

# **Measuring Impression Management in Women Leaders of Color**

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*The purpose of this study is to measure impression management in women leaders of color. Researchers used Bolino and Turney's (1999) scale to measure impression management as developed from Jones and Pittman's Impression Management Taxonomy (1982) that captures a variety of impression management behaviors identified by previous studies. The behaviors measured include self-promotion, ingratiation, exemplification, intimidation, and supplication. An exploratory factor analysis was completed where 205 valid responses were collected. The correlation matrix illustrated that many of the factors loaded above .300, thus confirming strong correlations between the given tactics.*

*Keywords: impression management, gender, ethnicity, leadership*

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Examining Impression Management in Women Executive Leaders of Color**

Women, particularly women of color in the United States, are consistently working to solidify their role within workspaces, especially when attempting to secure and maintain leadership positions. The perceptions of these leaders, as with any leader, directly contributes to the opportunities they are afforded and the response of followers to their leadership. In order to combat concerns related to their dedication, ability, emotional stability, and effectiveness, these leaders are thought to employ impression management techniques to control perceptions related to their leadership. This study seeks to understand if women of color employ the five impression management techniques found in Jones and Pittman's Impression Management Taxonomy (1982) and the techniques most used by these women leaders of colors within their respective organizations.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW/THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESIS**

Impression management is a concept that is used readily and considered to be an aspect of "normal human behavior" (Sallot, 2002, p. 150). Whether impression management is used within various schools of thought and/or social constructs such as in the social psychology realm (Iedema & Poppe, 1994),

public relations management (Sallot, 2002), university settings (Abrams & Trusty, 2004), or organizational environments (Bolino & Turnley, 1999), impression management has been a tool used to present one's self within a defined social construct. When examining the fundamental principles behind impression management, it could be considered a deceptive practice, especially when it appears as though the person is being manipulative under the guise of doing good for the collective (Sallot, 2002). However, understanding that managing one's self-presentation could provide the ability of a person to learn and become accepted into the organization and promote mutual interests.

Westphal and Stern (2007) conducted a study to examine the determinants of individual success in the market for corporate directors. The authors targeted 300 companies randomly selected from the Forbes 500 index of large and mid-sized U.S. industrial and service firms. Further, the researchers wanted to investigate how behavior and demographics such as ethnicity influence board appointments (Westphal & Stern, 2007). The results indicated directors increased their chances of board appointments via provision of advice and information to CEOs and ingratiation behavior toward peer directors. Ethnic minorities and women were rewarded less on the director labor market for the same behavior (Westphal & Stern, 2007). Directors also increased their chances for upward movement by engaging in less controlling behavior, whereas minorities were punished for this type of behavior (Westphal & Stern, 2007). This leaves room for further investigation of individual success for both minorities and women.

Bolino and Turnley (2003) investigated supervisor-subordinate dyads in order to examine the reactions of supervisors and their use of intimidation strategies by both genders (men and women) working in a law enforcement agency. Surveys were originally administered to 91 employees of which 76 were deemed usable. The results indicated women's use of intimidation was negatively related to likeability (Bolino & Turnley, 2003). Conversely, intimidation and likeability were positive but not significant for men. The results of this study are congruent with social role theory (Eagly, 1987) and prior impression management research (Rudman, 1998) illustrated women who engage in counter normative behavior are likely to be viewed less favorably than their male counterparts (Bolino & Turnley, 2003).

According to Bolino and Turnley (1999), several studies focused on examining Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) versus impression management. Bolino and Turnley (1999) conveyed distinct differences between the two theories and suggested a more succinct tool should be designed and used. It is purported that the difference between impression management and OCB rests upon extrinsic (Bolino & Turnley, 1999) versus intrinsic motivating factors (Fry et al., 2005; Phipps, 2012). Bolino and Turnley (1999) expounded further regarding the former notion and convey the underlying intent; whether there is a desire to aid the company, colleagues, or enhance one's own self-image distinguishes if OCB or impression management is at hand. Therefore, the Jones and Pittman's five-point Impression Management Taxonomy was used as a framework (Bolino & Turnley, 1999). The factors associated with the taxonomy include:

Self-promotion, whereby individuals point out their abilities or accomplishments in order to be seen as competent by observers; ingratiation, whereby individuals do favors or use flattery to elicit attribution of likability from observers; exemplification, whereby people self-sacrifice or go above and beyond the call of duty in order to gain the attribution of dedication from observers; intimidation, where people signal their power or potential to punish in order to be seen as dangerous by observers; and supplication, where individuals advertise their weakness or shortcomings in order to elicit an attribution of being needy from observers. (Bolino & Turnley, 1999, p. 190)

Researchers have suggested that some elements associated with the impression management theory lack empirical testing, e.g., elements such as exemplification, intimidation, and supplication need additional exploration to operationalize how those constructs influence self-presentation (Bolino & Turnley, 1999).

