Impression Management Strategies and Employee Performance in Hotels: Is there a relationship?

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to understand the relationship between the impression management behavior and the employee performance at hotels. Thus, the study included supervisor-focused IM, self-focused IM. The study included ingratiation, exemplification, intimidation, supplication and self-promotion as impression management strategies. A Convenience sample of 20 five-star hotels in Cairo was chosen for the study. A questionnaire forms were distributed to 420 employees. 362 questionnaire forms were received representing a response rate of 86.2%. The results indicated that there is no significant effect between impression management and employees performance.

Keywords: Performance Appraisal (PA), Impression Management (IM), Strategies, Employees, Hotels.

1. Introduction

An inescapable fact of everyday life is the need to ‘‘present well,” or to make a good impression on others, referred to impression management (Schlenker, 2005). Impression management (IM) generally refers to "a person's attempts to control or manipulate the reactions of others to images of themselves or their ideas" (Palmer *et al.*,2001). The IM framework employs a theatrical or dramaturgical metaphor to describe social life. People are actors, taking many roles, attempting to please audiences to win their moral, social, and financial support. The social actor engages in many IM tactics and strategies to avoid looking bad (Giacalone & Rosenfeld, 1989).

As employees confront fierce competition at work within a dynamic economy, they must find ways to increase their perceived value to the organization. To do this, an individual may engage in political behaviors with the aim of positioning himself as a powerful and crucial person. IM is "a specific type of political behavior intended to persuade an audience to view the individual in a particular way" (Schlenker, 1980) Many IM strategies have been reported in previous literature. Some of them focused on defensive tactics, which are used in response of bad performance, such as excuses and apologies. Others, including this study, focused on assertive tactics, "which are used by individuals to establish a particular identity for an audience and not just a reaction to situational demands" (Wayne & Liden, 1995). Research also demonstrates that IM has a considerable impact on individual success, promotion opportunities, career advancement, and achievement of social approval, power and wellbeing in organizations (Xin, 2004).

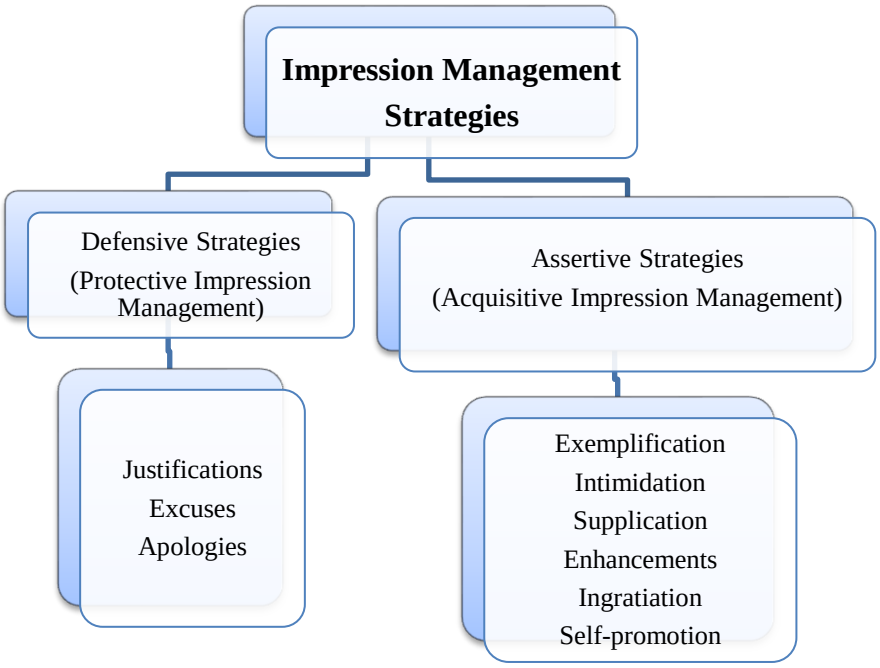
The present study is based on a vast array of previous research and applies the concept of impression management in the workplace; specifically individual impression management behaviors (IMBs) or the assertive IM tactics focused on the supervisor, on the self, and on the job, and their influence on employee performance.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Impression Management Models

