

# Impression Management Strategy of Sabrina Carpenter in the Release of the Album “Short N’ Sweet” on Instagram (@sabinacarpenter)

**A.A. Felicia Florenza Bonita, Inri Inggrit Indrayani and Fanny Lesmana**

Communication Science Department, Petra Christian University

## ABSTRACT

This study examined and assessed Sabrina Carpenter's impression management strategies during the "Short N' Sweet" album release through her Instagram account (@sabinacarpenter). Using a quantitative content analysis methodology, the study has been based on 88 posts that Sabrina uploaded between April 2024 and February 2025. The study focuses on how Carpenter develops and sustains her public persona during this advertising time using Instagram. The results show that Sabrina Carpenter employed exemplification, self-promotion, and ingratiation as her three impression management techniques. The most common ones were ingratiation and self-promotion, which portrayed her as a talented and appealing artist in her line of work. She demonstrated her ability and diligence as a role model in the entertainment sector through militancy, in particular. Her use of these techniques, which were demonstrated in her Instagram posts, promoted a friendly, approachable image to interact with fans and improve the reception of her album "Short N' Sweet."

**Keywords:** *Impression Management; Strategy; Short N' Sweet Album; Sabrina Carpenter; Instagram.*

## INTRODUCTION

The swift evolution of technology in the last decades has transformed communication. Social media, in particular, is one of the most important sites for identity formation and self-presentation today. Of all the possible platforms, Instagram is a ubiquitous image-based platform where users can represent themselves through carefully curated images, captions, and interactions. This development ensures greater understanding of how to control online reputations by public figures as well as how to use online media for shaping public opinion in communication science.

Self-presentation and impression management are longstanding concepts within communication and social psychology, with seminal contributions from Erving Goffman. In

his dramaturgical theory, Goffman argues that individuals perform their identities in everyday life, managing impressions in order to comply with social expectations and strategic goals. Impression management, as an extension of self-presentation, involves a conscious process of constructing the way one is seen by others. In the age of digital media, this process is further complicated, as they are publicly scrutinized at all times. Sabrina Carpenter, American singer, actress, and songwriter, is a suitable case study to analyze digital impression management. Having gained popularity after her role in Disney Channel's *Girl Meets World*, Carpenter is today an internationally acclaimed pop singer. Her sixth studio album, *Short n' Sweet*, released in August 2024, gave a complete makeover to her artist persona, from Disney teen icon to sassy, erudite pop diva. After this brand makeover followed a well-planned social campaign, more specifically on her Instagram profile (@sabinacarpenter), the primary point of focus for promotional content.

Instagram allows artists such as Carpenter to tell visual stories, uploading a photograph that is real, deliberate, and appealing to targeted audiences. Through mid-2025, Carpenter had garnered over 43.9 million followers, and uses the social media platform not only to sell albums, but to build and confirm her own identity. Sabrina keeps them ranging from professional milestones, such as Grammy nomination announcements and sold-out concert shows, to more personal and heartwarming ones that create a sense of closeness to followers. By this combination, Carpenter depicts a clear deployment of interest management strategies, more precisely those that Jones and Pittman (1982) identified: ingratiation, self-promotion, exemplification, intimidation, and supplication. This study seeks to examine the impression management strategies employed by Sabrina Carpenter during the promotional period of *Short n' Sweet*, April 8, 2024, to February 27, 2025. By applying the framework developed by Jones and Pittman, the research categorizes each Instagram post based on the communicative intent and visual-verbal cues present in the content. Particular attention is given to how Carpenter constructs her image through both professional achievements and interpersonal engagement.

The relevance of this study lies in its contribution to understanding content and engagement in the digital communication era. While numerous studies have examined corporate branding or organizational public relations, fewer have focused on how individual celebrities manage their personal brands across social media platforms. In Carpenter's case, Instagram becomes a performative space, her front stage, where identity is crafted, presented, and negotiated in real-time with a global audience. The careful selection of images, filters, captions, and timing reveals not only artistic intent but also strategic reputation management.