Iedema and Poppe (1994) examined self-presentation or impression management juxtaposed to social value orientation during interdependent situations. There are strategies individuals use to achieve the approval of others within social settings. The three motives associated with managing impressions include

identifying the cost–reward balance, self-esteem regulation, and creating a desired identity (Iedema & Poppe, 1994). Social value orientation is conceptualized as “an individual’s preference for certain outcomes for him- or herself for another individual, or for both” (Iedema & Poppe, 1994, p. 772). Based on the concept of social value orientation, values are defined within the conscious or unconscious cues framed by interdependent social conditions (Iedema & Poppe, 1994).

The impression management concept is rooted in how one maneuvers his or her environment and the collective versus individual value placed on the perception of one’s actions. Iedema and Poppe (1994) conveyed that this value may be rooted in factors identified in Hofstede’s global study, where the culture and socially acceptable construct favors either collective or individualistic behaviors. Despite the preferences specific cultures have for either collective or individualistic social constructs, there are boundaries regarding the appearance of deceit and misbehaviors one must present as to be deemed favorable. For those reasons, individuals decide whether the cost or benefits of functioning in one’s individual identity is either congruent or incongruent with the collective unspoken expectations as well as if the benefits outweigh the costs of appearing in a light that is contrary to one’s beliefs.

Grossman and Wood (1993) argued that sex differences in the intensity of emotional experience stem from the roles men and women fill in our society (Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Wood, 1991; Wood & Rhodes, 1992). Subjects were given individual questionnaires and asked to assess their stereotypic beliefs concerning emotional responses from both men and women. Four emotions were assessed: love, joy, sadness, and fear. The results indicated women reported more frequent and intense feelings of emotion than did men. Implications of this study provide support for social role interpretation of sex differences in emotions. However, limitations also exist in that this study was done in a controlled environment and does not reflect social roles of genders as they exist today. Yet, this initial study does illustrate the differences between emotional responses between both genders.

### **Self-Promotion & Impression Management**

Klotz, Yam et al. (2018) studied the consequences of daily impression management at work, especially in the areas of ingratiation and self-promotion. In their study, the authors made the argument that the daily management of impressions can be extremely exhausting and may lead employees to exemplify behaviors that can be harmful not only to themselves but also their reputation (Klotz, Yam et al., 2018). Their sample size included 131 middle managers employed at three divisions of a large, publicly listed software corporation with 14 divisions located throughout China. This study did not have formal IRB approval; however, the authors secured their business school’s approval and followed the APA ethical guidelines (Klotz, Yam et al., 2018).

Bolino and Turnley’s scale (1999) also examined the IM construct and used a five-point Likert scale to gather information from their respondents. The original instructions were written in English but later translated to Mandarin. Their final sample size consisted of 75 participants of which 76.4% were male. Additionally, the authors completed 574 valid daily observations with a 78.2% response rate. The mean job tenure was 3.62 years and 94.7% had a college education. The results indicated that the use of ingratiation, but not self-promotion, depletes employees’ self-control resources. With regard to ingratiation, depletion is positively associated with employee deviance and the indirect effect is stronger among employees with low political skill. Furthermore, Bennett and Robinson’s (2000) study lends support to the stream of work and shows that ingratiation may harm other employees and the organization. For those reasons, the amount of effort required to successfully engage in or complete acts of doing favors, flattery, and conformity, may leave employees feeling tired and drained, which may increase their deviance. Therefore, Bennett and Robinson’s (2000) article provided evidence of the deleterious within-person effects associated with crafting one’s image at work. In addition, these findings may also explain the reasons why IM tactics sometimes backfire due to the fact that some employees that try extremely hard to appear likable may be more prone to engage in subsequent deviance that undermines the positive image they sought to cultivate (Bennett & Robinson, 2000).

