Impression Management at Work Place;

A comparative study of Men and Women along with the consideration of women employees’ marital status

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Acknowledgement
I would like to own up the inspirational personality of my maternal Grand Father, Rasheed Ahmed Khan who was is and will remain my cradle of Creativeness.
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ABSTRACT

The study was designed to investigate that who manages his/her impression more often at work place between both genders. Along with the illustration of how marital status in women impact’s her impression management tactics. It was a main study done, employing purposive sampling and with the scale alpha cronbach reliability of .95. The sample size was (N=60), (N=30 males), (N=30) females from a cellular network of Pakistan, which was divided into 4 groups, N=30 males, (n=15 un-married), (n=15 married), N=30 females, (n=15 un-married), (n=15 married). The impression management scale developed by Bolino and Turnley (1999) was used. Independent t-test was used to compute the means, which showed significant difference in managing impression in both sexes and between married/unmarried women. The mean values gender wise are (\(\bar{X}=79.03\) males), (\(\bar{X}=87.96\) females), and marital status wise are, (\(\bar{X}=103.13\) un-married women), (\(\bar{X}=88.93\) married women). The results are indicative of that women are more concerned about leaving their impressions on others and to be more particular un-married women are observed to have more involvement in impression management.
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An environment which is regarded as a serious, professional and mature ones, can actually depicts human nature of manipulation of his or her actual or real self. People often wear persona at their place for the sake of earning their bread and butter. Sometimes people deny accepting that they manage their impressions in front of the observer to seem as like able or vice versa. The craving of modernization and personal development along with career orientation has given a birth to a new phenomenon known as Impression management. Generally it has been over looked in our daily living, like the way we present ourselves to others. But one’s work place holds such a significant position that its importance cannot be over thrown. The manipulation of human behaviors according to his boss mood and demands makes him vulnerable to full fill the criteria of being the one who manages his impression. It will not be inappropriate to say that employees are often like chameleons at their work place as the change their colors or mold themselves as far their work environment wants them to be. Interestingly the impression management tactics which are employed at work place are associated with one’s gender. The environment of the work place decides that which population either male or female will be more involved into managing his or her impression. Ultimately he or she will feel gratified at the completion of his task, in self-presentation. In eastern societies working married women has to follow certain norms, implemented on her by her husband or in-laws. To the contrary working un-married girl is often like a free bird, ready to fly across the globe. The explanation might be
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as if she is no more a financial burden on her parents and even became much assertive to fight for her rights. Due to the matter of fact that the un-married women who has let herself free from the orthodox principles of her parents, she indulges herself more into manage her impression. The objectives which were aimed to achieve includes; checking the cultural relevance of the scale and in case of any problem modifying it, testing the psychometric properties of the original scale with reference to private organizations, studying impression management at work place and investigating the difference in the use of impression management strategies by the male employees and female employees along with observing the difference in impression management on the basis of marital status in women employees.

Literature Review

In past it was studied that what happens when immigrant’s works together with culturally different people at their work place (Lau, 2003). The research findings were concluded with a wise suggestion of overcoming professional obstacles by employing impression management tactics at workplace.

A research on impression management was done on a large scale; involving six countries across the globe come up with the findings that impression management is neither good nor bad per se. The concern is whether, if people are investing energy in presenting a face that is not naturally their own, they are still able to engage fully in the purpose of the organisation or in their own development (MChenry, 2007).

An Asian research on impression management acknowledged the openness of women to mould themselves more than men at their work place, on the basis of results (Deshpande, Schoderbek & Satish, 1996). A significant difference was found in impression management
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Tactics being employed by male and female managers of a not for profit organization. The results of 107 females were significantly high than of the 67 males, which do provides evidence that women are more predisposed to impression management.

In a research gender and role expectations were studied in relation to impression management (Guadagno & Cialdini, 2007). The results showed that there is a substantial difference in the employment of impression management tactics by both genders, and they get engaged with such impression management tactics, which are expected with their role, masculinity or femininity and which even at times handicap the women to get higher posts.