2.1.1 Melburg & Tedeschi Model (1984)

On the one hand, as indicated by Tedeschi and Melburg (1984)d efensive procedures are used in impression management, such as accounts, excuses, apologies, self-handicapping, self-deprecation. Interestingly, assertive strategies are actively used to establish a particular reputation with a specific target audience, and are not merely a reaction to situational requests (Wayne and Liden, 1995). Because the focus of this study is not on subordinate's poor performance, defensive strategies were not of interest. Assertive strategies focused on the way in which employees endeavor to gain favorable performance ratings.



Source: (Tedeschi & Melburg, 1984).

Figure (1): Categories of impression management

On the other hand, assertive strategies (sometimes referred to as the acquisitive IM orientation) are used to establish a particular reputation with a specific target audience and not just a reaction to certain situational demands, typically by means of enhancements, ingratiation, self-promotion, exemplification and sometimes intimidation and supplication, among these tactics, ingratiation has received the most attention in empirical research (Bolino & Turnley,1999).

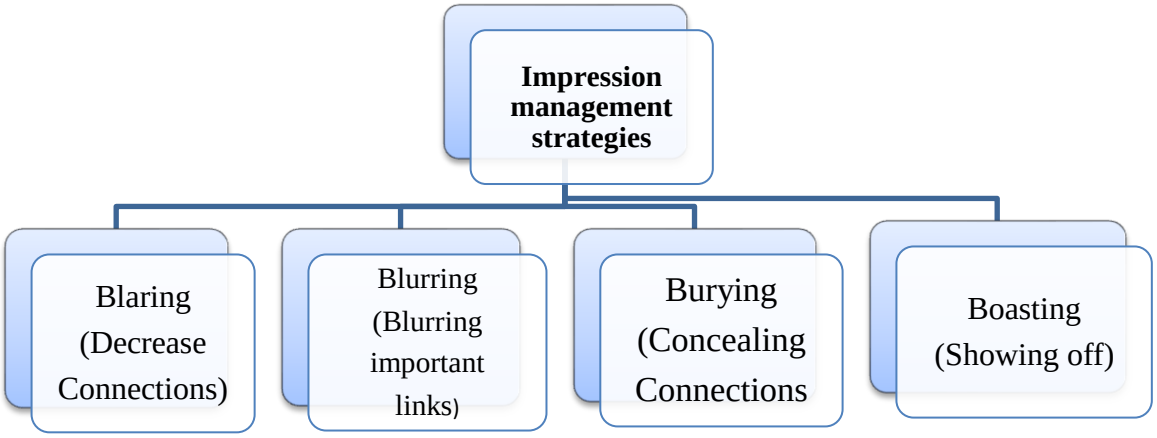
Interestingly, defensive strategies (also referred to sometimes as the protective IM orientation) involve the use of excuses, apologies and supports to repair spoiled characters (Rosenfeld et al., 2002). Figure (1) summarizes Tedeschi & Melburg (1984) categories of impression management as previously described.

2.1.2 Cialdini Model (1989)

Cialdini (1989) classified impression management strategies into four forms of connection focused tactics; Boasting, Burying, Blaring, and Blurring. According to andrews & Kacmar (2001), boasting refers to person tendency to boast about their positive associations with favorable others. Cialdini (1989) warned that these tendencies may diminish one's motivation for self-accomplished objectives. On the contrary, in Burying, persons try to conceal their connections with unfavorable others. As for Blaring, persons publicly minimize their connections with unfavorable others.

In the organization, this is easily illustrated as members often stray far from those who challenge the opinions and authority of leaders. In Blurring, individuals blur their links with favorable others by way of strategic omissions. While theory and common sense predict that organizational members actively use impression management by association to secure valuable career-oriented rewards. Another group of tactics that largely has been ignored is indirect impression management tactics identified by Cialdini(1989) which help in positive professional successes and results. Unlike direct strategies which are "explicit communication tactics about the self. According to Daggs (2008), indirect strategies create desirable impressions by including a third party (referred to also as impression management by association).

