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# Gender, Media and Leader Emergence: Examining the Impression Management Strategies of Men and Women in Different Settings

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## ABSTRACT

This study examined the impact of media (face-to-face versus computer-mediated communication) on the process of leadership emergence by females and males. Specifically, we adapted the literature associated with impression management to investigate whether there are any differences in terms of two key impression management behaviors- self-promotion and supplication- between males and females who emerged as leaders in face-to-face and technology-mediated settings. Our findings challenge conventional gender-related findings. The results indicated that self-promotion plays an important role in influencing leadership emergence while supplication negatively impacts leadership emergence. In a face-to-face context, females who emerged as leaders were found to employ more self-promotion tactics than male leaders while female leaders and male leaders did not differ with respect to the amount of supplication tactics used. Females who emerged as leaders in a face-to-face context were also found to engage in greater self-promotion and more supplication tactics than females who emerged as leaders in a CmC context. Interestingly, there was no significant impact of media on the extent of self-promotion and supplication strategies displayed by male leaders. Future research avenues and implications are discussed.

## Keywords

Leadership emergence, self-promotion, supplication, gender, media

## INTRODUCTION

Virtual teams are typically composed of geographically and organizationally dispersed members who collaborate on various projects using electronic collaboration tools. However, an understanding of how virtual teams work, especially in the area of leadership is limited. Much previous research has underscored the importance of understanding leaders, as leaders often wield extensive influence on group dynamics as well as group outcomes (Dobbins, Long, Dedrick, and Clemons, 1990). The leadership literature has made a distinction between formal leaders and individuals who are perceived as leaders. The focus of this paper is on the latter form of leadership--emergent leadership--which views a leader as not being a "leader" unless perceived by others as such. Interestingly, gender has played a significant role in affecting the emergence of leaders. Ideally, a level-playing field should exist such that individuals are assessed based on their abilities or other leadership-related characteristics when they emerge as leaders. However, much research examined in a face-to-face setting has demonstrated a wide variety of criteria. For instance, women, despite possessing and displaying relevant expertise, are consistently not elected as leaders (Watson and Hoffman, 2004).

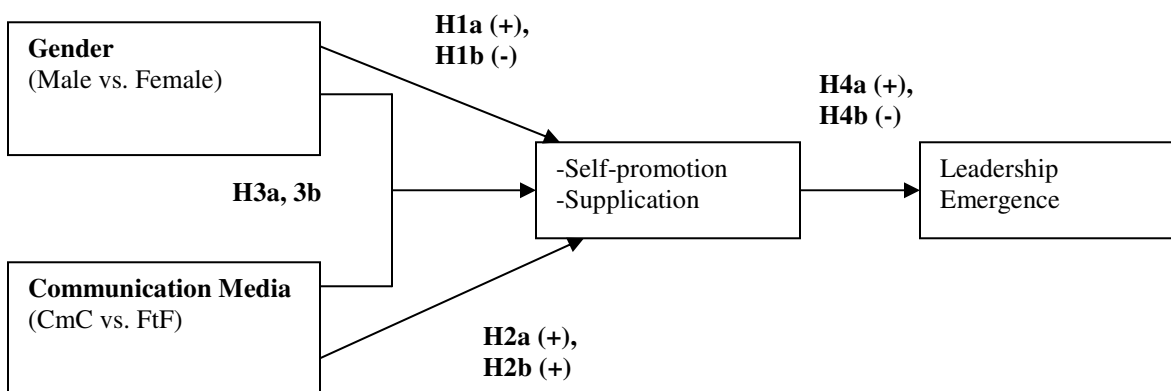
Impression management represents a process whereby individuals seek to influence the perception of others about their own image and may represent “a conscious or unconscious attempt to control images projected in real or imagined social interactions” (Schlenker, 1980, p. 44). In this paper, we are primarily interested in examining self-promotion and supplication impression management tactics as they are more congruent with characteristics associated with masculinity and femininity (Guadagno and Cialdini, 2007) respectively. Self-promotion relates to behaviors that individuals engage in so as to appear and convey competence while supplication pertains to actions that individuals employ so as to appear humble and helpful (Sosik and Jung, 2003). Self-promotion strategy is generally considered an aggressive tactic and supplication is deemed a passive and reactive tactic.

