

## FINAL TECHNICAL REPORT

GRANT #: N00014-00-1-0769

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Dr. William H. Turnley (e-mail: [turnley@ksu.edu](mailto:turnley@ksu.edu))

INSTITUTION: Kansas State University

GRANT TITLE: The Impact of Social Intelligence and Impression Management on Perceived Leadership Potential and Group Cohesiveness

AWARD PERIOD: 1 June 2000 – 30 September 2001

### OBJECTIVE:

In recent years, much of the work conducted in organizations has been carried out in a team environment. In such situations, it becomes increasingly important for individuals to possess not only the technical skills required to do their jobs, but also the social skills necessary to work effectively with others. In terms of working effectively with others, one characteristic that has recently attracted attention is the concept of social intelligence.

Social intelligence refers to a cluster of skills related to one's ability to recognize and regulate one's emotions and one's ability to recognize and influence others' emotions. Social intelligence has long been recognized as one component of human intelligence. However, in the past, researchers devoted considerably more attention to cognitive intelligence than to social intelligence. Thus, the relationships between social intelligence and important variables -- both antecedents and outcomes -- are not well understood.

This project examines social intelligence through the constructs of self-monitoring and impression management. Self-monitoring is an individual difference that refers to one's ability to accurately read social situations and control one's expressive behavior. Impression management refers to the behaviors used by individuals to influence the images that others have of them. This research examines both the antecedents and consequences of self-monitoring and impression management.

At the general level, this research has several objectives. First, this research seeks to better understand the role that gender plays in the impression management process. Second, this research examines how self-monitoring and impression management influence the way that individuals are perceived by their peers and supervisors. Third, and finally, this research helps to validate a recently developed measure of individuals' impression management tactics in work groups.

More specifically, data were collected from several groups of respondents in order to examine the issues mentioned above. In particular, data collection and analysis have been completed on two distinct samples: a group of students working in a team environment (student work groups sample) and a group of professionals working in a law enforcement agency (law enforcement sample). In addition, data collection and analysis are underway in a third sample of employed professionals (recent MBA graduates). The specific objectives of each of these projects are discussed, in turn, below.

### Student Work Groups Sample

A growing body of literature indicates that individuals often engage in behaviors specifically designed to influence the way that others perceive them. Prior research has generally examined how the use of specific impression management behaviors influence the ways in which individuals are perceived by others. However, previous research has not examined the effects of using various impression management tactics in combination. This research was undertaken with three goals in mind. First, this research uses cluster

analysis to identify clusters (or groups) of individuals who use various impression management tactics in similar ways. Second, this research explores whether self-monitoring and gender determine the pattern of impression management that individuals are likely to use. Third, this research examines how different patterns or styles of impression management influence the way that individuals are perceived by their work group colleagues.

#### Law Enforcement Sample

Previous research on impression management has tended to focus on the ways that impression management might enable individuals to create desired images and obtain favorable outcomes as a result. Far fewer studies have sought to understand why impression-management attempts sometimes have unintended negative consequences. This research focuses on a tactic that has received relatively little attention in prior studies, namely, intimidation. Intimidation is clearly an impression management tactic that can produce either positive or negative images for the user of the tactic. On the one hand, an individual using intimidation may be seen (positively) as forceful or tough. On the other hand, an individual using intimidation may be seen (negatively) as dislikable or over-bearing. In addition, this research investigates whether the outcomes of using intimidation are similar for men and women. Prior research suggests that individuals who engage in counterstereotypical impression management are more likely to be viewed negatively. This line of study suggests that women who use intimidation may be likely to be viewed negatively (especially in an organization with a relatively masculine culture). Thus, this research investigates whether women's images might be harmed by the use of intimidation, while, in contrast, the use of intimidation might improve the image that others have of men.

#### Recent MBA Graduates Sample

The relationships among gender, self-monitoring, impression management, and co-workers' perceptions of the employee are being examined in a sample of MBA graduates from the University of Notre Dame. Data has currently been collected from approximately 150 participant-colleague pairs. However, the initial response rate was relatively low, so a follow-up data collection has been undertaken. Thus, this part of the project is still being completed.

#### APPROACH:

As mentioned above, this research involved data collection from three distinct samples. The data collection and analysis have only been completed on two of the samples, while a follow-up data collection was necessary in the third sample. As a result, only the results associated with the first two samples are discussed in detail throughout this report.

