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EFFECTS OF IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT ON PERFORMANCE RATINGS: A LONGITUDINAL STUDY

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We tested a model proposing that subordinates' impression management behavior influences performance ratings through supervisors' liking of and perceived similarity to subordinates. We measured impression management behavior, liking, and similarity six weeks after the establishment of supervisor-subordinate dyads and measured performance ratings after six months. Results indicated support for the overall model and several specified relationships. Additionally, impression management behavior had a significant, indirect impact on performance ratings. Implications of the results for research on impression management and performance appraisal are discussed.

Over the past 30 years, social psychologists have devoted much research attention to impression management and the related topics of self-presentation and ingratiation (Jones, 1964; Leary & Kowalski, 1990; Schlenker & Weigold, 1992). Drawing on Schlenker (1980), we defined impression management as those behaviors individuals employ to protect their self-images, influence the way they are perceived by significant others, or both. Most impression management research has been conducted at the dyadic level and has focused on the types of strategies employed (Buss, Gomes, Higgins, & Lauterbach, 1987), motivations behind the use of each strategy (Arkin, Appleman, & Berger, 1980), individual characteristics of agents and targets related to the use of impression management (Baumeister, & Jones, 1978; Schlenker & Leary, 1982a), and reactions of targets to impression management behaviors (Schlenker & Leary, 1982b).

Following Wortman and Linsenmeier's (1977) suggestion that impression management findings in social psychology research may generalize to organizational settings, organizational researchers began to study impression management (e.g., Ansari & Kapoor, 1987; Ashford & Northcraft, 1992; Baron, 1983; Bohra & Pandey, 1984; Caldwell & O'Reilly, 1982; Fandt &

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Ferris, 1990; Giacalone, 1985; Hinkin & Schriesheim, 1990; Judge & Ferris, 1993; Kipnis & Schmidt, 1988; Kipnis, Schmidt, & Wilkinson, 1980; Mowday, 1979; Schriesheim & Hinkin, 1990; Vecchio & Sussmann, 1991; Wayne & Ferris, 1990; Wayne & Kacmar, 1991; Yukl & Falbe, 1990; Yukl & Tracey, 1992). Most of this research has focused on identifying impression management tactics or developing theoretical models of the impression management process. Although much has been accomplished within this stream of research, only a few studies have empirically examined the relationship between impression management and performance ratings (Ferris, Judge, Rowland, & Fitzgibbons, 1994; Kipnis & Schmidt, 1988; Wayne & Ferris, 1990; Wayne & Kacmar, 1991).

To date, impression management studies in the performance appraisal area have either been conducted in a laboratory setting or have employed cross-sectional designs with established supervisor-subordinate dyads. Whereas much can be learned from these studies, longitudinal research with newly formed supervisor-subordinate dyads is needed in order to determine whether subordinate impression management behavior affects performance ratings over time. Liden and Mitchell (1988) and Tedeschi and Melburg (1984) argued that impression management can be used for either short-term or long-term purposes. Tedeschi and Melburg made a clear distinction between tactical impression management behaviors, targeted at obtaining immediate gratification, and strategic impression management behaviors, geared for influencing future outcomes. The lack of longitudinal research in the area has precluded the possibility of investigating the long-term or strategic uses of impression management. One purpose of the current study was to develop a theoretical model for understanding the long-term effects of subordinate impression management behavior on supervisor performance ratings and to empirically examine hypotheses based on this model with a longitudinal research design.

Few studies have examined the process by which impression management influences performance ratings, and they have not investigated alternative explanations for apparent impression management effects. Thus, a second purpose of the current study was to examine the processes surrounding the influence of impression management on performance ratings. In particular, we examined supervisors' liking of and perceived similarity to subordinates as intervening variables in the relationship between impression management and performance ratings. In addition, we explored the impact of demographic similarity on performance ratings through its effect on perceived similarity and liking.

HYPOTHESIZED MODEL OF THE EFFECTS OF IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT ON PERFORMANCE RATINGS

In the theoretical model guiding our research (Figure 1), we propose that subordinates' impression management behaviors influence supervisors' liking of the subordinates as well as the supervisors' perceptions of similarity

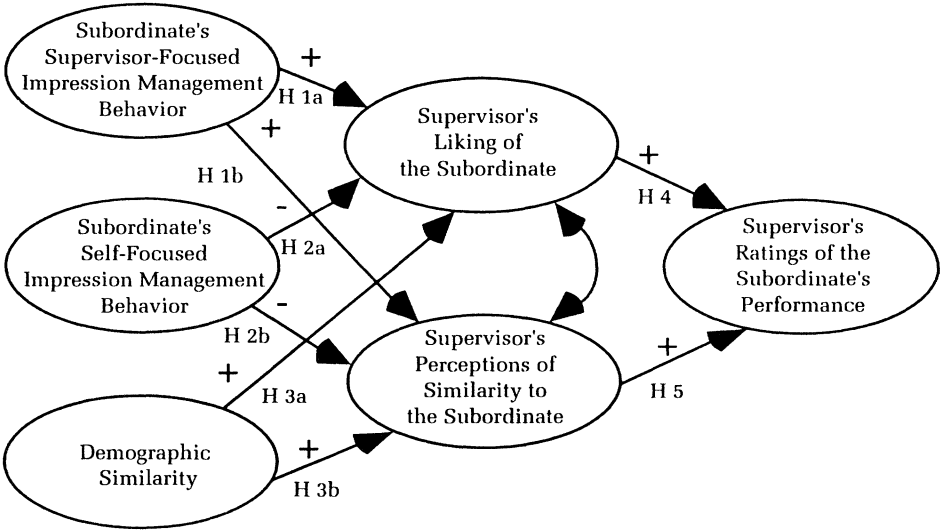
to the subordinates. Liking and perceived similarity assessed at an initial point in time in turn relate to supervisory ratings of the subordinates' performance made later. The model is not intended to be a comprehensive model of social influence processes in performance appraisal. Other models, such as Ilgen and Feldman's (1983) and Villanova and Bernardin's (1989, 1991), are more inclusive.

Impression Management Strategies

A vast array of impression management strategies have been reported in the relevant literature. Many of these focus on defensive tactics (Tedeschi & Melburg, 1984; Tedeschi & Norman, 1985) typically used in response to poor performance (Liden & Mitchell, 1988), such as accounts, excuses, apologies, self-handicapping, learned helplessness, self-deprecation, alcoholism, and drug abuse. Because the current investigation did not focus on subordinate poor performance, defensive strategies were not of interest. In contrast to those strategies, assertive impression management tactics are used by individuals to establish a particular identity for an audience and are not merely a reaction to situational demands (Tedeschi & Melburg, 1984).

