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Impression Management (IM) functionality and effectiveness in acing job interviews: A qualitative review based on social role theory

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Abstract: When a person intentionally changes or modifies his behavior to better suit himself in a particular situation; it is known as “Impression Management” – the process whereby people try to change or influence the image others have on them. Some psychologists argue that personality change happens within the same individual all the time because people do not have a core personality. As an alternative, they have multiple selves of which they show different behavior during different situations. A successful person is the one who strategically presents these different behaviors to gain good deeds from different audiences. This rather extreme analysis is not widely held because there is a lot of data to show that all of us do have a core personality, and that our core personality remains consistent most of our lives. Studies have proven that every interviewee will intend to use some types of Impression Management (IM) while attending to a structured interview session. This study examines interviewees concern on Impression Management (IM) during a prearranged interview session by determining the comparative significance which the interviewee is connected to. Both verbal and nonverbal Impression Management (IM) are measured up to a significant level that affixes it to prearranged competencies based on social role theory.

Keywords: Job interviews, Impression Management (IM), Interviewee and Social Role Theory.

I. INTRODUCTION

Impression Management (IM), based on Erving Goffman [6], the founder of the dramaturgical approach, "life is like a play, and we each perform for others": once a person shows business as an element, his or her determination unconditionally requests his or her spectators to believe seriously the intuitions and impression that is fostered before them.

Almost every organization conducts at least one interview before making employment decisions. Impression Management (IM) from interviewees' point of view is a very crucial factor that might have an effect on interview ratings. Interviewers are well aware of interviewees who exploit Impression Management (IM). Interviewees try to create a constructive impression.[2] There are some typical examples of Impression Management (IM) during interviews, which includes verbal self-promotion; “I am a very hard-working employee”.[6] There are some examples of typical non-verbal behaviors like, looking smart by wearing professional attire and smiling gestures as well as welcoming body posture. Until now, usage of self-focused IM is the most effective method. Whenever an

interviewee uses self-promoting statements, which illustrate the interviewee has desirable qualities for the position the interviewee attends interview for. [12] This is considered as a 'self-focused tactics' which will evoke attributions of competence. This self-promoting tactics mainly will appeal to interviewers as a shortcut method during information exchange process and attribute interviewee's behavior towards internal causes. Further on, Impression Management (IM) with defensive tactics, example such as excuses and apologies will put forth comparable effects. [5] These self-protective tactics express fundamental acknowledgments of unconstructive measures away from the interviewee or even change the magnitude of such fundamental attributions. [2]

II. IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT (IM): A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS REVIEW BASED ON SOCIAL ROLE THEORY

Every interviewee alters his or her behavior and personality during the existence of others in an effort to build an explicit impression on their interviewer.[6] Consequently, interviewee may create specific impressions on different group of interviewer ; example

hiring manager may seek a different self-presentation from the interviewee, compared to a human resource administrator who will be enthusiastic to understand interviewee's Impression Management (IM) from behavioral point of view.[3] As a result, during an interview session, interviewee has to determine his or her special objective for the interaction.

The most frequent type of Impression Management (IM) attempts is verbal self-promotions; the statements an interviewee makes concerning his or her skills and abilities. These types of statements are considered either assertive (interviewee initiated) or defensive (interviewee response to interviewer assumptions). Assertive self-promotion is characterized as self-focused statement that indicates the interviewee has necessary skills, abilities and positive characteristics. Both assertive and defensive IM are dominion of Impression Management (IM) which can be best described as 'the association principles', where interviewee tries to proclaim with desirable images[10] but however disclaim any undesirable images.[5] Nevertheless, usage of assertive Impression Management (IM) tactics are drastically higher compared to defensive type of Impression Management (IM).

A. Impression Management (IM) Tactics

Impression Management (IM) is defined as a type of 'conscious or unconscious attempt to control metaphors that are projected in any type of social interactions'. Repeatedly, Impression Management (IM) reflects in some behaviors. These include usage of verbal statements, expressive behaviors, and nonverbal behavior and also in integrated behavior patterns, jointly in modification of one's physical appearance. [12] At some point in interview sessions, most of the interviewees do not differ immensely in their dress code and they have limited ability to take benefit of integrated behavior blueprint.

