



Research Article

A Theoretical Exploration of the Nexus Between Performance Appraisal, Culture, and Impression Management

Performans Değerlendirme, Kültür ve İzlenim Yönetimi İlişkisine Yönelik Kuramsal Bir Tartışma

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ABSTRACT

This study theoretically discusses that the impression management (IM) strategies that employees apply depending on the purpose of performance appraisal (PA) in organizations may vary in different cultures. The propositions developed are based on Schütz's four-dimensional classification of IM strategies and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's (1998) seven-dimensional model of culture. It has been proposed that employees may exhibit more assertive or defensive IM strategies for administrative PA, and offensive or protective IM strategies for developmental PA. Moreover, employees in particularistic, diffuse, and synchronous cultures may apply IM more frequently in the PA process. Employees in individualistic cultures may use defensive IM tactics for developmental PA, while in communitarian cultures they may resort to assertive IM. Furthermore, employees can apply offensive and assertive IM for administrative PA in ascription-oriented cultures, taking responsibility IM tactics in both administrative and developmental PAs in inner-directed cultures, and justification and excuse tactics in outer-directed cultures.

ÖZ

Bu çalışmada, iş görenlerin performans değerlendirmesi amacına bağlı olarak farklı kültürlerde başvurabilecekleri izlenim yönetimi stratejilerinin tartışıldığı teorik bir çerçevede sunulmuştur. Schütz'ün dört boyutlu izlenim yönetimi sınıflandırması ve Trompenaars ve Hampden-Turner'in yedi boyutlu kültür modeli temel alınarak önermeler geliştirilmiştir. Çalışmada, yönetsel amaçlı performans değerlendirmesi için çalışanların daha çok iddialı veya savunmacı davranışlar sergileyebileceği, gelişimsel amaçlı performans değerlendirmesi için ise saldırgan veya korumacı izlenim yönetimi stratejilerine başvurabileceği önerilmiştir. Ayrıca, özgün, yaygın ve eşzamanlı kültürlere sahip çalışanların performans değerlendirme sürecinde izlenim yönetimi stratejilerini daha sık kullanabilecekleri sonucuna varılmıştır. Bireyci kültürlerde, gelişimsel performans değerlendirmeleri için çalışanların savunmacı izlenim yönetimi stratejilerine başvurabileceği, toplumcu kültürlerde ise iddialı izlenim yönetimi taktiklerini benimseyebileceği önerilmiştir. Atıf kültürlerinde, yönetsel performans değerlendirmeleri için çalışanların saldırgan ve iddialı izlenim yönetimi stratejilerini kullanabileceği belirtilmiştir. İç yönelimli kültürlerde ise hem yönetsel hem de gelişimsel performans değerlendirmelerinde sorumluluğu kabul etme davranışlarının daha yaygın olduğu, dış yönelimli kültürlerde ise meşrulaştırma ve mazeret bulma davranışlarının daha yaygın olduğu iddia edilmiştir.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Performance appraisal (PA) serves as a vital process within organizations, facilitating meaningful interactions between managers and employees (Farndale & Kelliher, 2013). It is defined as a structured process for evaluating and assessing an organization's or individual's efficiency, effectiveness, and areas for improvement in achieving business objectives and utilizing available resources (Naim, 2022). It can serve administrative functions, such as determining rewards and promotions, or developmental functions, such as identifying employees' training needs (Youngcourt, Leiva & Jones, 2007). Its significance lies in evaluating individual and organizational performance, providing valuable feedback, and making crucial decisions regarding promotions, rewards, and development opportunities. It is closely linked with the organization's competitive strategy and its overall performance (Bayo-Moriones, Galdon-Sanchez & Martinez-de-Morentin, 2021). However, the effectiveness of the PA process is influenced by various factors, including the intriguing use of impression management (IM) tactics by employees. Therefore, this study will explore the impact of employees' use of IM tactics on the performance appraisal PA process, aiming to gain a deeper understanding of how these tactics shape managerial perceptions, influence decision-making, and ultimately affect the outcomes of PA within organizations.

IM, the art of consciously or unconsciously shaping others' perceptions, plays a key role in how individuals present themselves (Goffman, 1959). It involves employees' strategies to shape, uphold, or modify a desired image when interacting with others (Chawla et al., 2021). IM strategies can be used to handle failures effectively (Kibler, Mandl, Farny & Salmivaara, 2021), repair the organization's legitimacy (Perkiss, Bernardi, Dumay & Haslam, 2021), make a favorable impression on interviewers during a job interview (Basch, Melchers, Kurz, Krieger & Miller, 2021), or by leaders to apologize after their own abusive behaviors (Shi, Wang & McGinley, 2023). In the context of PA, employees may resort to IM tactics to showcase their strengths, influence evaluators' opinions, and ultimately steer the outcomes of the evaluation process. While previous research has explored the impact of IM tactics, such as ingratiation behaviors and self-promotion, on performance ratings and evaluators' perceptions (Gundersen, Tinsley & Terpstra, 1996); Wayne & Liden, 1995; Zivnuska, Kacmar, Witt, Carlson & Bratton, 2004), little attention has been given to

their association with the diverse purposes of PA within organizations.

Moreover, the cultural values and norms prevalent within an organization significantly shape employees' IM tactics and the overall effectiveness of the PA process. Cultural dimensions, such as individualism-collectivism and power distance, have been observed to influence preferred IM tactics across different cultural contexts (Kim & Lee, 2012; Meydan, Basim & Başar, 2014; Rebecca, 2012). These cultural variations can impact how employees present themselves, interact with evaluators, and navigate the PA process (Peretz & Fried, 2011; Singh, Mohamed & Darwish, 2013; Snape, Thompson, Yan & Redman, 1998; Varma, Pichler & Srinivas, 2005). However these studies lack the link between culture, IM and PA's purposes. To bridge this research gap, the current study aims to explore the relationship between IM, the purpose of PA, and cultural values within organizations. The study will delve into the role of IM tactics in shaping evaluators' perceptions and influencing the outcomes of the PA process. Building on previous research, the study proposes a theoretical model (Figure 1) that considers the impact of cultural values and the organizational purpose of PA on employees' IM tactics, ultimately leading to the development of meaningful propositions.