The purpose of this study is to examine the role played by communication media (computer-mediated communication [CmC] versus face-to-face [FtF]) in influencing the amount of self-promotion and supplication strategies employed by females versus males. Carte and Chidambaram (2004) argued that the reductive capabilities (e.g. reduction of visual cues) offered by electronic collaborative technologies (i.e. CmC) are particularly useful in reducing the salience of demographic characteristics early in the life of the group and hence, ameliorate the dysfunctional effects associated with diversity (e.g., gender). Indeed, there is much empirical support for their assertion (e.g. Staples and Zhao, 2006). Further, the additive capabilities (e.g., electronic trail) enable one’s efforts to be easily recognizable (Nemiro, 2002). In this paper, we draw on the perspectives put forth by Carte and Chidambaram (2004) concerning the use of electronic collaborative technologies by diverse groups and argue that such technologies offer a more level-playing field for minority members, i.e., females. As such, we examine the idea that, in a CmC setting, females are not as obligated to engage in impression management strategies that are in line with femininity and are free to break away from gender stereotypes.

Leadership researchers have stressed the vital role played by impression management strategies as part of the communication process in “image building” (Gardner and Avolio, 1998). For instance, leaders could use impression management practices to promote personal images of competency, thereby inspiring followers and increasing their compliance (Gardner and Avolio, 1998). In this study, we examine the impact of two impression management strategies—self-promotion and supplication—on leadership emergence. Specifically, we examine the relative importance of self-promotion and supplication strategies for female and male leaders in a FtF and CmC environments.

### CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

Figure 1 presents the proposed theoretical model of gender and media in relation to impression management tactics employed in a mixed-gender group context. The influence of impression management on leadership emergence is further examined.



**Figure 1: Research Model**

#### The impact of gender

Goffman (1959), in his classical work of impression management, proposed a dramaturgical model in which “actors” engage in various “performances” depending on the “settings” and the “audiences”. These actors attempt to influence and control the

images that others have so as to shape “the definition of the situation” (Goffman, 1959), norms and behaviors (Bozeman and Kacmar, 1997); this in turn enables these “actors” to better achieve their ultimate desire (Bozeman and Kacmar, 1997).

However, the use of impression management strategies is not as straightforward as it seems. For every impression management strategy employed by an individual, there are desirable and undesirable images associated with it, which is further complicated by gender differences, where present (Rudman, 1998; Turnley and Bolino, 2001). When there is a gender misalignment of tactics (i.e., perceived masculine strategies used by females, for instance), the use of impression management strategies could backfire to the extent that negative social ramifications (e.g., reduced likeability) occur (Rudman, 1998). For instance, Rudman (1998) found out that individuals whose behaviors are incongruent with gender roles may be evaluated negatively (Rudman, 1998) and carry a risk of being labeled as “black sheep” by their peers. The use of self-promotion strategies by females may thus incur more costs rather than benefits for females.

According to the Social Role Theory, individuals adopt stereotypical gender roles for avoiding the risk of social censure (Watson and Hoffman, 2004). This orientation suggests that individuals carry preexisting mental models concerning what are the expected and accepted behaviors for each gender (Watson and Hoffman, 2004). Thus, even when females were perceived as competent and influential as their male counterparts, they were not perceived as leaders and did not receive as high ratings on leadership and likeability as males (Watson and Hoffman, 2004). For instance, Rudman (1998) found that while females who self-promoted achieved their desired image of competency, they were evaluated unfavorably by their peers (Rudman, 1998). In contrast, the use of supplication is more in line with the feminine gender role and is helpful in establishing images of humility or modesty (Sosik and Jung, 2003; Guadagno and Cialdini, 2007).

