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# A Study on the Importance of Image in Event Management Among Secretarial Science Students at Politeknik Port Dickson

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**Abstract.** In the professional domains of secretarial work and event management, professional image is a vital competency that extends beyond appearance to encompass credibility, competence, and confidence. It influences how individuals are perceived in academic and workplace settings, thereby shaping employability and long-term career success. Grounded in Impression Management Theory, this study investigates the importance of professional image among Diploma in Secretarial Science students at Politeknik Port Dickson, with a particular emphasis on its role in the DPK50183 (Event Organization) course. The study examines students' awareness and self-reported practice of professional image during event management duties, addressing the persistent gap between theoretical understanding and the confidence required for authentic professional performance. Using a quantitative research design, structured questionnaires were distributed to the total population of 88 final-year students, yielding 37 valid responses (response rate: 42%). Reliability analysis confirmed high internal consistency for the awareness ( $\alpha = 0.90$ ) and practice ( $\alpha = 0.87$ ) dimensions. Descriptive findings revealed that students demonstrated a very high level of awareness ( $M = 4.76$ ,  $SD = 0.43$ ), yet a slightly lower level of practice ( $M = 4.52$ ,  $SD = 0.57$ ), with the lowest score recorded for confidence when interacting with official guests ( $M = 4.30$ ). Inferential analysis using an independent samples t-test found no statistically significant difference in confidence between students with and without prior event experience ( $t(35) = 1.45$ ,  $p = 0.155$ ), suggesting that exposure alone is insufficient to enhance confidence without structured support. Thematic analysis of open-ended responses further highlighted students' expressed need for formal training, continuous feedback, and soft skills development in areas such as communication, leadership, and etiquette. Collectively, these findings underscore the critical importance of professional image as both a personal and institutional priority. However, the study is limited by its relatively small sample size and all-female respondents, which restricts the generalizability of results. The study concludes that structured curriculum interventions including workshops, simulated role-play exercises, and the integration of professional image components into DPK50183 course assessments combined with sustained co-curricular support such as mentoring and industry collaboration, are essential for equipping students with both competence and confidence to meet professional standards in the workplace.

**Keywords:** Professional Image, Event Management, Secretarial Science, Student Grooming, TVET Readiness

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the secretarial and administrative professions, the importance of personal image cannot be overstated [1]. Students enrolled in secretarial science programs are expected to portray professionalism, particularly when engaging in public-facing tasks such as event management. Politeknik Port Dickson offers the Event Management course (DPK50183) as part of the Diploma in Secretarial Science program [2]. This study focuses on how well students understand and practice professional image during their event management duties, and what improvements can be made to ensure they are industry ready. According to Goffman's Impression Management Theory [1], personal image is a key strategy in shaping perceptions and sustaining credibility in professional settings.

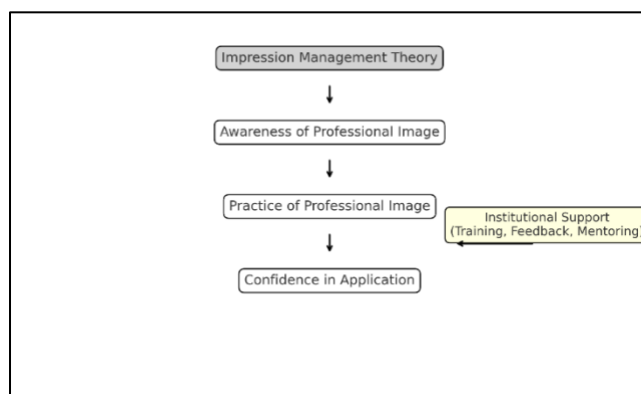
## 2. THE CONCEPT OF PROFESSIONAL IMAGE

One of the foundational concepts for understanding professional image comes from the field of sociology and social psychology, specifically the theory of impression management [2]. The concept of impression management was developed by sociologist Erving Goffman in his influential work, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959). In this work, Goffman describes social interactions using a dramaturgical (theatrical) metaphor, where individuals are "actors" who perform and present a particular "self" or image to an "audience" in a given social setting [3]. This theory posits that an individual's professional image is not just an innate quality but a strategic and continuous process of managing how others perceive their competence, character, and composure[3][4]

Professional image extends beyond mere physical appearance; it is a holistic construct that encompasses an individual's behaviors, communication, and overall demeanor [1][5], [6], which collectively influence how they are perceived by others in a professional setting. The foundational theory for this concept is Impression Management, introduced by sociologist Erving Goffman in his seminal work, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959). Goffman's dramaturgical perspective suggests that individuals are "actors" who consciously or unconsciously manage their "performance" to project a desired image to their "audience.". In a professional context, this "performance" is critical for building credibility, competence, and trust. Table 1 below showed the key component of a professional image from prior study.