Self-presentation and other-enhancement, two main types of impression management, provided the focus for the current study. Self-presentation strategies, intended by an individual, or agent, to make himself or herself more appealing to a target (Jones, 1964), are accomplished either verbally or with nonverbal cues such as smiling, eye contact, and touching (DePaulo, 1992; Drake & Moberg, 1986). Other-enhancement refers to the favorable

FIGURE 1
Hypothesized Model of the Effects of Impression Management on Performance Ratings



evaluation of, or agreement with, the target. Flattery, favor-doing, and opinion conformity are common forms of other-enhancement that have been shown to positively influence target individuals (Ralston & Elsass, 1989; Tedeschi & Melburg, 1984).

The agent's objective in the use of all impression management strategies is to favorably influence attributions made by the target (Jones & Wortman, 1973). Because prior research has shown that lower-status agents frequently use impression management in attempts to influence higher-status targets (Gardner & Martinko, 1988; Leary & Kowalski, 1990; Pandey, 1981; Ralston, 1985; Yukl & Tracey, 1992), subordinate impression management targeted at supervisors represents an especially rich setting for research on impression management (Bohra & Pandey, 1984).

Several studies have examined the effects of subordinate impression management behavior on performance ratings. In particular, Kipnis and Schmidt (1988), Wayne and Ferris (1990), Wayne and Kacmar (1991), and Ferris and colleagues (1994) found support for the relationship between subordinate impression management behavior and supervisor performance ratings. Although these studies have provided useful results, they have a number of limitations. Specifically, the prior studies have been conducted either in laboratory settings in which students were used as subjects or in field settings with established supervisor-subordinate dyads and cross-sectional designs. Thus, although significant relationships between impression management and performance ratings have emerged, the causal relationship is unclear, the intervening processes are not well understood, and the impact of impression management behavior on performance ratings over time is unknown.

Individuals can use many impression management behaviors to accomplish either short- or long-term goals (Tedeschi & Melburg, 1984). For example, a subordinate may do a favor for a supervisor in the morning because the former plans to ask for the afternoon off. In contrast, the subordinate may do favors for the supervisor over time in the hope of getting a good annual performance appraisal. To influence salient outcomes such as performance ratings, compensation, and promotions, individuals would seem to need to use impression management behaviors strategically over time.

Cognitive Information Processing

Cognitive information processing approaches provide a theoretical framework for explaining how supervisors translate their perceptions of subordinate impression management into initial impressions, encode them into memory, and later retrieve and decode them when rating the subordinates' performance (Lord, 1985; Schneider, 1991).¹ Successful subordinate impres-

¹ Encoding involves the translation of perceived social information into existing schema or categories in one's memory. For example, if we notice on several occasions that an individual is quiet and avoids interaction with others, we may encode the person as fitting our introvert

sion management behaviors favorably alter supervisor attributions of a subordinate (Jones & Wortman, 1973; Wood & Mitchell, 1981). Attributions in turn provide information the supervisor uses in categorizing or recategorizing the subordinate (Schneider, 1991).

Subordinate impression management may have the most salient influence on supervisors when the relationship between the two is developing. This time is when initial categorization of the subordinate occurs (Feldman, 1986). In many cases, supervisors begin to process information about a new subordinate before the individual's first day on the job, or even before interviewing the prospective employee. It has been found that interviewers, who are often the applicants' future supervisors, form impressions of applicants before interviews on the basis of preemployment information, such as résumés (Phillips & Dipboye, 1989). Thus, the categorization of information based on schemata may occur prior to an interview (Dipboye, 1989). However, even at this early stage, applicants may use impression management to manipulate the information presented in their résumés and cover letters announcing job candidacy (Liden & Mitchell, 1989). Impression management during actual interviews may further influence the interviewers' information processing, either positively (Fletcher, 1989; Gilmore & Ferris, 1989) or negatively (Baron, 1989).

Although initial impressions may be formed before the first day a supervisor and subordinate work together, we suspect that in most cases, supervisors continue to engage in a controlled processing mode when observing new subordinates' behavior on the job for the first time (Feldman, 1981). In most cases, assimilation of a new subordinate should be sufficiently unique to trigger a controlled categorization process² (Dienesch & Liden, 1986). Supervisors who have categorized a new subordinate as, for example, lazy may interpret the subordinate's use of impression management behaviors (such as doing favors) as schema-inconsistent information. This interpretation may in turn trigger an episode of controlled information processing (Fiske, Neuberg, Beattie, & Milberg, 1987; Srull & Wyer, 1989). Using this new positive information, the supervisor may revise the initial categorization of the subordinate.

Because such controlled processing involves making attributions for the new subordinates' behavior (Feldman, 1981; Green & Mitchell, 1979), the supervisors become vulnerable to subordinate impression management strategies designed to manipulate their attributions (Jones & Wortman, 1973). For example, in part on the basis of the subordinates' impression management behavior, the supervisors may categorize the new employees as

category. Retrieval occurs at a later time when information is accessed from memory and used in forming judgments, such as performance ratings.

² Controlled processing of information involves conscious thought in the interpretation and encoding of information into memory. Unlike the processing of routine information or stimuli that is handled automatically, controlled processes are invoked when individuals are confronted with novel stimuli or information that is inconsistent with existing schema.

friendly, hard-working, and similar to themselves. This categorization may compare favorably with the supervisors' prototype of ideal subordinate behaviors. A match between prototype and processed information based on the subordinates' impression management may positively influence the task assignments, feedback, resources, and support the supervisors provide to the subordinates. This favorable treatment may cause the subordinates' actual performance to be higher than that of others, and rating biases may also occur (Feldman, 1986; Ilgen & Feldman, 1983).

Supervisor-Focused Impression Management

Greenwald (1980) and Steele (1988) argued that people strive to affirm their self-concepts. They may accomplish this goal through the use of impression management, attempting to control or manage the impressions that other people form so that those impressions are consistent with their desired self-images (Schlenker & Leary, 1982). Often exerting such control translates into an attempt to behave in a way that will result in liking by a target. Research evidence shows that other-enhancement is often effective in provoking a favorable target impression. Jones and Wortman noted that "people find it hard not to like those who think highly of them" (1973: 4).

