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We sometimes unintentionally distance ourselves from the people we respect. In a relationship between two individuals of perceived unequal status, what are the behaviors or factors of the person of lower status that distance him or her from the person he or she respects? Impression management is the process by which people control their impressions others form of them (Leary & Kowalski, 1990), and can be a useful theory in explaining this phenomenon; however, it does not explain the entire story. This is one possible instance in which we have high impression motivation but refrain from impression management behavior. This project aims to shed light on the nature and causes of refrainment from impression management behavior despite high impression motivation by exploring the factors that cause people to distance themselves from the people that they respect and perceive to have higher status and power. This research focuses on the distancing factors surrounding the person of the lower status. Data has been collected through one-on-one interviews with people from different backgrounds at different stages of career in diverse organizational contexts.

What Makes Us Distance Ourselves From The People We Respect: Refrainment From Impression Management Behavior Despite High Impression Motivation

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May 12, 2015

Abstract

We sometimes unintentionally distance ourselves from the people we respect. In a relationship between two individuals of perceived unequal status, what are the behaviors or factors of the person of lower status that distance him or her from the person he or she respects? Impression management is the process by which people control their impressions others form of them (Leary & Kowalski, 1990), and can be a useful theory in explaining this phenomenon; however, it does not explain the entire story. This is one possible instance in which we have high impression motivation but refrain from impression management behavior. This project aims to shed light on the nature and causes of refrainment from impression management behavior despite high impression motivation by exploring the factors that cause people to distance themselves from the people that they respect and perceive to have higher status and power. This research focuses on the distancing factors surrounding the person of the lower status. Data has been collected through one-on-one interviews with people from different backgrounds at different stages of career in diverse organizational contexts.

Keywords: respect, impression management, relationship, distancing, status

1. Introduction

In what instances do we have high impression motivation but refrain from impression management behavior? Impression management is the process whereby people seek to influence the image others have of them (Rosenfeld, Giacalone, & Riordan, 1995). Recently, impression management has attracted increased attention as a fundamental interpersonal process (Jones & Pittman, 1982; Schlenker, 1980, 1985; Baumeister, 1982, 1986; Hogan, 1982). "At the most general level, the motive to engage in impression management springs from the same motivational source as all behavior, namely to maximize rewards and minimize expected punishments" (Schlenker, 1980). Impression management can be either conscious or preattentive. Impression management may be used to increase subjective well-being in three interrelated yet distinct ways: (1) by maximizing one's reward-cost ratio in social relations, (2) by enhancing one's self-esteem, and (3) by facilitating the development of desired identities (Rosenberg, 1979). In addition, there are three central factors that determine impression motivation: the goal-relevance of the impressions, the value of the desired outcomes, and the discrepancy between one's desired and current social image (Kowalski & Leary, 1990). Little research has examined how people respond to impressional dilemmas in which these motives conflict (Leary & Lamphere, 1988), as well as how people actually select the behavioral modes they use to manage their impressions. Little research has been done to explain why individuals do not exhibit impression management behaviors (such as ingratiatory behavior) despite the prevalence of such phenomenon in both the workforce and other related settings. Many of us have felt the need and motivation to exhibit impression management behaviors to maximize our reward-cost ratio or help achieve our goals, but refrained from actually exhibiting those behaviors for various internal reasons and external factors.

A significant factor that affects the goal-relevance of one's impressions involves the individual's dependency on the target. "When a person is dependent on others for valued outcomes, the impressions he or she makes on them are more important, and the individual will be more motivated to engage in impression management… people are more likely to ingratiate themselves with their bosses and teachers than with their friends and more likely to ingratiate these authorities when they have greater power to dispense valued outcomes" (Jones et al., 1965; Kowalski & Leary, 1990; Stires & Jones, 1969). "All others equal, people are more motivated to manage their impressions for people who are powerful, of high status, attractive, or likable than for those who are less so (Schlenker, 1980). One has dependency on people he or she respects because they have the ability to maximize one's reward-cost ratio in social relations, (2) by enhance one's self-esteem, and (3) facilitate the development of desired identities.

What's missing in the impression management literature is research on what factors cause or help explain people's refrainment from or hesitance to exhibit impression management behaviors (despite their initial motivation to do so). This project aims to shed light on the nature and causes of refrainment from impression management behavior despite high impression motivation by specifically exploring the factors that cause people to distance themselves from the people that they respect and perceive to have higher status and power.

