



---

# An Examination of Social Perceptions Regarding the Art of Impression Management

Dr. R. Rajesh Khanna<sup>1</sup>, Dr V. Nagajothi<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Abraham Rajan<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor, Vels University, Chennai 600117.

<sup>2</sup>Program Director, Tamil Nadu Dr. J. Jayalalithaa Fisheries University, Fisheries Business School, Chennai 603112

<sup>3</sup>Assistant Professor, St Thomas College of Arts and Science, Chennai 600106

<sup>2</sup>Email: [profvni@gmail.com](mailto:profvni@gmail.com)

---

## ABSTRACT

Society relies on impression management, the conscious or unconscious manipulation of information to shape others' opinions of people, objects, and events. Self-presentation is vital to interpersonal interactions and personal and professional success. This abstract discusses impression management and its social implications. Social engagement often involves impression management to build a persona. A desire to advance in industries that require a specific public profile often drives this behaviour. Individuals can portray a goal-aligned image by carefully selecting facts. For job interviews, first dates, and public presentations, self-presentation methods are used to make a good impression. Organisations and corporations seeking a positive public image must understand impression management. Good impression management boosts trust, credibility, and reputation. Mishandling self-presentation can cause miscommunication, misunderstandings, and brand damage. Impression management's psychological roots and cognitive processes are examined in this abstract. It emphasises honesty in self-presentation and the duality of conscious and unconscious social techniques. Impression management affects society and our worldview. In conclusion, impression management and self-presentation are complex and prevalent in social interactions. Recognising its importance helps people and organisations navigate interpersonal communication and use perception to achieve their goals.

**Keywords:** Impression management, Self-presentation, trust, credibility.

---

## INTRODUCTION

In today's society, impression management has become essential for achieving personal and professional success. It involves the conscious or unconscious manipulation of information to shape others' opinions of people, objects, and events. Self-presentation, a critical component of impression management, is particularly vital in industries requiring a specific public profile. Social scientists have extensively studied self-presentation, which refers to how individuals actively shape others' perceptions of themselves.

According to Erving Goffman, a prominent social psychologist, managing one's first impression is fundamental to any social contact. Through the device of play, Goffman explained how different performances are given to different audiences, and the actors and viewers work together to negotiate and uphold the situation's definition. Impression management is not just a technique influencing how others treat us but is also crucial to our success in social interactions. Mishandling self-presentation can cause miscommunication, misunderstandings, and brand damage, while good impression management can boost our trust, credibility, and reputation. Therefore, it is crucial for individuals and organisations seeking a positive public image to understand the psychological roots and cognitive processes of impression management and emphasise honesty in self-presentation. Impression management and self-presentation are complex and prevalent in social interactions. Recognising their importance can help us navigate interpersonal communication and use perception to achieve our goals. As such, it is essential to master the art of impression management to succeed in today's society.

## **Objectives**

(1) This study examines the tactics employed by interviewees, including self-promotion and ingratiation, and the influence of physical appearance and nonverbal communication on making employment decisions.

(2) The topic of gender and cultural perspectives has been extensively studied in research.

Specifically, scholars have focused on investigating gender disparities in impression management. Notably, these studies have shed light on the distinct obstacles faced by women in effectively managing impressions, particularly in striking a balance between being perceived as likeable and competent.

Impression management plays a crucial role in human social interaction, as individuals actively or passively manipulate information to influence and mould the impressions of others. This literature review thoroughly examines recent research findings and theoretical frameworks about impression management, emphasising its importance across several contexts, ranging from interpersonal connections to organisational environments.

**Theoretical Foundations:** Erving Goffman's dramaturgical theory posits a comparison between social interactions and the realm of theatre, wherein individuals strategically employ frontstage and backstage activities to construct and convey specific impressions. The idea of self-presentation, as formulated by Leary and Kowalski, delves into the strategic manner in which individuals portray themselves to attain particular objectives, including but not limited to acquiring social validation, preserving self-worth, or progressing in their professional endeavours.

**Impression management** is a concept that holds significant relevance in interpersonal relationships. The importance of authenticity in interpersonal relationships cannot be overstated since scholarly investigations have shed light on the inherent conflict between authenticity and impression control. Individuals who engage in self-monitoring exhibit a high level of proficiency in adapting their behaviour to align with societal norms and expectations. However, they may encounter challenges in expressing their true selves authentically. The advent of social media has led individuals to carefully construct their digital identities, strategically choosing what information and photographs to disclose to express specific impressions.

### **Impression management is crucial in organisational contexts**

The influential leaders strategically utilise various techniques to cultivate trust and instil confidence among their team members and stakeholders. The research investigates the impact of leadership practises, communication styles, and nonverbal clues on impression management. The practice of impression management holds significant importance in the context of job interviews and professional progression. This study examines the tactics employed by interviewees, including self-promotion and ingratiation, and the influence of physical appearance and nonverbal communication on making employment decisions. The topic of gender and cultural perspectives has been extensively studied in research. Specifically, scholars have focused on investigating gender disparities in impression management. Notably, these studies have shed light on the distinct obstacles faced by women in effectively managing impressions, particularly in striking a balance between being perceived as likeable and competent. Cultural conventions and beliefs also influence impression management strategies. Cross-cultural research investigates how individuals from various cultural backgrounds modify their impression management tactics to conform to cultural norms and expectations.