Indeed, a recent qualitative review of gender differences with regards to impression management tactics revealed that females are more likely to employ more passive and feminine impression management tactics (e.g. modesty) while males tend to use more masculine impression management tactics (e.g. self-promotion) in organizations (Guadagno and Cialdini, 2007). The above discussion, thus, suggests that females may tend to employ less self-promotion and more supplication strategies than males so as to conform to societal expectations.

**H1:** *Females engage in (a) less self-promotion strategies and, (b) more supplication strategies than males.*

### **The impact of communication media and gender**

In their Theory of Collaborative Technology Deployment, Carte and Chidambaram (2004) proposed that collaborative technologies offer a “bundle of capabilities” that can be categorized into two types—reductive capabilities and additive capabilities.

The features associated with reductive capabilities include reduced social cues and greater equality of participation as compared to traditional face-to-face communication. Reductive capabilities are particularly useful in a team that is composed of minority members (e.g. females) since “normal turn taking” by dominant members may be reduced, resulting in greater equality of participation (Bhappu et al., 1997). Moreover, the reduced availability of social cues provides a setting that enables members of a group to focus more on a message instead of the demographic characteristics of members (Carte and Chidambaram, 2004). Bhappu et al. (1997), for instance, found that group members who discussed their task in a face-to-face setting paid more attention to demographic characteristics as compared to those who discussed their task in a virtual setting.

The features associated with the additive capabilities of CMC, on the other hand, include enhanced coordination support and availability of electronic audit trails. In comparison to a face-to-face setting, the accessibility of archival and storage capabilities enables members to capture, keep track, review and evaluate the comments made by others (Nemiro, 2002). Given that the name of the contributor is tied to each record, it is therefore evident from the archival records as to who contributes most to the task. The additive capabilities offered by collaborative technologies enable the contributions of other group members to be recognized more easily. The evaluation of contributions in a CmC setting is, therefore, less biased and more straightforward and objective (Bhappu et al., 1997).

The availability of additive capabilities suggests that members are better able to notice and recognize each others’ contributions in a CmC setting as compared to a face-to-face environment. Further, as highlighted, the reductive capabilities

aspects indicate that there is a greater focus on task oriented activities. Compared with a face-to-face setting, the use of impression management strategies in a CMC setting may, hence, take on a less significant role in the image building process.

**H2:** *Individuals who collaborate in a CMC context engage in (a) less self-promotion strategies and, (b) less supplication strategies than individuals who collaborate in a face-to-face context.*

Using a similar line of reasoning laid out in the preceding discussion, we expect an interaction effect between media and gender on the amount of self-promotion and supplication tactics employed by members. The reductive capabilities, such as reduced social cues, resulted in a greater emphasis on task messages as compared to demographic attributes such as gender. In a CMC setting, there is thus a lesser need for females and males to engage in impression management strategies that conform to gender societal expectations. The additive capabilities further reinforce the notion that the importance of impression management strategies is less vital in establishing image outcomes in a CMC setting as compared to a face-to-face setting. We expect that, in a CMC setting, females and males do not differ with respect to the amount of self-promotion and supplication strategies employed. Due to the need to fulfill gender norms, it is reasonable to infer that, in a face-to-face setting, females engage in more supplication and less self-promotion strategies than males. In other words, the reductive capabilities of the CMC setting, provide female team members the ability to break out of gender stereotypes and engage in behaviors that are no different than those of their male counterparts.

**H3a:** *Females engage in less self-promotion strategies than males—in a face-to-face setting, but not in a CMC setting.*

**H3b:** *Females engage in more supplication strategies than males—in a face-to-face setting, but not in a CMC setting.*

### **The impact of self-promotion and supplication**

According to the Expectation States Theory, initial impressions and expectations emerge as a result of variation with respect to attributes such as power, gender and status (Berger et al., 1977; Ridgeway, 2001). In a mixed gender group where little information concerning competency is known, gender operates as a status characteristic whereby males (in comparison to females) are generally perceived as leaders, deemed as more capable and have more opportunities to influence the group. In comparison, women in a mixed-gender group tend to take a backstage role and have fewer opportunities to influence the group (Ridgeway, 2001).