The research employs a quantitative content analysis methodology, analyzing 88 posts categorized as promotional for the *Short n' Sweet* album. These posts are scrutinized for indicators of each impression management strategy, with a focus on frequency, context, and audience engagement metrics. The findings indicate a strong presence of self-promotion and ingratiation, with limited or no use of intimidation and supplication. Exemplification appears

occasionally, typically in posts related to social causes or expressions of gratitude. Ultimately, this study aims to deepen our understanding of how impression management operates in the context of social media celebrity branding. It also illustrates how online platforms allow artists like Sabrina Carpenter to craft their own story and stay in the good books of the people. By examining the crossroads of personal branding and impression management, the present study offers findings that can be beneficial for communication scholars, media practitioners, and digital strategists.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The literature review provides theoretical foundations and past research evidence relevant to the examination of impression management practices on Instagram. It covers core concepts such as self-presentation, impression management theory, the Jones and Pittman typology, the affordances of Instagram as a digital media platform, and the nature of public figures. Further, it outlines how these concepts meet on the terrain of digital branding, specifically during planned promotional periods such as the release of a music album. This section also presents a gap in previous literature that the current study bridges.

### ***Self-Presentation in Contemporary Communication***

Self-presentation is defined as the process by which individuals attempt to control the impressions others form of them. This includes verbal and non-verbal behavior designed to shape audience perception in social interaction. According to the Oxford Dictionary (2003), "self" refers to a person's identity or character, while "presentation" refers to the act of displaying or showcasing something. Therefore, self-presentation refers to how individuals intentionally display aspects of themselves in social contexts. Lewis and Neighbors (2005) emphasize that self-presentation is motivated by the desire to be perceived favorably and accepted socially. Individuals consciously engage in self-presentational behavior to enhance their reputation or meet the expectations of a specific audience. In public and digital spaces, these efforts become more strategic due to the broader visibility and permanence of the content.

Jones and Pittman (1982) position self-presentation as a subset of impression management. In their view, self-presentation involves behaviors directed at impression formation, with the purpose of aligning perception with personal or professional goals. These behaviors are often tailored to specific audiences and may shift depending on the individual's objectives, environment, or stage in life.

### ***Impression Management as a Theoretical Framework***

Impression management theory, rooted in the work of Erving Goffman (1959), focuses on how individuals curate their behavior to influence the impressions others form. Goffman compared social interaction to theatrical performance, distinguishing between the

"front stage," where individuals perform curated roles for public audiences, and the "backstage," where they prepare and express a more authentic or private version of themselves. In public settings, particularly on social media platforms like Instagram, the front stage is dominant. Posts are consciously selected and designed to portray a desired version of the self. Goffman explains that people employ a variety of expressions and gestures to maintain social coherence and meet audience expectations. In the digital context, this performative behavior is mediated through imagery, captions, and engagement features such as likes and comments. Impression management is not limited to individual self-esteem but serves professional and relational functions. For public figures, managing certain impressions is a core part of brand communication. Their success often relies on maintaining a favorable public image. Impression management provides a theoretical point of view to understand how public personas are cultivated, reinforced, and adapted across time and media platforms.

### ***Jones and Pittman's Five Strategies of Impression Management***

Building on Goffman's foundational theory, Jones and Pittman (1982) formulated five distinct impression management strategies: ingratiation, self-promotion, exemplification, intimidation, and supplication. These strategies were further operationalized into behavioral indicators suitable for qualitative or quantitative analysis in communication studies.

- **Ingratiation:** Behaviors that aim to increase likability, such as complimenting others, engaging in humor, or expressing gratitude. These behaviors appeal to audience affinity and emotional connection.
- **Self-Promotion:** Actions that portray the speaker as competent, talented, or successful. These include references to achievements, capabilities, and milestones, often used in professional or career-focused contexts.
- **Exemplification:** Efforts to appear morally worthy or socially responsible. This strategy involves highlighting values such as discipline, integrity, or commitment, sometimes through association with charitable causes or brand partnerships.
- **Supplication:** Presenting oneself as weak, in need, or vulnerable to elicit support or sympathy. Supplication is generally employed in contexts where emotional appeal is intended to soften or persuade audiences.
- **Intimidation:** Behaviors that communicate dominance, authority, or the capacity to influence or threaten. Though less commonly used in public celebrity contexts, it may be visible in assertive or confrontational messaging.

Each strategy can be further analyzed through indicators. For example, self-promotion may involve *performance claims* or *performance accounts*, while ingratiation includes *favor-doing* or *self-enhancement*. This operational framework enables systematic analysis of impression construction across various forms of communication. In this study, these strategies are applied to examine the content of Sabrina Carpenter's Instagram account during the promotional campaign for her album *Short n' Sweet*. The framework enables the

categorization of her posts based on the intent and content, offering insights into how she managed her public image throughout a career transition.