**Table 1.** Key components of a professional image

1	Physical Appearance	This involves professional attire, grooming, and neatness, which are often the first cues used to form an initial judgment. A well-kept appearance signals respect for the role and the organization[7].
2	Non-Verbal Communication	Body language, posture, facial expressions, and eye contact are powerful non-verbal cues that convey confidence and engagement (Strayer University, 2024). Poor body language can undermine a person's message, regardless of their verbal content.[8]
3	Verbal Communication	The use of appropriate language, clear articulation, and an assertive yet polite tone are essential for effective professional interaction [9][10]
4	Etiquette and Behaviour	Adherence to professional decorum, punctuality, and a respectful attitude towards colleagues and clients are integral parts of a positive professional image [11], [12] .



**Figure 1.** Theoretical framework

This study's conceptual design is anchored by the Impression Management Theory, a foundational sociological concept developed by Erving Goffman in his work, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959). Goffman's dramaturgical perspective treats social interaction as a performance where individuals act to project a desired image to their audience. Applied to the professional realm, this framework suggests that a positive professional image is a strategic process of managing perceptions of one's competence, character, and confidence [13][4]. As depicted in **Figure 1**, the framework begins with this theory as the basis for understanding students' awareness of professional image. The framework then moves to assess their practice of these principles, revealing a crucial disconnect between what they know and how confidently they perform in a professional setting. To bridge this gap, the model highlights the vital role of institutional support, encompassing formal training, continuous feedback, and mentorship, to enhance students' confidence in application.

### 3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Despite exposure to formal academic content and involvement in real event management activities, some students demonstrate poor understanding or inconsistent application of professional image standards [14], [15]. This includes attire, grooming, posture, etiquette, and communication style. Such gaps could potentially impact the perceived quality of events managed by students and diminish their credibility in the eyes of industry stakeholders as mentioned in prior research [16].

### 4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study aims to:

- i) Assess students' awareness of professional image in the context of event management.
- ii) Determine students' practices of professional image in the context of event management
- iii) Propose strategies to enhance the professionalism of students through curriculum and co-curricular support.

To achieve this goal, three research question were developed, the question is:

- i) What is the level of students' awareness of professional image in the context of event management?
- ii) What are the students' self-reported practices of professional image in the context of event management?
- iii) What strategies can be proposed to enhance the professionalism of students through curriculum and co-curricular support?

### 5. METHODOLOGY

The study employed a quantitative research design using a cross-sectional survey approach. This approach was used to analyze the current perceptions and practices of professional image among Secretarial Science Students at Politeknik Port Dickson. The total population for this study consisted of 88 final-year students. A census sampling method was used, as the research aimed to gather data from the entire population. However, the data collection resulted in a sample of 37 students, yielding a response rate of 42%.

A preliminary study was conducted with a small sample of 10 students to test the clarity and to establish the reliability of the questionnaire before the full distribution. To establish the instrument's reliability, the internal consistency of the scales was measured using Cronbach's alpha. Despite the small sample size for the pilot study, the results showed high levels of internal consistency: the awareness dimension's Cronbach's alpha was 0.90, and the practice dimension's alpha was 0.87. These values confirmed the reliability of the instrument for the study.

#### 5.1 Limitations of the Study

The primary limitation of this study is the small sample size of 37 participants and the low response rate. As such, the findings cannot be generalized to a broader population. However, the study still provides a valuable snapshot of the perceptions and practices of the participating students, which can serve as a foundation for future research with larger, more diverse samples.

## 5.2 Research Instrument

A structured questionnaire was developed specifically for this study to collect quantitative data on students' perceptions of professional image. The questionnaire was divided into four main sections: demographics, awareness, practice, and open-ended questions. A 5-point Likert scale was used to measure students' perceptions, where 1 represented 'strongly disagree' and 5 represented 'strongly agree'.