However, a large body of research has demonstrated that even when females demonstrate the necessary task expertise, they are viewed as violating gender norms and face the disapproval of their peers (Eagley and Karau, 2002). The Theory of Role Congruity purports that there is incongruity between the expectations that others have of leaders and the expected gender role that females need to fulfill. As the image of a leader tends to be associated with masculinity (Eagley and Karau, 2002), there is a tendency for females to face prejudice from others when females demonstrated behaviors that are consistent with those of a leader.

The leadership literature has investigated the importance of impression management behaviors and the role of gender in leadership emergence. As leadership is a “dynamic and interactive process” (Gardner and Avolio, 1998), this suggests that, in the context of mixed-gender groups, females may engage in certain impression management strategies in order to emerge as leaders. Unless females employ impression management behaviors that project themselves contrary to gender stereotypical image, the formation of initial impressions will be based on gender (Rudman, 1998). The broader implication is that females need to engage in atypical impression management behaviors, such as self-promotion, in order to overcome gender stereotypes (Rudman, 1998) and emerge as leaders.

Viewed differently, despite the gender roles associated with different impression management strategies, research has consistently viewed leadership as being associated more with aggressive traits (such as power, influence and self promotion) and less with passive traits (such as humility, helpfulness and supplication). Thus, in line with theoretical arguments and empirical findings, we propose that members engaging in self-promotion (regardless of gender) are more likely to be viewed as leaders, while those who engage in supplication strategies (regardless of gender) are less likely to be viewed as leaders. To sum up:

**H4a:** *Self-promotion strategies are positively related to leadership emergence.*

**H4b:** *Supplication strategies are negatively related to leadership emergence.*

## RESEARCH DESIGN

### Subjects and Data Collection

75 undergraduate business students served as subjects in this study. The subjects were randomly assigned into mixed-gender groups of three members per group, resulting in a total of 25 groups. A majority of these groups (about 75%) consisted of one female and two males. Although the gender composition of our sample is not entirely uniform, this is not much of a concern in affecting the phenomenon of interest since males attain a higher status than females in a mixed-gender group (Berger et al., 1977; Johnson & Schulman, 1989). Subjects ranged in age from 19 to 25 years, had some work experience and were predominantly white.

The subjects were required to complete a team project as part of their course requirement and they were graded based on their final report. Participation in the group project was mandatory, but participation in the study (i.e. completing surveys) was voluntary. Students who participated in the study were given extra credit. All groups were assigned the same case and they were required to produce a report based on the four questions that pertains to the case. As their grade for the project formed part of their final course grade, participants were motivated to contribute to their project. Further, the use of impression management behaviors is likely to occur since prior empirical studies have highlighted the significant role played by impression management behaviors in influencing norms and group dynamics when individual performance was on the line (Bozeman and Kacmar, 1996).

At the start of the project, subjects were required to complete a survey that measured demographic variables. For students who were assigned to the virtual team condition, they used the bulletin board and were reminded at the beginning of the project that they were not allowed to discuss the project using any other media. The message trail on the bulletin board served as evidence as to whether the students engaged in those proscribed activities. Upon completion of the project, participants completed an online questionnaire containing perceptual measures. Students who were assigned to the face-to-face condition were given the same task to compete, except that they were to complete the task using only face-to-face communication. The subjects did not receive the grade for their case study till they had completed the online survey. Instructors who assigned the grades were blind to the hypotheses. The team project took place over a period of one week.

### Dependent Variables

**Leadership emergence:** Members were asked to identify (an) individual(s) whom they perceived as being the leader(s). They were given the option to choose themselves as the leader. *Leadership emergence* is the ratio of the number of times the individual was nominated as a leader divided by the team size. *Emerged leader* refers to an individual who received the highest number of votes.

**Self-promotion strategy:** The impression management strategy of self-promotion was assessed using the instrument designed and validated by Bolino and Turnley (1999). Subjects were asked to indicate the frequency of the particular behavior using a five-point Likert scale (1= "Very Inaccurate" to 5="Very Accurate"). An example of a question is: "I made other group members aware of my talents or qualifications."