This theoretical study makes several contributions to the field of organizational behavior and PA management. Firstly, it addresses the gap in the literature by examining the relationship between IM, the purpose of PA, and cultural values. While previous research has primarily focused on the association between IM tactics and performance ratings, this study takes a broader perspective by considering the overarching purpose of PA within organizations. By exploring how the purpose of evaluation and cultural values shape employees' IM tactics, this study offers a comprehensive understanding of the complex dynamics involved in the PA process. Secondly, this research adopts a multilevel analysis approach, linking individual-level IM behaviors with structural variables such as the purpose of PA and cultural dimensions (organization-society). By considering these different levels, the study provides a more holistic understanding of how IM and PA interact within organizational contexts. This multilevel perspective contributes to advancing the theoretical understanding of organizational behavior and PA management, offering new insights into the dynamics of subjective processes such as perception, assumptions, and social interactions. Additionally, this study has implications for practitioners and human resource professionals. By

recognizing the impact of cultural values on employees' IM tactics in PA, organizations can design more culturally sensitive and effective PA systems. The findings shed light on the importance of aligning the purpose of PA with cultural values to enhance the fairness and utility of PA practices. This knowledge can inform the development of PA management strategies that consider cultural differences, ultimately promoting a more inclusive and equitable work environment. Furthermore, this research provides a fresh perspective for scholars focusing on international businesses or national business systems. By highlighting the role of cultural values and their influence on IM and PA, this study offers a new lens through which to analyze cross-cultural dynamics in the workplace. It underscores the significance of cultural context in shaping employees' behaviors and attitudes towards PA, contributing to a deeper understanding of the interplay between culture, organizational practices, and employee outcomes. In conclusion, this study contributes to the literature by examining the relationship between IM, the purpose of PA, and cultural values within organizations. Through its theoretical discussions and proposed model, this

choices, individuals endeavor to manipulate the perceptions of others, thereby crafting an impression that aligns with their intended portrayal. This interactive process underscores the paramount significance of IM as a potent tool for individuals to proficiently navigate and exert influence over the impressions that others form about them, ultimately shaping the outcomes of their social interactions. In the organizational context, IM is viewed as a set of strategies that individuals can employ to influence their superiors as well as their subordinates. For instance, leaders may engage in IM to gain support from their subordinates and establish legitimacy for their actions and decisions (Gardner & Martinko, 1988). Similarly, when faced with the consequences of a failed action, leaders may utilize IM by providing justifications (Caldwell & O'Reilly, 1982). On the other hand, subordinates may resort to IM tactics when they desire their superiors to hold positive feelings and thoughts about them. However, at times, the IM tactics employed by subordinates may not yield the desired changes in perception. For example, Gundersen, Tinsley & Terpstra (1996), in their examination of the impact of IM tactics on PAs, found that defensive methods,

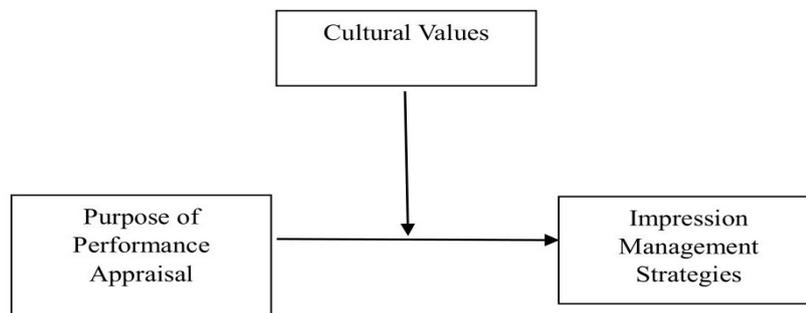


Figure 1: Theoretical Model

research enhances our understanding of the complex dynamics involved in the PA process.

2. IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT

IM, also known as self-presentation, refers to the deliberate actions individuals take to safeguard their self-image and shape the opinions of others they value (Wayne & Liden, 1995; Schütz, 1998). When people form judgments about others, they activate cognitive categories stored in their memory to make judgements about them (Wayne & Ferris, 1990). Consequently, individuals may employ a diverse range of IM strategies to influence the cognitive categories that others hold regarding their persona (Meydan et al., 2014). Through strategic behavioral

such as apologizing or offering excuses had negative effects on performance ratings. Thus, IM in the organizational setting encompasses a range of strategies that individuals can employ to influence their superiors and subordinates.

IM behaviors of employees can lead to positive feelings from their managers, which can indirectly influence PA ratings (Wayne & Liden, 1995). Similarly, self-focused IM behaviors have been found to increase PA ratings (Zivnuska et al., 2004). Moreover, Wayne & Ferris (1990) state that IM tactics targeted at managers can create biases in PA ratings by fostering positive feelings towards subordinates. Wayne & Kacmer (1991) also examined the effects of IM strategies such as doing favors, highlighting qualifications, and conforming to performance management.

IM has been extensively discussed in the relevant literature, both empirically and theoretically, with different authors proposing various typologies and concepts. For instance, Jones & Pittman (1982) conducted a classification study where they identified five IM tactics: self-promotion, ingratiation, exemplification, intimidation, and supplication. Subsequently, these categories were incorporated into the defensive/aggressive typology by Tedeschi & Melburg (1984). According to Wayne & Liden (1995), IM tactics can be categorized as self-focused, other-focused, and job-focused. Self-focused IM behaviors involve creating perceptions of being diligent, collaborative, and productive. Other-focused tactics aim to make the superior like the subordinate, often through excessive praise or acts of kindness. Job-focused tactics, on the other hand, focus on creating an impression of high job performance.