### **Ingratiation & Impression Management**

Keeves, Westphal, and McDonald (2017) investigated ingratiation, which refers to the means by which one builds their social capital. The authors suggested ingratiation, such as flattery or opinion conformity, may elicit positive effects from its target; on the other hand, ingratiation can also have the opposite effect and elicit negative responses as well. To support these conclusions, the population of this study included top managers at large and mid-sized public companies in the U.S. and with more than \$50 million in annual sales. A total of 3,895 responses were received for a 36% response rate from CEOs and subordinate managers. The Westphal and Park (2012) instrument was used for a large sample of top managers. In addition, scale items similar to an earlier measure developed and validated by Cuddy, Fiske, and Glick (2007) were refined for use with top managers based on pretest results; both instruments measure resentment toward the CEO. To measure ingratiation, a multi-item survey scale that was extensively validated for samples of corporate leaders (Westphal & Stern, 2006; Stern & Westphal, 2010) was used. The results illustrated a focus on ingratiation by top managers toward the CEO; however, the authors also found ingratiating managers are likely to develop feelings of resentment toward the CEO. The feelings of resentment when ingratiation is used may be more likely among top managers, especially when the CEO is a racial minority or a woman (Westphal & Stern, 2006; Stern & Westphal, 2010). Additionally, the authors found that negative effect from ingratiation can induce interpersonal behavior that has the potential to damage the social capital of the influence target as feelings of resentment that result from ingratiatory behavior can trigger social undermining of the CEO in the manager's communications with journalists (Westphal & Stern, 2006; Stern & Westphal, 2010).

Bolino and Turnley (2002) explored impression management tactics utilized in three different ways. The first measured impression management in groups or clusters, more specifically in students. Second, the primary investigators also used three individual difference variables: gender, self-monitoring, and Machiavellianism. Finally, this research explored the relationship between various patterns or styles of impression management and how individuals are perceived by their peers (Bolino & Turnley, 2002). Their results suggested that individuals who either avoid using impression management or who use only positive tactics are seen more favorably than those who use relatively high levels of all types of impression management (Bolino & Turnley, 2002). Additionally, this research was consistent with Eagly's (1987) role theory of gender differences in social behavior, which means individuals participate in behaviors that relate to socially prescribed gender roles. To illustrate, it is expected men will be more likely than women to routinely manage impressions in an aggressive manner. Conversely, it is expected that women will be passive versus aggressive like their male counterparts (Eagly, 1987). The results were not indicative that one gender is more likely than the other to utilize positive impression management tactics. Therefore, it is likely that men and women are equally likely to engage in positive strategies.

### **Exemplification & Impression Management**

Kacmar and Tucker (2016) examined the relationship between regulatory focus and the use of exemplification or supplication impression management tactics. The investigators first measured the main effects that occur between prevention-focused individuals and exemplification as well as between promotion-focused individuals and exemplification and supplication. Additionally, the authors utilized the supervisors' behavioral integrity as a moderator between regulatory focus and impression management (Kacmar & Tucker, 2016). This research was based on Regulatory Focus Theory (Higgins, 1997), which simply predicts a mental framework that guides or directs approach or avoidance behaviors. The authors' findings indicated a positive relationship between prevention-focused and exemplification, and between promotion-focused and supplication, but not promotion-focused and exemplification (Kacmar & Tucker, 2016). The research from this article would benefit managers by knowing behavioral integrity has the strength to substantially develop impression management behavior of their employees. Further, this could be helpful in preventing behaviors that take away from an employee and his or her assignments.

### **Intimidation & Impression Management**

In an article by Harris, Gallagher, and Rossi (2013), impression management tactics such as intimidation and exemplification were investigated. Intimidation is viewed as a negative IM tactic and defined as acting threateningly to others so they will be perceived as dangerous or forceful (Jones & Pittman, 1982). Additionally, intimidation involves aggressively dealing with others if they interfere with business and communications where one can make life difficult for individuals if they push too far (Bolino & Turnley, 1999). On the contrary, exemplification is an IM tactic that seeks to make others perceive one in a positive light, i.e., to be seen as exemplary and going above and beyond one's job duties (Jones & Pittman, 1982). Further, exemplification occurs when actors engage in behaviors designed to make them appear dedicated or proficient (Bolino et al., 2008). The goal of this study was to determine if organizational cultural norms of intimidation and exemplification usage are associated with burnout, job strain, and job satisfaction (Harris, Gallagher, & Rossi, 2013). The results indicated the exemplification culture was not related to job satisfaction but was significantly associated with burnout and that intimidation usage—intimidation culture was significantly related to job satisfaction but not related to burnout and job strain (Harris, Gallagher, & Rossi, 2013).