Indirect tactics of impression management **(**Cialdini , Model of IM tactics) are shown in figure (2).

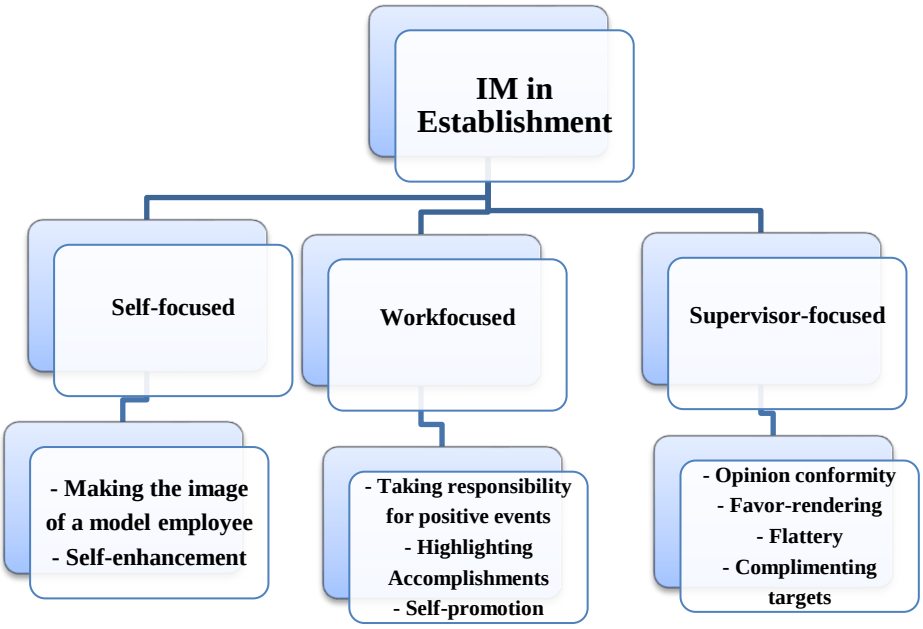


Source: (Cialdini, 1989).

Figure (2): Cialdini (1989) Model of IM tactics

2.1.3 Ferris & Wayne (1990) model

As indicated by Wayne and Ferris (1990) assertive systems may be supervisor-focused strategies, self-focused strategies, and job-focused strategies, Supervisor focused strategies center on behavior and verbal statements directed toward the supervisor, That is, the individual using these tactics praises the supervisor and does a personal favor for him or her, it consider other forms of ingratiation that is targeted toward supervisors, Tactics include flattery and other-enhancement (complimenting targets). Examples of such strategies include employees offering assistance to their directors or do personal favors for them or they may praise their directors and compliment them or agree with their thoughts (Bolino et al., 2006). As indicated by Schlenker and Leary (1982), individuals strive to affirm their self-concept, attempting to control or manage the impression that other people form so that those impression are consistent with their desired self-images. Subordinates use impression management as an attempt to influence their immediate supervisor, this refer to other enhancement tactics as supervisor focused impression management tactics, these include flattery which involve a subordinates communicating feeling of liking and admiration to a supervisor and doing favor for supervisor. Figure (3) summarized Wayne and Ferris (1990) IM Model.



Source: (Wayne and Ferris, 1990).

Figure (3): Wayne Ferris IM Model

Jones&Wortman (1973) proposed that self-focused strategies are determined by behavior that is intended to create the impression that the subordinate is a nice, polite person. Job-focused strategies comprise behavior and verbal statements that are related to the individual's job performance, that is to say, the individual employing these tactics attempts to manipulate information related to his job performance to make a positive impression on his supervisor.