This situation leaves verbal and nonverbal behaviors as most ubiquitous means of managing impression. [7] Researchers mainly focused on verbal IM behavior, which can be divided into two widespread or extensive categories of tactics; which are assertive IM tactics and defensive IM tactics. [16]

B. Assertive IM Tactics

Assertive Impression Management (IM) methods are used to 'assert' the illustration that is preferred at any particular time.[8] This management method is used by interviewees to establish a particular identity but not simply imprudent to situational demands.[1] There are many types of assertive Impression Management (IM) projection, most notably, interviewees will trail Impression Management (IM) method by wearing a particular outfit or may try to project a virtue statement in order to make an impression on the interviewer.[4] Assertive-strategic element has been identified as most

directly linked with nonverbal communication. This element is frequently used by interviewee to build attraction, status, prestige, credibility or trust worthiness in the interviewer's eyes.

Assertive IM tactics are always used to achieve a particular identity by approving constructive impressions and hold self-promoting and ingratiation tactics. [12] Self-promoting tactics are behaviors intended to suggest attributions of competence rather than attractiveness. Normally, interviewee will promote perceptions of competence through the usage of certain precise self-promoting remarks, developments and defeating obstacles. These are sub-categories of the whole self-promoting behaviors. [12] Throughout precise self-promoting utterances, the interviewee's effort to persuade the interviewer that interviewee has positive traits and behaviors. [13] Self-promoting is very useful for interviewee to respond on experience-based questions. [3]

Ingratiation tactics are known as behaviors, intended to evoke interpersonal liking and attraction, which is significantly used at a higher ratio when interviewee answers situational questions. One of the types of ingratiation is 'opinion conformity', whereby interviewee expresses his or her opinions, values and beliefs. Second structure of ingratiation is 'enhancement', by which interviewee expresses favorable evaluation.

C. Defensive IM Tactics

Defensive Impression Management (IM) techniques are 'backward-looking' and applied in certain condition, whereby interviewee is being recognized with negative behaviors or characteristics which are linked with an impression they do not want to.[1] Thus, the interviewee will make effort to 'deny' the image. This would be a justification for any deprived quality of work the interviewee may have done in his or her previous job. As a consequence, defensive technique will help interviewee to uphold a positive reputation. [4]

If assertive (IM) tactics are considered to strengthen interviewee's image, defensive (IM) tactics are considered to project and revamp interviewee's image. [7] Researchers, have identified a few types of defensive tactics which include apologies, justifications and excuses. As an example, for any type of negative behavior, excuses are claims that interviewee is not responsible for the act. [9]

However, justifications involve accepting responsibility for any type of negative outcome but propose the negative outcome is not as bad as it seems. On contrary, request for forgiveness by interviewee takes Defensive IM Tactics one step further by admitting responsibility for any unconstructive behavior, with acknowledgement that certain trial were intolerable and it must be penalized.[12]

D. When Impression Management (IM) is Effective?

IM usage and involvement during interview is very crucial. Therefore, it is important to understand the correlation between these different aspects of an interview process which will be helpful for Human Resource administrators, to understand how Impression Management (IM) will take effect during employment interviews. [8] This is important in order for the associated interviewer from Human Resource Department to be able to eliminate the negative effects of Impression Management (IM) usage. [8]

Whilst personality of an interviewee is measured prior to any interview processes, interviewer will be able to determine the extent of changes by using different personality traits the interviewee portray.[13] As an example, highly philanthropic individuals tend to be less paying attention on themselves. Consequently, they are more likely to use Impression Management (IM) behaviors which will be only related to ingratiating themselves with others, rather than using IM for self-promoting or merely for defensive excuses.