To ensure the instrument was valid and reliable, two key steps were taken. Content validity means that the questionnaire items were developed based on a comprehensive literature review and existing theories [5], [8], particularly the Impression Management Theory [1]. This process ensured that the questions were directly aligned with the key components of professional image as required by the study's objectives. To establish reliability, a preliminary study was conducted with 10 students to test the instrument before full distribution. The internal consistency of the scales was measured using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, and the results indicated that both dimensions of the questionnaire were highly reliable, as presented in Table 2:

**Table 2.** Reliability Table for the Awareness and Practice Dimensions

<b>Awareness dimension: cronbach's alpha</b>	0.90 (excellent)
<b>Practice dimension: cronbach's alpha</b>	0.87 (good)

These values, which are above the generally accepted threshold of 0.70, confirm that the questions within each dimension are internally consistent and reliably measure the same concept.

The collected data was analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 23. Descriptive analysis, including mean scores and standard deviations, was used to answer the research questions. For the open-ended questions, thematic analysis was used to identify recurring themes and suggestions from students' responses.

## 5.3 Open-Ended Questions and Thematic Analysis

In addition to the Likert-scale items, the questionnaire included an open-ended section to gather qualitative data. This section invited students to provide suggestions on how universities could better prepare them for professional environments, particularly in the context of event management. The responses from this section were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach to identify recurring themes, insights, and recommendations that complemented the quantitative findings. Thematic analysis allowed for a deeper understanding of the students' perspectives and provided a richer context for the study's conclusions.

## 6. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the study are based on the data collected from **37 respondents**. The analysis is structured to address the research objectives by first detailing the respondents' demographics and then presenting findings on their perceptions and practices related to professional image in event management.

### 6.1 Respondent Demographics

All respondents who sent in questionnaire answers were female students  $n=37$ . The majority of the respondents were in the **18–20 age group** (78.4%,  $n=29$ ), while 21.6% ( $n=7$ ) were in the 21–23 age group, as shown in **Figure 2** below. With regard to prior event involvement, 73.0% ( $n=27$ ) reported having previous experience in organizing formal or semi-formal events, while 27.0% ( $n=10$ ) had no such experience **Figure 3**. This demographic profile indicates that the findings primarily reflect the perceptions of female students, most of whom had at least some exposure to event management.

