

IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT AT WORK: INTENTION OF CASUAL WORKERS

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to investigate why casual employees at a global firm in Zimbabwe engaged in impression management. This exploratory qualitative study investigated casual workers' intention for engaging in impression management at the case global firm in Zimbabwe using the interpretivism research philosophy. Face to face, semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from ten research participants who had been employed by the global firm in Zimbabwe for a minimum of five months. The study found that casual workers at the case global firm in Zimbabwe are driven to control their work impressions to preserve their good reputation, build social capital, and accomplish career-related objectives including moving up the corporate ladder, receiving high performance reviews, obtaining a permanent position, and getting promoted. Therefore, as it is, casual workers at the case global firm in Zimbabwe use impression management tactics with the overall aim of maintaining job security. The current study recommends that casual workers should identify the circumstances in which impression management is most appropriate and make

an effort to become more aware of when and how often to manage impressions. They could do this by practicing self-monitoring, receiving feedback, or participating in other professional development activities. The study also urges managers at the global firm in Zimbabwe to encourage workers to utilize impressions that are authentic and discourage employees from managing images that are destructive to the organization.

Keywords: *Casual worker; Global firm; Job security; Impressions; Impression management*

JEL Classification: C31, J22, J23, L61, M54, O19

1. Introduction

The precarious nature of atypical employment means that atypical workers worldwide are exposed to a range of vulnerabilities, particularly in terms of income, health and safety at work and job insecurity (Kalleberg, 2012; Carr, 2023; Shin, 2023; Irabor et al, 2019). Sassenrath (2020) argue that the proportion of workers experiencing job insecurity is increasing worldwide and is currently over 25%. A long-term study by Burgard, Brand and House (2019) found that employees who experience job insecurity suffer negative behavioural and attitudinal effects that affect both their employers and them. The study identified high absenteeism rates, high turnover, low job satisfaction and poor performance as some of the behavioural and attitudinal effects of job insecurity. When confronted with uncertainty, people develop strategies to cope and improve (House, 2019; Masindi et al., 2023; Sassenrath, 2020). Shin (2023) argues that given the above sentiments, it is imperative to examine the strategies that non-standard workers employ to combat job insecurity. Several authors believe that employees who practice impression management may be able to reduce the insecurity associated with a job (Xu, 2022; De Cuyper, 2014; House, 2019; Carr, 2023). Similarly, Burgard (2019) argues that the unstable characteristic of non-standard employment is the reason why alternate safety measures like impression management are necessary. Chen and Fang (2018) characterise impression management as any action a person takes to influence or control how others perceive them. Researchers have shown that the factors that drive impression management are the consequence of the impressions formed, the significance of the preferred outcomes, and the disparity between the preferred and actual image (Sassenrath, 2020; Shin, 2023;

Carr, 2023). House (2019) claim that employing impression management techniques help workers to get instrumental and social support of superiors as well as sway their opinion.. For most people, keeping their job is a top priority, and maintaining a positive image in the workplace is extremely important if you care about your career (Sessenrath, 2020). Bolino (2016) further state that impression management practices can give workers hope that they can reduce the possibility of an unfavorable career action. When supervisors are concerned, they may also have an impact on the actual likelihood of job loss. Lam (2020), who claims that proactive measures such as impression management can make employees feel more effective and reduce their feelings of job insecurity. While some studies (Lam, 2020; Bolino, 2016) have attempted to examine the nature and prevalence of managing impressions in organizations, the majority of studies have concentrated on techniques used by non-standard workers to manage their impressions. (Klotz, 2018; Xu, 2022; House, 2019; Mpabanga et al., 2023). Considering how common impression management is, it would be beneficial to investigate why employees use it. The purpose of this research is to investigate the reasons why casual workers at the global organization in Zimbabwe engage in impression management. The study's research question is structured as follows:

- a. Why do workers choose to manage impressions at work?

2. Literature Review

1. This section covers the theories behind impression management, tactics for managing impressions, and reasons to manage impressions.