### **Supplication & Impression Management**

Jones and Pittman (1982) defined supplication as the extent to which people downplay their intelligence or intentionally appear inept in order to solicit help. In a study by Bolino and Turnley (2001), the authors investigated the effects of not only supplication but also intimidation. Intimidation is defined as the use of aggressive or forceful behavior meant to be seen as threatening. Hence, the authors sought to determine if the consequences of using these tactics influence performance ratings in an unfavorable way. Additionally, this study also examined the differences in the use of these tactics between men and women (Bolino & Turnley, 2001). Therefore, 87 participants were gathered from a large state law enforcement agency located in the southeastern United States. The results revealed that the usage of both intimidation and supplication yielded higher performance ratings among males while women who used the same tactics received lower performance ratings (Bolino & Turnley, 2001).

### **Gender & Impression Management**

The route one chooses to climb the corporate ladder and whether image bending tools such as Impression Management strategies are both decisions influenced by gender. According to Singh et al. (2002), there are gender differences associated with how women and men determine how to navigate organizational endorsements. The researchers' mixed method study explored gender and IM regarding how women versus men broach the notion of acquiring a promotion. The study indicated that women are uncomfortable with the use of IM techniques as these appear to be considered manipulative in nature. Instead, the women opted to use opportunities to take on additional tasks for visibility to show they are an asset to the organization and garner the perception they are worthy of advancement. On the other hand, the men in the study were slightly uncomfortable but more willing to play the proverbial IM "game" in addition to displaying high visibility as to gain an advantage by seeming promotion-worthy (Singh et al., 2020).

At first glance, it appears as though women choose to take a stand against the seemingly manipulative measures of IM such as ingratiation and intimidation, whereas self-promotion is universally not deemed favorable or an accepted trait regarding women and is used less often. Rudman (1998) explained further the issues related to women who violate the social norms regards to modesty and self-promotion suffer because it prohibits their ability to gain the positive impression needed to effectively navigate the office. On the other hand, men that use self-promotion more readily are not necessarily deemed favorable, but it is considered more socially acceptable. Conversely, men who display modest and self-effacing behavior are viewed poorly (Rudman, 1998).

Albeit the women in the study did not feel as though they needed to exemplify IM strategies from an overt perspective, their actions covertly embodied the exemplification technique. In other words, the women chose to work hard to gain visibility associated with completing tasks beyond their job duties as a

way to obtain a promotion (Singh et al., 2002). For those reasons, one would deduce that IM management is a universal tool used in workplace settings regardless of gender; however, there are acceptable limits as to where one may be willing to apply IM in order to win the promotion game.

Abrams and Trusty (2004) broached the concept of IM and racial identity in African–American students. According to these authors, the IM aspect as it relates to people of color could be perceived as deceptive and confounds how respondents provide answers because the respondents seek to be viewed as favorable. The notion of having to be viewed as favorable within various organizational and social contexts provides a need to examine whether the desire for acceptance within in a company setting allows gender and racial boundaries to remain intact despite the respondent acquiring a leadership role. For those reasons, one ponders if the need for acceptability is the most pressing matter and which IM techniques are favored by leaders who are women of color.

### **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

After careful examination of the literature, several questions come to mind regarding how the variables of the Impression Management construct interact and are employed by leaders who are women of color. Due to the fact that previous researchers failed to examine the nature of the variables with how they relate to ethnic women leaders, the following research questions and hypotheses are posed:

***RQ1:** Do women leaders of color use the five impression management tactics found in the Jones and Pittman Taxonomy?*

***RQ2:** Which of the five Jones and Pittman impression management tactics are employed by women leaders of color?*

***H1:** Women leaders of color employ impression management tactics found in the Jones and Pittman Taxonomy.*

***H2:** Women leaders of color would prefer not to use exemplification, intimidation, or supplication as an impression management tactic.*

***H3:** Women leaders of color would prefer to use ingratiation and self-promotion.*

***H0:** There is no relationship between the measured impression management constructs.*

Hence, the researchers conducted an exploratory empirical study of the Impression Management construct as it relates to women leaders of color.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Sample**

Participants in this study were collected through snowball sampling methods from primary investigators' individual networks of those with leadership experience. The initial participants were asked to share the survey with other relevant leaders in their personal and professional networks. Intention was focused on connecting with networks known to comprise women leaders of color. Leaders included were all women ranging in experience from lower level leadership, middle management, and senior/executive management positions of various career fields and/or organizational types. This empirical exploratory study sought to examine and collect information from respondents that hail from various generational groups, ranging from the Baby Boomers to Generation Z. For those reasons, this study was designed to capture the use of Impression Management tactics from leaders who are women of color from various industries, generational classifications, educational and socioeconomic status, and ethnic mix.