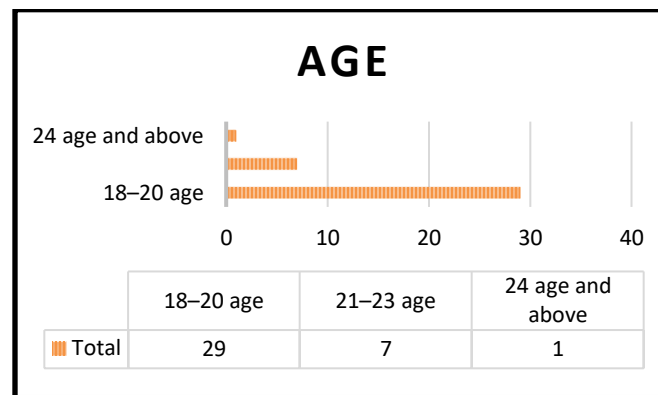


Figure 2. Respondents' age distribution

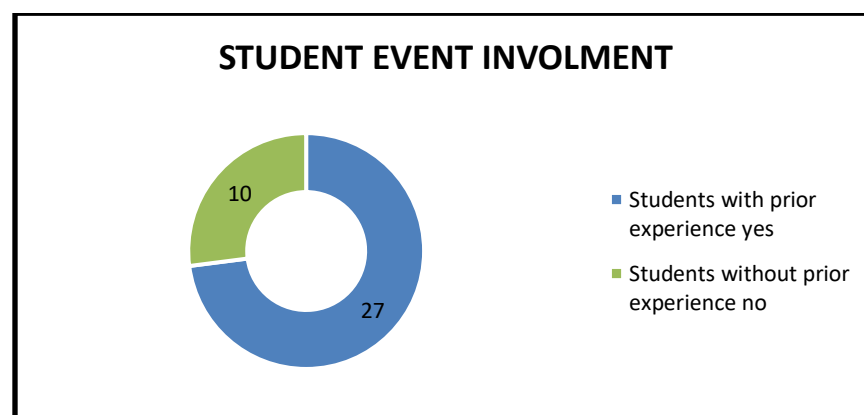


Figure 3. Event involvement

Meanwhile for event involvement, 73.0% (n=27) of the students had previous experience in organizing formal or semi-formal events and 27.0% (n=10) had no prior experience. This demographic profile provides a specific context for the study, indicating that the findings primarily reflect the perceptions of female students with some prior exposure to event organization. From a discussion perspective, the all-female sample reflects the gendered enrollment pattern of the program, thereby limiting the generalizability of the findings to male students. The relatively high proportion of students with event management experience suggests that exposure plays an important role in shaping awareness and practices of professional image. This aligns with studies that emphasize experiential learning as a significant contributor to professional competence in event and administrative contexts

## 6.2 Perception and Practice of Professional Image

The Likert-scale data from 37 respondents were analyzed to measure students' awareness and application of professional image. The questionnaire was divided into two main dimensions: (i) awareness (Q1–Q5), which assessed students' theoretical knowledge and recognition of the importance of image in career and event management; and (ii) practice (Q6–Q9), which measured how students applied these principles in real-life situations, including dress etiquette, body language, and confidence in professional interactions.

To provide a clear and meaningful interpretation of the Likert-scale results, the mean scores were categorized using a five-point scale. The ranges for this scale were established to align with the Likert values, with scores from 4.51 to 5.00 indicating "Very High" agreement or practice, 3.51 to 4.50 indicating "High," 2.51 to 3.50 as "Moderate," 1.51 to 2.50 as "Low," and 1.00 to 1.50 as "Very Low." This interpretive scale was adapted from a prior study [17].

**Table 3.** Interpretation of Mean Scores. *Note: Adapted from "The Impact of the Implementation of Capability Maturity Model Integration on User Satisfaction: Case Study on Software Companies in Jordan" [17]*

Mean Score	Range	Interpretation
4.51 – 5.00		Very high
3.51 – 4.50		High
2.51 – 3.50		Moderate
1.51 – 2.50		Low
1.00 – 1.50		Very Low

This structure allowed the study to identify potential gaps between awareness and practice, which was central to the research objectives. Table 2 summarizes the descriptive statistics for both awareness and practice.

**Table 4.** Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for Professional Image Awareness and Practice

Number	Question	mean	SD
1	I understand the meaning of professional image in a career context.	4.68	0.47
2	External appearance can influence people's perceptions of me.	4.81	0.39
3	Dressing etiquette is important when involved in event management.	4.78	0.42
4	Polite communication is part of a professional image	4.84	0.37
5	Self-image affects the smooth execution of an event	4.70	0.46
<b>Average Awareness</b>		<b>4.76</b>	<b>0.43</b>
6	I always dress according to etiquette when managing events.	4.65	0.53
7	I maintain my body language when acting as an event secretariat.	4.54	0.55
8	I know how to adapt my image to the type of event.	4.57	0.55
9	I am confident in my self-image when dealing with official guests.	4.30	0.65
<b>Average Practice</b>		<b>4.52</b>	<b>0.57</b>

The findings show consistently high mean scores for awareness items ( $M = 4.76$ ,  $SD = 0.43$ ), indicating that students possess strong theoretical understanding of professional image. The highest rated item was “Polite communication is part of a professional image” ( $M = 4.84$ ), suggesting that communication etiquette is widely recognized as a core component of professionalism.

By contrast, the mean scores for practice items were slightly lower ( $M = 4.52$ ,  $SD = 0.57$ ), with the lowest score recorded for “I am confident in my self-image when dealing with official guests” ( $M = 4.30$ ). This indicates a gap between theoretical awareness and practical confidence, echoing prior research that highlights the difficulty of translating conceptual knowledge into professional behavior [18], [19]. In line with Impression Management Theory [1], while students are aware of how they should present themselves, their ability to perform confidently in authentic settings remains limited. This reinforces the need for structured interventions, such as workshops and practical simulations, to help bridge the awareness–practice divide.