2.1. Leary and Kowalski (1990)'s Two Factor Model

The Two-factor model conceptualizes impression management in terms of impression construction and motivation (Bourdage et al., 2020). Leary and Kowalski (1990)'s model assumes that the eight major components listed in Table 1 below have an impact on impression creation and motivation. Madan and Srivastava (2016) characterise impression drive as the way in which external cues lead individuals to direct the images that others create of them. The process by which an individual modifies their behavior in order to affect how others perceive them is known as impression creation (Leary and Kowalski, 1990; Madan and Srivastava, 2016; Bourdage et al., 2020). The decision about the impression to be created and how to create it, including the selection of an appropriate method to create the impression, is made during the impression creation process (Krauss,

2022; Ishikawa et al., 2021). Table 1 below shows the factors determining impression motivation and creation as given by the two-factor model.

Table 1: Factors determining impression motivation and construction

Impression motivation antecedents	Impression construction determinants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significance of required goal • Discrepancies between needed and present image • Impression goal relevance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needed and undesired self images • Role constraints • Target’s value • present or possible social images

Source: Leary and Kowalski, 1990

The preconditions for building an impression and the motivation for impression management are listed in Table 1. The three most important preconditions for impression building motivation are goal relevance of impression, importance of the required goal and the differences between needed and present image. Employees who are driven by impression formation process are influenced by their self-image, their role constraints, and the value of the target, their current or potential image, and their desired and undesired identity image.

2.2. Compensatory Control Model (CCM)

The basic idea of Hockey's (1997) Compensatory control model is that people actively manage to adapt to stressful or unsafe working conditions. Employees who actively cope make more effort to achieve their goals. According to the theory of compensatory control, active coping increases the resources available to fulfil the demands, but also has psychological and physical consequences. According to Landau, Kay and Whitson (2015), people who feel powerless in a situation use compensatory techniques or personal resources to normalize their sense of control. Impression management techniques are some of the strategies that can be used to meet the needs of the organisation (Landau et al., 2015). The compensatory control model assumes that personal resources such as impression management can be used to secure social support and achieve economic goals in the organization. Compensatory control model also assumes that employees could use impression management as a means to achieve their desired goal (Whitson, 2015). Researchers have used the compensatory control model because it facilitates analyzing the motivations for impression management.

2.3. Conceptualization of Impression Management

The behaviour of workers to uphold, secure the impression of their targets is referred to as impression management (Ho and Stanley, 2021; Krauss, 2022). According to Bolino and Turnley (2016), impression management is the use of strategies by employees to influence how others perceive them. Atypical workers use impression management, according to Bass et al., (2023), to persuade prospective or present employers of their value to the company. Bourdage et al (2020) also state that then components of impression management affect a number of dimensions, including career success and supervisor evaluation.

2.4. Impression Management Behaviors

Bolino (1999) classified behaviors of managing impressions into three categories. Table 2 below shows the classified behaviors of managing impressions against the impression management tactics adopted.

Table 2: Impression management behavior and tactics

Impression management behavior	Tactic of managing impression
Supervisor focused	Ingratiation
Job focused	Self-promotion
Self-focused	Exemplification

Source: Bolino, 1999

2.4.1. Supervisor Focused Impression Management

Being popular and looking good are the goals of impression-control behaviours of superiors (Varela et al., 2016; Shi et al., 2024; Xin et al., 2014; Crețoiu; 2019). According to Shi et al., (2024), workers who utilize supervisor focused impression management behaviours attempt to project attractiveness and likeability by either showing conformity of opinion or complimenting the supervisor. According to Kingsley and Westerman (2019), ingratiation is associated with supervisor-focused impression management behaviour. Ni et al., (2023) define flattery as a tactic used by employees to gain the respect and favour of their targets. Some actions, such as behaviour that matches the target's preferences (Halbesleben et al., 2020) or providing favours for the target (Baumeister, 2018), are examples of how workers demonstrate their ingratiation. Rosenfeld et al. (2019) find that the ability of ingratiation to influence important outcomes in the workplace varies. Research by Higgins et al. (2018) found that a number of factors can influence the success of an

ingratiation attempt, such as who is ingratiating, who the target is, and under what circumstances the behaviour occurs. Proost et al (2018) found that those who used a combination of ingratiation and self-presentation had a higher chance of receiving a job offer than those who relied on ingratiation alone.