Tedeschi & Norman (1985) proposed a classification of IM behaviors into assertive and defensive categories, reflecting an individual's motivation to create impressions (Gundersen et al., 1996). Building upon this model, Schütz (1998) further expanded the categorization of IM tactics into four groups: assertive, defensive, offensive, and protective. In this study, the conceptual model developed by Schütz (1998) will be employed as it is believed to provide better alignment with the context of performance appraisal and yield valuable insights.

As described in Schütz's model, the assertive tactics, aim to create positive perceptions in the target individual with the intention of strengthening identity and self-image (Tedeschi & Norman, 1985). Within the scope of assertive tactics, ingratiating behavior involves the individual trying to influence others by exhibiting behaviors that go beyond the accepted norms of politeness and societal expectations (Tabak, Basım, Tatar & Çetin, 2010). In a sense, individuals seek to gain acceptance for their self, identity, and behavior by establishing emotional connections and eliciting sympathy from others. Through such efforts, individuals aim to conceal self-presentations that they perceive as negative. Exemplification, as an assertive IM tactic, involves individuals sacrificing their own interests to project an image of moral virtue (Jones & Pittman, 1982). By displaying this behavior, individuals aim to demonstrate to others that they possess admirable qualities and adhere to ethical values (Basım & Tatar, 2006). Similar to the ingratiation tactic, this behavior can be seen as an attempt to be appreciated by others whom the individual considers important, overlooking their

negative attributes, and striving to attain respect, prestige, and status.

Another assertive tactic involves self-promotion, where individuals frequently highlight their positive qualities (Jones & Pittman, 1982). By doing so, they aim to not only earn the respect of others but also appear deserving of praise (Tabak et al., 2010). This self-promotion can be seen as a means for individuals to create positive rumors about themselves in their social and organizational environment, leveraging the power and status acquired to access important resources. Additionally, the behavior of power display is also considered within the realm of assertive tactics. When engaging in power display, individuals emphasize the positive and creative outcomes of power (Schütz, 1997). As a result, they may be perceived by others as a threatening individual (Basım & Tatar, 2006). However, the preference for presenting oneself as a dangerous employee may also indicate a desire to be seen as a powerful figure with strong social capital and influential connections within the higher echelons of the organizational hierarchy. This way, individuals attempt to counter potential criticisms by exerting social power. Lastly, the behavior of identifying with a group identity is also examined within assertive tactics. In this approach, individuals tend to emphasize their membership in a group to which they attribute positive qualities, often through symbolic or verbal means (Schütz, 1998). By highlighting themselves as a prototypical member of the group, they strive to project the positive image associated with the group onto themselves (Wills, 1981). This behavior stems from the belief that their individual identity may not have the same influence on others, leading them to focus on creating positive impressions through their group identity.

The second classification in Schütz's model pertains to defensive tactics aimed at reducing others' negative perceptions (Tedeschi & Norman, 1985). One of these strategies is denial, where individuals reject the truth and even question the credibility of others who present the negative reality, claiming that the adverse conditions never existed (Schönbach, 1980). By employing denial, individuals seek to protect their self-esteem and distance themselves from the anxieties associated with facing the harsh realities of their negative behaviors or low performance outcomes. Another defensive behavior conceptualized is reframing. Individuals adopting this behavior acknowledge the occurrence of an event but advocate for focusing on its positive aspects rather than dwelling on the negative aspects and exaggerating the problem (Schütz, 1998). This way, they attempt to redirect attention and perception, shape others' cognitive

categories, and preempt potential negative evaluations about themselves in the future. Dissociation behavior is also considered a defensive tactic, where individuals accept the occurrence of a negative event but strive to create an image of detachment, implying that they were not involved (Schütz, 1998). By negatively portraying the impressions of their peers with whom they compare themselves, they can influence the comparison to their advantage.

Another defensive tactic is the use of legitimization, excuse-making, and acceptance of responsibility. Through legitimization, individuals acknowledge the negatives but claim that they were inevitable or beyond their control (Schönbach, 1980). They even attempt to create an image where others should feel grateful instead of angry, as their actions prevented more significant problems from arising (Schütz, 1998). Individuals who make excuses generally try to convince others that the negatives occurred without their intention or beyond their will (Tedeschi & Riess, 1981). By employing excuses, individuals aim to minimize the negative consequences attributed to their personality (Schütz, 1997). In contrast, with the acceptance of responsibility, individuals take full accountability for the negatives (Schönbach, 1980). They express regret, seek forgiveness (Tedeschi & Riess, 1981), and assure that such mistakes will not happen again (Schütz, 1997).

The third category in Schütz's model, which forms the framework of the current study, consists of aggressive IM behaviors. Aggressive strategies involve individuals attempting to establish dominance over others and create an impression of superior skills and competence by demeaning them (Schütz, 1998). When facing failure, individuals seek to elevate themselves by making comparisons with third parties (Wills, 1981). They make sarcastic and critical judgments about others, aiming to present themselves as superior and accomplished (Schütz, 1998). Another aggressive IM strategy involves responding to criticism with criticism, questioning the technical knowledge, professional background, and power of the critic, implying their bias or inadequacy (Schütz, 1997). Additionally, attempts to change the subject in the communication process or engaging in uninterrupted speaking without allowing the topic to be altered are also considered aggressive IM tactics (Schütz, 1998).

Finally, the fourth IM tactic involves protective strategies. In this category, individuals aim to minimize the likelihood of behaving incorrectly or facing criticism by reducing their interaction with others (Schütz, 1998). They approach self-

presentation cautiously, portraying themselves as humble or even dependent, seeking help and support (Arkin, 1981). In social settings, they avoid speaking or making comments, or conceal their critical opinions in their remarks, attempting to create an impression of friendliness and adaptability (Schlenker & Leary, 1985).

3. PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL AND PURPOSES OF ITS USE

Performance appraisal (PA) aims to evaluate employees' behaviors, motivation, skills, knowledge, and competencies (Youngcourt et al., 2007). It provides important information for decisions concerning employees, such as salary increases, promotions, transfers, and training programs, while also facilitating the necessary steps for employee development (Cleveland, Murphy, & Williams, 1989). Studies focusing on PA have predominantly addressed psychometric issues, characteristics of evaluators and ratees, cognitive processes, rating biases, and appraisal purposes (Bretz, Milkovich & Read, 1992). The outcomes of the PA system depend on factors such as the sources of evaluation data, the methods of scoring and interpreting, and employee satisfaction with the evaluation system (Selvarajan & Cloninger, 2012). In addition to the contextual elements of political and environmental factors in PA processes, ethical and organizational justice issues, ratees' reactions to the evaluation, and individual motivations for receiving feedback have been examined by researchers (Fletcher & Perry, 2001). Alongside these studies, the purpose of the evaluation is also considered a significant factor influencing the output of PA (Boswell & Bourdeau, 2000, 2002; Cleveland et al., 1989; Jawahar & Williams, 1997; Ostroff, 1993; Youngcourt et al., 2007). For example, the purposes for which evaluations are used significantly influence employees' psychological contract perception (Eyoum, Chen, Ayoum & Khelifat, 2020), or their work engagement (Vidè, Micacchi, Barbieri & Valotti, 2022)

Organizations typically implement both administrative (i.e. compensation and benefits) and developmental (i.e. training and development, or mentorship and coaching) PA systems (Murphy, 2020). These different purposes influence the quality, scope, accuracy, and rating processes of the evaluation (Youngcourt et al., 2007). Organizational culture and climate also determine the decisions for which the information obtained from PA will be used (Cleveland et al., 1989). While some organizations prioritize developmental PAs, others may give more importance to

administrative PAs. However, in most cases, organizational practitioners emphasize the need to separate the two evaluation systems to ensure that employees receive feedback on both their strengths and weaknesses (Boswell & Boudreau, 2002).

Administrative/judgmental PA is used for salary adjustments, promotion decisions, contract termination, rewards, and disciplinary actions (Ostroff, 1993). In other words, it aims to make comparisons among employees and differentiate individuals from others in the organization (Cleveland et al., 1989). The comparison can be based on predetermined standards or taking into account the individual's past performance (Boswell & Boudreau, 2002). The emphasis is more on organizational development rather than individual development, with the goal of enhancing overall effectiveness (Youngcourt et al., 2007).

Prince & Lawler (1986) have reported that organizations that base their salary system on performance experience increased organizational satisfaction among employees with the use of administrative PA (Prince & Lawler, 1986). Additionally, studies indicate that employees show a preference for utilizing administrative PA primarily for promotion decisions and less for salary adjustments (Gosselin, Werner & Halle, 1997). Other research suggests that in organizations where administrative PAs are implemented, employees engage in more social comparisons (Zedeck & Cascio, 1982), and the influence of friendship relationships or political maneuvering on PAs leads to employees perceiving them as unfair in terms of distributive justice (Selvarajan & Cloninger, 2012).

The dimension of social comparison among individuals within the administrative PA system is a sensitive context, as indicated by Drenth (1984). Many cases have shown that employees often respond negatively to evaluations, engaging in behaviors such as resistance, aggression, or denial when receiving feedback (Boswell & Bourdeau, 2000). This is because the administrative PA system directly impacts outcomes that employees consider important, including bonuses, promotions, and salaries, as highlighted by Youngcourt, et al. (2007). In certain situations, individuals may exhibit avoidance behavior to protect their self-esteem, and they may also hold biased beliefs that do not align with reality (Silverman, Pogson & Cober, 2005).

As can be observed, the administrative purpose of performance appraisal (PA) can significantly impact the interaction and social relationships between the evaluator and the evaluatee. Thus, subordinates can

manipulate their superiors through IM tactics, influencing decisions such as promotions and salary adjustments (Prince & Lawler, 1986). When we consider administrative PAs as a practice to compare subordinates and distinguish one employee from another, it is conceivable that individuals may employ assertive tactics to highlight their achievements, create an exemplary employee image, frequently emphasize their successful performance, and generate positive rumors within the organization, positioning themselves as more important, successful, and diligent than others. Additionally, in cases where past performance is taken into account, individuals may attempt to mask their weaknesses in managerial PAs, thereby adopting defensive tactics. Consequently, it is reasonable to expect that individuals may employ defensive tactics to minimize potential negative perceptions from evaluators. On the other hand, the likelihood of individuals adopting aggressive or protective tactics in administrative PAs seems low. Engaging in aggressive strategies may negatively affect the evaluator, which, in turn, may disadvantage the employee in subsequent high-stakes decisions such as promotions and salary adjustments. It can also be expected that employees may resort to protective tactics in the context of administrative PA. Nevertheless, such tactics would deprive evaluators of comparative data, resulting in evaluators having neither negative nor positive perceptions of the employee. Based on these explanations, the first proposition of this study is developed.

Proposition 1: The likelihood of employees exhibiting assertive and defensive tactics in administrative PAs is higher than the likelihood of exhibiting aggressive and protective tactics.

The developmental purpose of PA aims to assess employees' strengths and weaknesses, identify their training needs, provide performance feedback, and make decisions related to their organizational positions (Boswell & Bourdeau, 2000). It emphasizes the importance of fostering an environment that places a strong emphasis on learning, self-regulation, developing skills, experiences, and attitudes that can enhance employees' effectiveness and empower them (Boswell & Bourdeau, 2002; Tillema, 2000). The concept of development, with its future-oriented and supportive elements, may lead to more positive reactions from employees towards the use of a developmental PA system (Milkovich & Boudreau, 1997), and increase their performance (Wang, & Li, 2022). Additionally, research on 360-degree feedback has shown that employees perceive the use of a developmental PA system as an indication that the organization values them and invests in

their future (Ash, 1994). Moreover, studies indicate that developmental PA ratings are less influenced by evaluation biases compared to administrative PA practices (Zedeck & Cascio, 1982). It also reduces employees' tendency for social comparisons within the organization and limits evaluators' manipulability, thereby enhancing the perception of procedural fairness (Selvarajan & Cloninger, 2012).

