Linking Impression Management As A Precursor for Surface Acting: A Conceptual Model

Preeti Mishra
M.Sc-SBT DAVV Indore, M.B.A. -IMS DAVV Indore
SVC Co-op Bank Ltd.
Pune, India

Abstract— Impression management, the process by which people try to control the impressions other form about them plays an important role in emotional labor. In this paper I have tried to present a conceptual model linking impression management to emotional labor. Emotional Labor is a hot topic which is being researched since late and surface acting and deep acting both are part of it, but does emotional labor arises out of some precursors or it is a mundane activity which people follow on daily basis is what I have tried to analyse in this paper. I have tried to form a conceptual model linking the techniques of impression management as a precursor to perform surface acting which in turn affects employee well being and leads to Job stress and Burnout.

Keywords—Emotional labor, Impression management, Deep Acting, Surface Acting, Employee Well Being, Stress, Burnout.

I. INTRODUCTION

Emotional Labor is a process in which an employee expresses organisationally desired emotions during interpersonal interactions at work. This term was first coined by Hoch child (1983) The Managed Heart: commercialisation of Human Feelings. The main purpose of emotional labor was to influence customers' perceptions during service interactions (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993), but now emotional labor is being widely used among employees within the organisation too. The employees while interacting with each other within the organisation use emotional labor knowingly or unknowingly.

Employees perform emotional labor either by surface acting or by deep acting (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993; Hochschild 2003). Surface acting is considered as a physical attempt to conceal Felt emotions (Zapf, 2002) and also it is termed as faking in bad faith (Rafaeli and Sutton, 1987). In deep acting employees consciously change their internal feelings in order to express the organisationally desired emotions. It is termed as faking in good faith as the intention is to help the customers. (Rafaeli and Sutton,1987). Research Findings also suggest that Surface acting is positively related to emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and work family conflict. (Hulsheger et al., 2010; Yanchus et al,2010.)

The concept of impression management was first presented by Goffman (1959), who provided a model in which actors perform differently according to the settings and audiences. Impression management tactics can be useful in controlling their images in others' mind (Goffman, 1959; Jones & Pittman, 1982) better influence the situation (Goffman, 1959) and group dynamics (Kacmar & Carlson, 1999).

Impression Management can be defined as an individual's attempt to control the impressions others form of them. It can help employees to get jobs they want in an organization, more fast promotions, salary increments and better status. Impression management is a common phenomenon in the organizations (Wayne & Liden, 1995), and employees are often found engaged in such behaviours for developing a positive image of self in mind of others (Bolino & Turnley, 1999). Individuals use different techniques to perform Impression management, Five different strategies for impression management were identified by (Jones and pitman 1982) as Self Promotion, Ingratiation, Exemplification, Intimidation and Supplication. These strategies can be used independently of one another (Jones and Pitman 1982).

Although considerable work has been done in both the fields of Emotional labor and Impression management linking both and forming a conceptual model for the same is missing which I have tried to form using the above studies. In this research I have first reviewed previous theoretical perspectives of Impression management and emotional labor and then presented a conceptual model which tries to integrate these ideas. I have also tried to list the consequences of emotional labor which arises due to practising Impression Management. The study is original in the sense that Impression management has been thought of as a precursor to Emotional Labor mainly surface acting which is faking in bad faith for good of self using impression management.

II.   LITERATURE REVIEW

The recent literature on Impression Management and Emotional Labor is vast. Our study focused on review of papers for concept of Impression Management and Techniques used for the same. For, Emotional Labor our study focused on Types of Emotional Labor and Impact of emotional labor on employees well being.

A. Leary Mark and Kowalski Robin (1990): Impression Management: A literature Review and Two Component Model

This Paper has presented a two component model within which the literature regarding Impression Management is reviewed. It has conceptualized Impression Management as being composed of 2 discrete processes. The first one is called as Impression motivation and the second component is called as Impression Construction. This model provides coherence to the literature in the area of Impression Management and supplies a framework for future research in area of Impression Management.

B. Hochschild's (1983)

It classified employees based on the type of acting they performed, the work recognised the importance of controlling emotions according to organizational display rules. Thus, an employee who tried to change only his/her outward appearances and behaviour when exhibiting required emotions is said to do   "Surface Acting" Individuals, can modify more than their outward displays when dictated by situational prescriptions: they have the ability to choose or alter their inner feelings as well .Therefore Hochschild(1983) expanded Goffman's (1959) view of surface acting by adding the notion of deep acting. Thus, when employees feelings do not fit the situation they may use their training or past experiences to help show appropriate emotions which they are required to display. These employees are performing "Deep Acting".