**Supplication strategy:** The impression management strategy of supplication was assessed using a previously validated instrument (Bolino and Turnley, 1999). Subjects were requested to specify the frequency of the particular behavior with a five-point Likert scale (1="Very Inaccurate" to 5="Very Accurate"). Lower scores indicated a lower level of supplication. An example of a question is: "I acted like I needed assistance on my part of the project so that other group members will help me out."

**Control variables:** GPA was used as a covariate to control for its effects on leadership emergence.

## RESULTS

The hypotheses were tested using Partial Least Squares (PLS) analysis as it makes minimal assumptions with regards to sample size and distribution of data as compared to other structural equation modeling techniques.

To assess convergent validity, we looked at both the composite reliabilities as well as the average variance extracted from the measures (Table 1). The reliabilities of the self-promotion and supplication instruments are 0.88 and 0.93, exceeding the recommended value (i.e. 0.7) for a reliable construct (Chin, 1998). The average variances extracted for self-promotion and supplication are 0.65 and 0.72, both of which are above the acceptable value of 0.50. The weights and loadings of self-promotion and supplication measures are shown in Table 2. As demonstrated in Table 2, the measures are significant on their path loadings at the level of 0.01.

Measures	Items	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted
Self-promotion (SP)	4	0.88	0.65
Supplication (Supp)	5	0.93	0.72

**Table 1: Results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis**

Construct	Items	Weight	Loading	Standard Error	t-value
Self-promotion	SP1	0.26	0.83	0.14	6.09
	SP2	0.38	0.92	0.11	8.20
	SP3	0.33	0.80	0.12	6.53
	SP4	0.26	0.65	0.18	3.58
Supplication	Supp1	0.27	0.79	0.08	9.49
	Supp2	0.26	0.89	0.06	13.87
	Supp3	0.15	0.88	0.11	8.12
	Supp4	0.22	0.87	0.11	8.15
	Supp5	0.28	0.83	0.11	7.52

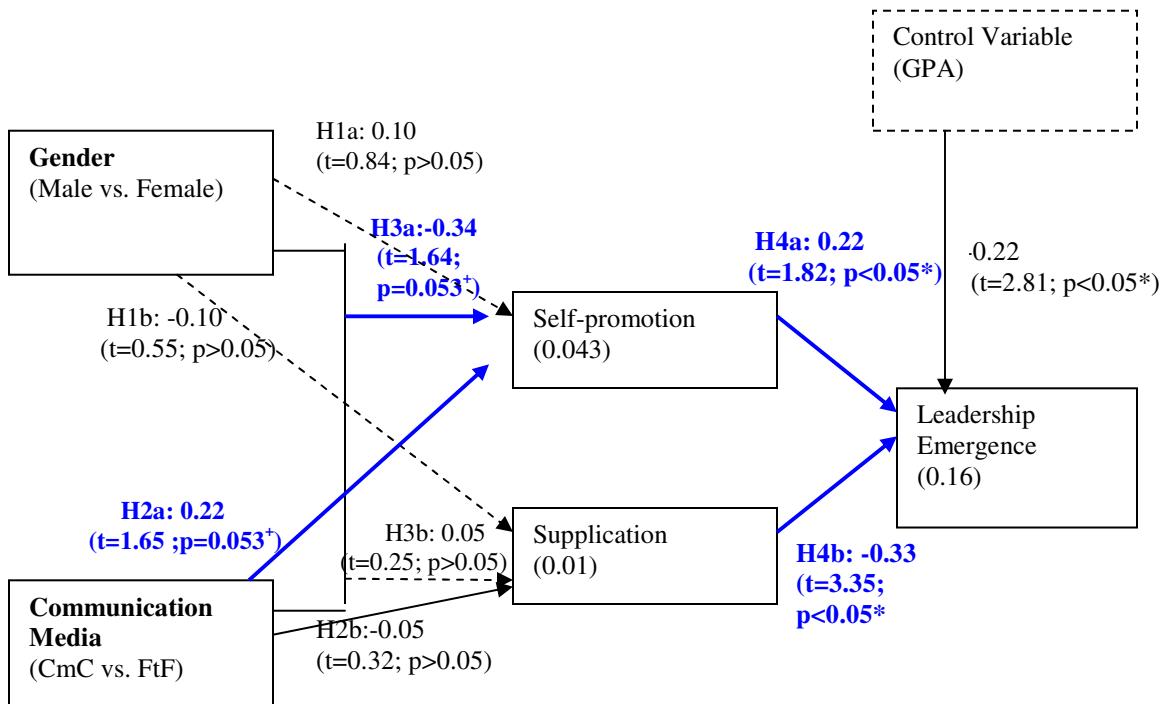
**Table 2: Weights and Loadings of the Measures**

