaging improves brand image and stakeholder support (Bansal & Clelland, 2004).

d. Enhanced Social Capital

Impression management strategies helps employees to build networks and collaborate more effectively, and access resources.

e. Competitive Advantage

Organizations that manage impressions management strategically nourish stakeholder confidence, which can further lead to financial performance gains.

4.2 Negative Impacts

However, there are certain negative effects also which are discussed as under:

a. Disfigured Performance Assessments

Sometimes, managers may be biased by impression management tactics rather than the actual performance, which leads to unfair evaluations.

b. Ethical Lapses and Deceit

Furthermore, some impression management tactics involve lying, manipulation or exaggeration that harm trust and culture the organization.

c. Emotional Exhaustion and Lassitude

Employees who must constantly craft impressions experience higher emotional labor.

d. Reduced Authenticity

Overuse of IM may damage interpersonal relationships and team cohesion.

e. Organizational Ailment

At a macro level, excessive organizational impression management can mask internal inefficiencies that can delay important reforms.

5. Moderating and Mediating Factors

There are certain moderating and mediating factors that affect the impression management tactics and therefore, organizational performance. These are explained as under:

a. Organizational Culture

The culture of the organization emphasizing transparency and ethics reduce the negative impacts of impression management tactics.

b. Leadership Style

There are many leadership styles, out of which, transformational leaders foster healthy impression management, while, on the other hand, authoritarian leaders may encourage manipulation.

c. Personality Traits

Out of a number of personality traits, individuals who are high in self-monitoring tend to engage more in impression management tactics.

d. Contextual Factors

Competitive environments may increase IM due to pressure for visibility and recognition.

6. Research Methodology

This paper follows a qualitative systematic literature review methodology, focusing on peer-reviewed empirical and conceptual studies.

6.1 Research Design

A conceptual review approach was adopted to synthesize theories, findings, and perspectives on impression management and organizational performance and the impact of impression management on the organizational performance.

6.2 Data Sources

Databases reviewed from sources namely: Google Scholar, JSTOR, Scopus, Web of Science and APA PsycINFO.

6.3 Inclusion Criteria

- Peer-reviewed articles
- Publications between 1990–2024
- Studies addressing impression management in organizational settings
- Empirical and theoretical works

6.4 Exclusion Criteria

- Non-organizational IM studies (e.g., clinical, social media outside work)
- Non-English publications
- Opinion pieces without academic grounding

6.5 Data Analysis

A thematic analysis was conducted:

1. Open coding to identify themes
2. Categorization into positive, negative, and contextual impacts
3. Interpretation based on theoretical foundations

This methodology allowed comparison of findings across studies and identification of recurring patterns.

7. Findings

7.1 IM enhances perceived performance more than actual performance

Evidence indicates that IM influences supervisors' evaluations disproportionately (Bolino et al., 2008).

7.2 Organizational performance benefits when IM aligns with ethical standards

Positive signaling through CSR and transparency builds trust and competitive advantage.

7.3 Excessive IM leads to dysfunctional behaviors

Studies show links between ingratiation, manipulation, and unethical leadership behaviors.

7.4 Leadership IM shapes team performance

Authentic IM enhances followership, but manipulative IM reduces morale.

7.5 Context matters

IM is most effective in environments with ambiguous performance measures.

8. Discussion

It can be said from the literature that impression management is neither inherently positive nor negative. Mainly, its impact depends on the intention, ethical considerations and authenticity. When employees and managers use impression management tactics to exhibit their real strengths, it improves the organizational performance. Indeed, manipulative or deceptive impression management breeds mistrust along with false performance.

Organizations must make a balance between encouraging employees to present themselves in the best possible light and discouraging dishonest practices. Leadership development, ethics training, and transparent evaluation systems can help achieve this.

9. Practical Implications

9.1 For Managers

- Use structured evaluation criteria to reduce IM-driven bias.
- Encourage authentic communication and transparency.
- Train leaders to identify manipulative IM.

9.2 For Employees

- Use IM ethically to highlight achievements.
- Avoid excessive ingratiation or deceptive tactics.

9.3 For Organizations

- Align corporate IM with genuine values and practices.
- Promote ethical cultures to reduce dysfunctional IM.

References (APA Style)

Bansal, P., & Clelland, I. (2004). Talking trash: Legitimacy, impression management, and unsystematic firm risk. *Academy of Management Journal*, 47(1), 93-103.

Bolino, M. C., Kacmar, K. M., Turnley, W. H., & Gilstrap, J. B. (2008). A multi-level review of impression management motives and behaviors. *Journal of Management*, 34(6), 1080-1109.

Goffman, E. (1959). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Anchor Books.

Leary, M. R., & Kowalski, R. M. (1990). Impression management: A literature review and two-component model. *Psychological Bulletin*, 107(1), 34-47.

Rosenfeld, P., Giacalone, R. A., & Riordan, C. A. (2001). *Impression Management: Building and Enhancing Reputations at Work*. Thomson Learning.