C. Mishra S.K .(2013): Linking Perceived Organisational support to Emotional Labor.

This paper is based on two studies on different occupational groups, the purpose of this paper is to examine the relationship between Perceived Organisational Support and different forms of emotional labor. The study has found that POS is positively related to deep acting and negatively related to surface acting. The stuidy further found that organizational identification mediates the relationship between POS and surface acting.

D. Bolino Mark and Turnley William (1999): Measuring Impression management in Organisations

A scale Development based on the Jones and Pittman Taxonomy .In this study based on the taxonomy proposed by

Jones and Pittman five studies were conducted to develop a measure of employee impression management behaviour.

III.   TECHNIQUES OF IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT

Individuals use different techniques to perform Impression management.

Five different strategies for impression management were identified by (Jones and Pitman 1982) as Self Promotion, Ingratiation, Exemplification, Intimidation and Supplication. These strategies can be used independently of one another (Jones and Pitman 1982).These strategies as defined by (Jones and Pitman 1982) are:

- *Ingratiation (Jones and Pitman 1982):* This is based on the theory that much of our social behaviour is shaped by a concern that others like us and attribute to us such characteristics as warmth, humour, reliability, charm and physical attractiveness. Based on this ingratiation has been defined by Jones and Wortman (1973) as "a class of strategic behaviour illicitly designed to influence a particular other person concerning the attractiveness of one's personal qualities". It is termed as an illicit behaviour as it is directed towards an objective which is not contained in the contract underlying social interaction.

- *Intimidation (Jones and Pitman 1982):* In the above point we saw that the ingratiatory tries to convince other people that he/she is good and likeable; on the other hand the intimidator tries to convince other people that he/she is dangerous. An intimidator shows others that he has resources to inflict pain and stress and the inclination to do so if he/she does not gets his/her way. An intimidator does not wants to be liked by people but wants that people should be feared of him/her. In maximum cases intimidation flows from high power person to low power person than vice-versa.

- *Self Promotion (Jones and Pitman 1982):* It is a combination of both Ingratiation and Intimidation. Here we may wish to be both liked for our attractive personal qualities and respected for our talents and capabilities or we may wish to appear competent so that we gain the social privilege of being intimidating. But self promotion is not equivalent to intimidation. We can convince others of our competence without threatening them of striking fear in their hearts.

- *Exemplification (Jones and Pitman 1982):* In this technique a person presents himself as honest, disciplined, charitable, and self abnegating. He is the saint who walks among us, the martyr who sacrifices for the cause. The person exemplifies his morality, and this person seeks to project integrity and moral worthiness. Exemplification suggest that individuals are engaging in behaviours such as working for extended hours, giving phone calls to the boss from the office telephone late at night to update the

assignment status, coming to office early in the morning even before the office hours and staying late at work or arriving at work early in order to be seen as dedicated (Bolino & Turnley, 1999).

- *Supplication (Jones and Pitman 1982):* In this technique a person exploits his own weakness and dependence. It is a strategy of promoting one's dependence to solicit help from others. They want to be seen as helpless. They arouse the emotion of nurturance in others to help them. Here the person threatens his own self esteem by projecting dependence and inaptitude. The supplicant can also view himself as deserving the largesse of others who are more

fortunate than he is. It is based on the conviction that those who have gained more should be expected to give more, or the supplicant may feel that the system has let him down therefore it is the system which owes him and the person shows passivity. Employees may engage in supplication to seek the help and support from others (Wayne & Ferris, 1990)