Because of our focus on subordinates' use of impression management in attempts to influence their immediate superiors, we refer to other-enhancement tactics as supervisor-focused impression management strategies. These include such strategies as flattery, which involves a subordinate's communicating feelings of liking and admiration to a supervisor, and doing favors for the supervisor. A supervisor who feels liked and admired by a subordinate will be more attracted to that subordinate. In fact, a target's attraction to and liking of an agent has been the dependent variable in the majority of the social psychology experiments on impression management. In nearly all those studies, researchers found agent use of flattery and favors to be related to target affect for and attraction to the agent (Jones, 1964; Jones & Wortman, 1973; Schlenker, 1980; Wortman & Linsenmeier, 1977). The handful of studies specifically designed to assess the use of other-enhancement in organizational situations has revealed similar results. For example, subordinate use of supervisor-focused impression management has been found to be related to supervisors' attraction to subordinates (Kipnis & Vanderveer, 1971) and liking of the subordinates (Wayne & Ferris, 1990).

Hypothesis 1a: A subordinate's use of supervisor-focused impression management behaviors will have a positive effect on his or her supervisor's liking of the subordinate.

In an effort to maintain positive self-images, individuals may be especially attentive to positive things that are said about them and to favors done for them (cf. Markus, 1980). According to self-verification theory, people tend to be attracted to and to identify with those who confirm the perceptions they have of themselves (Swann, Stein-Seroussi, & Giesler, 1992). In-

dividuals tend to perceive themselves as similar to those who display attractive behaviors, such as giving compliments (Byrne, 1971; Lewicki, 1983). It follows that supervisors will see themselves as being more similar to subordinates who compliment them and do favors for them than to subordinates who do not engage in these behaviors.

Hypothesis 1b: A subordinate's use of supervisor-focused impression management behaviors will have a positive effect on his or her supervisor's perceptions of similarity to the subordinate.

Self-Focused Impression Management

There are many assertive self-presentation strategies, including false modesty, boasting, and a host of nonverbal behaviors such as smiling, making eye contact, and touching (Cialdini, 1989; Ralston & Elsass, 1989; Schlenker, 1980; Tedeschi & Melburg, 1984; Tedeschi & Norman, 1985). We measured self-presentation in terms of two strategies, self-enhancement and exemplification, or acting as an exemplar. We refer to these strategies as self-focused impression management. With these strategies, a subordinate attempts to convey the impression that he or she is a friendly, hard-working, model employee.

A subordinate's goal with these self-focused strategies is to create an image that a supervisor will perceive favorably. An agent must be willing to assume risk when using self-focused strategies (Liden & Mitchell, 1988) because the influence attempt will backfire if the target interprets the self-presentation as insincere (Wortman & Linsenmeier, 1977). Subordinates who are consumed by presenting themselves favorably may fail to devote enough effort to job duties (Baumeister, 1989), which results in negative supervisor reactions. As Cialdini and DeNicholas wrote, "If there is an overarching lesson to be learned from the large body of work on impression management, it is that favorable self-presentation is a tricky business" (1989: 626). Research results indicate that agents often do not succeed in the use of self-focused strategies, as is evidenced by neutral (Wayne & Ferris, 1990) or negative (Baron, 1986; Powers & Zuroff, 1988) target reactions. For example, in Powers and Zuroff's research, agents who used self-focused impression management were less liked than were individuals who did not use impression management. Given the extreme skill that appears to be needed in the use of self-focused impression management tactics, we expect that most subordinates will not succeed in conveying a positive image with such tactics.

Hypothesis 2a: A subordinate's self-focused impression management behaviors will have a negative effect on his or her supervisor's liking of the subordinate.

A very consistent finding in the social psychology and organizational literatures is the strong association between perceived similarity and liking. It follows that if supervisors do not like subordinates who promote them-

selves, the supervisors will not perceive themselves as similar to the self-promoting subordinates. Psychologically healthy individuals tend not to identify with or perceive themselves as similar to those they consider undesirable (Byrne, 1971; cf. Cialdini & DeNicholas, 1989; Lewicki, 1983; Swann et al., 1992).

Hypothesis 2b: A subordinate's self-focused impression management behaviors will have a negative effect on his or her supervisor's perceptions of similarity to the subordinate.

Demographic Similarity

A recent extension to the study of demography and individual differences has involved examining similarity between individuals at both dyadic and group levels. This new approach, termed relational demography, relies on the similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971) for its theoretical foundation. According to this theory, individuals who possess similar individual characteristics and attitudes will perceive one another as similar and will be attracted to each other. Experiments in social psychology have provided support for the theory (Berscheid & Walster, 1969; Byrne, 1971; Jamieson, Lydon, & Zanna, 1987). Field research in organizational settings has demonstrated effects that explain variance in dependent variables beyond that explained by main effects for individual differences. For example, demographic similarity between supervisor and subordinate has been found to be positively related to a supervisor's liking of a subordinate (Judge & Ferris, 1993; Tsui & O'Reilly, 1989) and negatively related to role ambiguity (Tsui & O'Reilly, 1989).

Hypothesis 3a: Demographic similarity between a supervisor and a subordinate will have a positive effect on the supervisor's liking of the subordinate.

Hypothesis 3b: Demographic similarity between a supervisor and a subordinate will have a positive effect on the supervisor's perceptions of his or her similarity to the subordinate.

Supervisor Liking and Ratings of Subordinate Performance

Zajonc (1980) argued for the primacy of affect, suggesting that it dominates interactions between people. An especially important interpersonal interaction in organizations is that between subordinate and supervisor. Empirical support has been found for Liden and Mitchell's (1989) proposition that affect plays a critical role in the type of exchange that develops between supervisor and subordinate (Liden, Wayne, & Stilwell, 1993; Wayne & Ferris, 1990). One implication of the importance of affect in subordinate-supervisor interactions is that it may cause bias in a supervisor's treatment (Feldman,

1986) and evaluation of subordinates (Dipboye, 1985; Villanova & Bernardin, 1989).

Responding to calls by Landy and Farr (1980) and Mitchell (1983) for research on the social context of performance ratings, researchers have conducted studies in which they found social factors to be related to performance ratings (e.g., Mitchell & Liden, 1982). Specifically, a supervisor's liking of a subordinate has been shown to be positively related to supervisory performance ratings (Judge & Ferris, 1993; Tsui & Barry, 1986; Wayne & Ferris, 1990). These studies are also important because they were among the first to integrate cognitive information processing with the social context of performance rating (cf. Schneider, 1991). However, the research reported in each of these studies was either conducted in a laboratory or in the field, with a cross-sectional design. Thus, common method variance is a concern because supervisors assessed their liking for and the performance of the subordinates at the same time. And even if common method variance did not influence the results, it is not known if liking at one time influences ratings made later.