2. Methodology

Open-ended research questions are suggested for specific topics that are not well known or at a nascent stage of theory research. These questions require methods that allow data collected in the field to further shape the researcher's developing understanding of the phenomenon (Barley, 1990). Following Edmonson and McManus' suggestions on methodological fit in management

field research, I gathered qualitative and open-ended data. Because the state of prior theory and research on this topic is nascent, I gathered data primarily from interviews with a variety of people from diverse backgrounds at different stages of career in diverse organizational contexts.

3.1 Data Collection

First, I conducted preliminary interviews with 5 people in order to optimize the interview structure, protocol, and identify where follow-up questions are most relevant. Based on both my observation and the feedback from the interviewees, I finalized the interview structure and protocol, and conducted interviews with 40 people that were enrolled in or graduated from a private, research university (undergraduate or graduate school) in the United States at the time of the interview.

The interview consisted of questions exploring the nature and proximity of the relationship, relationship-building aspects of the relationship, and relationship-distancing factors. In the beginning, the interviewee was asked to think of a meaningful relationship with someone that (1) he or she truly respects who is (2) in a higher status or position of power relative to the interviewee (3) in the same organizational context (4) with whom he or she has interacted with in person. Interviews typically lasted 30 minutes, ranging from 20 minutes to 1 hour. All interviews were transcribed verbatim throughout the entire duration of the interviews. See Appendix 1 for the interview protocol.

Because the interview required the interviewee to recall any relationship in the past of his or her choice that meets the above criteria, I was able to gather data from people's past experiences, reflecting a sample of diverse backgrounds at different stages of career in diverse organizational contexts. This allowed a diverse collection of narratives, perspectives, and relationships. Table 1

shows examples of the positions of people involved in the relationship with their respective organizational contexts.

Table 1: Examples of the organizational positions of the interviewees and their respected people

Position of the interviewee	Position of the interviewee's respected person	Organizational context
High school student	School teacher	High school
High school student	Private instructor	Learning center
Undergraduate student	Professor	Undergraduate institution
Doctoral student	Advisor	Doctoral program
Musician	Band director	High school band
Intern	Employer	Investment bank
Business analyst	Senior associate	Consulting firm
Managing editor	Editor in chief	Publication firm
Researcher	Head research assistant	Research laboratory
Athlete	Coach	High school varsity team
Student mentee	Student mentor	Student organization
Volunteer	Program director	Volunteer program

3.2 Data Analysis

I followed an inductive, grounded theory development process (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Eisenhardt, 1989; Sutton, 1991). I began analyzing the interview data before all the interviews were completed in order to identify and emerging constructs or themes, focus on them, and compare them to accounts in following interviews. I used an iterative process of moving back and forth among the data, relevant literature, and emerging themes in order to develop conceptual classifications.

After having completed all the interviews, I managed data by first reading through the transcribed interviews and summarizing the interviewees' response to each question without interpretation. Interpretation was kept to a minimum at this stage so that there is always an

opportunity to revisit the original response as the more refined levels of analysis occur. This allowed for initial familiarization with the data at the start of the analysis. Then, I read through the summaries of the responses and labelled the data by concept or theme that emerged. Afterwards, I identified initial themes, which emerged early on in the process of data analysis. Themes that immediately emerged surrounding the relationship-distancing phenomenon included insecurity, fear, and worry surrounding the person of the lower status regarding his/her relationship with the person he or she respects.

After initial data management, I prepared descriptive accounts, sorting data by more specific themes to portray meaning, identifying recurring themes, and refining categories throughout the process. 32 out of 40 interviewees answered yes to the question, "Did you ever hesitate to approach this person?" and 8 out of 40 interviewees indicated otherwise. 36 out of 40 interviewees implied that it was important for them or valuable to develop a closer relationships with the respected people discussed in the interviews. 4 out of 40 interviewees that indicated otherwise expressed that a close relationship formed naturally without any significant intention preceding the formation of a close relationship. The majority of the interviewees indicated that they at least once hesitated from approaching the people they respected, and that they felt some distance. Table 2 shows identified themes surrounding the reason for respecting the person followed by examples of evidence from the interviews. Table 3 shows identified themes surrounding the reason for distancing the person followed by examples of evidence from the interviews.