2.4.4. Job Focused Impression Management

The aim of behaviours that give the impression of being competent is to convey competence. One of these behaviours is the acceptance of recognition for completed tasks (Al-Shatti and Ohana, 2021; Curtis et al., 2023; Peck, 2017). Self-presentation is related to job-related impression management (Curtis et al., 2023; Levashina, 2017). The goal of self-promotion is to look like a successful, capable, knowledgeable and competent person (Peck, 2017). Self-promoters tend to emphasise their successes, claim credit for positive outcomes (Bolino, 2016) and mention notable people by name (Long, 2016; Jones and Pittman, 2015). However, similar to ingratiators, self-promoters also seek to enhance their reputation through a variety of actions, which can be risky for many people (Cialdini and De Nicholas 2019). The habits of self-promoters, if not well regulated, can lead to the paradox of the self-promoter (Berman et al. 2019). Paradox of self promoter means that employees appear less competent by over emphasizing their credentials and showing self-interest (Berman et al., 2014; Jones & Pittman, 2016). Similarly, Tsai (2015) claims that employees who constantly engage in self-promotion can alienate others. To overcome this contradiction, self-promoters should build credibility by projecting a modest self-image (Lalwani et al., 2023; Gardner and Avolio 2018).

2.4.3. Self-Focused Impression Management

To convey the image of an exemplary employee who is hardworking, cooperative, productive and kind, practice self-centred impression management associated with role modelling (Bolino and Turnley, 1999; Lalwani et al., 2023; Lewis & Neighbours, 2015; Wayne and Ferris, 2019). For example, it can be helpful to work harder when the target is present (Bolino et al., 2006). Exemplification is typically used in situations of extreme job insecurity (Learly, 2019), and certain workers find exemplification useful when they feel insecure (Sezer, 2022; Haynie, 2018). Employees who value exemplification project an image of diligence and loyalty to the organisation, which influences organisational decision-makers and reduces the likelihood of job loss (Pontari, 2019). Exemplars behave in an egocentric impression management manner to give the impression that they are keen to endure for a reason (Andrews, 2019). According to Leary (2019), employees who work a lot with exemplars run the risk of appearing pious and hypocritical to others.

2.5. Motivation for Impression Management

According to Leary and Kowalski (2010), it is motivation that drives people to use impression management techniques to achieve their goals. Due to the nature of atypical employment and its potential impact, temporary workers often employ a range of impression management strategies to demonstrate their value to the organisation and be considered for permanent employment (Grant, 2019). According to Pounders (2016), temporary workers' intentions to stay with the company or move up to a better position are directly linked to their impression management behaviour. On the contrary, a study by Sias, Kramer and Jenkins (2019) has shown that non-standard workers who neither believe nor expect to stay with the company much longer give little thought to their impression management behaviour. Some of the motivations for using impression management techniques at work are listed below.

2.5.1. Gaining Social Rewards and Approval

Managing impressions is the process of falsifying information to sway the opinions of others in order to promote one's own goals or those of society (Schlenker and Pontari, 2020). As they are social creatures, workers regularly socialise with their colleagues (Gardner, 2018). Gardner (2018) goes on to explain that consciously or unconsciously, attempts are made to change the image that is projected during social interactions. Social self-presentation is the most important means of gaining social advantage (Martinko, 2018). A study by Schlenker (2000) has shown that workers engage in impression management to strengthen their social relationships and to be popular with their targets. In addition, Rao (2015) claims that employees who show a positive impression benefit socially in many ways. Social incentives depend on the actor's ability to convince the target that they possess certain traits (Schmidt; 2015).

