

# **It's not the Aptitude but the way you are Viewed: Impact of Impression Management on Popularity in the light of Social Influence Theory**

**Tahira Saudagar**

Riphah School of Business and Management, Riphah International University, Lahore, Pakistan

## **ABSTRACT**

**Purpose:** This study investigates into the fascinating dynamic between impression management, social influence, and performance evaluation, introducing popularity as a key player in the equation. The research aim to shed light on how individuals leverage impression management strategies to harvest positive social influence and ultimately influence how their performance is perceived. The research uniquely position popularity as a mediating factor between impression management and social influence, a gap identified in existing research. By investigating impression management as a driver of popularity, the research move beyond traditional perspectives that solely view it as a consequence. The research further incorporate social dominance orientation as a moderator, exploring its potential to amplify the impact of impression management on popularity. The research framework aligns with social influence theory, offering a valuable contribution to understanding employee behavior and its outcomes.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** In this study, 382 responses were received through time lagged study, and data were collected from Islamabad, Pakistan. To test descriptive analysis, Cronbach alpha, and correlation, SPSS and AMOS were used. Mediation was tested through SEM and moderation analysis was tested by Hayes PROCESS macro.

**Findings/Results:** This study, grounded in Social Influence Theory, offers compelling evidence that impressions matter in the workplace. The research found that employees who engage in strategic impression management are more likely to achieve popularity among colleagues, which subsequently translates into positive work-related outcomes. Specifically, the research finding reveal that Impression management directly leads to increased popularity. Whether it's building rapport, showcasing competence, or demonstrating helpfulness, crafting a positive image paves the way for social acceptance. Individuals with high SDO find it easier to leverage impression management for popularity. Their assertive and influential nature makes them adept at navigating social dynamics and gaining recognition. Both impression management and popularity significantly contribute to gaining social influence and receiving positive performance evaluations. These findings highlight the importance of understanding the nuanced interplay between self-presentation, social dynamics, and career success. By strategically managing their image and fostering positive social connections, employees can unlock valuable opportunities for advancement and influence within their organizations.

**Practical Implications:** The management can equip employees with the skills to navigate social dynamics, communicate effectively, and manage their personal brand effectively. By understanding the power of impression management and popularity, HR professionals can implement strategies to create a more positive and productive work environment where

employees thrive and contribute their best. Through unveiling these intricate connections, this study aims to provide valuable insights for individuals, organizations, and researchers alike.

**Originality/Value:** The research is novel by introducing popularity as a mediator between impression management and social influence, and by examining the moderating effect of social dominance on this link. This offers a fresh perspective on how self-presentation impacts career outcomes.

**Keywords:** *Impression management; Popularity; Social influence; Performance evaluation; Social influence theory*