Employees' perceptions of PA purposes can lead to variations in their attitudes and behaviors towards the evaluator or the organization (Boswell & Bourdeau, 2000). For instance, a developmental-focused PA system that highlights employees' strengths and weaknesses may be perceived by employees as being used for administrative purposes, potentially influencing decisions such as salary increments (Cleveland et al., 1989). Therefore, the PA system is regarded as a system influenced by the social context, the relationship between the evaluator and the evaluated, and social-psychological processes (Ash, 1994).

Considering that developmental PA practices aim to uncover individuals' strengths and weaknesses, and when associated with IM tactics, several implications can be drawn. Many employees perceive the revelation of their developmental areas as a threat to their self-esteem or believe that these weaknesses may be used in administrative PAs. In such cases, individuals may resort to aggressive IM tactics, portraying themselves as superior than others while labeling others as deficient in skills and competencies. They may assert their technical knowledge and intellectual prowess, emphasizing the inadequacies of both the evaluator and other employees within the organization. Additionally, individuals may employ protective strategies in the context of developmental PAs. By acting cautiously in their relationship with the evaluator, they may attempt to conceal information that would expose their weaknesses, thereby preventing the evaluator from making any judgments regarding their development. Based on these explanations, the second proposition of the study is presented as follows:

Proposition 2: Employees are likely to engage in aggressive or defensive IM strategies during developmental PAs.

4. PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL AND CULTURE

The influence of national culture on the relationship between PA practice and IM strategies is an important aspect to consider. The relationship

between PA and IM can also be discussed within the context of national culture. The association between PA and cross-cultural differences started to be examined in the 1990s, coinciding with the acceleration of globalization. Contradictory results obtained from social psychology studies conducted in different cultures, as well as the research conducted by Hofstede (1980) and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) on cultural values, have indicated that PA processes may exhibit cultural variations (Fletcher & Perry, 2001). For instance, in individualistic cultures, it is assumed that performance differences are independent of situational or group dynamics; instead, they are believed to stem from individual attributes. Therefore, evaluations are structured around individual achievements (Fletcher & Perry, 2001). In collectivistic cultures, on the other hand, feedback is given more indirectly and with implicit expressions due to the avoidance of direct confrontation (Fletcher & Perry, 2001). Another study that emphasizes the influence of culture found that the evaluator's ability to differentiate between emotions and performance data during PA is regulated by cultural norms (Varma et al., 2005). Furthermore, another study exploring the relationship between cultural values and PA examined the effects of cultural dimensions proposed by Hofstede (1980) on PA practices. The findings suggested that future-oriented cultures tend to embrace developmental PA systems more than past-oriented cultures, and individualistic cultures show less preference for administrative PA systems compared to collectivistic cultures (Peretz & Fried, 2011). These studies imply that cultural values may have moderating effects on the relationship between IM and PA. Therefore, the subsequent section of this study will attempt to explore the moderating effects of culture on these two variables after reviewing the dimensions of Shütz's culture model, which highlight the diverse ways in which different cultures perceive and interpret the world.

Universalism / Particularism: In Shütz's model, universalistic societies adhere to rules and standards that establish moral and appropriate conduct without any exceptions (Trompenaars, 1996). Within such societies, individuals advocate for the presence of fundamental rules that are applicable in all situations (Thorne & Saunders, 2002). They believe that it is possible to define what is right or wrong and apply this definition universally (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). In societies with a particularistic orientation, however, the significance of specific and unique circumstances surpasses that of rules, particularly in the context of familial and friendship relationships, where these bonds are considered more important than abstract rules. These societies assume that

rules and principles can be adaptable and flexible depending on individuals and circumstances (Trompenaars, 1996). Social conditions give rise to various exceptions and each social relationship carries its own set of obligations that hold greater importance than abstract societal norms (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). For example, while failure to fulfill obligations outlined in legal contracts may result in legal actions for organizations in universalistic societies, particularistic societies prioritize adjusting contractual arrangements in response to changing conditions and preserving mutual trust, as these factors are considered vital (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998).

According to Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998), universalistic societies view particularistic societies as untrustworthy due to their tendency to prioritize the interests of friends or family members over compliance with rules and regulations. Conversely, particularistic societies may perceive universalistic societies as untrustworthy because of their emphasis on upholding laws at the expense of interpersonal relationships. Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars (2000) suggest that universalistic cultures strive for uniformity and seek to impose their adopted rules on a global scale, whereas particularistic cultures value diversity and embrace contradictions, uniqueness, and context-specific phenomena. As a result, particularistic cultures may deviate from universal concepts such as equality and human rights. When it comes to evaluating others, Triandis (2000) explains that universalists rely on universal criteria to assess individuals, while particularistic societies consider contextual factors such as age or ethnic background in their judgments. Therefore, individualistic societies align with universalistic tendencies, prioritizing adherence to universal rules, while collectivist cultures are associated with particularistic approaches that emphasize contextual considerations. (Triandis, 2000).

Based on the aforementioned explanations, it can be argued that in universalistic societies, there is a tendency to question the validity of rules, principles, and standards governing the official administrative and developmental PA systems implemented by organizations. In contrast, particularistic societies tend to embrace the perception that performance standards can vary based on individual attributes, situational factors, and task outcomes. In these societies, non-compliance with job responsibilities is often attributed to external circumstances that have hindered performance, alongside the individual's role. Additionally, the importance of trust and interpersonal relationships in PAs may contribute to

bias, leading employees to exhibit IM tactics more frequently. Conversely, employees from universalistic societies may contend that attempting to influence evaluators' perceptions raises ethical and moral concerns. Building upon these insights, the study's third proposition is formulated as follows:

Proposition 3: In comparison to employees in universalistic societies, employees in particularistic societies are more inclined to engage in IM strategies in the context of PA.