#### Student Work Groups Sample

First, the relationships among gender, self-monitoring, impression management, and interpersonal attraction (a proxy for group cohesiveness) were examined among students working in groups. In this sample, individuals were assigned to work in mixed-gender, four-person groups for approximately three months. Participants completed the self-monitoring scale at the beginning of the project. At the conclusion of the project (approximately 3 months later), participants indicated the extent to which they had engaged in five specific types of impression management. Approximately one week later, participants provided their perceptions of each of their group members.

#### Law Enforcement Sample

Second, the relationships among gender, impression management, and supervisor evaluations of subordinate likeability and performance were evaluated in a law enforcement agency (an organization with a fairly masculine culture). In this sample, data were collected from 76 supervisor-subordinate dyads. Subordinates reported the extent to which they used various forms of impression management at work. Then, supervisor rated each of the subordinates in terms of the subordinate's likeability and overall performance.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

### Student Work Groups Sample

Two studies were conducted using students working in mixed-gender work groups. In each study, five specific types of impression management were examined: (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).

In Study 1, cluster analysis was used to identify three profiles of impression management. This analysis suggested three patterns (or clusters) of ways in which individuals use the various types of impression management. The individuals in the first cluster were labeled the “positives.” The “positive” cluster consisted of individuals who used relatively high levels of ingratiation, self-promotion, and exemplification, while using relatively low levels of supplication and intimidation. The individuals in the second cluster were labeled the “aggressives.” These individuals used relatively high levels of all five types of impression management. Finally, the individuals in the third cluster were labeled the “passives.” In direct contrast to the aggressives, these individuals tended to avoid impression management altogether and used relatively low levels of all five types of impression management.

In Study 2, the three-cluster pattern of impression management was replicated and the antecedents and consequences of using the three types of impression management were examined. Specifically, in Study 2, additional data were collected from a larger sample of students in order to confirm the impression management profiles (positives, aggressives, passives) identified in the first study. This analysis confirmed the existence of the three profiles. Then, the study examined gender and self-monitoring as potential antecedents of these profiles of impression management. As expected, women tended to be more “passive” in their use of impression management, while men tended to be more “aggressive.” In addition, high self-monitors were more likely than low self-monitors to use impression management in a “positive” way (i.e., to engage in ingratiation, self-promotion, and exemplification, while avoiding the use of supplication and intimidation). Finally, the results also suggested that there were significant differences in how positives, passives, and aggressives were viewed by their colleagues. Aggressives were significantly less likely to be seen as desirable work colleagues. However, work group colleagues did not have significantly different perceptions of positives and passives.

An article has been prepared from this research and is currently under review (see below).

### Law Enforcement Sample

Researchers have given considerable attention to the idea that impression-management behaviors can help individuals achieve greater career success. However, research has paid far less attention to the fact that impression management can sometimes have unintended negative consequences. In addition, prior research has paid relatively little attention to the way that impression management attempts are interpreted based on the gender of the person using the impression management tactic.

Using a sample of professionals from the headquarters of a state law enforcement agency, this research investigated whether attempts at intimidation were viewed differently by one’s supervisor based on whether the intimidation tactics were used by women or men. A total of 76 supervisor-subordinate dyads participated in the research.

The results suggest that women who managed impressions by using intimidation were perceived as less likable and received lower performance ratings from their supervisors than men who used similar amounts of these tactics. These findings are consistent with the predictions of social-role theory which suggests that

women who engage in counternormative or counterstereotypical types of impression management (e.g., intimidation, self-promotion) are likely to be viewed unfavorably.

An article has been prepared from this research and is currently under review (see below).

#### CONCLUSIONS:

##### Student Work Group Sample

This research examined how individuals attempt to influence the image their colleagues have of them by using impression management tactics in combination. The results support the idea that not only do individuals differ in how they use individual impression management tactics, but they also differ in how they use such strategies in combination. Specifically, the two studies conducted suggest that there were three distinct patterns of impression management among the participants. One group favored the use of “positive” impression management tactics like ingratiation, self-promotion, and exemplification. A second group tended to engage in impression management “aggressively,” using the tactics somewhat indiscriminately. Finally, a third group was more reserved or “passive” in their use of all five types of impression management.

In addition, individual differences predicted the patterns of impression management the participants employed. Women tended to take a more “passive” stance in their use of impression management, while men tended to be more “aggressive” in their use of the impression management tactics. Also, high self-monitors tended to emphasize the positive forms of impression management that were most likely to be appreciated by their colleagues.