Table 2: Identified reasons for respecting the person

Reasons	Evidence
Character	"I guess it's her whole personality. She is so warm and welcoming." "She's very calm and confident all the time." "He's just very nice and helpful." "I just think her outlook on life is so benevolent… She does all this very humbly." "Because she's really nice… She is not negative." "Just because like, she was honest with me, and she was real." "She was very soft and understanding… She was also strong." "He's a very generous person." "He is one of the hardest workers I know." "He wasn't afraid to try new things." "I found him very thoughtful and relatable, very down-to-earth and level-headed." "When someone else disagreed with him, he didn't really care, but would talk it out."
Approachability	"He always took the extra effort that if we wanted to learn more, he was available to help us do that. If we wanted to come by after school, he would talk to us. I admire that because teachers don't take the time or effort to do that. I thought that was very awesome of him." "Everyone felt comfortable speaking to her." "I felt that I could go to him to talk about anything. He was able to provide mentoring and advice without me feeling like I was talking to someone too superior." "He accomplishes everything that people do, but makes extra time for junior-level people." "He also reaches out to and cares a lot about people."
Similarity	"He's actually a lot more similar to me than I thought." "He's done it in a manner that I would hope to emulate. I agree with the principles he followed in order to get to where he is." "One, he's gone through the same experience and can relate to us." "First time I met him, asked him who his hero was, and his answer was same as mine, his father. Showed how much he respects his family."

	"She's taking a life path that at one point I wanted to take the same process and path, which she is succeeding in."
Success	"I respect him because he's done so well in a field that I hope to survive in." "I think I respected the fact that he did hold a high position in a very large company." "She has achieved academic success, has great creative ideas, is a successful consultant."
Expertise	"He was very smart and had good people skills." "He's one of the smartest people I know." "He was very knowledgeable." "He's a very kind-hearted guy with really top-notch work." "…he was so smart."
Inspiration and motivation	"He really pushed me to improve musically and as a person. "He demanded punctuality and had very high expectations not just musically but as a person in general." "He had a distinct vision for how things needed to operate." "He really instilled in me a passion for a subject, which I never really had. He does this by not only delivering the knowledge, but also trying to instill passion in students. He really motivates students in ways that typical teachers don't do enough of." "It comes down to the fact that he, through example and teaching, sparked a genuine academic interest in me, which I think is something that's pretty rare… He almost opened up my mind a whole new field of possibilities." "…when you know that he pushes you to an extent that you are so grateful afterwards, that's when you really feel that he deserves your respect." "…but it's amazing and inspiring how older people go back to school." "I think it was his vision to take the journal to a new level." "He's really inspirational speaker that connects people to causes."

Table 3: Identified reasons for relationship-distancing

Reasons	Evidence
Character of the interviewee	"I guess I was hesitant mostly at first because I'm kind of quieter with people generally, especially with people I see as older or more mature or higher up than me." "I think I'm more hesitant overall." "There were definitely times when I was nervous to approach people."
Character of the respected person	"He comes off as a little crazy… the way he pushes us, it was intense." "She was very curt when it came to communications with people who are lower than her. She tends to be very cold when she's assessing interns on the progress… She has a very sharp tongue if what you bring to the table isn't worthy of her attention." "I thought she was a super intense person, very hierarchical." "I thought he was very intimidating… I thought that he thought he was better than everybody else." "The only thing that may make me hesitate is if I feel that they are going to judge me or say something mean."
Avoidance of forming bad impressions	"I didn't want to say something and have her think I am immature or stupid." "I might hold off on some things, because I don't want to form a bad impression." "You don't want anything to go wrong." "If you distance yourself from them, they will never not like you." "…you want them to see you in a positive light with as few obstacles or hurdles that you are jumping through." "I guess I didn't approach him with dumb questions because I wanted to appear competent." "Definitely, there's that element of being scared to approach due to the fear of making a fool of yourself." "Most of that comes from a fear of… not wanting to make yourself look bad in front of this person you admire." "I don't want to approach this person I respect for help because I'm scared they will think I'm an idiot." "Not doing anything that would create a negative impression of myself to him." "I never want to create a negative impression of myself, so if I ask a wrong question, I worry I may do that."