### *Instagram as a Platform for Identity Construction*

Instagram, launched in 2010 and later acquired by Meta Platforms Inc., is one of the most influential social media platforms for visual identity presentation. It is a curated space where users post images, videos, and captions, and where interactions are measured through likes, comments, shares, and follower metrics. It is particularly relevant to public figures due to its aesthetic emphasis and high engagement rate.

Instagram enables strategic self-presentation in several ways:

1. **Visual Curation:** Users can carefully select and edit visual content, portraying themselves in a controlled and stylized manner.
2. **Caption Crafting:** Captions provide context, narrative, or emotional framing to support visual content.
3. **Audience Engagement:** Metrics such as likes and comments offer feedback on public reception, encouraging content alignment with follower preferences.
4. **Narrative Continuity:** The platform allows users to maintain coherent storylines through highlights, reels, and story features, creating multi-modal identity construction.

For public figures, Instagram serves as a performative space equivalent to Goffman's front stage. Posts are seldom spontaneous; instead, they are planned with attention to audience reception and strategic messaging. In Sabrina Carpenter's case, her Instagram feed reflects a balance between professional promotion, personal expression, and brand alignment. Through consistent visual themes, selective captioning, and strategic post timing, Carpenter demonstrates calculated impression management.

### *Characteristics of Public Figures*

Public figures are individuals recognized by a large audience due to their profession, achievements, or public persona. Widyatmoko (2011) describes public figures as individuals known broadly for their professional or public roles. According to Riyono Praktiko (in Khair, 2021), the appeal of a public figure consists of three factors:

- **Credibility:** Trustworthiness and consistency in messaging and behavior.
- **Power:** The ability to influence public opinion or command attention.
- **Attractiveness:** A combination of physical appearance and personal charm that enhances audience appeal.

These elements contribute to a public figure's ability to manage impressions successfully. In entertainment, public figures often navigate brand construction alongside performance. Their digital existence is made an extension of professional labor, with each posting affirming or refiguring viewer perception. Sabrina Carpenter's digital transformation

from Disney Channel ingenue to Grammy-winning pop artist entailed strategic impression management. Through digital branding, she transformed her adult artist image, capable of engaging a wider audience. Instagram was an important apparatus in this transformation, offering the space through which she was capable of blending visual aesthetics and personal narrative with professional accomplishment.

### ***Prior Studies on Impression Management***

Previous studies have examined impression management across different contexts. Jastika (2021) compared celebrity self-presentation on Instagram and found ingratiation and self-promotion to be the most common strategies. These traits were strongly correlated with audience interaction and follower gain. Sudiby (2021) analyzed how the influencer Sarah Deniz used impression management to craft a digital persona. The study indicated that consistent posting behavior and content alignment significantly affected audience perception, supporting the importance of frequency and visual coherence. Kuswanto (2022) explored how Ganjar Pranowo, a political figure, used Instagram to build public trust. The research highlighted the role of storytelling and authenticity in political branding. Amanda (2014) focused on singer Agnes Monica and identified impression management as a tool to support her internationalization strategy. These studies collectively show that impression management is a strategic communication process applicable across multiple domains. However, many focus on domestic figures, political figures, or general influencers. Few explore global music artists during album promotions—a highly structured and time-bound context where impression management may intensify.

Although previous research validates the relevance of impression management on social media, there is limited focus on its strategic deployment by music artists during brand transitions. This study addresses a specific research gap by applying Jones and Pittman's typology to a well-defined promotional period in the career of Sabrina Carpenter. Unlike influencers or politicians who post content across diverse themes, Carpenter's Instagram activity during the *Short n' Sweet* campaign is narrowly focused on artistic rebranding. The structure and timing of her posts reflect not only aesthetic intent but also communicative strategy aligned with career repositioning. By analyzing 132 posts—88 of which were directly promotional—the study offers a focused view of how impression management is operationalized in professional artistry.