Although the research that has appeared on the association between liking and performance appraisal has been cross-sectional, theory supports the argument that liking will have an enduring effect that will influence later performance ratings. French and Raven (1959) described being liked as "referent power" that provides the liked individual with influence. Tedeschi and Melburg noted that "on a long term basis there are many potential gains for the liked person" (1984: 45), including better communication, trust, and ability to influence. Specifically, liking may influence supervisors' observation and storage of information over time as well as their recall at the time they actually rate a subordinate's performance (Cardy & Dobbins, 1986; DeNisi & Williams, 1988; Srull & Wyer, 1989). Supervisory liking of a subordinate may reflect job behaviors associated with good job performance, such as the subordinate's friendliness toward customers and working well with other employees (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993). However, liking may also mask performance deficiencies and lead to biased performance ratings. At least three biases resulting from liking or disliking a subordinate may influence a supervisor's performance ratings. First, the supervisor may provide liked subordinates with more resources and support than disliked subordinates, which may influence actual performance (Feldman, 1986). Second, supervisors may be selectively attentive to subordinates' work behaviors over time, noticing and storing information concerning the positive work behaviors of liked subordinates and the negative work behaviors of disliked subordinates. Finally, when actually rating subordinates, supervisors will tend to recall the positive work behaviors of liked subordinates and the negative work behaviors of disliked subordinates.

Hypothesis 4: A supervisor's liking of a subordinate will be positively related to the supervisor's ratings of the subordinate's performance.

Supervisor Perceptions of Similarity and Ratings of Subordinate Performance

Perceived similarity has also been shown to have a direct effect on performance ratings (Pulakos & Wexley, 1983; Senger, 1971; Turban & Jones, 1988; Wexley, Alexander, Greenwalt, & Couch, 1980; Zalesny & Highhouse, 1992; Zalesny & Kirsch, 1989). Zalesny and Highhouse suggested that research in social cognitive information processing might explain correlations between perceived similarity and performance ratings. Specifically, substantial support has been found for the idea that people develop self-schemata for organizing perceptions of themselves (Markus, Smith, & Moreland, 1985; Srull & Gaelick, 1983). Research findings of self-serving attributional biases (Ross, 1977) and tendencies to protect self-image (Schlenker, 1980; Steele, 1988; Swann, 1982) imply that most people evaluate themselves positively (DeNisi & Shaw, 1977; Shore, Shore, & Thornton, 1992). These findings also suggest that supervisors' self-schemata should approximate the prototypes of desired characteristics and behaviors they use in the process of rating performance. Thus, a supervisor, comparing his or her self-schema with information remembered about a similar subordinate, should rate that subordinate more positively than a dissimilar subordinate (Lewicki, 1983).

Hypothesis 5: A supervisor's perceptions of similarity to a subordinate will be positively related to the supervisor's ratings of the subordinate's performance.

Long-Term Effects of Impression Management

To our knowledge, researchers have not used longitudinal research designs in the investigation of impression management and its effects on performance ratings. It is not clear if the results found in previous cross-sectional research will also be found in longitudinal studies. However, drawing on a cognitive information processing model, we predict that impression management will influence later performance ratings.

METHODS

Respondents

The study was conducted at two major universities located in the Midwest and Southeast. We collected complete data from 111 pairs of subordinates and their immediate supervisors. The respondents held a wide range of nonacademic positions, such as that of secretary, electrician, librarian, admissions counselor, research scientist, and computer programmer. The average age of the subordinates was 33 and the average age of the supervisors was 41. The subordinate group included 47 men and 64 women, and the supervisor group included 51 men and 60 women. Of the subordinates, 73 were Caucasian, 27 were African-American, and 11 indicated they were of another race. Of the supervisors, 98 were Caucasian, 8 were African-American, and 5 marked "other." The average educational levels were an

associate's degree for the subordinates and a bachelor's degree for the supervisors. Supervisors had held their positions for an average five years.

Procedures

Recently hired subordinates at both sites were required to attend a one-day orientation session. The orientation sessions were held biweekly with small groups of new subordinates. Over a one-year period, a member of our research team at each location attended every orientation session in order to describe the study and to elicit participation. It was necessary to attend orientation sessions over an entire year because of the fairly low number of new hires at any single session. Over the course of the entire data collection period, approximately 35 percent of all individuals attending orientation sessions at one site and about 70 percent of all attendees at the other site agreed to participate in the study. These percentages should be interpreted as the lower bounds for response rates as many individuals did not participate because they were not eligible. For example, employees who held academic appointments, had worked with the supervisors previously, or had worked with their supervisors for more than 28 days were not eligible for the study. The personnel directors at both sites also informed us that some of the new employees attending orientation sessions were illiterate or functionally illiterate. For ethical reasons, we did not attempt to identify employees who were eligible for the study but who elected not to participate. Thus, 35 and 70 percent are conservative estimates of the response rates. The difference in the response rates at the two sites resulted from one of the organizations having a large temporary work program. Thus, many orientation attendees were ineligible for the study because they had been working with their supervisors as temporary employees.

The measures from which the data used in this study are drawn were part of a larger organizational survey of supervisor-subordinate relationships (Liden et al., 1993). We intended to have all respondents complete four surveys at the following times: within five days of starting employment, after two weeks, after six weeks, and after six months. The demographic items were included in the initial survey. Although the personnel departments at both sites encouraged all new employees to attend the orientation within the first five days of their employment, many employees worked with their supervisors for a couple of weeks before attending the session. As a result, we modified the study so that new employees who had been working with their supervisors for more than five days completed the two-week, six-week, and six-month surveys. For these respondents, the demographic items were included in the two-week survey.

New employees who agreed to participate completed either three or four surveys, depending on how many days it had been since they first started working with their new supervisors. Those who said it had been five days or less completed the zero-to-five-day questionnaire immediately. They received another three questionnaires via campus mail after two weeks, six weeks, and six months from their hiring date. Employees volunteering to

participate in the study who indicated that it had been between 6 and 28 days since they started working with their new supervisors were provided with the two-week survey and asked to complete it immediately and return it by mail to us. They received the six-week and six-month surveys through campus mail. Except for the variation noted in regard to demographic items, all subordinates completed the same surveys after two weeks, six weeks, and six months from their hiring dates.

We asked all respondents for their direct supervisors' phone numbers and contacted the latter immediately after the orientation to ask them to participate in the study. A supervisor who agreed to participate completed either three or four surveys, depending on how many days it had been since the focal subordinate first started working with the supervisor. Again, the demographic items were included either in the zero-to-five-day survey or in the two-week survey. Except in regard to the demographic items, all supervisors completed the same surveys after two weeks, six weeks, and six months from the subordinate's hiring date.

As in any longitudinal study, it was necessary to identify respondents so that responses at each time could be compared. Identification was also necessary for matching supervisor and subordinate responses. A code number on each questionnaire served this purpose. We told all employees that their responses would be held in strict confidence and provided envelopes in which they were to return the surveys by mail.