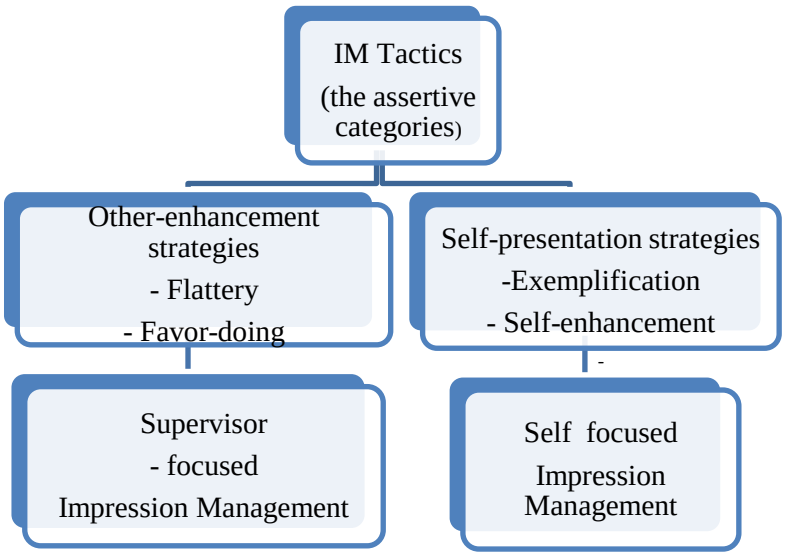
There are many assertive self-presentation tactics, including false modesty, boasting and a host of nonverbal behaviors such as smiling making eye contact, (Cialdini, 1989; Schlenker, 1980; Tedeschi&Melburg, 1984). Subordinates who are consumed by presenting themselves favorably may fail to devote enough effort to job duties which result in negative supervisor reaction (Baumeister, 1989). As Cialdini (1989) wrote, if there is an overarching lesson to be learned from the large body of work on impression management, it is that favorable self-presentation is a tricky business.

Wayne & Liden (1995) proposed that workers must accept risk when using these procedures, because the influence attempt will backfire if the target interprets the self-presentation as insincere. Research results indicate that workers often do not succeed in the use of self-focused strategies, as it is reflected in neutral or negative target reactions.

2.1.4 Wayne & Liden (1995) model

Wayne & Liden (1995) measured self-presentation in terms of two tactics. Self enhancement & exemplification, which can be combined in one concept that is, self-focused IM strategies. Self-enhancement and exemplification, or acting as an exemplar.

A subordinate's goal in these self-presentation strategies is to convey the impression that he is a friendly, hard-working, model employee. Other-enhancement tactics also referred to such as supervisor-focused impression management, include flattery, favor-doing, and opinion conformity. Wayne and Liden (1995) concluded that self-presentation and other-enhancement were two main types of impression management. Self-presentation tactics, also called as self-focused are accomplished either verbally or with nonverbal cues such as smiling, eye contact and altering face expressions. They are similar to exemplification. Wayne and Liden (1995) Impression Management tactics (the assertive dimensions) are shown in Figure (4).



Source: (Wayne and Liden, 1995).

Figure (4): Wayne and Liden Impression Management Model

2.3 Performance appraisal Definitions

According to Murphy and Cleveland (1995), PA can be defined as the social and interaction process in which a supervisor assesses a worker's behavior in the workplace and communicates those ratings and feedback to the worker. According to Randell (1994), performance appraisal can be characterized as "the procedure whereby current performance in a job is observed and discussed for the purpose of adding to that level of performance". Edwards and Williams (1998) claimed that performance appraisal include the way toward assessing the performance and behavior of employees in the context of their specific positions of employment. The behaviors analyzed should be tangible, objective components of the individual's job and should not include subjective, evaluative statements that focus on personality. On the other hand, Cummings and Worley (2001) determine performance appraisal as a feedback system associated with the direct evaluation of employees or group performance by a superior, manager, or employees.