Individualism / Communitarianism: The dimension of individualism/communitarianism proposed by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner aligns with Hofstede's (1991) cultural values of individualism/collectivism, as noted by Thorne & Saunders (2002) and Low & Chapman (2003). Individualistic societies perceive the enhancement of communitarian actions as a means to fulfill individual goals (Trompenaars, 1996). In these societies, the significance of personal needs outweighs group interests (Thorne & Saunders, 2002). Consequently, interpersonal dynamics within organizational contexts are governed by abstract and legally defined agreements (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). Collaborative behaviors are contingent upon serving the individual's own interests (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). Notably, individualistic societies prioritize values such as personal competition, self-assurance, personal growth, well-being, and the pursuit of individual freedom for self-fulfillment (Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars, 2000).

Communitarian cultures, according to Trompenaars (1996), view the group as a collective purpose and regard the development of individual competencies as a means to serve this purpose. In such cultures, there is a strong emphasis on the interests of the group, mutual support, a sense of belonging, and respect for traditions (Thorne & Saunders, 2002). Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner (1998) note that conformity to group decisions and consensus is highly valued, and the success of the group is attributed to collective actions rather than individual effort. These societies prioritize values such as sacrifice, social concern, public service, cooperation, the preservation of cultural norms, shared memories and experiences, and social solidarity (Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars, 2000).

Based on these explanations, it can be postulated that in individualistic cultures employees are more likely to take advantage of opportunities for personal growth, prioritize their own interests and future career plans over organizational objectives, and demonstrate a greater willingness to engage in

learning activities within the organization as a result of the developmental PA. Consequently, they may actively seek the identification of their weaknesses and rely on the evaluator to determine their training needs. Conversely, in communitarian cultures, the exposure of an individual's deficiencies may raise concerns about potential harm to the collective, leading to exclusion and damage to one's reputation. In order to avoid leaving a negative impression on the evaluator, individuals in these cultures may strategically employ assertive IM tactics, aiming to create a positive perception of themselves as diligent, knowledgeable, qualified, and successful individuals. Therefore,

Proposition 4: In individualistic cultures, employees are likely to exhibit defensive IM tactics during developmental PAs, whereas in communitarian cultures, employees are likely to resort to assertive IM tactics.

Affective / Neutral: Neutral cultures are characterized by a predominant presence of individuals who refrain from openly expressing their thoughts and emotions. In such cultures, the use of physical contact, body language, or dramatic facial expressions is not socially acceptable (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). Interpersonal relationships emphasize logical thinking and rational reasoning, with emotions being conveyed indirectly (Trompenaars, 1996). Behaviors such as displaying anger, happiness, or intense emotions are perceived as unprofessional in the workplace (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). Decision-making processes in these cultures strive to minimize the impact of emotional elements and instead emphasize a rational approach (Brady, Robertson & Cronin, 2001).

In affective societies, where emotions are highly valued, interpersonal relationships are significantly influenced by emotional expression (Trompenaars, 1996). These cultures consider the use of vivid gestures, physical touch, and dramatic facial expressions as acceptable forms of communication (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). In contrast, individuals from neutral cultures may perceive affective societies as lacking emotional restraint, while viewing themselves as more controlled and rational (Trompenaars, 1996). Workplaces in affective cultures often embrace humor and joking as normal behaviors (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). Furthermore, decision-making processes in these cultures may involve a higher degree of emotional influence (Brady et al., 2001). Based on these explanations, it can be inferred that individuals in neutral cultures are more likely to adopt defensive IM tactics in developmental or administrative PAs.

Due to the expectation that individuals in neutral cultures tend to suppress the outward expression of emotions and thoughts, they may exhibit controlled behavior, provide limited self-disclosure to avoid criticism, and approach communication with caution. Conversely, employees in affective cultures may openly express their emotions and thoughts without filtering them, and may even engage in critical judgments and questioning of the evaluator's and colleagues' competencies. Consequently, another proposition can be formulated based on this research:

Proposition 5: In affective cultures, employees tend to exhibit aggressive IM tactics, whereas in neutral cultures, employees tend to adopt defensive IM tactics in developmental or administrative PAs.

Specificity / Diffuseness: The dimension of specificity-diffuseness in culture relates to the cultural tendency of either including or excluding others in specific areas of our lives and defining the boundaries of our personality (Trompenaars, 1996). Cultures characterized by specificity tend to analyze and distinguish between right and wrong with clear-cut boundaries, emphasizing the outcome and breaking down the whole into distinct parts. On the other hand, cultures characterized by diffuseness prioritize the quality and security of the whole, focusing more on the process rather than the outcome (Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars, 2000). In specific cultures, managers establish relationships with their employees based solely on work-related interactions, maintaining sharp divisions between personal and professional spheres (Trompenaars, 1996; Low & Chapman, 2003). These cultures operate within a single role and personality framework (Brady et al., 2001). Relationships in specificity-oriented cultures are more direct and goal-oriented, and principles and norms exhibit little variation on an individual level (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998).

In diffuse cultures, relationships are permeable, ambiguous, and based on values that vary depending on the situation and the individual (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). Individuals operate in multiple roles and personality dimensions within a single social context, leading to blurred boundaries between work and personal life relationships (Brady et al., 2001; Low & Chapman, 2003). For example, in organizations operating within specific cultures, when a mistake occurs, the individual responsible for the error is held accountable. In contrast, in diffuse cultures, the mistake is seen as the collective responsibility of the entire team, and the lack of support from the team is considered the primary cause of the error (Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars, 2000). Diffuse

cultures adopt a holistic perspective towards their surroundings. For instance, in these cultures, the statement "I didn't like the report you wrote" may be interpreted as "I don't like you." Conversely, in specific cultures, there is an understanding that "not liking the report you wrote" is unrelated to whether or not the person is liked (Triandis, 2000: 148). Therefore, in diffuse cultures, the data obtained from PAs can significantly impact the social relationship established between employees and evaluators. Employees may perceive the negative outcomes of the evaluation as a judgment on their personality and self-integrity, potentially damaging the emotional bond they have with their superiors. The compromised emotional bond can be perceived as a threat to their interests in work relationships within the organization. Consequently, it is likely that employees will frequently resort to IM tactics to positively influence evaluators' perceptions of their performance. On the other hand, in specific cultures, where personal and work relationships are kept separate, the likelihood of PA information damaging social bonds is perceived to be low. Therefore, employees may not feel the need to intervene in evaluators' decisions. Based on these explanations, the sixth proposition of the study is formulated.