Given the longitudinal design, some subject mortality occurred during the study. A total of 160 supervisor-subordinate dyads completed the two-week survey; 149 of these completed the six-week survey; and 111 dyads completed all three surveys. All analyses are based on the 111 supervisor-subordinate dyads.

Measures

Subordinates reported their impression management behavior in the two-week and six-week surveys. Supervisors also reported their subordinates' impression management behavior at those points. Supervisors completed measures of perceived similarity and liking of the subordinate in the six-week survey and evaluated their subordinate's performance at six months.

Subordinate impression management behavior. Wayne and Ferris (1990) developed a 24-item scale to measure a number of assertive impression management behaviors, including self-enhancement, other-enhancement, opinion conformity, favor-doing, and exemplification. Results of their principal components analysis indicated three types of impression management: job-focused, supervisor-focused, and self-focused. The reliabilities for these scales in their study were .87 for job-focused, .78 for supervisor-focused, and .71 for self-focused impression management. We used a shortened version of the 24-item Wayne and Ferris scale to assess impression management behavior, assessing two of the three types of tactics, supervisor-focused and self-focused impression management. Subordinates

reported how often during the past six weeks they had engaged in 12 impression management behaviors on a seven-point scale (never, 1, to always, 7). Using the same response scale, supervisors also reported how often their subordinates had engaged in the 12 impression management behaviors during the past six weeks.

Demographic similarity. Drawing on research by Turban and Jones (1988), we created a measure of demographic similarity including gender, race, and age. Educational level was not included because some data for this variable were missing. Respondents indicated their race as white, African-American, or other. For the other category, respondents were asked to specify their race. Subordinates and supervisors who both checked the other category but did not specify their race were not included in the analyses because we could not determine similarity in terms of race. Gender and race were coded as the same (0) or as different (1). Age was measured in years. Age discrepancy was the absolute difference between supervisors and subordinates. We divided the discrepancy values by their respective standard deviations, summed them, and then reverse-scored them so that the larger the score, the greater the demographic similarity.

Supervisor liking. Three items were used to measure liking. Two items, developed by Wayne and Ferris (1990), were: "I like my subordinate very much as a person" and "I think my subordinate would make a good friend." Each item was scaled from "strongly disagree," 1, to "strongly agree," 7. For the third item, developed for this study, the following instructions were provided: "Liking refers to the mutual affection the supervisor and subordinate have for each other. Please rate each of your subordinates on the degree to which you like each other" (1 = dislike each other very much, 4 = indifferent about each other, 7 = like each other very much). The response scale was designed in such a way that a supervisor's response on the liking item for a new subordinate could be identified from among the responses concerning his or her other subordinates. We summed ratings on the three items to create the liking measure ($\alpha = .79$).

Supervisor perceptions of similarity. We used three items developed by Turban and Jones (1988) to measure perceived similarity: "My subordinate and I are similar in terms of our outlook, perspective, and values," "My subordinate and I see things in much the same way," and "My subordinate and I are alike in a number of areas." Supervisors responded on a seven-point scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." The items were summed to create the measure ($\alpha = .89$).

Performance ratings. We developed the following four items: (1) "This subordinate is superior (so far) to other new subordinates that I've supervised before," (strongly disagree to strongly agree), (2) "Rate the overall level of performance that you observe for this subordinate" (unacceptable, poor, below average, average, above average, excellent, and outstanding), (3) "What is your personal view of your subordinate in terms of his or her overall effectiveness?" (very ineffective to very effective), (4) "Overall, to what extent do you feel your subordinate has been effectively fulfilling his

or her roles and responsibilities?" (not effectively at all to very effectively). In addition, we used three items developed by Tsui (1984) that measure the extent to which a supervisor feels a subordinate is meeting the demands of his or her roles. Responses for all seven items were made on seven-point scales and were summed ($\alpha = .94$).

RESULTS

Because data were collected at two organizations, we examined differences between the sites on all variables. A moderated hierarchical regression analysis was conducted with site entered first, followed by the independent variables and the interactions between site and each independent variable. The results revealed no significant main effect for site and no significant interaction terms. Therefore, we merged data from the two organizations for all analyses.

Before testing the proposed model, we conducted a series of principal components analyses with the variables of interest. First, principal components analysis with varimax rotation was used to examine the 12-item impression management scale administered to the subordinates and supervisors at two weeks. The resulting factor structures were ambiguous and unreliable, perhaps because employees had not had an adequate opportunity to engage in impression management behaviors. Thus, impression management behavior at two weeks was not included in this study.

We examined the factor structure of the 12-item impression management scale completed by subordinates at six weeks by conducting a principal components analysis with varimax rotation. First, a three-factor solution was examined. Three factors emerged with eigenvalues greater than 1.0; however, only one item loaded above .40 on factor 3. Because these results did not support a three-factor solution and because prior research has found support for a two-factor solution (Wayne & Ferris, 1990), we conducted a principal components analysis in which we set the number of factors to two. One item with a cross-loading and a second item that did not load above .40 on either factor were omitted. Analysis of the remaining ten items yielded two eigenvalues greater than 1.0 (2.94 for factor 1 and 2.30 for factor 2), and the factors explained 52.4 percent of the variance. The Cronbach alpha estimate for the supervisor-focused impression management scale (factor 1) was .78, and for the self-focused impression management scale (factor 2), it was .71. As Table 1 shows, the factor matrix indicated that all items loaded on the intended factors and had acceptable loadings. Because subordinates may have responded in a socially desirable way to the impression management items, we included the Crowne-Marlowe measure of social desirability (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960) in the initial subordinate survey (zero-to-five days). Forty-three subordinates completed this survey. The social desirability scale, which had a Cronbach alpha estimate of .84, was not significantly correlated with supervisor-focused impression management ($r = .13$, n.s.) nor self-focused impression management ($r = .06$, n.s.). These results sug-

gest that subordinates did not respond in a socially desirable way to the impression management items.

The factor structure of the supervisor reports of subordinate impression management (ten items) measured at six weeks was also examined with principal components analysis with varimax rotation and the number of factors set to two. The factor structure was consistent with the results for the factor structure based on subordinates' reports. The correlations between supervisor and subordinate reports of impression management were significant for supervisor-focused impression management ($r = .51, p < .001$) and nonsignificant for self-focused impression management ($r = .08, n.s.$). We did not include supervisor reports of impression management in the analyses for three reasons: the number of observations would have been reduced because of missing data; common method problems may have arisen because liking, perceived similarity, and performance ratings were assessed from the supervisor's perspective; and supervisors may have been unaware of impression management behaviors when subordinates engaged in those behaviors effectively.