2.2 Impression management strategies

2.2.1 EXEMPLIFICATION

Through exemplification tactics the employees will try to make an identity of dedication, sacrifice and responsibility. The employees use this impression management tactics to appear as if they are willing to suffer for a cause. Rosenfeld et al. (1995) suggest that the employees want to influence and control through inducing guilt or attributions of virtue. The employees use such behaviors to make them as Ideals employees (Kacmar et al., 2007). These individuals are willing to suffer to help others but in reality also attempt to make others feel guilty because they are not acting in a same morally and integer manner, the target can reduce their feelings of guilt by at least supporting the cause of the exemplifier (Jones and Pittman, 1982). Furthermore the exemplifier regularly needs other individuals to know how hard he/she has been working because they need to advertise their behavior (Rosenfeld et al., 1995). To use exemplification successfully, Jones (1990) advises the individuals to find relevant contexts where it makes sense to demonstrate exemplary or commendable actions.

2.2.2 INGRATIATION

Jones (1990) discovered ingratiation; "making notable one's most favorable attributes" in order to create an impression of agreeability to be the most commonly used impression management strategy. Ingratiation is employed when the user or the individuals needs to develop a personality of being agreeable. Individuals can encourage positive feelings with their audiences through such communicative activities as agreement, flattery, compliments, compassion, and reciprocity (Gardner and Cleavenger, 1998). Tedeschi and Melburg (1984) proposed that Ingratiation can be defined as "a gathering of forceful strategies with the goal of picking up the admiration of an audience, who has the authority to offer significant rewards for the employees"

Conversational activities to achieve likeability may include praising, agreeing with, or flattering a target audience.

2.2.3 SELF-PROMOTION

Higgins et al. (2003) in their meta- investigation found that self-promotion techniques yield positive results in the scenario of selection interviews as compared to that of performance. The managers have ample opportunities to gauge the performance of their employees in comparison to their competency claims, the self-promotion strategies proves not effective. Self-promotion is more in line with a masculine orientation; the use of such tactic may result in more penalty than benefits in case of female employees (Lim, 2008). Jones and Pittman's (1982) explored taxonomy of impression management systems, workers utilize self-promotion to call attention to their accomplishments as they want audiences to see them as competent. As indicated by Sosik and Jung (2003), Self-promotion is a kind of behavior in which individual is involved in conveying his expertise and competence. Self-promotion is generally considered an aggressive strategy. Self-promoters make claims to persuade others to see them as competent: users of this impression management strategy will give positive performance accounts of themselves, self-promotion is most often used when the chance of their claims being challenged or discredited is low (Rosenfeld et al., 1995).

2.2.4 SUPPLICATION

The individual emphasizes his own dependence and weakness to get assistance from other. By announcing their lack of ability, they attempt to activate a powerful social rule: the norm of social responsibility that says you should help those who are in need (Rosenfeld et al., 1995). Bolino and Turnley (1999) proposed that Supplication is considered as the most negative of the impression management strategy. Turnley and Bolino (2001) proposed that employee who uses supplication tends to be perceived negatively by their colleagues regardless of their abilities. Christopher et al. (2005) found a negative relationship between use of supplication and self-esteem for employees.

Individuals may use supplication strategy to seek the help from others (Wayne & Ferris, 1990). Rosenfeld et al.(1995) describe supplication as the art of looking incompetent for the greater gain without permanently damaging one's reputation. As indicated by Jones (1990) workers who use supplication technique will call attention to their weaknesses in hopes that social norms or rules governing leader-members relationships will obligate others to feel more kindly and forgiving toward them. Jones offers the example of an elderly woman who may act helpless as a way to persuade a friend to carry her luggage.

2.2.5 INTIMIDATION

Intimidation is an impression management strategy used to raise the credibility of one's threats (Tedeschi & Riess, 1981). According to Jones (1990) the intimidators may get their way by projecting a capacity and the inclination to provide negative results. as the risk of making a negative impression is high for this strategy, intimidation is most often found in non-voluntary interactions.

As indicated by Jones (1990), Intimidation is a power-oriented impression management strategy. Intimidation is used to build an identity of authority using threats and other power- tactics. Intimidators want to project attributes of danger and elicit fearful respect.