Proposition 6: Employees in diffused cultures are more likely to engage in IM tactics in PA practices compared to those in specific cultures.

Achievement orientation / Ascription orientation: Achievement-oriented cultures believe that individuals who receive recognition for their actions and are successful should ascend to the higher levels of the hierarchy (Trompenaars, 1996; Roney, 1997). In these cultures, an individual's status is directly proportional to their success (Thorne & Saunders, 2002). Respect is attributed to individuals based on their education, professional qualifications, and technical knowledge (Low & Chapman, 2003). For instance, a young and promising female employee can be elevated to significant positions in the organizational hierarchy and gain sufficient respect and status due to her outstanding performance (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998).

In ascription-oriented cultures, hierarchies are established with the aim of acquiring power and exerting dominance (Trompenaars, 1996). In these cultures, status is either ascribed at birth or determined by an individual's social position (Thorne & Saunders, 2002). Factors such as age, work experience, gender, familial reputation, and social connections serve as justifications for an individual's status and power (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998; Roney, 1997; Low &

Chapman, 2003). In other words, status is closely tied to gaining the respect and admiration of others. For instance, within organizations, a worker's hierarchical status can be determined by having loyal subordinates or past demonstrations of competence (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). The prevalent inclination in ascription-oriented cultures towards power and status, and the framing of achievement in terms of advantages gained outside of performance, may lead employees in these cultures to exhibit assertive tactics, particularly in administrative PA practices. Through IM tactics, individuals may aim to influence evaluators by creating the perception that they have relationships with influential figures who hold high status within the organization, and they may seek to exert control over promotion or salary decisions. Furthermore, in ascription-oriented cultures, employees may engage in assertive tactics during administrative PAs, such as presenting themselves as possessing abundant social capital and collaborating with high-status groups. On the other hand, in achievement-oriented cultures, employees may not feel the need to employ the aforementioned IM strategies for administrative PAs, as they assume their performance will be evaluated based on their behavior and work outcomes within predetermined standards. Therefore,

Proposition 7: In comparison to achievement-oriented cultures, employees in ascription-oriented cultures are likely to exhibit a higher tendency to display aggressive and assertive IM tactics in administrative PAs.

Inner direction / outer Direction: In outer-directed cultures, individuals consider what others will think of them and perform their actions accordingly (Trompenaars, 1996). The behavioral motivation and core values of individuals in these cultures are externally determined, placing a higher priority on adapting to the environment (Thorne & Saunders, 2002). Virtue and truth are believed to be inherent in external elements such as the power of nature, aesthetic values, and relationships (Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars, 2000). In contrast, inner-directed cultures assume that individuals have control over nature, allowing them to internally regulate their actions (Trompenaars, 1996). Individuals are believed to be able to exercise their will to manage or modify environmental factors (Thorne & Saunders, 2002). Virtue and truth are recognized to reside within the individual's inner self, principles, and actions (Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars, 2000).

Based on these explanations, in outer-directed cultures, employees' evaluation of their own performance outcomes, identification of their

knowledge and skill gaps, and comparison with other colleagues within the organization are the basis for their satisfaction. Therefore, in their reactions to administrative or developmental PAs, employees in these cultures are likely to attribute their performance based on external factors and attempt to justify their performance by comparing it to the outcomes of others' actions. In inner-directed cultures, on the other hand, employees may guide their behavior based on their internal motivations, which may lead them to assume a more responsible attitude in their responses to both administrative and developmental PAs. They can determine what they deserve and the areas they need to improve without feeling the need to compare themselves with others or attribute responsibility to external factors. Based on these explanations, the following proposition can be put forward:

Proposition 8: Within cultures oriented towards inner direction, it is likely that employees will demonstrate a tendency to employ defensive IM tactics by accepting responsibility in both administrative and developmental PA processes. Conversely, in cultures characterized by an outer-directed orientation, employees are likely to resort to defensive tactics, such as legitimizing and making excuses, as part of their IM strategies.

Sequential cultures / Synchronous cultures: In cultures characterized by sequential orientation, every action is perceived as a series of events that occur in a linear and orderly fashion, with each event having a specific time and place. It is crucial to execute each step in the appropriate sequence and at the right time to achieve the desired outcome. Even in the face of unexpected events, there is a strong inclination to adhere to the predetermined plans and avoid deviating from them (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). Individuals in these cultures prioritize completing tasks promptly and avoid postponing them to the future, recognizing the irrevocable nature of time (Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars, 2000). They place great importance on being punctual for appointments and tend to operate within the framework of their well-organized plans (Low & Chapman, 2003).

In synchronous cultures, there is an intertwined relationship between the past, present, and future, where the memories of the past and the plans for the future shape the actions of the present (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). Consequently, individuals in these cultures exhibit a tendency to engage in multiple tasks simultaneously, as the concept of time allows for non-linear approaches and deviations from predefined plans and schedules are considered acceptable (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner,

1998). The cyclical nature of events and opportunities, such as the cycle of life and death or growth and decay, is acknowledged, emphasizing the interconnectedness of these phenomena (Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars, 2000). People in synchronous cultures are inclined to multitask, and there is a flexible attitude towards appointment times, with last-minute changes being regarded as normal (Low & Chapman, 2003).