Note that the t-values are for the loadings.

Further, the results show that the discriminant validity of our measures is attained. The square root of the average variance extracted for self-promotion (0.81) and supplication (0.85) exceeded the correlation between self-promotion and supplication (-0.15). Below, we described the results of the model in relation to our proposed hypotheses.

### Results of proposed hypotheses

Figure 2 presents a graphical representation of the results. The t-statistics, the path coefficients and the significance of the paths are presented (Figure 2). Since the path coefficients of the PLS are standardized regression coefficients, the interpretation of the model is relatively straightforward.



**Figure 2: A Path Model of Gender, Media, Self-Promotion, Supplication and Leadership Emergence (All Members)**

**Note:** Arrows in boldfaced and values with asterisks indicate significance ( $p < 0.05$ ); R-squared values for each dependent variable are indicated in parentheses

The first set of hypotheses (H1a and H1b) that proposed an impact of gender to self-promotion and supplication strategies were not supported. Regarding the hypotheses (H2a and 2b) that related the impact of media on self-promotion and supplication, only H2a was marginally supported ( $p = 0.053$ ). Specifically, individuals who collaborated in a face-to-face setting were found to use more self-promotion strategies than those who work together in a CmC context ( $\beta = 0.22$ ;  $t = 1.65$ ;  $p = 0.053$ ). However, there was no impact of media on the amount of supplication strategies used, i.e. H2b was not supported. The third set of hypotheses (H3a and 3b) proposed the interaction effects between media and gender on the amount of self-promotion and supplication strategies used. H3a was marginally supported ( $\beta = -0.34$ ;  $t = 1.64$ ;  $p = 0.05$ ). We conducted additional analyses to examine the source of effects. As predicted, there was no impact of gender on self-promotion in a CMC environment. However, females were found to engage in more self-promotion tactics than males ( $\beta = -0.23$ ;  $t = 1.94$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) in a face-to-face setting. Contrary to H3b, there was no interaction effects between media and gender on the level of supplication strategy used.

Consistent with our predictions for H4a and H4b, there was a significant positive impact of self-promotion ( $\beta = 0.22$ ;  $t = 1.82$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) and supplication ( $\beta = -0.33$ ;  $t = 3.35$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) on leadership emergence.

### Follow-up analysis

As described above, there was a positive impact of self-promotion and a negative impact of supplication on leadership emergence. We were interested in examining the source of effects and to determine whether male and female leaders used different impression management strategies in a face-to-face versus a CmC setting. Table 3 provides the comparisons we were interesting in examining.



<b>Gender</b>	Male		
	Female		
		<b>FtF</b>	<b>CmC</b>

**Media**

**Table 3: Comparisons between Male and Female Leaders in Different Communication Media**

To examine the source of effects for leadership emergence, we first identified individuals who emerged as leaders, i.e. individuals who received the highest number of votes. Next, we used PLS to examine the hypothesis. Table 4 provides the descriptive statistics for the variables of interest examined in this study while Table 5 presents the t-statistics, the path coefficients and the significance of the paths.