This study also differs methodologically by applying quantitative content analysis with defined coding categories and reliability checks. While previous studies have used qualitative approaches, this research offers empirical clarity on the frequency and distribution of impression strategies. It demonstrates how self-promotion and ingratiation dominate celebrity branding during a specific phase of artistic development. Furthermore, it considers Instagram as a performative front stage and evaluates how public feedback mechanisms (likes, comments, shares) interact with post content. This multidimensional analysis allows

for a more robust understanding of impression management as both a communicative and strategic process.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study employs a quantitative descriptive research approach to analyze the impression management strategies utilized by Sabrina Carpenter on her official Instagram account (@sabinacarpenter) during the promotional period of her sixth studio album, *Short n' Sweet*. The research is grounded in the theoretical framework proposed by Jones and Pittman (1982), which categorizes impression management into five distinct strategies: ingratiation, self-promotion, exemplification, intimidation, and supplication. The primary objective of the research is to identify which strategies are employed in Carpenter's Instagram content between 8 April 2024 and 27 February 2025, and to understand how these strategies contribute to constructing her public image during the album's promotional cycle.

### ***Research Design and Approach***

This research applies a content analysis methodology, which enables systematic and objective examination of message content within communication studies. Content analysis was selected due to its effectiveness in analyzing visual and textual data from social media platforms. The focus on Instagram as the object of study aligns with the platform's visual-centric nature and relevance in personal branding, especially for public figures. A quantitative method was adopted to analyze 88 Instagram posts related specifically to the album *Short n' Sweet* and its singles. These posts include images, videos, and captions. Each post was analyzed and categorized based on the indicators of impression management strategies provided by Jones and Pittman (1982). The research excludes Instagram Stories and focuses solely on feed posts that contain visual and textual elements. The quantitative approach allows for the identification of dominant strategies based on the frequency of their occurrence.

### ***Unit of Analysis***

The units of analysis in this study are the visual (photo/video) and textual (caption) components of Instagram feed posts made by Sabrina Carpenter during the specified period. Each post was treated as a single unit and examined holistically. Posts were analyzed based on their alignment with the predefined indicators for each impression management strategy. These indicators include specific behaviors, such as praising oneself (self-enhancement), showcasing achievements (performance claims), and promoting relatability (favor doing), among others.

### ***Population and Sample***

The population of this research consists of all Instagram feed posts made by Sabrina Carpenter between 8 April 2024 and 27 February 2025. During this timeframe, Carpenter published a total of 132 posts, of which 88 were identified as related to the promotion of the *Short n' Sweet* album and its corresponding singles, including "Espresso," "Please Please Please," and "Feather." Posts were selected using purposive sampling. This non-probability sampling method was applied to ensure that only posts meeting specific criteria were included in the sample. The inclusion criteria were: (1) posts must directly reference the *Short n' Sweet* album or its singles in either the caption or media content; (2) posts must include visual content (photo or video) and written captions; and (3) posts must be part of the promotional strategy for the album. Posts unrelated to the album promotion, such as brand endorsements without musical context or purely personal content, were excluded.

### ***Data Collection Technique***

Data was collected through documentation, specifically by retrieving and compiling visual and textual data from Sabrina Carpenter's Instagram feed. Each selected post was recorded along with its corresponding caption and engagement metrics (e.g., likes, comments) to provide context during analysis. The documentation process was guided by a coding sheet developed to categorize each post according to the relevant impression management strategy. The coding sheet was used to operationalize indicators for each of the five strategies according to Jones and Pittman's model. The ingratiation category, for example, had indicators such as self-enhancement and favor doing, and the self-promotion category had performance claims and performance accounts. Each post was examined to ascertain the presence of these indicators, and results were documented on the coding sheet.

### ***Operational Definition of Key Concepts***

The key concept in this study is impression management. It is operationalized by the five types of strategies such as:

1. Ingratiation: Actions that render one more attractive, such as favor doing (e.g., being friendly or nice) and self-enhancement (e.g., confidence or being charming).
2. Self-Promotion: Activities of emphasizing competence and achievement, e.g., claims of performance (e.g., asserting success or ability) and accounts of performance (e.g., associating oneself with significant events or awards).
3. Exemplification: To appear morally dedicated or socially responsible, e.g., self-denial, charity, and assertions promoting good action.
4. Intimidation: Efforts to make someone afraid or powerful through threats or announcements of anger.
5. Supplication: Behaviors of pleading for sympathy or support, e.g., subtle behaviors of exhaustion, disillusionment, or outright pleas for help.

### ***Reliability Testing***

To ensure the reliability of the coding process, the study incorporated inter-coder reliability testing. A second coder, Neysa Muardi, a communication studies graduate with experience in image analysis, was selected to evaluate a subset of the data. The reliability test followed Holsti's formula for intercoder agreement, using the threshold of 0.7 (70%) as the minimum acceptable level of reliability.