The occurrences of impression management have been studied in various contexts on human species. An explicit argument on this point that the ability of workers to engage in successful impression management is likely to be affected not only by their gender but also by the fact that their managers are usually men was being done on the basis of research findings (Edwards & Wajcman, 2005).

A major study on studying Impression management: a form of emotion work or women in a male-dominated profession was conducted. A worth reading verbatim was given which narrates that she loved the Work and the wonder of seeing structures go up. When she started out there were no other women so she had to fit in with the men if she was going to succeed (Watts, 2008).

The purpose of the study was to find out the relationship between impression management and gender, along with investigating that how a women’s marital status can meddles in her use of impression management tactics at her work place.
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Time has been changed and now women are taking actively part in not only their personal development but playing a great innings for the prosperity of their organization and country. Amazingly they do manipulate their impression but hesitate to admit it. While keeping in view all these mentioned schemas the study was planned.

Hypotheses

The research design is Ex-post facto design, as impression management which is the independent variable already exists at the work place. With the aid of demographic form the gender, age, education, marital status, and designation was inquired. In the present study the participants of the private sector were firstly briefed about the purpose of the research and they were assured about the confidentiality of the data they had provided. The hypotheses of the respective study were;

1. Women working in private sector practice more impression management as compare to men, at work place.
2. Un-married women of private sector employ more impression management tactics as compare to married women, at their work place.

Method

Participants

The purposive sample of N=60 individuals (N=30 males and N=30 females: including n=15 married and n=15 unmarried women) from a sales and customer service center of private cellular network of Rawalpindi and Islamabad participated in the present study. The education level of all the participants ranges from bachelors to masters and above.
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Instrument

The original form of the impression management scale (Bolino & Turnley, 1999) consists of 25 items and is based on likert scale. The questionnaire comprises of five subscales which are:

1. **Self-promotion:** whereby individuals point out their abilities or accomplishments in order to be seen competent by observers

2. **Ingratiation:** whereby individuals do favors or use flattery to elicit an attribution of likeability from observers.

3. **Exemplification:** whereby people self-sacrifice or go above and beyond the call of duty in order to gain attribution of dedication from observers.

4. **Intimidation:** whereby people signal their power or potential to punish in order to be seen dangerous by observers.

5. **Supplication:** whereby individuals advertise their weaknesses or short comings in order to elicit an attribution of being needy from observers.

Procedure

The data was being collected from a private cellular organization of Pakistan, Telenor telecommunication network. Instructions and purpose of the study were explained to each respondent. Respondents were assured about the confidentiality of their information. The participants were briefed about the questionnaire. They were instructed to response each and every item. Respondents were thanked for their cooperation. The score data was then fed into the
computer for statistical analysis. The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) was used for the analysis of data.

**Results**

The present study aimed to investigate the relationship between gender and impression management particularly at work place. Marital status of women employees was also a matter of concern to measure its impact on managing impression. Data analysis of the study consisted two parts. The first part dealt with reliability measure of the instrument. While the second with hypothesis testing. Alpha Cronbach was employed to measure the reliability of the composite scale which was quite satisfactory (alpha coefficient .95). The subscales were in high positive correlation with each other, ranging from .78 to .89 at \( p < .01 \) level. Independent sample-t test was being instrumental in computing mean gender wise as well as marital status wise too.

Insert Table 1

Table 1 reveals the reliability coefficient of composite scale and of its subscales. The instrument consists of 5 subscales.

Insert Table 2

Table 2 shows the results of computed Mean values of both male and female participants. The results indicate significant differences in both genders while talking about manipulating their impressions. It depicts that women are clearly involved and more concerned about their self-presentation and have the ability to mold themselves according to the demand of their organization.
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Insert Table 3.