IV. MODEL LINKING IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT AND SURFACE ACTING

After review of literature available in field of Impression Management and Emotional labor finally the following Model can be drawn based on available data.
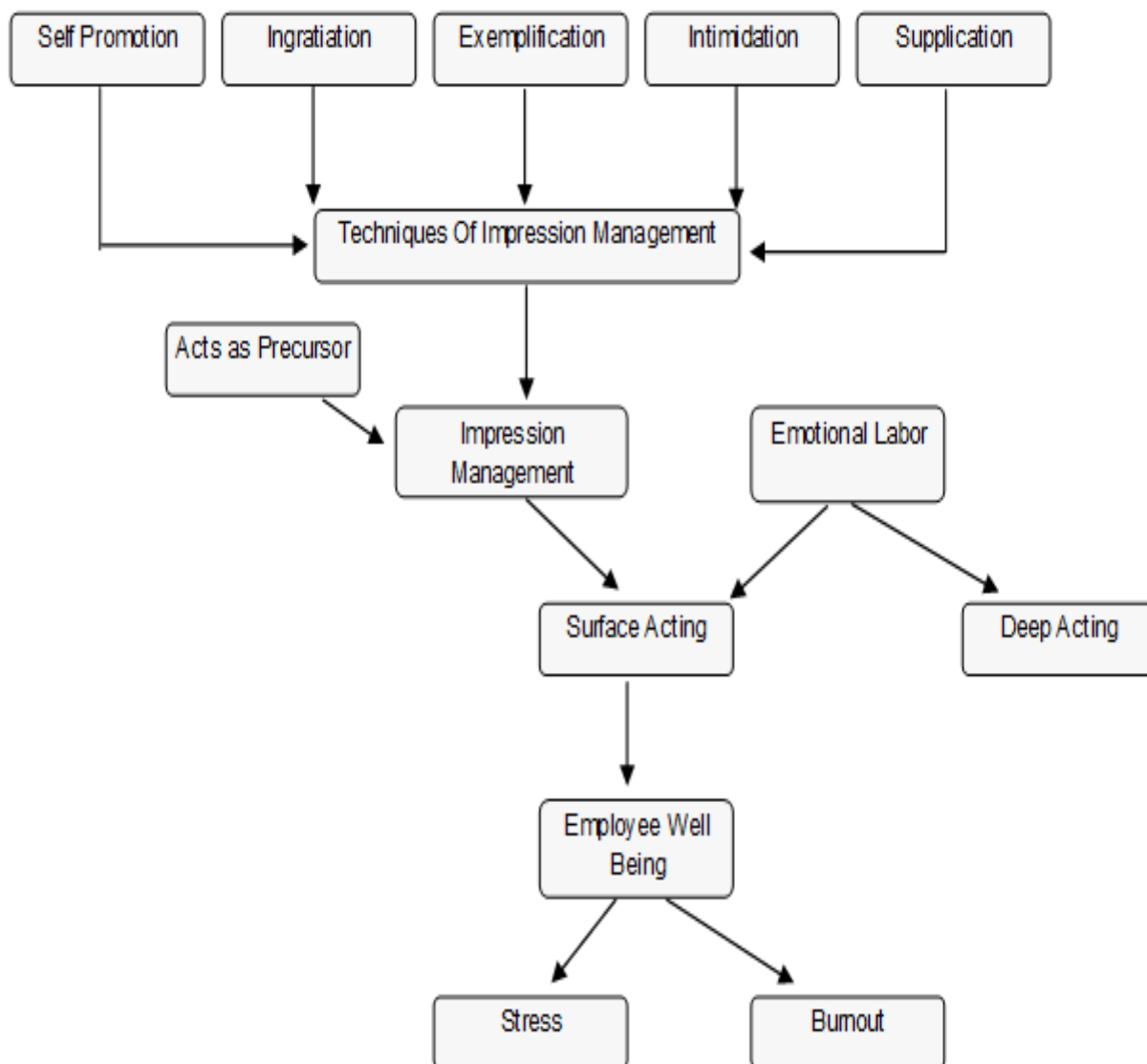

Fig. 1: Model Linking Impression Management to Surface Acting

The Primary objective of this above model was to link Impression management as a Precursor to Surface Acting. In order to do Impression Management the employees try to conceal their felt emotions and show fake emotions to others at workplace and as surface acting is thought of as a physical attempt to conceal felt emotions. (Zapf, 2002) therefore in order to impress other colleagues and customers employees involve in surface acting. If Individuals use these different techniques to do Impression management then they have to conceal their real emotions and project fake emotions at workplace which leads to surface acting. Surface acting in turn leads to certain other consequences which have negative impact on employee well being.

V.   OUTCOMES OF SURFACE ACTING

- **Employee Well Being:** Surface acting is found to have negative effect on employee well being, it is a source of strain that threatens employee well being. (Grandey,2000;Hochschild,1983;Morris and Feldman 1997).

  When felt emotions differ from expressed emotions, tension results and expressing emotions that are
  different from the emotions that are felt poses a challenge to the person's sense of self.(Hochschild,1983). Surface acting is also thought to be associated with negative mental health outcomes. (Morris and Feldman, 1997). Hiding feelings of anger harms employee well being because it reminds employee of their lack of control over their own emotions. (Erickson and Ritter,2001).With regard to employee well being we focus on stress and burnout as two key outcome variables given that these two are the most frequently examined outcome variable in surface acting studies.