## Measures

The instrument examined the extent to which respondents either agreed or disagreed with engaging in impression management behaviors using a seven-point Likert scale and statements from Jones and Pittman (1982). Demographic questions were asked in order to help investigators understand the sample characteristics. Demographic questions included age, gender, years of leadership experience, income, and educational attainment. This instrument specifically measured five behaviors: ingratiation, self-promotion, exemplification, supplication, and intimidation. According to Hinkin (1995), the most commonly accepted indicator of a measure's reliability is its internal consistency. Thus, the reliability of the five impression management scales was assessed using Cronbach's coefficient alpha. Nunnally (1978) suggested that reliability measures should have a coefficient alpha of .70 or greater. The coefficient alphas for the impression management scales used were as follows: self-promotion (alpha = .78), ingratiation (alpha = .83), exemplification (alpha = .75), intimidation (alpha = .86), and supplication (alpha = .88). The alphas for all the scales therefore exceed Nunnally's .70 criterion, suggesting that the scales are reliable.

A sample item from the ingratiation subscale is: "Compliment your colleagues so they will see you as likeable." A sample item from the self-promotion scale is: "Talk proudly about your experience or education." A sample item from the exemplification scale is: "Stay at work late so people will know you work hard." A sample item from the supplication scale is: "Try to gain assistance or sympathy from people by appearing needy in some area." Lastly, a sample item from the intimidation scale is: "Deal strongly or aggressively with coworkers who interfere with your business."

To measure the results, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted. In addition, each question under the five tactics was combined into composite variables for a total of five dependent variables. As a result, a Multiple Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was conducted. Descriptive and frequency tables were constructed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to understand the demographic characteristics associated with respondents' responses.

## RESULTS

This exploratory study examined Impression Management and how African-American women leaders self-rate their behaviors on Bolino and Turnley's (1999) scale. Various tests were conducted with the Statistical Package for Social Sciences to review data. There were 205 valid responses assessed of which African-Americans were 63%, Hispanics were 16%, Caucasians were 11%, Asians were 6%, and participants who identified as "Other" were 1%. The median age of 69.8% of the respondents was in the range of 44-49 years. The respondents' education levels were primarily Bachelor's (30.2%) and Master's (27.3%), the primary industries were Education (24%) and Business/Finance (9.3%), and the median for income was in the range of \$75,000-\$85,000.

An exploratory factor analysis was completed. According to Pallant (2010), an exploratory factor analysis was completed to gather information regarding the interrelationships between variables. The correlation matrix illustrates that many of the factors loaded above .300 (Table 1). The KMO and Bartlett's Test is .633 at a .000 significance level, which means the variables have the correct strength of reliability (Pallant, 2010). The communalities extractions were above .3 for each Impression Management factor. According to Pallant (2010), the Total Variable Explained table assists with understanding if the factor analysis is an appropriate test for examining the relationships of the variables. The eigenvalues must be 1 or above in order to be valid. The Total Variable Explained shows the amount of difference needed to show interrelatedness; however, different constructs examine different elements (Table 2). The scree plot is another indicator that assists in determining which components are the factors to assess and, based on the scree plot associated with these results (Pallant, 2010), it appears as though components 1 and 2 should be examined (Figure 1).

According to Pallant (2010), assessing 205 valid cases reduces the underestimate of the variances of groups that are similar. A MANOVA was completed to review the interactions of the five dependent variables associated with the Impression Management construct. The results and normality of the scale

were verified through a review of kurtosis, which was positively skewed on the histogram, and skewedness. Figure 2 shows the results were normal. The authors reviewed the results to test for assumptions regarding equality of variances and determined the *p*-values to be within the recommended ranges (Pallant, 2010).

Box's Test of Equality of Covariance was greater than .05 with a significance level of .540. The Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances was also conducted to determine if the equal variances assumption was satisfied. All the values for the five dependent variables had significance values greater than .05, which illustrates the equal assumptions were satisfied (Pallant, 2010). The dependent variables were also assessed together against the effect of ethnicity via multivariate tests ( $F(20, 638) = 1.64, p = .038$ ; Wilks' Lambda = .85; partial eta squared = .02). According to Pallant (2010) reviewing the Wilks' Lambda item provides insight on whether to reject the null hypothesis if the significance is less than .05. The results show the significance level was .038, allowing the authors to reject the null hypothesis and showing that there is a difference among the variables.