Correspondingly, many self-disciplined potential interviewees are more likely to prepare for interviews and contribute additional time and effort on how they will react in responding to credible questions during an interview session.[11]

E. (IM) Tactics application in Structured Interviews

It has been suggested by researchers that interviews offer both interviewee and interviewer the best fitted opportunity to deal with their impressions because both groups will be attempting to fit the needs of the interview's offer. There are a number of experimental studies which uphold this statement by clearly indicating Impression Management (IM) tactics do, in fact, appear quite repeatedly during any type of employment interview situations. [17] Normally, IM tactics are used in unstructured interviews. There are very few researches done to study the dynamics of IM tactics used throughout a structured interview. However, structured interviews hold a numeral of mechanisms that have the capacity to reduce any type of IM tactics. [1]

F. Social Role Theory

Human-being, both men and women take up diverse roles in the communal order (example, contributor, and caregiver) and through these roles; they learn diverse skills and way of life that relate to communal behavior. Both men and women are together subject to different normative anticipations for behavior. Based on communal role, this theory directs to diversified behaviors on the part of men and women. Men are anticipated to be more vigorous (example, assertive, controlling, independent), and women are projected to be more mutual and

compassionate (for instance, worried for the wellbeing of others, interpersonally responsive, emotionally expressive). [13]

The implication of this hypothesis for Impression Management (IM) in organizations is that men and women possibly will perform in a different way at a workplace (example, men possibly will feel normatively stressed to be assertive, and women possibly will feel normative tension to be fostering). Therefore, gender role prospect holds over to these types of employments considered suitable for both men and women by their perception of behavior in organizational conditions. For an example, a nurse is referred as a feminine-type of occupation, and a doctor is referred as a masculine-type of occupation. In addition, forcefulness in a man is observed as a gender 'fitting' behavior, while a powerful woman is viewed as infringing gender-based behavior which may reflect as an offensive approach. [7]

Social roles impact Impression Management (IM) because they establish normative expectations for individual behavior. As a consequence, we would anticipate that normative hope for behavior may differ by the organizational conditions as well as the characteristics of the communication. For instance, although self-promotion is considered suitable for a job interview, [12] a woman who engages in self-promotion may be perceived as violating feminine gender role-custom since self-promotion is not a feminine characteristic. This observable fact has been termed 'the backlash consequence'.

III. DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis from existing articles, Impression Management (IM) is an application applied by numerous type of community, especially those who has to grow to become interviewees, even when it is for a very short period of time. Impression Management (IM) has continued to operate as a vital part in interviewee's profession growth no matter if the interviewee is a male or a female. What actually makes the difference between the usage of Impression Management (IM) between a man and a woman is the way, how the community where the interviewee lives in, interprets it. Community used to think IM usage should be more constructive for man when judged against a woman. But in the present day of drastic changes in human-being's civilization, both male and female are treated far more equally compared to two decades before.

The principally significant discovery is the significance of IM tactics which is comparatively small as measured up to the significance of close to job-related competencies. Consequently, capability ratings are more important in determining the whole evaluations than interviewee's Impression Management (IM) tactics. Therefore, it is a vital discovery as it is originated from both examples. Nevertheless, it has placed emphasis on capability ratings; these do not suggest the impact of IM

is insignificant. As an alternative, results propose the impact of IM must be put in a broader perception as it appears to be comparatively smaller to other indications.

It should be renowned, despite the fact, the high degree of interview formation might have reduced personality differences among interviewers and consequently the prospective usefulness effects of familiarity. There is a saying that one should not blow his own trumpet, but IM is actually an essential avenue whereby, one can share the achievements and contributions to society in large and business organization on a close-up viewpoint. Most of the time, this is done by interviewee who has provided evidence which is based on integrity and reliability. Interviewer on the listening side has sufficient access to verify the genuineness of each and every testimonial shared by interviewee during an interview session. For an example, a knowledgeable interviewer should be able to justify an interviewee's statement while looking at the interviewee's body language and eye-contact as well as by validating both assertive and defensive amount of IM used by the interviewee. When there is an over use of Defensive IM, interviewers will have a high chance of detecting the interviewee's lack of honesty and this may tarnish the interviewee's image as well as his or her job prospect in other companies