		<b>Communication Media</b>	
		<b>CmC</b>	<b>FtF</b>
<b>Self-promotion</b>	Female	2.44 (0.53) n=3	3.35 (0.72) n=10
	Male	2.96 (0.80) n=8	2.72 (0.49) n=8
<b>Supplication</b>	Female	1.00 (0.00) n=3	1.52 (0.62) n=10
	Male	1.53 (0.82) n=8	1.40 (0.50) n=8

**Table 4: Means (Standard Deviations) of the Amount of Self-promotion and Supplication (Leaders only)**

IM Strategy	Results	t-statistics (path coefficients, significance)
Self-promotion	FtF (Females) > FtF (Males)	$\beta = -0.54$ ( $t = 5.15$ ; $p < 0.05^*$ )
	FtF (Females) > CmC (Females)	$\beta = 0.57$ ( $t = 4.49$ ; $p < 0.05^*$ )
	CmC (Females) < CmC (Males)	$\beta = 0.54$ ( $t = 3.84$ ; $p < 0.05^*$ )
	CmC (Males) = FtF (Males)	$\beta = -0.22$ ( $t = 1.42$ ; $p > 0.05$ )
Supplication	FtF (Females) = FtF (Males)	$\beta = -0.13$ ( $t = 0.95$ ; $p > 0.05$ )
	FtF (Females) > CmC (Females)	$\beta = 0.40$ ( $t = 3.65$ ; $p < 0.05^*$ )
	CmC (Females) < CmC (Males)	$\beta = 0.39$ ( $t = 2.40$ ; $p < 0.05^*$ )
	CmC (Males) = FtF (Males)	$\beta = -0.16$ ( $t = 1.09$ ; $p > 0.05$ )

**Table 5: T-statistics, Path Coefficients and Significance (Leaders only)**

With regards to the impact of gender on the extent of impression management strategies employed within a face-to-face context, the findings showed that females who emerged as leaders engaged in more self-promotion than males who emerged as leaders ( $\beta = -0.54$ ;  $t = 5.15$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). However, female and male leaders in a face-to-face setting did not differ with respect to the extent of supplication strategies used.

Also, the results showed that there is a media impact concerning the extent of impression management strategies used by female leaders. Specifically, female leaders in a face-to-face environment engaged in more self-promotion ( $\beta = 0.57$ ;  $t = 4.49$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) and supplication strategies ( $\beta = 0.40$ ;  $t = 3.65$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) than female leaders in a CmC context.

In addition, our results showed that, in a CmC setting, there was an impact of gender on the extent of impression management strategies. In particular, male leaders were found to engage in more self-promotion ( $\beta = 0.54$ ;  $t = 3.84$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) and supplication ( $\beta = 0.39$ ;  $t = 2.40$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) strategies than female leaders in a CmC setting.

Regarding the impact of media on the extent of impression management strategies employed, the results showed that male leaders in a face-to-face setting did not differ from male leaders in a CmC setting with respect to both self-promotion ( $\beta = -0.22$ ;  $t = 1.42$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ) and supplication ( $\beta = -0.16$ ;  $t = 1.09$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ) strategies. Below, we discuss our results and their implications for research.

## DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

### Discussion

The current study examined the impact of impression management strategies on leadership emergence. In addition, we also examined the impact of gender and media as well as the interaction effects between gender and media on the type of impression management strategies employed. Our findings were intriguing and challenge conventional gender findings. While our results were somewhat mixed with regard to our predicted hypotheses, our follow-up analysis offers clear insights concerning the interplay among impression management, gender and communication media on leadership emergence.

Consistent with our predictions, self-promotion represents an important strategy in promoting leadership emergence. Individuals who emerged as leaders employed more self-promotion strategies than those who did not emerge as leaders. Additional analysis revealed that in a face-to-face environment, females who emerged as leaders used more self-promotion strategies than males who emerged as leaders—an argument consistent with “fighting to get ahead in a boy’s world”. This finding seems to contradict the results of Rudman (1998) whose study indicated that females who engaged in self-promotion suffered from backlash and faced repercussions for their behavior. In their study, while females who engaged in self-promotion were perceived as being more competent when compared to those who did not, they aroused disapproval for transgressing gender norms.