	"But with people you really respect, you're afraid you might do something that make you look less in their eyes. You are scared to be yourself, partly."
	"I tend to worry about showing myself entirely to people I respect. Since they have limited communication opportunities with me, the images they form of me in their minds are limited… I don't want to negatively influence it."
	"If I expose myself too much to people in higher positions, I worry that I may slip."
	"Sometimes, I didn't want to tell him something that I thought would lower his opinion of me. That's the big thing. Sometimes I thought that maybe because he's a senior, and maybe he didn't want my opinion because I don't have that experience and may not have good ideas."
	"I was afraid of him because I thought that he might think I'm not smart."
	"…you just want to make sure to say the right thing. No one wants to come off to an important person as banal.
Fear of disapproval or causing disappointment	You don't want to seem like you're too full of it, it's hard to find the right point. I think everybody has that kind of anxiety."
	"I wasn't sure if I had something of enough interest to talk with him."
	"I don't know how to update him in a way that he would be happy to hear from me."
	"There is this worry that you won't measure up to their expectations or have a thoughtful conversation."
	"I've had experiences in which, experience of reaching out to people you respect can be disappointing and disheartening when they don't respond as you hope they would."
	"I was very anxious that I would mess up… I've been afraid of messing up."
	"What if she doesn't like me as a person?"
	"I also didn't want to disappoint when he was that helpful for me."
	"I think it's a fear of imposing on them, them letting you know that you're imposing on them."
Perspective taking	"She is very busy, so her time is very precious."
	"I think as the year went on, he got busier."
	"I'm afraid of wasting her time. She is an important person and has things to do."
	"The professor will never have time for me."

Feeling of relative unworthiness, inadequacy, or incompetence	"Her time is more valuable than mine." "I admire people who are smarter than me… It can be a scary thing… Feeling inadequate." "Feeling of relative incompetence, power." "Usually, I kind of hesitate because I think they're too busy for me." "Otherwise, you seem so insignificant. It's too daunting to talk to someone that important." "…having a quiet of few feelings of inadequacy realizing that you're not worth their time." "The people we respect the most, oftentimes tends to be correlated with some status or something that you don't have." "I think in general, the thought process is, with people you respect, 'he probably doesn't have time for me.'" "There's always that issue of, if they are so important in your mind… then obviously, you'll be seen as unimportant to them in your mind."
Mental elevation of the respected person	"I guess it happens because people tend to build people up in their minds, and kind of elevate them above where they really are possibly and also where they are relative to me." "I want to see her as a perfect person that I respect, not as a friend." "You shouldn't imagine them as a perfect idol." "For example, would you consider an MBA an equal with you? Probably not… I wanted to seem like a subordinate." "But, her opinion is suddenly worth so much more if she has a good or bad opinion of you." "I had built him up as someone very impressive and cool."
Avoidance of disillusionment of the ideal perception of the respected person	"What if I speak to this person I admire and realize they're not actually that great, shattering your illusions." "I think part of the reason is, you don't want to like ruin this image of somebody that you've looked up to. More and more interactions with somebody would tend to reveal that they have weaknesses, they fail, they have a side of themselves that you might judge to be more negative if you knew them for longer periods of time. If I see one particular attribute as admirable, I don't want to have that image ruined or colored by learning that they also have flaws."

I classified the reasons for respecting the person into 6 categories: character, approachability, similarity, success, expertise, and inspiration and motivation (as a pair). I believed that these categories are comprehensive, coherent, and discrete from each other to a sufficient extent. Although approachability can be under the character category, the data indicated that approachability itself was a significant reason for respecting the person, in addition to or asides from other character traits, such as kindness, generosity, honesty, caring, diligent, and humility.

I classified the reasons for distancing the person into 8 categories: character of the interviewee, character of the respected person, avoidance of forming bad impressions, fear of disapproval or causing disappointment, perspective taking, feeling or relative unworthiness, inadequacy, or incompetence, mental elevation of the respected person, and avoidance of disillusionment of the ideal perception of the respected person. Although the categorizations are not as discrete from each other as the ones surrounding reasons for respecting the person, I classified them as such because the specific reasons, despite some overlap or possibility of double-counting with another category, were distinctly pertinent and salient from the data. One example of such overlap is "Her time is more valuable than mine." as this can be categorized as both perspective taking and feeling or relative unworthiness, inadequacy, or incompetence. Another example is "I think it's a fear of imposing on them, them letting you know that you're imposing on them." Which can be categorized as both avoidance of forming bad impressions, and fear of disapproval or causing disappointment. Although some of the reasons for relationship-distancing can overlap with different categorizations depending on the interpretation of the corresponding data and its context, I placed the examples of evidence into distinct categories that most closely matched the explicit, literal expression from the interviewee. Although the presence of some overlap and the fact that some reasons are not mutually exclusive and not completely disparate

exist, the above reasons were identified as significant themes from the data indicating relevant and salient reasons of which more than one can be and was expressed by each interviewee, partly depending on the interpretation and analysis.