In light of the above discussion, it becomes evident that cultural orientations towards sequential and synchronous perspectives significantly impact employees' behavior during PAs. In sequential cultures, where events are perceived as independent and follow a linear order, individuals anticipate that their achievements or failures will be assessed separately, without considering the present context. As a result, employees in these cultures are less likely to employ IM tactics, as they expect their performance to be evaluated based on objective criteria and individual merit. On the other hand, in synchronous cultures, where time is perceived as interconnected and events are seen as part of an ongoing cycle, individuals believe that past experiences and future expectations shape the present moment. In such cultures, employees may strategically engage in IM tactics during PAs to influence evaluators' perceptions of both their past contributions and future potential. By managing impressions effectively, employees aim to align evaluators' judgments with their own understanding of the cyclical nature of time and the holistic nature of their performance. Hence, employees in synchronous cultures are more likely to emphasize the interdependence of time and showcase their ability to adapt to changing circumstances. By strategically employing IM tactics, they seek to convey their readiness to seize future opportunities and their commitment to ongoing personal and professional growth. Considering these factors, we propose the following:

Proposition 9: Compared to sequential cultures, employees in synchronous cultures are more inclined to utilize IM tactics in both administrative and developmental PAs.

5. CONCLUSION

In a nutshell, this study has provided theoretical insights into the PA system, the purposes of PA use in the organization, impression management tactics utilized by employees, and the impact of national culture on impression management strategies in the context of performance appraisal. The purposes of PA use have already been shown to significantly

impact employees' perceptions and attitudes within the organization (Boswell & Boudreau, 2000). Consequently, the process of PA serves as a social context where employees seek to influence evaluators through IM strategies.

Furthermore, in this study cultural values have been highlighted as important determinants of IM behaviors in the context of PA (Kim & Lee, 2012; Meydan et al., 2014; Rebecca, 2012). The arguments presented in the current study suggest that employees in specific, diffuse, and synchronous cultures are more inclined to employ IM strategies in PA practices. In individualistic cultures, employees may resort to defensive IM tactics in developmental PAs, while in communitarian cultures, assertive IM strategies may be more prevalent. In ascription-oriented cultures, employees are likely to exhibit aggressive and assertive IM tactics in administrative PAs, whereas in inner-directed cultures, employees may demonstrate a behavior of accepting responsibility in both administrative and developmental evaluations. In outer-directed cultures, defensive tactics such as legitimization and excuses may be commonly observed. These arguments are in line with the recent studies showing the effects of culture (organizational or national) on various organizational variables (e.g. Gunkel, Schlaegel, Rossteutscher & Wolff, 2015; Güner Kibaroglu & Basim, 2023; Kortsch, Bashenkhaeva & Kauffeld, 2023)

The arguments of this study have important implications for organizations seeking to improve their PA practices within diverse cultural contexts. By recognizing the influence of cultural values on IM tactics employed by employees, organizations can adopt strategies to foster a fair and objective assessment process. Firstly, organizations should invest in cross-cultural training programs to increase cultural awareness and sensitivity among managers and performance evaluators. This training can help them understand the cultural norms and expectations of employees from different cultural backgrounds, enabling them to interpret and evaluate performance in a culturally appropriate manner. Secondly, organizations should promote open communication and transparency in the PA process. By providing clear guidelines, criteria, and performance expectations, employees are less likely to resort to defensive IM tactics. Managers should encourage a supportive and constructive feedback culture that allows employees to express their concerns and aspirations, fostering a more collaborative and developmental approach to PA. Thirdly, organizations should consider tailoring their PA systems to align with cultural values. This could involve adapting evaluation criteria, methods,

and frequency to suit the cultural preferences for sequential or synchronous orientations. By taking cultural nuances into account, organizations can ensure that PA processes are perceived as fair, meaningful, and relevant by employees from different cultural backgrounds. Lastly, organizations should continually monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of their PA systems, considering the feedback and suggestions from employees. This ongoing assessment can help identify areas for improvement and enable organizations to refine their evaluation processes to better suit the cultural diversity of their workforce. By implementing these managerial implications, organizations can foster a culture of fairness, inclusivity, and continuous improvement in their PA practices, ultimately enhancing employees' engagement, job satisfaction, and overall organizational performance.

It is important to acknowledge that this study has several limitations that warrant consideration. Firstly, the proposed model and propositions are theoretical in nature and have not been empirically tested. Therefore, future research should aim to conduct empirical studies in various cultural and industrial contexts to validate and further explore the relationships between PA, IM and cultural values. By gathering empirical evidence, researchers can enhance the robustness and generalizability of the findings. Secondly, this study primarily focused on the influence of cultural values on IM tactics and their implications for PA processes. However, it is crucial to recognize that other contextual variables may also play a significant role in shaping the dynamics between PA and IM. Organizational culture, for example, sets the norms, values, and beliefs that shape employees' behavior and their strategies for IM. The climate of the organization, including the level of trust, communication patterns, and power dynamics, can also impact employees' use of IM tactics during PA. Moreover, the degree of bureaucratization and professionalization within an organization can affect the formalization and structure of PA systems, as well as employees' perception of fairness and transparency. Therefore, future studies should incorporate these contextual factors to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the complex relationship between cultural values, IM, and PA within organizational settings.

Furthermore, individual factors, including personality traits, age, gender, and years of service, were not extensively addressed in this study. Considering the potential influence of these factors on the identified relationships, future research should investigate their roles and explore how they interact with cultural values and IM strategies

within the PA context. Moreover, it is worth exploring the potential mediating mechanisms that link cultural values, IM, and performance outcomes. By examining these underlying processes, researchers can uncover the mechanisms through which cultural values influence IM tactics and subsequently impact PA outcomes. Lastly, this study focused on the specific topic of PA within the realm of IM and cultural values. Future research could expand the scope to explore other facets of performance management, such as feedback processes, reward systems, and talent development, and examine their relationships with cultural values and IM. Addressing these limitations and pursuing the suggested avenues for future research will contribute to a deeper understanding of the complexities involved in PA practices across diverse cultural contexts. It will also provide practical insights for organizations aiming to develop culturally sensitive and effective performance management systems.

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Ethical Approval: As this study is based on theoretical discussions, the use of ethical approval was not applicable.

Informed Consent: As this study is based on theoretical discussions, the use of an informed consent form was not applicable.

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