### **Impression Management is a Multifaceted Phenomenon**

The most important in interpersonal interactions, organisational achievements, and social dynamics. A comprehensive grasp of the intricacies associated with impression management is crucial for individuals, organisations, and researchers interested in gaining a deeper understanding of human communication and interaction. This literature review offers a complete overview of the significance of impression management in many circumstances, drawing from recent research findings and theoretical viewpoints.

### **Review of Literature**

Impression management is an essential process in interpersonal behaviour, according to Leary, M. R., and Kowalski, R. M. (1990). They stated that impression management is the purposeful control individuals take over the impressions they project to others. This article presents a theoretical framework comprising two components for the management of appearances. Within this framework, the existing research on impression management is analysed critically. According to this approach, the concept of impression management is presented as comprising not one but two separate processes. The first component is impression motivation, which refers to the degree to which people are driven to control how others view them based on what they project to others. The extent to which the impressions one creates are relevant to one's aims, the value placed on desired results, and the disparity between one's existing and intended images are three key elements that drive impression motivation. Impression motivation is a construct influenced by these three key factors. The formation of impressions is the subject of the second part of this equation. The five factors determining the prints people want to make are the self-concept, desired and undesirable identity images, role limits, the values of the individual one tries to impress, and the current societal image.

The two-component approach provides a complete framework for interpreting and organising the existing body of literature in impression management. It tackles controversial subjects and lays a strong groundwork

for subsequent research and discovery in this field of study by providing a firm basis. Impression management can be defined as individuals' purposeful control over the impressions they project to other people. Leary and Kowalski (1990) stated that impression management is critical to interpersonal behaviour. They offered the idea of impression management comprising two separate processes. They introduced a theoretical framework that did a critical analysis of the existing literature on the topic of impression management. The first phase is known as impression motivation, which refers to the degree to which individuals are driven to control how others view them. The second step in the procedure involves the formation of impressions, and five factors impact the kinds of images that individuals want to form. The two-component model provides a complete framework for interpreting and organising the body of literature in impression management and a solid foundation for further exploration into this study field. The impression management literature review provided this framework. Keeping this in mind, it begs the question, "What happens to people who lack the skills or resources to manage their impressions effectively, and how this impact might their interpersonal behaviour?" Individuals who lack the ability or resources to manage their impressions properly raise the question of what happens to them.

According to Schlenker, B.R. (1980), an evaluation was conducted to determine how the numerous audience problem was affected by self-presentation and how self-regulatory resources were affected. In the experiment, 38 participants were asked to talk throughout three sessions and randomly assigned to either the consistent or inconsistent condition. The incompatible state was altered, so many audience difficulties may be presented during speaking session 3. After listening to three different speakers, the participants were tasked with solving three-digit by three-digit multiplication problems until they either reached a point where they could not continue or gave up. An observer used a stopwatch to track how long participants took to solve the problems. According to the findings, inconsistent persons gave up much more quickly than consistent people.

### **Research Gap**

In addition, participants who needed to be more consistent with their performance completed fewer multiplication problems than consistent participants. In light of these findings, we concluded that self-presentation was a challenging task that called for laborious forms that depleted one's self-regulation capacity when exposed to different audiences. More research is required to fully understand the effects of compensatory self-enhancement, a coping strategy for dealing with a wide variety of audience issues, on a person's self-regulating capacity. Schlenker, B.R. (1980) experimented with investigating how many audience problems are affected by self-presentation and how it influences self-regulatory resources. In this experiment, there were 38 participants, and they were each given a random assignment to either the consistent or inconsistent condition. During each of the three sessions, they were required to talk. The unstable condition was altered, so many audience difficulties may be presented during speaking session 3. Following the three speech sessions, the participants were tasked with solving 200 multiplication problems using three-digit by three-digit numbers until they either reached a point where they could not continue or gave up. The experimenter used a stopwatch to keep track of the amount of time each participant spent on

problem-solving. The findings revealed that inconsistent participants gave up their efforts more quickly than those who were consistent and completed fewer multiplication problems than those who were consistent. According to these findings, self-presentation is a difficult task that calls for laborious forms, which might deplete an individual's capacity for self-regulation when dealing with various audiences. However, an additional study has to be conducted to investigate the effects of compensatory self-enhancement, a coping strategy for dealing with multiple audience issues, on self-regulatory resources.

According to Leary, M. R., and Kowalski, R. M. (1990), the authors stated that interpersonal behaviour depends on impression management, also known as the ability to regulate how others perceive oneself. A 2-component method is used throughout this study to review the previous research on impression management. Taking this method means viewing the control of impressions as two separate activities. First is the motivation of appearance, which refers to how much people desire to change how others perceive them. The goal relevance of impressions, the value of desired outcomes, and the mismatch between present and desired pictures all influence the motivation behind an appearance, and the creation of an impression comes next. Beliefs are affected by self-concept, wanted and undesired identity images, role limits, target values, and present social image.