Table 3 shows the results of computed Mean values of women according to their marital status wise. The results indicate significant differences in varying status of women. This means that unmarried women are even more vulnerable to impression management as compared to married ones. It may be because they are less under the burden of responsibility and does not have any companionship or mate, which allows them to practice their freedom and prone to adopt changes around them.

**Discussion**

The present research assumed the spurious relationship between women, more particularly unmarried women and impression management. The arena where it was measured was her work place. Private sector was selected, as it most often believed that in private sector people have more exposure, and they have a larger social network. A pool of tactics can be employed by those people in big organizations. The first dependent variable was women, regardless of her marital status.

In past studies it has been proved that now women are more prone to manage their impressions at work place. It might be due to the need of the hour that they want to be financially independent. Or they have become more assertive, putting a side their role expectations.

It was also been attested in a study (Wajcman et. al, 2005) that the impression which a women will manage women manage is dependent upon the environment, male female ratio, and the sex of her manager. It shows that she is capable of practising it, but due to the matter of fact that it is a man oriented society she becomes submissive. It can be concluded that the impression
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management tactics being employed by the participants of the present research have such an environment where they feel like practising them.

The second dependent variable was marital status, target on the unmarried women more prone to wear a persona required from her boss. Researches which have reviewed and quoted before are on the basis of gender. The marital status was not mentioned regarding the sample. But the research findings of the current study support the hypothesis that marital status of the women do affects her impression management.

To be précised there is a significant relationship between impression management and gender. On the other hand the marital status of women has something to do with her ability of manipulating her behavior at her work place. Further studies can be conducted in this field, involving other variables to be related with impression management. Future studies should focus more on work environments and positions or rank of the participants in their respective offices.

Limitation of this study

As nothing is perfect and permanent in the world of science, there are certain limitations of the current study. The limitation which should be ranked first is the limited locale of the study. Only 2 cities cannot exhibit the nature of the people living elsewhere. Then the sample size was also small. This lowers down its ratio of generalizability. Another limitation of the research is that the data was taken from a single private organization. The responses of the subjects can be because of entirely their own, and different set up from other private sector organizations.
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Conclusions and Future Study

Knowledge is always undiscoverable, so for the future studies it is preferable to have an highly extensive literature review, to have a deep down and insightful understanding of the phenomena under consideration. It has been already mentioned in limitations, about the small sample size. It is recommended to have a larger sample in future studies, to have a larger behaviour sample pool. Then it would be a much desirable option, if the data from other cities of Pakistan can be collected. Similarly conducting a research in some other country or continent means that sample should be taken on a larger scale and from different cities or states of that country. It can even provide an additional finding, about the impact of culture on impression management. To be more concerned, the private sector should sub-divide into further categories, for instance category 1 of cellular networks, 2 of advertising agencies, 3 of media and vice versa. The findings of such a research will be highly extensive, with more reliable and generalizable impacts. Even the additional finding will provide at a glance that which category demands more impression management tactics and why.
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Table # 1

*Reliability table of Impression management composite and subscales (N=5)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>no of items</th>
<th>reliability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IM</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ING</td>
<td>6, 7, 8, 9, 10</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EX</td>
<td>11, 12, 13, 14, 15</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INT</td>
<td>16, 17, 18, 19, 20</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SU</td>
<td>21, 22, 23, 24, 25</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE; IM= Impression management, SP=Self Promotion, ING=Ingratiation, EX=Exemplification, INT=Intimidation, SU= Supplication.

Table # 2

*Means, standard deviations and t values for both genders on Impression management (n =60)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Women</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n = 30)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(n = 30)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>T</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IM</td>
<td>70.97</td>
<td>11.52</td>
<td>96.03</td>
<td>12.11</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>.044</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

df=58
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Note. IM = Impression Management.

Table # 3

Means, standard deviations and t values for both married and un married women employees on
Impression management (n =30)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Married women (n = 15)</th>
<th>Un-married Women (n = 15)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IM</td>
<td>88.93</td>
<td>6.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

df=28

Note. IM = Impression Management.