4. Discussion

In addition to impression management, there are other concepts and theories that help explain the relationship-distancing phenomenon in relationships with people we respect. Some important concepts include cost-benefit analysis, loss aversion, cultural differences, power distance, self-monitoring, and perspective taking.

4.1 Cost-Benefit Analysis and Loss Aversion

At a basic level, the relationship-distancing can be explained by the person's (one motivated to control others' impressions of her/him) belief that the potential costs outweigh the benefits after an economic cost-benefit analysis, under the plausible assumption that impression management behavior is conscious or for impression management behaviors that are consciously executed. At one extreme, people are virtually oblivious of others' reactions to them; in such a situation and state, people do not hold themselves as an object of their own thoughts and thus do not process information in a self-relevant fashion (Duval & Wicklund, 1972). For example, in moments of ecstatic joy or in deindividuating circumstances, people may fail to consider how their behavior is viewed by others (Diener, 1979; Lindskold & Propst, 1981). At the other extreme, people have acute public self-awareness in which they attend consciously to the aspects of themselves that others can observe (Buss, 1980). In situations where the individual's dependency on the target is high, oftentimes the thought of exhibiting impression management behaviors such

as ingratiating with the target is deliberate, conscious, and planned. To varying extents, we may be trying to evaluate whether or not the outcomes of exhibiting impression management behaviors will result in more gains or losses.

Impression management is one means of dealing with a situation that involves both risk and uncertainty; risk and uncertainty constitute the thought process and behavior of impression management themselves. One basic phenomenon of choice under both risk and uncertainty is that losses loom larger than gains (Kahneman and Tversky 1984; Tversky and Kahneman, 1991). The certainty effect states that people underweight outcomes that are merely probable in comparison with outcomes that are obtained with certainty. This contributes to risk aversion in choices involving sure gains and to risk seeking in choices involving sure losses. (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979). Loss aversion may help explain an individual's refrainment from impression management behavior despite his or her initial need or motivation for impression management even though the reality may be (although in hindsight or on supposition, perhaps) that he or she would have overall had a higher gain than losses through exhibiting impression management behaviors (Novemsky & Kahneman, 2005).

A couple of examples from the data that highlight costs-benefit analysis and loss aversion are "I feel like I have so much to lose because she's in a higher power." and "If you never put yourself out there, you're never getting let down… If you distance yourself from them, they will never not like you." The prevalence and weight of the data indicating avoidance of forming bad impressions and fear of disapproval or causing disappointment indicate the presence and force of loss aversion.

4.2 Cultural Differences and Power Distance

Power distance is defined as "the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally (Hofstede, 1980)." Individuals from high power distance cultures are more accustomed to centralized leadership; however, those from low power distance cultures prefer autonomous leadership and are more comfortable with relatively equal power distribution (Eylon & Au; 1999). Individuals from low power distance cultures are accustomed to being treated as equals (Hofstede, 1980, 1993 Morris & Pavett, 1992). American managers generally embrace openness and equality, characterized as rejecting inherited status, formal titles, and the rigidity of formal rank (Pascale & Athos, 1981). Individuals from low power distance cultures may feel more comfortable exhibiting impression management behaviors with their targets since they are accustomed to being treated as equals and would hesitate less in approach their targets (with high status or power) whom they are dependent on; on the other hand, individuals from high power distance cultures may hesitate more from exhibiting impression management behaviors toward their targets. Our knowledge and understanding of cultural differences, and power distance in particular, could help explain the phenomenon. The hierarchy and culture of the specific organization should also be considered, as they may have similar effects as power distance.