However, our study differs from that of Rudman (1998) in several respects. *First*, while Rudman (1998) employed a scripted experiment which took place over a very short span of time, our study employed a field experiment in which students were required to complete a case study over a period of one week. *Second*, Rudman (1998) employed a dyadic level of analysis,

while this study employed a mixed gender team that consisted of three individuals. Our findings are not surprising, given that the price of not being aggressive—such as in refraining from self promotion—especially for females in work settings has been well documented (Guadagno and Cialdini, 2007). By engaging in self-promotion, females appeared to have taken a page out of their male counterparts' playbook where portraying an image of competency was vital to their being perceived as leaders.

Our follow-up analyses indicated that communication media played an important role in influencing the inter-relationships among gender, impression management, and leadership emergence. Specifically, we found that female leaders in a face-to-face context employed more self-promotion and supplication strategies than female leaders in a CmC setting. As argued earlier, the additive and reductive capabilities offered by a CmC environment are valuable in two important ways. *First*, the lack of social contextual cues reduces the salience of gender (Carte and Chidambaram, 2004) in affecting leadership emergence, offering a more task-oriented environment. Compared to a face-to-face context, this reduction in status distinctions provides an important platform for greater participation equality (Carte and Chidambaram, 2004). *Second*, the additive capabilities provide a record of contributions by members enabling others to gauge the amount of actual contributions made (Nemiro, 2002).

Interestingly, our findings indicated that in a CmC setting, female leaders used less self-promotion strategies as compared to male leaders. For male leaders, our results showed that media did not have an impact on the extent of impression management strategies displayed, i.e. males who emerged as leaders in a face-to-face setting displayed similar levels of impression management strategies as males who emerged as leaders in a CmC setting. As suggested by the Expectation States Theory, males are assumed to have a higher status than females in a mixed-gender team and their opinions are likely to be valued more than those of female members. As a result of this gain in idiosyncrasy credits, there is a greater tendency of males to emerge as leaders and, hence, a lesser need for males to regulate their impression management strategies in different settings.

### Limitations and future research

We employed perceptual data in which individuals rate the amount of impression management tactics they themselves used. It is possible that coding the amount of impression management strategies employed by each individual could shed additional light in terms of whether degrees of perceived versus actual self-promotion strategies match.

While our study examined the importance of impression management strategies in facilitating leadership emergence in a face-to-face versus CmC setting, a limitation of our study is that it did not take into account the effects of personality attributes such as self-monitoring. For instance, individuals who engage in self-promotion tactics and possess higher levels of self-monitoring may be more successful in portraying an image of competency than those with lower levels of self-monitoring (Turnley and Bolino, 2001). Given that prior research, conducted in a face-to-face setting, has highlighted the relationship between self-monitoring and leadership emergence (Dobbins et al., 1990) as well as the relationship between impression management strategies and self-monitoring on image outcomes (Turnley and Bolino, 2001), future work should examine the interplay among impression management strategies, self-monitoring and leadership emergence in both face-to-face and CmC settings.

### CONCLUSION

This study found significant relationships between the levels of self-promotion, supplication and leadership emergence. Follow-up analyses highlighted that media plays a significant and vital role in influencing the amount of impression management strategies displayed by male leaders and female leaders. In particular, in a face-to-face setting, females who emerged as leaders tended to employ more self-promotion strategies than males who emerged as leaders. Further, our results indicated that females who emerged as leaders in a technology-mediated setting used less self-promotion strategies than those who emerged as leaders in a face-to-face environment. This finding, in conjunction with findings from prior studies, which demonstrated that collaborative technologies reduce the salience of demographic characteristics (Bhappu et al., 1997), suggest that collaborative technologies may indeed offer a more level playing field for minority members (e.g. females) with respect to leadership emergence. Given that the study of impression management strategies in a virtual team has been largely neglected (Kahai, Carroll and Jestice, 2007), our paper sheds light on the relative importance of self-promotion and supplication strategies for team members of either gender working in technology-mediated or face-to-face settings.

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