2.3.1 Performance Appraisal Uses

As indicated by Henenman (1996)PA is utilized to distinguish the measurement of performance and also to set standards of contributions for each performance dimensions step. Mathis and Jackson (1997) suggested that PA has two roles in associations. First role is to measure performance for rewarding or otherwise making administrative decisions about employee's promotions or layoffs might hinge on these ratings making them difficult at times. Second role is the development of individual potential. Different organizations use PA for different purposes as different scholars stated. The following are some Examples: Managers often believe that the most significant PA outcome involves the contributions employees make to the organizations goal attainment. Higher performing employee successfully meets their responsibilities and thereby makes a contribution to the goals of the organization.

As indicated by Mullins (1996), PA is a basic segment of a broader set of human resource practices, it is the mechanism for evaluating the extent to which each employee's day-to-day performance is linked to the goals established by the organization. According to Armstrong (2000), PA function is a continuous and transformative procedure in which performance enhances after some time; it provides the basis for regular and frequent dialogues between managers and individuals about performance and development needs based on feedback and self-assessment, it is mainly concerned with individual performance but it can also be applied to teams. Mondy et al. (1999) claimed that performance appraisal information is conceivably useful for human resource functional areas such as:(planning, Recruitment and selection ,Training and development, Career planning and development, Compensation programs)

2.3.2 Objectives of Performance Appraisal

As indicated by Spinks et al.(1999), every person differs in his abilities, attitude and aptitudes, there is always some difference in inputs, outputs and quality of outputs when two or more persons are working on the same job, it becomes very difficult to know who is more suitable to the job.

Management is putting efforts for proper utilization of men, machines and materials, except manpower, other resources are nonliving resources. Once they are in use then full utilization is possible. But in case of manpower, when people are employed, their full utilization may be possible sometime, the need for contribution assessment of every person has been felt, This is only called performance appraisal.

According to Baruch (1996), PA of employees are necessary to understand each employee's abilities, competencies and relative merit and worth for the organization. Performance appraisal rates the employees in terms of their performance criteria. PA takes into account the performance of one year, looks critically into the strength, weaknesses and deficiencies in the performance given. The focus is on improvement in future performance of the employees. PA shows relative worth of an employee. The focus of the PA is measuring, analyzing and improving the actual performance of the employee and also to find out the potentials of the employees for future investigations. It is a powerful tool to calibrate, refine and reward the performance of the employee. It helps to analyze his achievements and evaluate his contribution towards the achievements of the overall organizational goals. By focusing the attention on performance, PA goes to the heart of human resource management and reflects the management's interest in the progress of the employees as well as organization.

According to Spinks et al. (1999), PA have become vital parts of dismissal processes as well as corporate restructuring. Laws and court decisions have recently denied employers the right to hire and fire as they pleased, in other words a property cannot dismiss an employee without just cause. Many times, management has given "satisfactory" appraisals to individuals whose performances were not satisfactory, simply because those managers did not want their subordinates to seem as poor performers. Based on Wells and Spinks (1994), PA also provides individuals with useful feedback which they can apply it to improve their performance, the feedback includes suggestions to change and also encouragement. PA has a significant impact towards the individuals perception of justice which it will affect the attitude and behavior of the individuals alternately it will affect the performance of the property.

Based on Baruch (1996), the acceptance of the evaluation system also depends on the perceived fairness associated to it. With that, it is also important that they perceive that they are being evaluated against what they are actually supposed to do on the job. In recent years, performance appraisals have taken on additional importance. Thus, the process of PA is of most importance in Human Resource Management (HRM). PA are used for two main purposes as a source for information for management and as a feedback instrument for individuals employed by the organization as a source for information for management; In this case, the applications of the use of PA serve a variety of management functions, and these could be decision-making about promotions, training needs and salaries.

Payne et al. (2009) categorized PA objectives as follows: recognize job–related accomplishments, set standards for the next review period, outline areas for employee development, provide employees with feedback to improve or maintain job performance, identify job performance deficiencies and report to the next level of supervisory responsibility and enhance communication and working relationships.