- **Stress:** It is a dynamic condition in which an individual is confronted with an opportunity, demand or resource related to what the individual desires and for which the outcome is perceived to be both important and uncertain (R.S.Schuler,1980). Research has shown that employees with low level of commitment perform worse under stress.(Hunter and Thatcher, 2007).Emotional labor becomes a source of stress as customer service grows ever more important(A.A.Grandey,2003;Glomb,Mueller and Rotundo,2004).Surface acting but not deep acting has been related to stress (Grandey,2003).In Surface acting employees.

  Modify their displays without shaping inner feelings. Doing this entails emotional dissonance and the tension can be felt when expressions and feelings diverge.(Hochschild,1983)

- **Burn Out :** It is a kind of stress typically found in employees working in service sector. It occurs when an employee becomes over emotionally involved in interactions with customers and has little way to replenish those emotional resources which are being spent

(Jackson, Schwab & Schuler, 1986). The signs of burnout are emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishments (Cordes and Dougherty, 1993; Maslach,1982). Surface acting is associated with job burn out and depression   (Abraham,1998; Brotheridge and Grandey 2002; Erickson and Wharton,1997) and may result in negative reactions from observers (Ekman,Friesen and O'Sullivan,1988)

The main component of job burnout is the state of depletion and fatigue called as emotional exhaustion. (Maslach   and   Jackson,1981;Wright   and Cropanzano,1998).

VI.   CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

To conclude Impression Management is a phenomenon exhibited by all employees in an organisation knowingly or unknowingly. The present study shows that this phenomena leads to performance of emotional labor by employees mainly surface acting which is detrimental to their well being and leads to negative outcomes such as stress and burnout. If an employee is facing stress and burnout then this can lead to absenteeism and employee turnover. So, this model may have implications for hiring and staffing decisions. If we hire employees who can easily practise Impression management then such people can better cope with demands of surface acting and will have lesser feeling of stress and burnout. Such people are more confident about their ability to manage their emotional displays and can succeed in the work allotted to them. As far as future research is concerned the model does not considers the role of environmental factors in relation to Impression management and surface acting which can be studied. This study is not empirical, so in future lab studies and field studies which are empirical in nature can be designed to study impression management as a precursor to emotional labor esp. Surface acting.

REFERENCES

[1]. Abraham, R. (1998). Emotional dissonance in organizations: Antecedents, consequences, and moderators. Genetic, Social, and General Psychology Monographs, 124, 229–246

[2]. Ashforth, B.E., & Humphrey, R.H. 1993. Emotional labor in service roles: The influence of identity. Academy of Management Review, 18(1): 88-115.

[3]. Bolino, C., M. & Turnley, W. (1999). Measuring impression management in organizations: A scale development based on the Jones and Pittman Taxonomy. Organizational Research Methods, 2, 187-206.

[4]. Brotheridge, C. M., & Grandey, A. A. (2002). Emotional labor and burnout:Comparing two perspectives of "people work." Journal of Vocational Behavior, 60,17–39. doi:

10.1006/jvbe.2001.1815

[5]. Cordes,C.L. & Dougherty,T.W.(1993).A Review And An Integration Of Research On Job Burnout.Academy Of Management Review,18(4),621-656

[6]. Ekman, P., Friesen, W.V., & O'Sullivan, M. 1988. Smiles when lying. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 54(3): 414-420.

[7]. Erickson, R. J., & Ritter, C. (2001). Emotional labor, burnout, and inauthenticity: Does gender matter? Social Psychology Quarterly, 64, 146– 163. DOI: 10.2307/3090130

[8]. Erickson, R. J., & Wharton, A. S. (1997). Inauthenticity and depression. Work and Occupations, 24, 188–213. doi: 10.1177/0730888497024002004

[9]. Glomb,T.M.,Kammeyer Mueller,J.D.& Rotundo, M. (2004) Emotional Labor Demands And Compensating Wage Differentials.Journal Of Applied Psychology,89(4),700-714.DOI:10.1037/0021-9010.89.4.700

[10]. Goffman, E., 1959. The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life. New York, Doubleday Anchor Books

[11]. Grandey, A. A. (2000). Emotion regulation in the workplace: A new way to conceptualize emotional labor. Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 5, 95–110. doi: 10.1037/1076-8998.5.1.95

[12]. Grandey, A. A. (2003). When "the show must go on": Surface acting and deep acting as determinants of emotional exhaustion and peer-rated service delivery. Academy of Management Journal, 46, 86–96. doi: 10.2307/30040678

[13]. Grandey, A. A., Fisk, G. M., & Steiner, D. D. (2005). Must "service with a smile" be stressful? The moderating role of personal control for U.S. and French employees. Journal of Applied Psychology, 90, 893–904. doi: 10.1037/0021-9010.90.5.893

[14]. Hochschild, A. R. (1983). The managed heart: Commercialization of human feeling. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

[15]. Hochschild, A.R. (2003), The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling, (Twentieth Anniversary Edition) University of California press, Berkley, CA.