Finally, the pattern of impression management used by individuals significantly affected the way they were perceived by their work group colleagues. Individuals who used impression management tactics “aggressively” (i.e., engaged in relatively high amounts of all five tactics) were generally viewed as less desirable colleagues than individuals who took either a “positive” or a “passive” approach to impression management.

##### Law Enforcement Sample

This research examined whether there was an interaction between gender and the use of intimidation such that women who used this impression management tactic were viewed less favorably than men who used this tactic. The results suggest that women who used intimidation were viewed more negatively than men who used intimidation. However, it is interesting that the use of intimidation did not influence supervisors’ perceptions of their subordinates’ likeability and performance in a similar way.

In particular, women who used relatively higher levels of intimidation were viewed as less likable than women who used relatively lower levels of intimidation. In comparison, the use of intimidation had little impact on supervisors’ ratings of how likable their male subordinates were. However, in terms of performance ratings, supervisors more favorably evaluated the performance of male subordinates who used relatively higher levels of intimidation, while the use of intimidation had a very slight negative impact on the performance evaluations of female employees.

Although these findings are generally consistent with the idea that women who use intimidation will be evaluated more negatively than men who use this tactic, this result is somewhat surprising in that it suggests that the women who used intimidation did not receive significantly lower performance ratings. Instead, the use of intimidation had little effect on the performance evaluations of female employees, but had a positive impact on the performance appraisal of male employees.

#### SIGNIFICANCE:

##### Student Work Group Sample

Previous research has examined how specific impression management tactics influence the ways in which individuals are perceived. However, prior research has not examined the effects of using various impression management tactics in combination. Two studies using student work group samples were used to identify three patterns of impression management. Individual differences (gender and self-monitoring) were theoretically and empirically linked to the use of specific forms of impression management. These results suggest that men and women attempt to manage impressions differently, even when working on the same project. In addition, the results imply that high self-monitors are more effective at managing the image that their group members have of them (and, thus, may function more effectively in team-based organizations). In addition, the pattern of impression management used significantly impacted the way that individuals were perceived by their colleagues. Thus, while the study of individual impression management tactics remains important, this research highlights the need for additional research on the way that different patterns of impression management influence relationships within groups and organizations.

#### Law Enforcement Sample

Although a number of studies have sought to understand how impression management helps people create favorable images and obtain valued career outcomes, far less research has focused on instances in which impression-management attempts fail or backfire. This research adds not only to the literature that helps explain when impression-management attempts fail, but also highlights the danger that individuals face when they try to manage impressions that are counternormative. In addition, the findings add to the literature that suggests that the performance appraisal process is often influenced by the impression-management behaviors of employees.

Finally, previous research suggests that women are often disadvantaged relative to men with regard to career progression, salary levels, and other outcomes. As a result, women have sometimes been advised to “play like a man” by being more forceful, assertive, and aggressive. The results of this study suggest that women should carefully consider the implications of such recommendations. Although the performance evaluations of women were generally unaffected by their use of intimidation, women who used such tactics (which are inconsistent with the stereotypical female gender role), were seen as less likable by their supervisors. Thus, one implication of these results is that women seeking to get ahead by managing impressions that are counternormative should be judicious in their use of such behavior.

PATENT INFORMATION: Not applicable.

AWARD INFORMATION: “Gender and the use of supplication and intimidation in organizations” (a paper based on the law enforcement sample) was selected as the outstanding applied paper for the Careers Division of the 2001 Academy of Management. This paper was also selected for inclusion in the Best Paper Proceedings at this meeting.

#### REFEREED PUBLICATIONS:

Bolino, M.C., & Turnley, W.H. 2001. "Gender and the use of supplication and intimidation in organizations." Best Paper Proceedings, Academy of Management Meetings, Washington, D.C.

#### BOOK CHAPTERS, SUBMISSIONS, ABSTRACTS AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS:

Bolino, M.C., & Turnley, W.H. More than one way to make an impression: Exploring profiles of impression management. Manuscript under review at Journal of Management (submitted July, 2001; revision requested September, 2001).

Bolino, M.C., & Turnley, W.H. Counternormative impression management and performance ratings: The use of intimidation in organization settings. Manuscript under review at Personnel Psychology (submitted September, 2001).