**TABLE 1**  
**SUMMARY OF INTERCORRELATIONS FOR AN EXPLORATORY FACTORY ANALYSIS ON IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT COMPOSITE VARIABLES FOR SELF-PROMOTION, INTEGRATION, EXEMPLIFICATION, INTIMIDATION, AND SUPPLICATION**

Measure	1	2	3	4	5
1. Self-promotion	---	.316	.249	.092	-.024
2. Ingratiation	.316	---	.542	.256	.369
3. Exemplification	.249	.542	---	.386	.345
4. Intimidation	.092	.256	.386	---	.590
5. Supplication	-.024	.369	.345	.590	---

*Note: Intercorrelations for Impression Management was conducted on participants (n = 205) where Bolino and Turnley's (1999) scale was implemented. Add that dimensions are intercorrelated. Components are reflected as follows: 1 = Self-promotion, 2 = Ingratiation, 3 = Exemplification, 4 = Intimidation, 5 = Supplication.*

**TABLE 2**  
**SUMMARY OF THE TOTAL VARIANCE EXPLAINED FOR AN EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS**

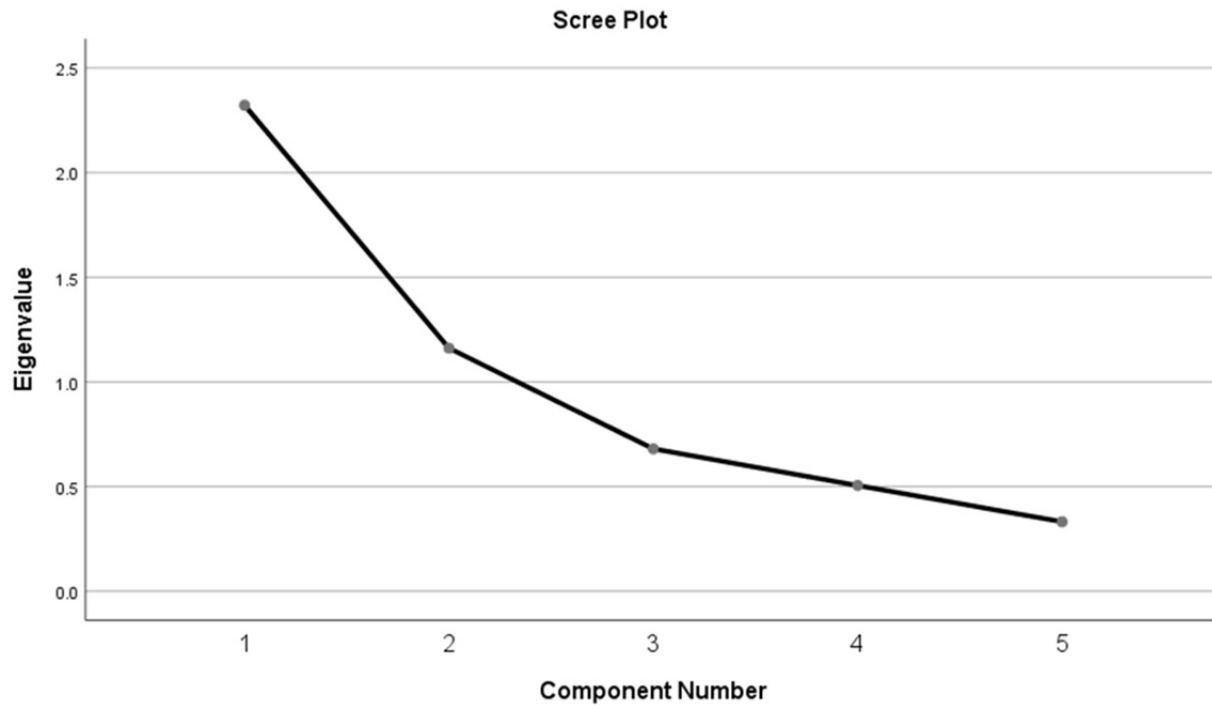
Component	Total	Initial Eigenvalues		Extraction Sums of Square Loadings			Rotation Sums <sup>a</sup> of Squared Loadings Total
		% of Variance	Cum.%	Total	% of Variance	Cum.%	
1	2.322	46.436	46.436	2.2322	46.436	46.436	2.007
2	1.161	23.225	69.662	1.161	23.225	69.662	1.726
3	.660	13.603	83.264				
4	.505	10.101	93.365				
5	.332	6.635	100.000				