### 6.3 Impact of Event Experience

The independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the mean scores on confidence (Q9) between students with and without prior event experience ( $n=27$ ) and students with no prior experience ( $n=10$ ). As shown in Table 3, students with prior experience reported a slightly higher mean confidence score ( $M = 4.41$ ,  $SD = 0.62$ ) compared to students with no prior experience ( $M = 4.00$ ,  $SD = 0.71$ ). However, the difference was not statistically significant,  $t(35) = 1.45$ ,  $p = 0.155$ .

**Table 5.** Independent Samples t-test on Confidence (Q9) by Prior Event Experience

Group	N	Mean	Sd	T-statistic	P-value
Students with prior experience	27	4.41	0.62	1.45	0.155
Students without prior experience	10	4.00	0.71		

This suggests that prior event experience does not significantly influence students' self-reported confidence when interacting with official guests. Factors such as personality traits, exposure to public speaking, and interpersonal communication training might play a more crucial role in shaping confidence levels than prior event experience alone.

A key finding from the inferential analysis is that there is no statistically significant difference in self-confidence scores (Q9) between students who have prior experience in event organization and those who do not. Although the experienced group showed a slightly higher mean score (Mean = 4.41) compared to the non-experienced group (Mean = 4.00), this difference was not large enough to be considered statistically significant.

This finding is particularly important and should be highlighted as it challenges the assumption that practical exposure alone, such as being involved in event management, is sufficient to build students' professional image confidence. Instead, this result suggests that experience without structured guidance or formal training may not lead to a significant increase in self-confidence. This gap reflects Goffman's Impression Management theory [1], which emphasizes that projecting a professional image requires both awareness and confident performance. The results also align with soft skills literature [9][10], which stresses the importance of structured interventions in communication and self-image training. Since the sample consisted entirely of female students, implications for male students remain unexplored. Future research should include male participants to capture potential gender differences, thereby broadening the applicability of findings. According to Goffman's dramaturgical perspective, students may understand their 'roles' but struggle with the 'performance' aspect when applying professional image in real settings. This highlights the importance of structured practice to complement theoretical knowledge. Moreover, since the current sample consisted entirely of female students, the findings represent only female perspectives. Future research should include male students and expand to other institutions to provide a more comprehensive understanding of professional image development.

This finding is supported by previous studies[20][2], who emphasized the need for 'authentic assessments' and structured support to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical skills in event management [7]. Similarly, practical exposure that is not accompanied by consistent feedback and focused training may fail to help students effectively practice their professional image skills [8]. Therefore, this finding provides a strong justification for the study's recommendations, which emphasize the need for planned interventions like workshops and simulation exercises, to ensure students are not only aware but also confident and capable in applying their professional image.

#### *6.4 Analysis of Responses to Question 11: Needs for Training and Support*

The responses from the 37 students provide rich qualitative data on their perceived needs for improving their professional image. A thematic analysis of the open-ended answers revealed several key themes, which can be categorized as follows:

Theme	Sample responses	Implication
<b>1. Structured and formal training</b>	"An image grooming course."- "a workshop on dressing etiquette."- "to have an orientation or briefing or course before an event starts."- "training in communication, dressing etiquette, and leadership skills."	Students desire clear, formal, and structured guidance from the institution, beyond experiential learning.
<b>2. Soft skills training</b>	"self-confidence training."- "communication training."- "leadership training."- "teamwork training."	Supports quantitative findings of lower self-perceived confidence; students acknowledge

		the need to enhance communication and self-confidence.
<b>3. Continuous support and guidance</b>	"Feedback from lecturers during class if a student does not maintain their own image."- "continuous guidance from lecturers."- "the teacher should provide feedback face-to-face."	Highlights the importance of lecturer feedback and continuous support, suggesting the need for a consistent institutional feedback system.
<b>4. Practical exposure</b>	"Opportunities for direct involvement in a real event can also increase self-confidence."	Reinforces that practical exposure is valuable, but as seen in the inferential analysis, it should be paired with structured training for full benefit.

The thematic analysis of students' open-ended responses reveals a clear and consistent call for structured institutional support to enhance professional image. The most dominant theme was the need for structured and formal training, indicating that students prefer systematic guidance through workshops, briefings, and skill-specific courses rather than relying solely on experiential learning.