A principal components analysis with varimax rotation was also conducted for the supervisor responses to the perceived similarity, liking, and performance rating items. The number of factors was set to three. The eigenvalues were 6.76 for factor 1 (performance), 2.41 for factor 2 (perceived similarity), and 1.01 for factor 3 (liking). A total of 78.3 percent of the vari-

TABLE 1
Rotated Factors and Loadings for the Impression Management Items^a

Items	Factor 1	Factor 2
To what extent do you		
1. Do personal favors for your supervisor (for example, getting him or her a cup of coffee or a coke, etc.)	.83	– .02
2. Offer to do something for your supervisor which you were not required to do; that is, you did it as a personal favor for him or her	.76	.08
3. Compliment your immediate supervisor on his or her dress or appearance	.73	.13
4. Praise your immediate supervisor on his or her accomplishments	.65	.14
5. Take an interest in your supervisor's personal life	.62	– .06
6. Try to be polite when interacting with your supervisor	– .13	.83
7. Try to be a friendly person when interacting with your supervisor	– .17	.74
8. Try to act as a "model" employee by, for example, never taking longer than the established time for lunch	.20	.72
9. Work hard when you know the results will be seen by your supervisor	.13	.60
10. Let your supervisor know that you try to do a good job in your work	.20	.59

^a N = 111.

ance was explained. The results, shown in Table 2, indicated that all the items loaded on the intended factors and had acceptable loadings.

Table 3 gives means, standard deviations, and correlations among the variables. The subordinates' reports of supervisor-focused impression management behavior were positively related to the supervisors' liking of the subordinates and perceptions of similarity. Demographic similarity was also positively related to the supervisors' liking and perceptions of similarity. Supervisors' liking of subordinates was strongly and positively correlated with perceptions of similarity. Further, supervisors' liking of the subordinates and perceptions of similarity measured at six weeks were positively related to supervisors' ratings of the subordinates' performance measured at six months.

Structural Equations Modeling

To test the hypothesized model presented in Figure 1, we used structural equations modeling, taking this approach because the model specifies causality rather than mere empirical association. In addition, structural equations modeling allows the correction of structural estimates for mea-

TABLE 2
Rotated Factors and Loadings for Performance, Perceived Similarity, and Liking Items^a

Items	Factors		
	1	2	3
1. Overall, to what extent do you feel your subordinate is performing his or her job the way you would like it to be performed?	.92	.06	.11
2. To what extent has your subordinate's performance met your own expectations?	.90	.05	.14
3. Overall, to what extent do you feel your subordinate has been effectively fulfilling his or her roles and responsibilities?	.90	.14	.21
4. Rate the overall level of performance that you observe for this subordinate	.87	.24	.16
5. This subordinate is superior (after 6 months) to other new subordinates that I've supervised before	.83	.14	.14
6. What is your personal view of your subordinate in terms of his or her overall effectiveness?	.82	.20	.29
7. If you entirely had your way, to what extent would you change the manner in which your subordinate is doing his or her job?	.75	.29	-.11
8. My subordinate and I are similar in terms of our outlook, perspective, and values	.13	.87	.24
9. My subordinate and I are alike in a number of areas	.16	.83	.32
10. My subordinate and I see things in much the same way	.30	.82	.22
11. I like my subordinate very much as a person	.12	.21	.88
12. I think my subordinate would make a good friend	.19	.23	.80
13. Please rate your subordinate on the degree to which you like each other	.14	.40	.61

^a N = 111.

TABLE 3
Descriptive Statistics and Correlations^a

Variables	Means	s.d.	1	2	3	4	5
1. Subordinate's supervisor-focused impression management behavior	2.97	1.08					
2. Subordinate's self-focused impression management behavior	5.53	0.88	.16				
3. Demographic similarity	5.53	1.79	.11	.06			
4. Supervisor's liking of the subordinate	5.39	0.97	.34***	.07	.31**		
5. Supervisor's perceptions of similarity	4.84	0.97	.28**	-.09	.31**	.59***	
6. Supervisor's ratings of the subordinate's performance	5.59	1.04	.18	.01	.17	.36***	.42***

^a N = 111.

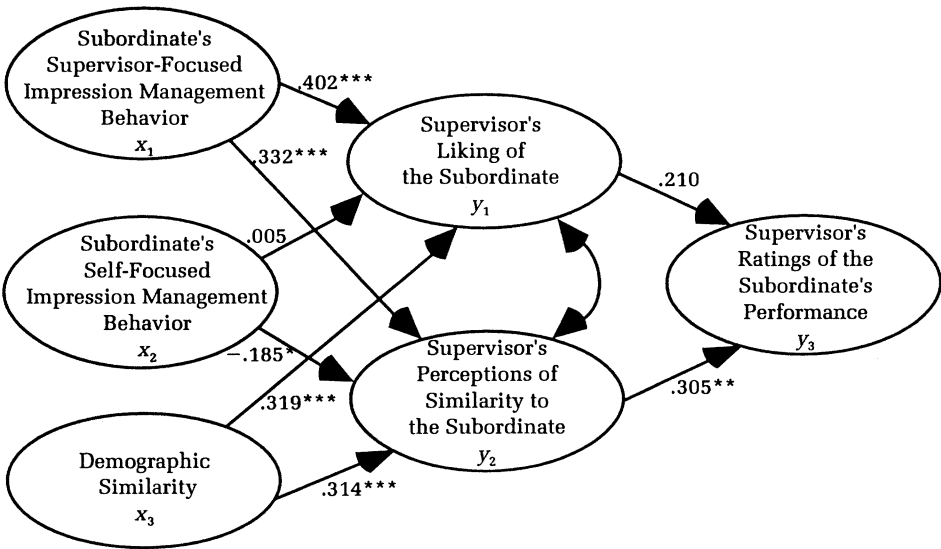
* p < .05

** p < .01

surement error. Finally, structural equations modeling can be used to examine the overall fit of a model and to examine alternative models (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1989). Scale values for each variable were calculated and the covariance matrix was used as input to LISREL 8.03 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993). To adjust for measurement error in the scale values, we set the path from the latent variable to the indicator equal to the square root of the scale reliability. The error variance was set equal to the variance of the scale value multiplied by 1.0 minus the reliability (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1989; Williams & Hazer, 1986). The reliability of the demographic similarity variable was estimated at .95 (Hayduk, 1987).