## **Discussions and Findings**

A framework for study on impression management is provided by the 2-component model, which also unites the existing body of research and addresses critical difficulties. According to Leary and Kowalski's theory, interpersonal behaviour depends on the ability to manage impressions and the degree to which individuals can control how others perceive them. In their study, they conduct a literature analysis on impression management using a 2-component approach. This approach views impression management as the combination of two separate activities. The first step is known as impression motivation, and it refers to the degree to which individuals are motivated to change how other people view them. Several factors, including the intended outcomes, the mismatch between the actual and desired pictures, and the relevance of impressions, determine impression motivation. The second step is known as impression creation and various elements, including the self-concept, the impact it sought, the identity images that are not desired, role limits, target values, and the present social embodiment. The two-component model consolidates the existing body of research on impression management, offers solutions to troublesome difficulties, and lays the groundwork for additional investigation into this field.

## **Conclusion:**

Managing one's impressions and appearance in the presence of others is a critical component of social interactions, exerting a substantial influence on personal and professional relationships. This investigation presents several significant findings regarding the control of impressions and self-presentation. The Significance of Initial Impressions: Initial impressions are swiftly established and possess the potential to last over an extended period. Individuals often depend on their initial perceptions when evaluating or assessing others. Hence, it is imperative to exercise mindfulness in how individuals portray themselves during initial interactions. Individuals utilise self-presentation tactics to affect the perception others have of

them actively. The techniques mentioned earlier encompass impression control, self-promotion, ingratiation, and intimidation. A specific approach is frequently contingent upon the prevailing social context and individual objectives.

The issue of finding a balance between honesty and self-monitoring is frequently encountered. The pursuit of authenticity is highly regarded in establishing trust and fostering meaningful interpersonal relationships. However, individuals frequently employ self-monitoring strategies to navigate social contexts and attain desired objectives effectively.

The significance of impression management has been magnified with the emergence of social media and internet platforms in the digital age. Individuals in contemporary society possess the capacity to construct and manage their virtual identities carefully. However, this phenomenon engenders apprehensions regarding genuineness and imposes a need to uphold a coherent portrayal. Cultural variations notably impact impression management since they shape and influence cultural norms and expectations. Diverse cultural backgrounds can influence the preference for specific presenting styles, with collectivist societies often placing importance on modesty, while individualistic societies tend to prioritise self-expression.

The significance of impression management in the workplace cannot be overstated, as it plays a crucial role in professional interactions. The factors mentioned earlier can significantly influence one's professional growth, opportunities for building connections, and the overall functioning of a team. Establishing a favourable reputation and effectively controlling public impressions are crucial to achieving professional success.

Ethical considerations are crucial in impression management and should not be disregarded. Using manipulative or dishonest strategies in self-presentation can result in adverse outcomes and undermine the establishment of trust within interpersonal connections. The concept of ethical self-presentation strongly emphasises the principles of honesty and transparency.

The task of consistently managing impressions can significantly impact an individual's mental health, resulting in heightened levels of stress and worry. Many individuals have the issue of reconciling their desire for authenticity with societal expectations and specific situations.

The concept of adaptive presentation encompasses the practice of effectively managing one's impression by tailoring one's presentation to suit various audiences and scenarios. The ability to interpret and respond to social cues in a manner that is appropriate and adaptive is a highly advantageous talent.

### **Continuous learning:**

The ability to manage impressions is a skill that can be developed and improved by ongoing practice and experience. Acquiring self-awareness, empathy, and the capacity to derive insights from prosperous and unsuccessful relationships is necessary.

In summary, controlling and presenting one's impressions and self-image is a complex component of human conduct that carries substantial consequences for both personal and professional connections. Achieving a harmonious equilibrium between genuineness and flexibility, demonstrating awareness of cultural subtleties, and upholding ethical principles are all imperative for effectively managing one's impression in the

contemporary globalised society. Continuous learning and self-reflection are crucial in enhancing these skills and effectively navigating social views.

### **References:**

- [1]. Goffman, E. (1959). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Anchor Books.
- [2]. Leary, M. R., & Kowalski, R. M. (1990). Impression management: A literature review and two-component model. *Psychological Bulletin*, 107(1), 34-47.
- [3]. Schlenker, B. R. (1980). *Impression Management: The Self-Concept, Social Identity, and Interpersonal Relations*. Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.

### ***Cite this Article:***

*Dr. R. Rajesh Khanna, Dr V. Nagajothi, Dr. Abraham Rajan, "An Examination of Social Perceptions Regarding the Art of Impression Management", International Journal of Scientific Research in Modern Science and Technology (IJSRMST), ISSN: 2583-7605 (Online), Volume 2, Issue 9, pp. 59-65, September 2023.*

*Journal URL: <https://ijrmst.com/>*