4.3 Perspective Taking: High Self-Monitors vs. Low Self-Monitors

Another factor that may help explain this phenomenon is the extent to which one self-monitors or exhibits perspective-taking behaviors. "According to self-monitoring theory, individuals differ in the extent to which they are willing and able to monitor and control their self-expressions in social situations… they present the right image for the right audience" (Mehra,

Kilduff, Brass, 2001). In a social situation, high self-monitors ask, "Who does this situation want me to be and how can I be that person" (Snyder, 1979). High self-monitors are consistent in adjusting behavior to the demands of different situations and rely on social cues from others to guide their behaviors rather than on their own inner attitudes and emotions (Mehra, Kilduff, Brass, 2001). There may be a curvilinear relationship between the extent to which the individual is a self-monitor and his or her impression management behaviors towards a target with high status and power whom he or she is highly dependent on. A moderate degree of self-monitoring can help one socially function effectively and achieve social and material outcomes by paying sufficient attention to environmental and social cues and reacting appropriately; however, too much self-monitoring or perspective-taking behavior could result in refrainment from exhibiting impression management behaviors or from even approaching the target(s) whom the person is dependent on for valued outcomes. Too much thought or concern about the perspective of the target may elicit further thoughts that make the potential costs of partaking in impression management behaviors more salient than the benefits, and formulate thoughts that discourage one from approaching the target. For example, if one is too concerned about the target and his or her busyness, one may hesitate to approach because he or she does not want to waste the target's time. Two examples that show this are "She is very busy, so her time is very precious." and "I'm afraid of wasting her time. She is an important person and has things to do." Better understanding of the relationship between self-monitoring and impression management may help explain the refrainment from impression management behaviors or from interacting with targets with high status, power, and dependency.

5.1 Theoretical Implications

As previously mentioned, little research has been done to explain why individuals with initial high motivation for impression management do not exhibit impression management behaviors despite the prevalence of such phenomenon in both the workforce and other related settings. There is a conflict of motivation and interests between one's motivation to develop a closer relationship and one's motivation distance. These motivations can be both external and internal. Little research has examined how people respond to impressional dilemmas in which their motives (social and material outcomes, self-esteem maintenance, and development of identity) conflict (Leary & Kowalski, 1990).

The relationship-distancing phenomenon that exists between the person of lower status or power and the person of higher status or power whom the former respects is both an interesting instance in which people refrain from impression management behavior despite their motivation for impression management, and a case that shed light on impressional dilemmas, and conflicting motivations and interests. This research makes a theoretical contribution to research on impression management by providing and exploring an exemplary phenomenon that brings to light the above fields of specific topics under impression management that should be further researched.

Finally, this research provides a basic categorization of possible reasons for refraining from impression management behavior (or interaction in general) despite the motivation to do so form the specific context of such relationships. The former was explored primarily with the question, "Did you ever hesitate to approach this person? If so, why?" The latter was explored primarily with the questions, "How and why was it important for you to develop a close relationship with the person?", and "How much did his or her impression of you matter?"

5.2 Practical Implications

Our understanding of relationships can help better understand factors that cause positive and negative effects on the nature and functionality of the relationships. More specifically, this research helps us better understand factors that help explain the cause the facilitation of relationship-building and relationship-distancing. This understanding and further discussion about the relationship-building and relationship-distancing factors can help foster relationships that are more effective and appropriate (depending on the interests of the organization) relationships between employees and their respected, more senior employees in positions of higher status or position.

In particular, the final question of the interview, "What could be done to help people feel more comfortable building relationships with those they respect?", sheds light on what the person in the lower position of status or power, the respected person in the higher position of status or power, or the institution they both belong to could do to reduce the distancing in the relationships and help foster closer relationships. Table 4 shows some suggested solutions by the interviewees. Most of the solutions revolve around the person of the lower status and his or her ability to affect the relationship.

Table 4: Suggested solutions to help people build relationships with those they respect

Person of the lower status	Person of the higher status	Institution
Show vulnerability	Show vulnerability	Create spaces that bring two people together (such as office hours for educational institutions)
Build self-confidence and develop courage	Establish or clarify expectations of the relationship in the beginning	Create mentorship programs that allow one-on-one interaction
Be yourself	Be more approachable	
Humanize the respected person		
Develop a personal, not just professional, relationship		
Prepare for interaction (such as preparing good questions or conversation topics)		
Seek advice or mentorship		
Seek one-on-one interaction		
Let him/her know that the person respects him/her		
Do not make assumptions		
Remember that relationships are mutually beneficial		
Find out how he/she can help the person he/she respects or what he/she can offer		

6. Limitations and Future Directions

Although the data represents diverse perspectives from people across various backgrounds and positions and organizational contexts in the past, the sample is limited in that all the interviewees were either current students or graduates of a private, research university in the United States. The sample could represent a limited sample if the university promotes a rather homogenous culture or atmosphere regarding the students' relationships with people in higher positions of status or power that the students respect or attracts a certain type of students that may be relevant to this phenomenon. The aim of this paper was to identify the presence of different

themes surrounding the phenomenon as opposed to a quantitative analysis, so the sample does not seem to be a significant limitation to the study as a wide diversity of perspectives seem to have been represented.