Figure 2 presents the maximum likelihood parameter estimates of the proposed model. Because supervisor liking of a subordinate and perceived similarity were both measured at the same time (six weeks), causality could not be determined. Thus, the model depicts the relationship between liking and perceived similarity as noncausal. Six of the eight predicted links were statistically significant. Hypothesis 1a was supported; the parameter estimate for the relationship between supervisor-focused impression management behavior and supervisor liking of a subordinate was significant. However, Hypothesis 2a was not supported; self-focused impression management was not significantly related to a supervisor's liking a subordinate. The significant parameter estimate for the relationship between supervisor-focused impression management behavior and supervisor's perceptions of similarity indicated support for Hypothesis 1b. For the relationship between self-focused impression management behavior and supervisor's perceptions of similarity, the parameter estimate was negative and significant, providing

FIGURE 2
Structural Estimates of the Hypothesized Model^a



^a Standardized path coefficients; $N = 111$.
* $p < .05$, one-tailed test
** $p < .01$, one-tailed test
*** $p < .001$, one-tailed test

support for Hypothesis 2b. Findings also supported Hypotheses 3a and 3b; demographic similarity was significantly related to a supervisor's liking a subordinate and to perceptions of similarity. In terms of the predictors of performance ratings, the parameter estimate for the path linking a supervisor's liking a subordinate to performance ratings was not significant. However, the parameter estimate was significant for the link between perceptions of similarity and performance ratings. Thus, Hypothesis 4 was not supported and Hypothesis 5 was supported. In addition, a subordinate's report of supervisor-focused impression management behavior exerted a significant, indirect effect on the supervisor's ratings of the subordinate's performance ($t = 3.02, p < .01$) via perceptions of similarity. Demographic similarity also had a significant, indirect effect on performance ratings through perceptions of similarity ($t = 3.06, p < .01$).

The results for the overall model (model 2, Table 4) indicate that the data fit the proposed model very well. Results were as follows: chi-square, with 6 degrees of freedom, 4.46 ($p = .615$); goodness-of-fit (GFI) index, .986; adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), .952; and root-mean-square residual (RMSR), .066. The R^2 for the ratings of the subordinate's performance was .23.

The overall fit indexes for the proposed model were compared to those

TABLE 4
Results of the LISREL Analyses

Models	df	χ^2	Goodness-of-Fit Index	Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index	Root-Mean-Square Residual
1	14	60.08***	.839	.759	.252
2	6	4.46	.986	.952	.066
3	9	11.90	.964	.917	.074

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

*** $p < .001$

of a null model (model 1) in which no relationships among the variables are posited. The results for this model were chi-square, with 14 degrees of freedom, 60.08 ($p < .001$); GFI, .839; AGFI, .759; and RMSR, .252. The change in chi-square between models 1 and 2 was 55.62, with 8 degrees of freedom, a significant change ($p < .001$). These results indicate that the proposed model is superior to the null model specifying no causal paths among the variables.

It may be that the two impression management behaviors and demographic similarity directly influence perceptions of similarity, which in turn influence liking. Further, liking a subordinate may have a direct impact on ratings of the subordinate's performance. We examined this alternative model, in which the causal path from perceptions of similarity to ratings of the subordinate's performance was not included and the impression management behaviors and demographic similarity were not directly linked to liking. The fit indexes for this model, model 3, had lower values than those for the hypothesized model: chi-square, with 9 degrees of freedom, 11.90 ($p = .22$); GFI, .964; AGFI, .917; and RMSR, .074. The change in chi-square between models 2 and 3 was 7.44, with 3 degrees of freedom, a significant value ($p < .05$). These results indicate that the hypothesized model was superior to model 3.

DISCUSSION

Overall, the results of this study provide strong support for the hypothesized model. Demographic similarity and subordinate impression management behavior influenced supervisory performance ratings through their impact on supervisors' perceptions of similarity to subordinates. The fit of the data to the full model and parameters for six of the eight hypothesized links in the model were significant. The current study extends knowledge on impression management by demonstrating that a subordinate's use of impression management early in the relationship with a supervisor induces liking and perceptions of similarity, which in turn influence performance ratings made later. Another addition to current knowledge was the independent effect of demographic similarity on performance ratings through perceived similarity.

Supporting the hypotheses, supervisor-focused impression management was positively related to a supervisor's perceived similarity to a subordinate. Also, as predicted, self-focused impression management was negatively related to perceptions of similarity. The predictions of a negative path between self-focused impression management and liking and of a path between liking and performance ratings were not supported. The results suggest that agents are more successful in the use of other-enhancement (supervisor-focused) strategies than in the use of self-focused strategies. With supervisor-focused impression management, it appears that supervisors do not suspect that subordinates have ulterior motives. In other words, the supervisors may believe and accept positive statements and compliments about themselves made by the subordinates, but not accept positive statements concerning the subordinates' qualities. However, although self-presentation strategies often fail (Cialdini & DeNicholas, 1989), targets may have positive reactions to agents' use of self-presentation (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Schlenker, 1980). Future research is needed to determine what differentiates favorable target reactions to agent self-presentation from unfavorable ones (Baron, 1989; Godfrey, Jones, & Lord, 1986).

Demographic similarity was also found to affect perceived similarity. Supervisors perceived themselves to be more similar to subordinates whose demographic profiles were similar to the supervisors' than to those with dissimilar demographic profiles. Interestingly, the paths between demographic similarity and perceived similarity and between impression management and perceived similarity were both significant. Thus, demographic similarity and subordinate impression management uniquely influence performance ratings through a supervisor's perceptions of similarity to a subordinate.

Although the self-focused impression management behaviors were quite subtle, they resulted in lowering the supervisors' perceptions of their own similarity to subordinates. Despite this effect, these behaviors did not influence supervisor liking. This finding suggests that even when targets do not interpret self-focused impression management as bragging or conceit, they may find such self-promotional behaviors to be boring and tiresome (Leary, Rogers, Canfield, & Coe, 1986). In a controlled laboratory setting, Leary and colleagues (1986) found self-focused impression management led neither to like nor dislike on the part of subjects. An alternative explanation is that when a subordinate uses self-focused tactics, especially those of acting as an exemplar or model employee, supervisors may form expectations that the subordinate does not or cannot live up to over time, causing performance ratings to suffer (Baumeister, 1989). Further research is needed to examine the underlying reasons for the different effects of supervisor-focused and self-focused impression management on supervisory reactions.

As the current model suggests, supervisors' perceptions of their own similarity to subordinates were significantly related to liking the subordinates, a finding that provides support in an organizational setting for Byrne's similarity-attraction hypothesis. Previous research testing this hypothesis

has either been conducted in laboratory experiments or in field studies involving nonorganizational samples, such as teenagers (Kandel, 1978). Organizational researchers have assumed the validity of the similarity-attraction association, but the current results provide the first evidence of generalizability to organizational settings.