Holsti's formula:  $CR = 2M/(N1+N2)$

Where:

- CR: Coefficient of Reliability
- M: Number of coding agreements between coders
- N1 and N2: Number of coding decisions made by each coder

The reliability score obtained was over 0.7, which indicates that the instrument was valid and reliable for content analysis.

### ***Data Analysis Procedure***

After data collection and coding, the posts were tallied to determine the frequency of each impression management strategy. Descriptive statistical analysis was later applied in the interpretation of the frequency and distribution of the strategies. Charts and graphs were used to depict the prevalence of each class of strategies. This quantitative analysis enabled one to spot the most and least employed strategies during the album's promotion. The results were then compared to the theoretical framework to ascertain the degree to which Carpenter's Instagram activity was accountable for her public image building. Examples were listed and placed in context according to visual factors, terms utilized in captions, and consistency of goals by brand observed throughout the promotional campaign. In short, the research approach enables a systematic analysis of the way in which a popular public figure constructs and sustains her online identity on Instagram. The systematic method of data collection, categorization, and analysis ensures the results to be replicable, reliable, and grounded in established theory of communication.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This study analyzed the impression management tactics employed by Sabrina Carpenter on her Instagram account @sabinacarpenter from the publicity period of her album *Short n' Sweet*, which started on April 8, 2024, and concluded on February 27, 2025. There were 132 posts collected that were categorized under Jones and Pittman's (1982) theory on impression management, which consists of five basic strategies: ingratiation, self-promotion, exemplification, intimidation, and supplication. Out of 132 posts, 88 were directly dedicated to the promotion of the album or song. The remaining 44 posts consisted of fashion collaborations, personal moments, and random moments. Each post was assessed for

relevant verbal and visual elements, including captions, images, and audience engagement metrics (likes, comments, shares), and coded accordingly.

The quantitative analysis showed that self-promotion and ingratiation were the most dominant strategies used by Carpenter, while exemplification appeared occasionally, and intimidation and supplication were entirely absent.

### ***Self-Promotion as a Dominant Strategy***

Self-promotion appeared in the highest proportion among the five impression management strategies. This strategy includes both *performance claims* and *performance accounts*, which are used to highlight professional achievements and competencies. Carpenter's posts frequently showcased milestones such as chart positions, music video releases, Grammy nominations, and tour announcements.

One example is a post dated 25 June 2024, where Carpenter shared her achievement of reaching number one on the *Billboard Hot 100* with her song "Please, Please, Please." The post also referenced the song "Espresso," which ranked at number four. The visual consisted of celebratory imagery, while the caption included expressions of gratitude and pride. This post received 2.2 million likes, 9,130 comments, and 25.7 thousand shares, indicating strong audience engagement.

Another self-promotional post occurred on 18 June 2024, which promoted a limited edition vinyl album featuring Carpenter's signature. The item was gone in a few hours, and the update got 1.2 million likes and 3.8 thousand comments, showing her fans that she releases special items on several rare occasions. These situations highlight how Carpenter uses Instagram on purpose to tell her fans about her wins and trustworthiness. Promoting herself helps people see her as a good and successful artist, which fits with her plan to change her image from a young Disney actress to a grown-up pop singer.

### ***Ingratiation to Foster Relational Closeness***

The second most prevalent tactic employed was ingratiation, wherein the behaviors are applied to obtain affection and likability. This was illustrated in Carpenter's captions that were abundant with appreciation, wit, and emotional receptiveness and also in photos that had her posing as if she was friendly and relatable.

Sabrina Carpenter often shared simple pictures with her followers, pictures taken while making music videos, and simple selfies. She usually added friendly or funny lines to these posts, like saying thanks for the support or making light of things that happened to her.

For example, a post from 20 June 2024 announcing her North American tour dates was captioned with playful language that generated excitement and reinforced her accessibility. This content contributed to parasocial relationships with fans, encouraging perceptions of intimacy despite the mediated nature of interaction. Such use of ingratiation

not only humanizes the artist but also reinforces fan loyalty, which is essential for the sustainability of an artist's personal brand in a competitive media environment.