*Note: Extraction Method used was Principal Component Analysis.*

*a. When components are correlated, sums of squared loadings cannot be added to obtain a total variance. Components are reflected as follows: 1 = Self-promotion, 2 = Ingratiation, 3 = Exemplification, 4 = Intimidation, 5 = Supplication.*



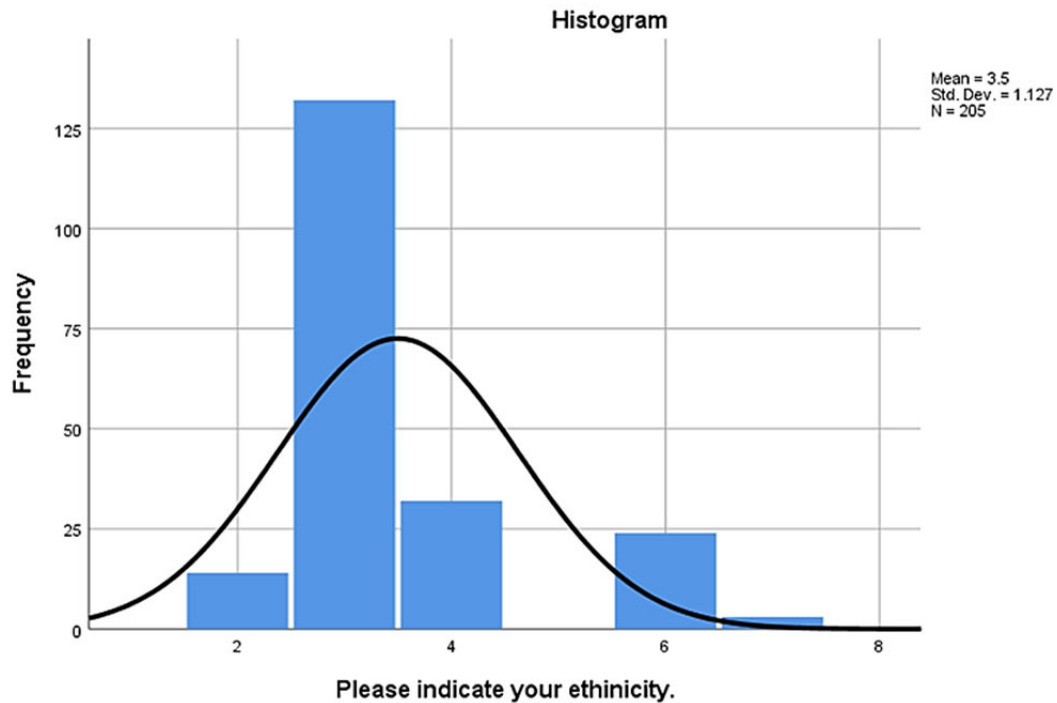
**FIGURE 1**



*Scree plot of the composite Impression Management Variables conducted in SPSS that details the components of interest and their corresponding eigenvalues*

Despite the fact the primary subject was African–American women leaders, the between-subjects effects test provided a notion there may be differences in the types of Impression Management variables that various ethnicities favor. The significance value (.012) and partial eta squared (.063) appears to convey different ethnic groups’ use of the intimidation construct. More importantly, when assessing the differences of the dependent variables separately and applying the Bonferroni adjusted alpha level of .01, the significance level remains within the recommended threshold. Participants other than African–American have insufficient representation to ensure the normality is not validated (Pallant, 2010); however, this table provides insight that the Impression Management construct may need further research to explore the application of various techniques by ethnic groups.

**FIGURE 2**



*Histogram details the normality associated with the scale. The mean, standard deviation, and number of participants are provided by ethnicity. The horizontal axis represents the numerical representation of how the respondents categorize their ethnicities where 2= Asian, 3= Black/African American, 4= Latino/Hispanic, 6= White, and 7= Other.*

## **DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

Organizations seek to increase their ethnic and gender diversity. Therefore, this study supports the idea that women resort to impression management tactics to control how they are viewed by their counterparts so as to be perceived as an effective member of the team. Kacmar and Tucker (2016) state that “decades of research have suggested that the results associated with how others see us are too great an influence to ignore” (p. 87). Impression management is defined as the desire to create and sustain a positive image in the mind of one’s targets (Carlson et al., 2011). This study addressed the question as to whether women of color use the five impression management tactics found in the Jones and Pittman Taxonomy (1982).