Additionally, the demand for soft skills training aligns with quantitative findings that highlighted lower self-perceived confidence, underscoring the importance of improving communication, leadership, and teamwork skills to complement external appearance. The theme of continuous support and guidance reflects the high value students place on lecturer feedback as an essential mechanism for self-improvement, suggesting the need for a formalised feedback system. Finally, while practical exposure is recognised as beneficial for building confidence, students acknowledge that it must be combined with structured training to yield significant results.

Overall, these findings reinforce the conclusion that a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach integrating formal training, soft skills development, consistent feedback, and practical experience is essential to preparing students for professional success in event management and secretarial work as mentioned by [9].

## 6.5 Discussion and Interpretation

The objective of this study is to examine the perceptions and practices of professional image among Secretarial Science students in Politeknik Port Dickson. To achieve this, the study is guided by three specific research questions (RQs). The first RQ, "What is the level of students' awareness of professional image in the context of event management?" seeks to assess the theoretical knowledge and understanding students have regarding their professional appearance, behavior, and communication. This is followed by the second RQ, "What are the students' self-reported practices of professional image in the context of event management?" which aims to determine the extent to which students apply these principles in real-life situations. Finally, the third RQ, "What strategies can be proposed to enhance the professionalism of students through curriculum and co-curricular support?" is designed to complement the quantitative findings with qualitative insights, allowing for the development of practical recommendations to bridge any identified gaps between awareness and practice. Together, these RQs provide a comprehensive framework to achieve the study's stated objectives.

### 6.5.1 Awareness: What is the level of students' awareness of professional image in the context of event management?

The findings of this study reveal that students possess a **very high level of awareness** regarding the importance of professional image in event management. As presented in Table 2, the awareness dimension received a mean score of 4.76 (SD = 0.43). This score falls into the "Very High" category, based on the interpretive mean scale used in this study. The low standard deviation further indicates a high level of consensus among the students, suggesting that their understanding of professional image concepts is strong and widely shared. These results align with **Impression Management Theory**, which posits that individuals consciously manage their appearance and behavior to create a favorable impression. The students' emphasis on attire, communication etiquette, and body language reflects this theoretical framework (**Figure 1**), showing that they recognize a professional image as a deliberate effort to present



themselves credibly in organizational contexts. This strong theoretical foundation is a crucial starting point for their professional development.

### *6.5.2 Practice: What are the students' self-reported practices of professional image in the context of event management?*

The findings of this study indicate that students demonstrate a high level of self-reported practice of professional image. As presented in Table 2, the practice dimension of the questionnaire received a mean score of 4.52 with a standard deviation of 0.57. This mean score places their self-reported practices within the "High" category of the interpretive mean scale.

However, a critical analysis of the findings reveals a notable gap between awareness and practice. While students' awareness was rated as "Very High" ( $M = 4.76$ ), their self-reported practice, though still high, was quantitatively lower ( $M = 4.52$ ). This divergence suggests a potential disconnect between students' theoretical knowledge and their application of these principles in real-world professional contexts. This gap is further supported by the highest standard deviation within the practice dimension ( $SD = 0.65$ ), which was associated with the item "I am confident in my self-image when dealing with official guests." This higher variability in responses indicates a lower level of consensus and a potential lack of confidence in practical situations.

This finding aligns with a key principle of skill development: while knowledge is foundational, practical application and confidence often require experiential learning to achieve true mastery. The data suggests that while students possess the theoretical knowledge, they may lack the practical experience necessary to consistently apply these skills with confidence.

### *6.5.3 Strategies: What strategies can be proposed to enhance the professionalism of students through curriculum and co-curricular support?*

#### Proposed Strategies to Enhance Student Professionalism

Based on the quantitative findings and qualitative insights from this study, several strategies are proposed to enhance the professionalism of Secretarial Science students. The analysis of Likert-scale data, which revealed a notable gap between students' awareness ( $M = 4.76$ ) and their self-reported practices ( $M = 4.52$ ), serves as the primary evidence for the need for targeted interventions. This quantitative finding is directly supported by the qualitative data from the open-ended questionnaire section, where students explicitly requested more practical and formal training to bridge this gap.