### ***Exemplification Through Brand Association and Social Image***

Less explicitly used, but certainly there were Sabrina's brand endorsement partnerships with fashion and beauty brands such as Skims and Marc Jacobs. Through these pieces of content, a view of Carpenter as fashionable and aspirational was cultivated as a means of mirroring the prevailing cultural moment. This strategy was particularly effective at portraying Carpenter as a cultural and moral icon, someone who not only had talent but also style and a sense of style and was attuned to the standards of high culture. The posts would depict Carpenter set against stylized backdrops, with brand stickers and carefully worded captions written about dedication and sophistication. While these entries did not actively promote the *Short n' Sweet* album, they played a secondary role in upholding the overall impression management system by engaging in repetitive personal brand reinforcement.

### ***Absence of Intimidation and Supplication***

No posts were labeled as intimidation or supplication. This is consistent with a pop star's image needs of upholding her image in the context of mainstream social media promotion. Intimidation strategies that attempt to evoke fear or intimidation are not conducive to the image Carpenter wishes to present—namely, friendly, talented, and accessible. Similarly, supplication, which attempts sympathy by creating an image of weakness, does not fit with the empowered and assertive image she maintains. This lack lends credibility to the theory that public figures selectively utilize impression management tactics that match what they want their personal brand to be, omitting those that could interfere with or counteract the image they have built.

### ***Discussion in Context of Communication Studies***

From the communication sciences perspective, the study falls within Erving Goffman's dramaturgical framework, in which social media is employed as a front stage in presenting oneself. Carpenter's deliberate use of Instagram strengthens the belief that online media sites are extensions of identity construction, whereby public figures can shape narrative and perception. The study also contributes to previous research that focuses on how public figures utilize media to craft branding tales in real time. It indicates impression management is a dynamic phenomenon that varies with career milestones, public sentiment, and the affordances of social media. In contrast to previous studies that look at corporate or political image creation, this study offers data concerning celebrity branding via people's use of social media, thus extending the applicability of impression management theory to entertainment communication studies.

**Table 1.1 Impression Management Strategies of Sabrina Carpenter**

Indicator	Total Percentage
Ingratiation	12.5 %
Intimidation	0%
Self Promotion	85,2 %
Exemplification	2,2 %
Supplication	0%
<b>Total</b>	100%

Source : Researcher’s Analysis, 2025



Figure 1 Sabrina Teases New Album Cover of “Short N’ Sweet ” 2 Months Ahead of Release Date

Source : @sabinacarpenter

**CONCLUSION**

The objective of the study was to explore the impression management strategies employed by Sabrina Carpenter through her official Instagram account, @sabinacarpenter, during the promotional period of her sixth studio album *Short n’ Sweet*. Utilizing the theoretical framework developed by Jones and Pittman (1982), the research categorized her social media posts according to five primary strategies of impression management: ingratiation, self-promotion, exemplification, intimidation, and supplication. The study employed a quantitative content analysis approach, focusing on posts published between 8 April 2024 and 27 February 2025, a period marked by the release and promotion of Carpenter’s album and related activities.

A total of 132 posts were collected and analyzed. Out of this dataset, 88 posts were specifically identified as promotional content directly associated with the album *Short n’ Sweet*, either through references to the album itself, specific singles, promotional campaigns,

tour announcements, or artist milestones. The remaining 44 posts were classified as unrelated to the album promotion, including fashion endorsements, brand collaborations, and personal content.

### ***Summary of Findings***

The analysis of the 88 promotional posts revealed a consistent and strategic application of impression management, with dominant reliance on self-promotion and ingratiation. Carpenter's use of Instagram throughout the specified timeframe demonstrated calculated control over her public persona, in alignment with her transition from a teenage television actress associated with the Disney Channel to a mature pop artist with global reach. Through the curation of visual and textual content, she shaped perceptions of her as competent, professional, relatable, and emotionally expressive.

### ***Self-Promotion Strategy***

The most frequently used impression management strategy was self-promotion. This strategy was evident in Carpenter's posts that emphasized her musical accomplishments, professional growth, and recognition from industry institutions. Examples included announcements of chart rankings (such as reaching number one on the Billboard Hot 100), Grammy nominations and wins, behind-the-scenes documentation of music video shoots, and promotional content for merchandise and album formats such as signed vinyl records.