Quantitative analysis was not conducted because of the complexity of various factors involved and emerged throughout the study, validity of quantitative interpretation of the sample size, and the inability to support any statements about prevalence or distribution other than that within the study sample itself. Rather, the presence of different themes and constructs was identified, regardless of the frequency exhibited throughout the sample. Future quantitative research, or a combination or quantitative and qualitative approach, should be conducted as the theory surrounding the phenomenon become more mature. Maturing or intermediate theory benefits from a combination of quantitative and qualitative data, and mature theory spawns more precise, quantitative research designs (Edmonson & McManus, 2007).

Further research should be conducted to explore the relationship among cost-benefit analysis, loss aversion, and impression management. One way to explore this factor would be to conduct a lab experiment and create a setting in which the research participants rely on a target(s) whom they must depend on in order to achieve a given goal. A follow-up interview or survey could be conducted in order to analyze the participants' thought process and evidence of their cost-benefit analysis. Another way would be to assign the participants to read different scenarios, write down or select a decision regarding impression management behavior (after making impression management motivation salient or significant), and explain their rationale in terms of cost-benefit analysis (open-ended or specific).

Further research can be done to explore the relationship among cultural differences, power distance, and impression management. One way to explore this is to study organizations with

distinct and identifiable cultures, perhaps in different countries. A survey could be used to measure the extent to which specific types of impression management behavior occurs among employees and their managers (with high dependency) and explore these measures with the measured power distance (from the perspective of the researchers, organizational experts, and/or the employees themselves).

Using expert coders to measure and rate the degree of self-monitoring in a controlled lab experiment could help quantify the relationship between self-monitoring and (refrainment from) impression management behavior.

Little research has examined how people respond to impressional dilemmas in which their motives (social and material outcomes, self-esteem maintenance, and development of identity) conflict (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). The impressions that result in valued outcomes sometimes involve presenting an unfavorable view of oneself, thereby achieving favorable social and material outcomes but lowering self-esteem (Gove, Hughes, & Geerken, 1980). Further research should be conducted to explore various dilemmas and conflicts in impression management and how individuals go about in the process of making decisions and exhibiting impression management behaviors. Better understanding of impressional dilemmas may help explain people's refrainment from impression management behaviors despite the initial motivation to do so.

Lastly, a similar qualitative research should be conducted in the future exploring the perspectives of people in higher position of power or status that are respected by people of lower position of power or status in the shared organizational contexts. This could complement the research surrounding the perspective of the people of lower position of power or status, and help better understand the relationship-distancing factors in these relationships.

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Appendix 1: Interview protocol

Introduction

Thank you very much for taking the time to do this interview. In this project, I'm hoping to understand more about how we navigate relationships with people we respect. Throughout this interview, I'll ask you questions about your relationship with someone you truly respect. Please take a moment to think of an important or meaningful relationship with someone (1) you truly admire (2) who is in a higher status or position of power in (3) an organizational context (for example, a school or company) (4) with whom you have interacted. Your information will be anonymized and never be connected with the responses you provide so no one will ever be able to identify you in any publications that will result from this research. Please take your time and let me know if you have any questions.

Background information on the respected person and the relationship

- Can you tell me a story or anecdote about this person who you respect?
- What organization does he or she belong to, and what position did he or she hold?
- Describe the proximity, general exchange, and setting between you and the person. Why did you respect this person?
- How and why was it important for you to develop a close relationship with the person?
- How much did his or her impression of you matter?

Relationship-building aspects

- Did he or she make an effort to develop a closer relationship with you?
- Follow-up question: What were some of the things he or she did to develop a closer relationship with you?
- Did you make an effort to develop a closer relationship with the person?
- Follow-up question: What were some of the things you did to develop a closer relationship with him or her?

Relationship-distancing factors

- Did you ever hesitate to approach this person? If so, why?
- *Follow-up questions as relevant

Closing questions

- I've noticed that we sometimes keep ourselves distant from people we admire. Have you ever done this? If so…
- Can you tell me about it?
- Why do you think this happens?
- What could be done to help people feel more comfortable building relationships with those they respect?