Strong support emerged for the predicted effect of supervisor-perceived similarity to a subordinate and ratings of the subordinate's performance. Although substantial evidence for similarity-performance rating effects has accumulated in the organizational literature (Pulakos & Wexley, 1983; Senger, 1971; Turban & Jones, 1988; Wexley et al., 1980; Zalesny & Highhouse, 1992; Zalesny & Kirsch, 1989), our results demonstrate that performance ratings can be predicted from similarity perceptions assessed 20 weeks before performance is rated. In cross-sectional designs, causality cannot be demonstrated, even with LISREL analysis (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1989); the time separation between the similarity measurement and the performance rating featured in our design supports the plausibility of causality from similarity to performance rating. However, because supervisors may informally evaluate subordinates' performance prior to formally appraising it, there may be a reciprocal interdependence between perceived similarity and performance ratings.

Although prior studies have found strong support for the path between a supervisor's liking a subordinate and the supervisor's ratings of the subordinate's performance, no support for the relationship emerged in the current investigation. One explanation may be that, unlike previous studies, this study measured liking and performance 20 weeks apart, substantially reducing the effect of common method variance occurring when the two are assessed simultaneously. Another explanation is that although liking and perceived similarity were both significantly correlated with performance ratings, perceived similarity dominated liking when tested using LISREL, a multivariate technique. Previous studies demonstrating significant effects for liking on performance ratings (e.g., Judge & Ferris, 1993; Tsui & Barry, 1986) have not included a measure of perceived similarity.

The time-lagged effects are theoretically important because they provide support for the assertion that impression management behaviors have long-term effects. Although we cannot determine whether the respondents in our study consciously or unconsciously engaged in impression management with the intent of influencing future performance ratings, our results are consistent with such an interpretation. Supervisor-focused impression management measured at six weeks had a significant, indirect effect on performance ratings made at six months, but self-focused impression management did not. Impression management's long-term effect on performance ratings provides support for Tedeschi and Melburg's (1984) thesis that impression management can be used strategically to influence future outcomes with important organizational implications. Although short-term tactical impression management behaviors may affect such outcomes as getting the day off, outcomes of lasting importance, such as performance ratings and compen-

sation, are most likely influenced by strategic, not tactical, uses of impression management.

Although not directly tested in the current research, the effect of the long-term outcomes of strategic impression management can be explained with a cognitive information processing approach. Subordinates' supervisor-focused impression management may favorably influence their supervisors' impressions and categorizations of them, and the latter are "encoded into memory." Months later, when the supervisors evaluate the subordinates' performance, the favorable categorization is "retrieved," resulting in a biased rating. Alternatively, the initially favorable categorization may have influenced the supervisors' behavior toward the subordinates in terms of task assignments, feedback, and support so that the subordinates' actual performance is higher than that of others (Feldman, 1986; Ilgen & Feldman, 1983). Studies that include objective measures of performance are needed if researchers are to examine these alternative processes. However, in response to Ilgen, Barnes-Farrell, and McKellin's (1993) call for research on work group and organizational variables that influence supervisors' cognitive information processing, results of the current study suggest that impression management behavior may be an important factor.

Just as supervisors develop categorizations, they may develop expectations about subordinates' performance during the job interview process rather than after working with the subordinates. Thus, supervisor performance expectations and impressions of a subordinate formed during an interview may influence subsequent performance ratings to a greater extent than impression management behavior that occurs on the job.³ Future research integrating the study of employment recruiting and selection with work on the early interactions between supervisors and subordinates is needed. To what extent do impression management and the expectations formed prior to an individual's employment influence the initial work interactions between supervisor and subordinate and performance ratings?

A number of weaknesses of the current study should be acknowledged. One potential weakness is that, as in most longitudinal studies, some subject mortality occurred over the duration of the study. In addition, because supervisors responded to the six-week and six-month surveys, there may have been a testing effect in which the responses at six weeks influenced the subsequent responses. Also, although not a problem for the model as a whole, common method bias may have influenced the reported correlation between supervisors liking of and perceived similarity to the subordinates as both were measured from the supervisors' point of view at six weeks. Another limitation is that we examined only two impression management tactics, and use of both tactics was reported by the same source, the subordi-

³ Data collected on a small portion of the study group (40 dyads) shed light on this issue. Supervisors' expectations of the subordinates' performance assessed within five days of the start of the working relationship were not significantly correlated with performance ratings at six months ($r = .02$, *n.s.*).

nates. The subordinates' report of impression management was considered preferable to the supervisors' report because supervisors may not detect successful use of impression management. Additional sources that might be used in future research to assess impression management include independent observers and co-workers.

A problem with existing, cross-sectional impression management research is that the history of subordinates' prior behavior, from well before data are collected, may influence supervisor reactions to subordinate use of impression management (cf. Green, Fairhurst, & Snavelly, 1986). The current research included only newly formed supervisor-subordinate dyads, thus controlling for potential history effects. Another strength of the current investigation was the reduction of the common method variance explanations that have been characteristic of some impression management studies. It is possible that when all data are collected from the same source, mood or response tendencies may influence relations between variables (Mitchell, 1985; Schmitt & Klimoski, 1991; Wagner & Gooding, 1987). In the current investigation, impression management was measured from the agent's (subordinate's) perspective and reactions to impression management were assessed from the target's (supervisor's) perspective. In addition to having advantages inherent in longitudinal designs, this study was unique for its examination of the intervening processes involved in the link between impression management behavior and performance ratings.

Suggestions for future research include examining the relative impacts of subordinate impression management behavior and performance-related behavior on performance ratings and outcomes such as pay and promotion decisions. For example, to what extent can supervisor-focused impression management compensate for unsatisfactory performance? This question may be difficult to examine because the objective performance measures used in a given setting are problematic or nonexistent, as was the case in the current investigation. Independent raters should be employed in lieu of, or in addition, to objective measures.

The performance appraisal literature would also benefit from research integrating a full range of social context variables with the cognitive processes of supervisors in observing, storing, and recalling data about subordinates. How does impression management and degree of demographic similarity affect a supervisor's cognitive processing of information? How do situational variables such as organizational level, work group size, technology, and task interdependence influence the processing of information as altered by impression management behavior?

Additional longitudinal studies on impression management are needed so that its uses can be more fully understood. A substantial body of research on the short-term tactical use of impression management has accumulated, but long-term strategic uses have been virtually ignored. One question that needs to be addressed is whether agents deliberately use strategic impression management in an attempt to influence future outcomes. It would also be useful to examine more time periods than were covered here to determine

how far into the future impression management behaviors can continue to influence outcomes.

In summary, results of the current investigation point to the importance of examining aspects of social contexts, including demographic similarity and impression management behavior, in relation to performance appraisal. Demographic similarity and impression management are topics worthy of additional investigation, given their implications for fairness in performance evaluations and personnel decisions based on these evaluations.

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