Such announcements are always aligned with the self-promotion markers identified in Jones and Pittman's model, i.e., performance claims and performance accounts. With these tactics, Carpenter communicated her expertise, secured her status as a professional artist, and secured her positioning in the pop music industry. These messages secured her positioning as an accomplishment-focused individual, with career milestones being the basis for her public persona. The visual presentation of such postings usually involved high-quality professional photography, decorative graphics, and visual alignment with the overall Short n' Sweet brand. The subtitles were professional but engaging, framing content highlighting achievement while also attributing achievement to collaboration and backing from followers, thus avoiding arrogance and heightened identification. It allowed Carpenter to balance competence with humility and thus maximize audience interaction with greater assertion of professional identity.

### ***Ingratiation Strategy***

Ingratiation emerged as the second most utilized strategy. Posts categorized under ingratiation included expressions of gratitude, interactions with fans, personal reflections, and humorous or emotionally resonant content. These posts frequently incorporated captions with emotive language, informal tone, or references to shared experiences with fans. The ingratiation strategy was operationalized through *favor doing* and *self-enhancement*. Favor

doing was reflected in content that acknowledged the role of fans in Carpenter's success, including thank-you messages, references to fan reactions, and celebrations of community milestones such as streaming numbers. Self-enhancement was identified in posts that highlighted Carpenter's confidence, aesthetic presentation, or charisma in a manner that aimed to increase audience admiration without appearing excessively self-centered. The effectiveness of this strategy was amplified by Instagram's affordances as a visual platform. Through carefully selected imagery—often portraying candid moments, behind-the-scenes activities, or relaxed interactions—Carpenter crafted an image of accessibility and sincerity. This visual and narrative consistency fostered a parasocial dynamic, wherein followers perceived closeness and emotional intimacy despite the mediated nature of the interaction.

### ***Exemplification Strategy***

While used less frequently, exemplification was present in a subset of posts, particularly those involving partnerships with fashion and beauty brands. Carpenter collaborated with Skims and Marc Jacobs during the promotional period, and her posts related to these collaborations conveyed attributes of discipline, elegance, and moral credibility. Although these posts did not always refer explicitly to *Short n' Sweet*, they contributed to the overall construction of Carpenter's brand and complemented the promotional messaging. Posts under this category often reflected *helping* and *militancy* sub-indicators, where Carpenter aligned herself with aspirational lifestyle imagery and culturally relevant aesthetics. While not overtly instructional, these posts functioned as soft endorsements of personal values or public positioning, adding depth to her brand identity.

### ***Absence of Intimidation and Supplication***

No data supported the use of intimidation or supplication strategies within the sample. This absence indicates a deliberate effort by Carpenter and her communication team to exclude expressions that could portray aggression, dominance, helplessness, or emotional dependency. From the standpoint of brand strategy, this exclusion maintains coherence with the desired image of Carpenter as confident yet empathetic, assertive yet approachable. This selective deployment of impression management strategies reflects an advanced understanding of audience expectations and the functional role of social media in personal branding. By avoiding controversial or polarizing expressions, Carpenter minimized reputational risk and maintained alignment with public and industry standards for artists in her category.

### ***Integration with Theoretical Framework***

The findings of this study reinforce the utility of Jones and Pittman impression management taxonomy in the analysis of celebrity communication on digital platforms. The five-strategy model proved to be a practical framework for categorizing content, especially

when coupled with detailed indicators and operational definitions adapted from prior research. Moreover, Goffman's dramaturgical model—although not quantitatively tested—offers additional interpretive value. Instagram functions as a "front stage" in which the artist performs a version of the self tailored to audience expectations. The visual nature of Instagram amplifies this performative aspect, allowing celebrities to engage in both literal and symbolic self-presentation. The combination of self-promotion and ingratiation can be interpreted as a dual effort to manage both perceived competence and likability, two central pillars of impression formation.

### ***Contributions to Communication Science***

This research contributes to the literature on digital communication and self-presentation in several ways. First, it demonstrates the continued relevance of classical impression management theory within the evolving context of social media. While the technological landscape has changed significantly since these theories were introduced, their core principles remain applicable when appropriately operationalized. Second, the study fills a research gap related to contemporary celebrity branding on Instagram, particularly within the context of album promotion. Although many studies have addressed corporate or political communication, fewer have examined impression management strategies of individual artists undergoing brand transformation. Carpenter's case offers a timely and data-rich example of how digital platforms are used strategically to support personal branding and narrative control. Third, the study offers empirical support for the assertion that audience-oriented content—especially when involving relatable language, emotive messaging, and aesthetic consistency—can serve as a vehicle for both relational engagement and promotional effectiveness.