[16]. Hu ̈lsheger, U.R., Lang, J.W.B. and Maier, G.W. (2010), "Emotional labor, strain, and performance: testing reciprocal relationships in a longitudinal panel study", Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, Vol. 15 No. 4, pp. 505-521.

[17]. Hunter, L.W.,Thatcher,S.M.B.(2007).Feeling The Heat: Effects Of Stress, Commitment And Job Experience On Job Performance.The Academy Of Management Journal,50(4),953-968

[18]. Jackson,S.E.,Schwab,R.L.,Schuler,R.S.(1986).Toward An Understanding Of The Burnout Phenomenon.Journal Of Applied Psychology,Vol 71,No.4,630-640.

[19]. Jones, E. E., & Pittman, T. S. (1982). Toward a general theory of strategic self presentation. In J. Suls (Ed.), Psychological perspectives on the self (pp. 231-262). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

[20]. Jones,E.E.,& Wortman,C.(1973).Ingratiation:An Attributional Approach. Morristown, NJ: General Learning Press.

[21]. Judge, T. A., Locke, E. A., & Durham, C. C. (1997). The dispositional cause of job satisfaction: A core evaluations approach. Research in Organizational Behavior, 19, 151–188.

[22]. Kacmar K. M., & Carlson S. D., (1999). Effectiveness of impression management. Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 1999, 29(6), 1293-1315.

[23]. Leary,M.R., & Kowalski,R.M. (1990). Impression Management: A Literature Review And Two Component Model. Psychological Bulletin, 107 (1), 34-47.

[24]. Maslach,C. (1982).Burnout: The Cost of caring, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.Prentice Hall,c 1982

[25]. Maslach, C., & Jackson, S.E. 1981. The Maslach Burnout Inventory. Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.

[26]. Mishra,S.K.,(2014). "Linking Percieved Organizational Support To Emotional Labor",Personal Review,Vol 43 issue 6 pp.845-860.

[27]. Morris, J. A., & Feldman, D. C. (1997). Managing emotions in the workplace. Journal of Managerial Issues, 9, 257–274.

[28]. Rafaeli, A. and Sutton, R.I. (1987), "Expression of emotion as part of the work role", Academy of Management Review, Vol. 12 No. 1, pp. 23-37.

[29]. Schuler,R.S.,(1980).Definition And Conceptualization Of Stress In Organizations. Organizational Behaviour and Human Performance,Vol 25, Issue 2, 184-215

[30]. Wayne, S. J. & Ferris, G. R. (1990) . Influence tactics, affect, and exchange quality in supervisor subordinate interactions: A laboratory experiment and field study. Journal of Applied Psychology, 75(5): 487-499.

[31]. Wayne J. S.y, & Liden C. R., (1995). Effects of Impression Management On Performance Ratings: A Longitudinal Study. Academy of Management Journal, 38(1), 232-260.

[32]. Wharton, A. S. (1993). The affective consequences of service work: Managing emotions on the job. Work and Occupations, 20, 205–232. doi:

10.1177/0730888493020002004.

[33].   Wharton, A. S. (1996). Service with a smile: Understanding the consequences of emotional labor. In C. L. Macdonald & C. Sirianni (Eds.), Working in the service society (pp. 91–112). Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

[34].   Wright, T.A., & Cropanzano, R. 1998. Emotional exhaustion as a predictor   of job performance and voluntary turnover. Journal of Applied Psychology, 83, 486-493.

[35].   Yanchus, N.J., Eby, L.T., Lance, C.E. and Drollinger, S. (2010), "The impact of emotional labor on work-family outcomes", Journal of Vocational Behavior, Vol. 76 No. 1, pp. 105-117.

[36].   Zapf, D. (2002), "Emotion work and psychological strain. A review of the literature and some conceptual considerations", Human Resource Management Review, Vol.12 No. 2, pp. 237-268.