The Jones and Pittman (1982) scale was used to measure the use of five commonly used tactics: ingratiation, self-promotion, exemplification, supplication, and intimidation. Then, the research sought to investigate which of these five tactics are preferred by each ethnicity. An article by Bolino and Turnley (1999) echoes Jones and Pittman’s (1982) definition of ingratiation:

- (1) Ingratiation, whereby individuals seek to be viewed as likable by flattering others or doing favors for them;
- (2) Self-promotion, whereby individuals seek to be viewed as competent by touting their abilities and accomplishments;
- (3) Exemplification, whereby individuals seek to be viewed as dedicated by going above and beyond the call of duty;
- (4) Supplication, whereby individuals seek to be viewed as needy by showing their weaknesses or broadcasting their limitations; and
- (5) Intimidation, whereby individuals seek to be viewed as intimidating by threatening or bullying others. (p. 4)

While a great deal is known about the consequences of using impression management, much less is known about the actor and why these tactics are used (Bolino & Turnley, 2003). Therefore, impression management is vital to the success of an organization and its employees.

The exploratory factor analysis conducted showed the five tactics associated with Jones and Pittman's Taxonomy (1982) (intimidation, ingratiation, self-promotion, supplication, and exemplification) to be intercorrelated. A strong positive correlation was found between exemplification and intimidation, which may exist due to the fact the more supplication is used the more other peers take advantage. Additionally, the positive moderate correlation found between exemplification and intimidation may infer that going above and beyond the call of duty may be viewed as a passive–aggressive technique to not appear as intimidating. However, further statistical analyses would have to be performed to support this possible implication. A positive moderate correlation was found between supplication and ingratiation, which means that being viewed as weak or being vulnerable about limitations gives an opportunity for encouragement or positive reinforcement of stronger abilities. Another positive moderate correlation was found between exemplification and supplication where leaders work overtime to compensate for their shortcomings. Additionally, a positive moderate correlation was found between self-promotion and ingratiation illustrates the more a female leader promotes herself the more she might be inclined to flatter her peers. The weak negative correlation between supplication and self-promotion demonstrates women appearing needy or broadcasting their limitations are less likely to use self-promotion. The MANOVA supported rejection of the null hypotheses, which shows there is a difference among the variables. Due to the fact this empirical study is exploratory in nature and design, further statistical analysis would be required to determine the extent of these differences.

The majority of respondents has a graduate degree or higher as well as a Bachelor's degree; therefore, it can be inferred that the women of color with a college education preferred to lift others or encourage by using ingratiation to find belonging. Additionally, self-promotion is correlated with other variables, which indicates self-promotion provides a higher sense of self or identity. According to social identity theory (Tajfel, 1982), people behave in concert within a collective with which they identify. Thus, social identity is a person's awareness of belonging to a set of individuals who view themselves as members of the same social group (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). In addition, the rules of the workplace are changing. Consequently, this means that sharing limitations and being vulnerable could be a sign of strength versus being a sign of weakness or supplication. However, a universal understanding exists regarding one Impression Management tactic (Iedema & Poppe, 1994), i.e., intimidation by women, which women said hindered performance evaluations.

### **Limitations of Findings**

The researchers used a convenience sampling method by snowball technique, which provided an equal chance of respondents being selected at random. This limits the ability to generalize to a larger audience unless the said larger audience has similar demographics (Pallant, 2010). This study contained a large number of categories among the dependent variables, which reduces statistical power and may lead to Type II errors, particularly in combination with the skewed data. Location of the study and the inability for the Principal Investigators to travel to other areas to collect data was a limitation of this study (Pallant, 2010). Additionally, while men were sampled, they were not used in statistical testing of this dataset. The majority of respondents were primarily Black/African–American and Latino/Hispanic women; thus, the primary investigators did not have enough respondents to be able to generalize which IM tactics were preferred by other women of color.

### **Areas for Further Research**

As previously mentioned, an area for further research would be to conduct a statistical analysis to compare men and women and their preferences for the five tactics according to Jones and Pittman (1982). While Generation Z was included, they are a generation that uses social media to manage their impressions outside of a workplace environment. Comparing generations within the workplace about age

may prove to be an interesting study to determine which of the four generations, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, or Generation Z, resorts to impression management tactics more than the others. Further analysis could be conducted to investigate if certain industries prefer to employ which of the IM tactics. Other instruments that measure impression management may also be useful in determining what other, if any tactics are preferred by not only cis-gender individuals but also individuals that identify as transgender or gender fluid as well as all persons of color. Finally, collecting more responses from other women of color could be useful in determining which tactics are preferred by conducting a comparison study.

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