### ***Limitations of the Study***

Despite the clarity of findings, this study is subject to several limitations. First, it focused exclusively on Instagram posts in the main feed, excluding other formats such as Instagram Stories, Reels, or cross-platform content on TikTok and X (formerly Twitter). As a result, the analysis may not fully capture the entirety of Carpenter's impression management strategy during the promotional period. Second, while the research applied inter-coder reliability measures, content interpretation remains inherently subjective to a degree. Even with structured coding sheets and consistent indicators, the classification of visual and textual elements is influenced by context, cultural assumptions, and individual coder perception. Third, the study was limited to a single public figure during a specific promotional period. While this focus allows for depth and specificity, it restricts the generalizability of the findings. Different figures, operating in distinct cultural or industrial contexts, may employ alternative strategies or respond to audience dynamics in dissimilar ways.

### *Suggestions for Further Research*

Future studies could adopt a comparative approach, analyzing multiple public figures across diverse industries or time periods to identify patterns and deviations in impression management strategies. Additionally, mixed-method approaches incorporating audience reception analysis, sentiment analysis, or interviews with communication strategists could enrich the findings and provide more holistic perspectives.

Technological tools such as computer-assisted content analysis, natural language processing, or automated image recognition could also be integrated to improve reliability and scalability. Exploring engagement metrics (likes, comments, shares) in relation to specific impression management strategies may yield further insights into effectiveness and audience response. Furthermore, longitudinal studies examining shifts in impression management strategies before, during, and after major career events could reveal adaptive communication behaviors and the long-term implications of strategic branding choices.

This study confirmed that Sabrina Carpenter employed deliberate and continuous impression management strategies via Instagram to drive the release and promotion of her album *Short n' Sweet*. Through ubiquitous use of self-promotion and ingratiation, supported occasionally by exemplification, Carpenter was able to convey a public persona of competency, professionalism, and likability. The absence of intimidation and supplication also further contributed to the consistency and deliberate aspect of her branding strategy.

The results support the accuracy of the ideas of Jones and Pittman in today's online speaking situations and show that they can be used more widely for studying celebrity culture, public relations, and social media. The research not only gives us more information about managing how people see you now, but it also sets the stage for a more thorough look at how identity, media, and audiences are changing in the world of online communication.

### **REFERENCES**

- Bowman, B. (2018). Dramaturgy, social performance, and digital front stages. *Journal of Communication Studies*, 12(3), 45–58.
- Broom, G. M., & Sha, B.-L. (2013). *Cutlip & Center's effective public relations* (11th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Cutlip, S. M., Center, A. H., & Broom, G. M. (2006). *Effective public relations* (9th ed.). Pearson.
- Davies, J. (2007). Self-presentation through online image sharing. *New Media & Society*, 9(4), 561–582. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444807076979>
- Goffman, E. (1959). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Anchor Books.
- Jastika, A. D. K. C. (2021). Analisis strategi impression management dalam membentuk personal branding selebgram melalui media sosial Instagram. *Jurnal Komunikasi dan Media*, 13(2), 112–124.

- Jones, E. E., & Pittman, T. S. (1982). Toward a general theory of strategic self-presentation. In J. Suls (Ed.), *Psychological perspectives on the self* (Vol. 1, pp. 231–262). Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Mutia, I. (2018). Analisis dramaturgi dalam citra digital selebriti. *Jurnal Kajian Komunikasi*, 6(1), 17–25.
- Oliver, S. (2008). *Strategic communication management: Making public relations work*. Kogan Page.
- Stewart, C. (1993). *Social image and media*. Wiley.
- Subidyo, M. C. (2021). Impression Management Sarah Deniz dalam akun Instagram @sarahdenizz. *Jurnal Komunikasi Visual*, 4(1), 77-85.
- Utami, L. (2019). Peran media sosial dalam pengelolaan citra diri. *Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi*, 7(2), 123–134.
- Venice Music Co. (2024). Artist development and visual branding: Sabrina Carpenter case study. Retrieved from <https://www.venicemusic.co>
- Vogue Business. (2024). Sabrina Carpenter’s rise as a Gen Z fashion icon. Retrieved from <https://www.voguebusiness.com>
- The Concept Agency. (2024). Social strategy and digital intimacy in music promotion. Retrieved from <https://www.theconceptagency.co>