To address this, universities should implement a two-pronged approach focusing on both curriculum-based enhancements and co-curricular support.

#### Curriculum-Based Strategies

Curriculum-based strategies should pivot towards experiential learning to complement theoretical knowledge. This can be achieved by integrating mandatory modules on professional image that focus on hands-on skills such as verbal and non-verbal communication, professional etiquette, and personal branding. Furthermore, incorporating practical exercises like role-playing, mock interviews, and simulated event scenarios into existing coursework would provide students with a safe environment to apply their skills and receive constructive feedback. These practical applications are crucial for building the confidence that the quantitative data identified as a potential area of weakness.

#### Co-Curricular Support

Co-curricular support should be designed to reinforce classroom learning in real-world contexts. The university should facilitate and encourage participation in activities such as mentorship programs that pair students with industry professionals, allowing them to observe and learn from experienced practitioners. Additionally, organizing networking events, career fairs, and industry visits provides valuable opportunities for students to practice their communication and social skills in professional settings. By linking these experiences to the academic curriculum, institutions can

ensure that students' professional development is continuous and holistic, ultimately preparing them for the demands of their future careers.

In addition, the results align with the broader soft skills literature, where communication, confidence, and adaptability are consistently cited as core competencies for workplace readiness [21]. The students' calls for structured training and continuous feedback also support the argument that such skills require formal development rather than being left to experiential learning alone.

One notable limitation in interpretation arises from the sample being entirely female. While this provides valuable insights into how female students perceive and practice professional image, it limits the applicability of findings to male students, who may face different social expectations regarding image and impression management. Future research should therefore include male participants or compare across genders to better understand variations in professional image construction.

These findings have important implications for curriculum design in Secretarial Science programs. Incorporating structured image and etiquette training, combined with practical exposure to real events, could enhance not only technical competence but also the soft skills necessary for success in the corporate sector.

## 7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In general Professional image plays a significant role in shaping students' readiness for careers in secretarial and administrative fields. This study confirms that while awareness exists, practical reinforcement and institutional support are necessary to ensure consistency. With the implementation of proposed improvements, students will be better positioned to represent both themselves and their institution with professionalism and confidence.

### 7.1 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several strategic and practical recommendations are proposed to bridge the gap between students' theoretical knowledge and their practical application of professional image. These recommendations are designed to strengthen students' career readiness, particularly in the context of event management

#### 7.1.1 Structured Curriculum Interventions

The study found that while students have a high level of awareness, they demonstrate a lower level of confidence in practical application. Therefore, the curriculum should be enhanced with more structured interventions.

**Professional Image Workshops** The institution is advised to organize specialized workshops that focus on the practical aspects of professional image. These workshops should cover topics such as dressing etiquette for various event types, confident body language, social protocols, and effective communication skills.

**Integration into Course Assessments**, to make professional image a valued skill, these elements should be formally integrated into course assessments. For instance, lecturers could include specific evaluation criteria for students' professional appearance, body language, and professional interaction during event project assignments.

**Development of an Event Code of Conduct** so that the polytechnic can develop and introduce a clear and specific code of conduct and dress code for all students involved in event organization. This code would serve as a consistent and official guide, ensuring that students adhere to established professional standards.

#### 7.1.2 Continuous Support and Confidence Building

The study's findings indicate that event exposure alone is not sufficient to significantly boost students' confidence. Therefore, continuous support is crucial. **Mentorship and Feedback System:** Lecturers and industry mentors are encouraged to provide consistent and constructive feedback on students' professional image, not only academically

but also in terms of their appearance and demeanor. This could be facilitated through one-on-one mentoring sessions or post-project debriefs.

**Simulation and Role-Playing Exercises:** Students should be given more opportunities to participate in simulated or role-playing exercises that mimic real-world scenarios. This would allow them to practice professional image skills in a controlled environment before dealing with official guests or high-level stakeholders.

**Industry Collaboration:** Establishing strategic collaborations with event management agencies or corporate companies can expose students to industry standards directly. Mentor-mentee programs or industry visits can help students understand the real-world expectations of employers regarding professional image.

By implementing these recommendations, Politeknik Port Dickson can ensure that its graduates not only possess a strong theoretical foundation but also the confidence and practical *skills* to become competent and credible professionals in the administrative and event management sectors.

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