2.3.3 Performance Appraisal Criteria

Armstrong (2009) confirms that the criteria for checking performance should be balanced between: achievements in relation to objectives; the level of knowledge and skills possessed and applied (technical competencies); behavior in the job as it affects performance (competencies) the degree to which behavior upholds the core values of the organization.

Based on Mathis and Jackson (1997), performance criteria are standards commonly used for testing or measuring performances. Criteria for evaluating job performances can be classified as trait-based, behavioral based.

- Trait based criterion: determine a subjective character trait such as pleasant personality, creativity and has little to do with the specific job. Such traits tend to be ambiguous and courts have held that evaluation based on traits such as general demeanor are too vague to use as the basis for performance.
- Behavior-based criterion: determine specific tactics that help work success.

3. Methodology

3.1 Population and Sample

The objective of the study was to determine the effects of impression management on employee performance in five star hotels in Cairo. Based on the Egyptian Hotel Association (2016) there are 33 five star hotels in Cairo. A Convenience sample of 20 five-star hotels in Cairo was chosen for the study. A questionnaire forms were distributed to 420 employees. 362 questionnaire forms were received representing a response rate of 86.2%. The questionnaire was divided into three parts. The first part is about the demographics of the respondents and other work-related information. The second part is to measure the level of employee's impression management behaviors It included 22 statements divided into five subsection which are ingratiation, exemplification, intimidation, supplication and self-promotion.

Kacmar et al., (2007) in their work on looking for further approval on the Bolino and Turnley (1999) IM scale's, they attested that there is an empirical evidence for its validity, in addition, all five subscales produced acceptable internal consistency exceeded 0.75. They included, the development of the items version of the impression management scale, employable to examine these five tactics, and marked a very important step in the process of assembling a reliable and valid tool to study impression management behaviors in different organizational settings. Finally, the last part investigates the employees performance. Employees Performance was measured by a scale created by Podsakoff and MacKenzie (1994).

4. Results and Discussion

Reliability analysis

The reliability of the measurements was tested. Cronbach' alpha for measures was 0.7 which indicate to the reliability of the scale used to measure the study variables.

Table (1) coefficient of the questionnaire items

Scale	No. of items	Alpha
Impression Management	22	0.777
Employees Performance	10	0.709

Table (2) work related information and respondents profile

Work and Demographic Information		Freq.	%
Work area	Front of the house	112	21.9
	Back of the house	250	78.1
Job tenure	Less than 5 year	251	74.5
	Between 5 to 10 year	69	22.2
	More than 10 year	42	3.3
Years of experience	Less than 5 year	244	75.8
	Between 5 to 10 year	73	22.2
	More than 10 year	45	2
Educational level	Technical	103	32
	Bachelor	228	66
	Master/PhD	31	2
Marital status	Single	112	29.8
	Married	250	70.2
Gender	Male	262	74.5
	Female	100	25.5
Age	Less than 30 years	991	65.5
	30:40 years	131	32
	More than 40 years	32	2.5

Table (2) indicated that 220 (72.8%) of the respondents are less than 5 year experience, 244(4.96%) are more than 10 year experience and 45 (22.2) are between 5 to 10 year experience. The data also indicated that the majority of 251(74.5%) belong to less than 5 year in current job, 69(22.2) between 5 to 10 year,42 (3.3%) belong to more than 10 years in current job.

Also, the majority of 262 (74.5%) were male, 100(25.4) were female, 199(65.9%) belong to less than 30 years old, 131(34.1%) belong to from 30:40 years old group. Also, 250(70.2%) of the respondents are married, and 112 (29.8%) are single. The data also indicate that the majority of 228 (66.2%) have a bachelor degree and 103(32.1%) graduated from technical schools. Also, 112 (21.9%) of the respondents are working in the front-of-the-house area, and 250 (78.1%) are working in the back-of-the-house area.

4. Impression management and employees performance

A simple regression was conducted to investigate the effect of impression management on employee's performance. The predicted variable was the performance whereas the criterion variable was the managers' independent variables (impression management).