Having said so, Impression Management (IM), occasionally called as strategic communication, refers to the strategies used by organizations to create, maintain, or improve their public image. In this case, IM is a crucial strategy used by both interviewer and interviewee during interview which at many occasions plays as the ice-breaker between hiring manager and his prospective new joiner. Impression Management (IM) strategies are characterized by their self-serving methodology. A strategy that is self-serving is typified by one taking credit for positive outcomes and placing blame on others for negative outcomes. The usage of Impression Management (IM) can actually deform the results of experimental research that relies on interviews and surveys, a phenomenon vastly referred to as 'communal desirability bias'. Moreover, Impression Management (IM) hypothesis affirms that every individual from any type of organization must establish and maintain impressions that are very similar with the idea they share or exchange with the interviewer. Nevertheless, the idea of perception in reality is the basis for this social psychology hypothesis. In conclusion, one must examine closely the interviewer-interviewee interaction processes in order to comprehend

the particular IM tactics being used at any particular instance.

IV. CONCLUSION

This article is a conceptual research that utilizes literature review and analysis approach to analyze and interpret Impression Management (IM) functionality & effectiveness in acing job interviews: A qualitative review based on social role theory.[9] Throughout an extremely competitive business environment, a number of factors can contribute to one's success or failure; clearly some of these factors involve gender differences in nonverbal communication.[15] The employment interview is a defining point in a process leading to a specific outcome; one is either being hired or being redundant. During such a pivotal situation, it is possible to evaluate the impact of gender nonverbal factors on the impressions created and the final employment resolution. [7]

It is the complication of managerial theory, research and practice to continue improving the organization's capability to differentiate among desirable behavior and Impression Management (IM) behavior, and as a result to discover better methods to encourage one without promoting the other, through the planning of organizational systems and leadership.[3] The results help to expand our perception and understanding of the behaviors in which organizational norms affect working class behaviors during employment, suggesting that employees particularly effort to impress their relevant reference groups and build impressions that are reliable with organizational norms, customs and expectations To conclude, this paper is intended to enhance theoretical understanding of IM performance, recognizing tendencies in IM, addressing the impact of IM competencies and understanding how IM develops over the time. IM is a dynamic process that occurs continuously during interpersonal interactions. [14]

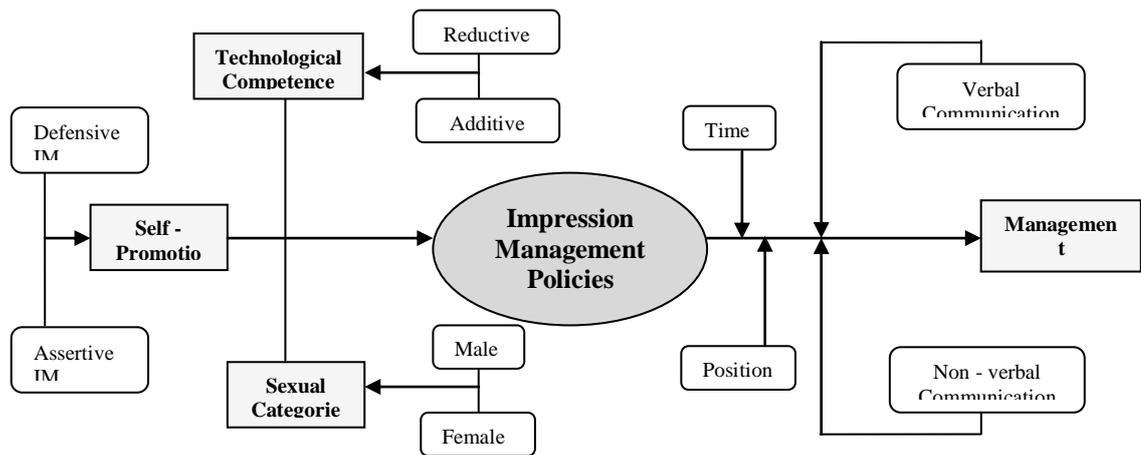


Figure 1. Impression Management Policies in Job Interviews based on Qualitative Review on Social Role Theory.

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