Table (3): The relationship between impression management and employees performance

Variable	Model (performance)	T	Sig.	R2
Self-promotion		41.813	0.060	0.109
		-6.071	0.070	
Ingratiation		46.681	0.060	0.016
		-2.204	0.028	
Exemplification		39.381	0.000	0.010
		-1.720	0.087	
Intimidation		58.129	0.080	0.012
		-1.887	0.060	
Supplication		61.824	0.000	0.004
		-1.137	0.256	
Total IM behaviors		32.481	0.080	0.067
		-4.639	0.079	

Table (3) demonstrated that there is no significant correlation between impression management and employee's performance**.** A possible justification to the negative relationship is that impression management tactics in general are not acceptable in the hotel culture. When leaders realize that their members use of such behaviors they give them negative performance. According to Bolino &Turnley (2003) found that the use of tactics of IM was unrelated to performance evaluations among employees. Also, Bolino &Turnley (2001) found that impression management tactics negatively impacted performance evaluations. On the other hand, Wayne and Kacmar (1991) found that assertive IM tactics (intimidation, supplication, self-promotion, ingratiation,) influence employee's performance positively.

As indicated by Watt's field (1993) bank employees who used impression management tactics not only received higher employees' performance, but also were considered more competent and were thought to possess more leadership ability. Gundersen et al. (1996) also found that IM tactics influence employees' performance. according to Kacmar& Carlson (1999), there is a positive relationship between employees use of impression management tactics and employees performance, when individuals become so interesting with doing impression management tactics to influence the leaders they spend time and effort to do such as extra assignments to their leaders, and become delinquent in their basic responsibilities.

5 .Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to understand the long-term effects of impression management behavior on employee performance at hotels. It aims to identify the relationship between the different impression management strategies and employee performance. A convenience sample of 362 managers were chosen for investigation. The results indicated that there is no significant relationship between impression management and employees performance.

5.2 Recommendations

1- HR managers should train employees how to use self-promotion effectively and limit the use of other-focused tactics. For example, when there is a promotion opportunity, employees should be able to know how to be extraverted and communicate more effectively, to promote their fit with the new job and increase their perceived qualifications.

2- Training systems should be organized to increase the social skills and the awareness of leaders and supervisors at different levels of different impression management behaviors that can be practiced to obtain favorable outcomes.

3- Managers should understand the importance of social and affective elements to performance evaluation decisions, and not focus solely on objective performance.

4- Managers should concern about various impressions management tactics that are used in the recruitment interviews to ensure a candidate qualifications.

5- HR management must provide training programs to get the leaders and the supervisors familiar with knowledge and skills needed to be aware of different impression management strategies.

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إستراتيجيات إدارة الانطباع وأداء العاملين بالفنادق: هل توجد علاقة؟

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الملخص العربي

تهدف الدراسة إلى معرفة العلاقة بين إستراتيجيات إدارة الإنطباع وأداء العاملين بالفنادق. كما تشمل الدراسة على سلوكيات إدارة الانطباع الموجهة نحو الرئيس وسلوكيات إدارة الإنطباع الموجهة نحو الذات. إشتملت أيضاً الدراسة على التملق والإطراء، التظاهر والتمثيل، التخويف والترهيب والتذلل والتضرع والترويج للذات كسلوكيات لإدارة الانطباع. وإشتملت الدراسة على ٤٢٠ إستمارة إستبيان تم توزيعهم على ٢٠ من العاملين فى فنادق الخمس نجوم في القاهرة وبلغت نسبة الاستمارات الصالحة للتحليل الإحصائى ٣٦٢ إستمارة بنسبة ٨٦,٢%. أوضحت النتائج أنه لا توجد علاقة ذات دلالة إحصائية بين سلوكيات إدارة الانطباع وأداء العاملين فى الفنادق.

الكلمات الدالة: إدارة الإنطباع، أداء العاملين، فنادق الخمس نجوم، القاهرة.