2.5.2. Getting a Permanent Job

Due to the large pool of potential competitors, impression management can serve as a ticket to permanent employment; a aim that the majority of casual workers pursue (Roulin, 2014; Gardner, 2018). According to Koopman (2021), the prospect of a permanent job offer motivates atypical workers to regulate their impression (Al-Shatti and Ohana, 2021). Kang et al. (2012) also state that effective self-presentation is crucial to obtaining and keeping a permanent job. According to Kang et al. (2019), impression management correlates favourably with internal quantitative and qualitative employability, which motivates employees to prove

their worth and contribute to their current company. In addition, a study by Wittekind (2017) has shown that employability strategies supported by external quantitative and qualitative perceived employability can lead to a supply-demand dynamic that benefits employees and can ultimately lead to them being hired for better positions.

2.5.3. Performance Evaluation

Employees are more likely to process impressions if they desire a permanent position or a better performance review (Krieg et al., 2018; Terracciano, 2017). According to the principle of goal relevance, employees are more inclined to regulate their perceptions if they have some influence on the outcomes they want to achieve (Houston et al., 2018). According to Chawla (2021), managing impressions is a critical emotional concern in the performance review. Managers regulate workers' access to crucial benefits such as favourable performance evaluations and therefore the impression their managers has of them is crucial (Tarraf, 2018). Researchers have documented various impression management strategies used by employees to improve their performance appraisals. These strategies include raising performance standards in public (Ferris and Porac, 2017), offering justifications and regrets for substandard work (Eagly and Acksen, 2016; Wood and Mitchell, 2019; Adagbairi and Okolie, 2019), and attempting to salvage one's reputation after a poor appraisal (Eagly, 2019; Schneider, 2018).

2.5.4. Promotion

In the internal labour market, impression management is known to create job and promotion opportunities (Arif et al., 2011; Olatunji et al., 2021). Hazer and Jacobson (2013) found that promotion, internal employability and self-presentation are positively correlated. Imran (2011) claims that both permanent and non-permanent workers often control their impression in order to move up. Similarly, Klotz (2014) claims that employees who want to be promoted usually need to create the impression that they are intelligent, committed and promising for their employers.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research Paradigm

In order to understand and appreciate casual workers' narratives about their reasons for impression management in the global company in Zimbabwe, the researchers opted for an interpretivist research philosophy. This philosophy enabled the researchers to capture the subjective interpretation of casual workers' reasons for impression management. The researchers also utilised the interpretivist

paradigm because it has the same philosophical underpinnings as the qualitative methodology used in this study.

3.2. Research Approach

The researchers used a qualitative research methodology. According to Myers (2013), a qualitative technique enables researchers to understand people's actions and behaviours. Using a qualitative research approach, the researchers were able to investigate the motivations of the study participants for using impression management in the global case company in Zimbabwe.

3.3. Research Setting

This study was done at a global organisation in Zimbabwe, which employs people from local, national and international labour markets, making the case organization a multi-ethnic site. The study site is easily accessible due to its proximity to a major railway line and major main road.

3.4. Population and Sampling

The study population consists of all casual workers in a global firm in Zimbabwe. The researchers used a non-probability sample. The casual workers who were most suitable and available for this study were selected using purposive sampling. The purposive sampling method was utilized in this study because it allowed the researchers to select representative participants with appropriate experience in relation to the topic under study.

3.5. Sample Size

Researchers usually categorize qualitative studies as studies with a small sample size, between one and thirty people. Nevertheless, the sample size was determined by the researchers according to the principle of data saturation. The researchers reached data saturation after conducting ten interviews. This therefore means that the researchers specifically selected a total of ten research participants. A prerequisite for participation in the study was casual labourers who had been working for the global firm in Zimbabwe for at least five months.

3.6. Data Collection Procedures

After agreeing to take part in this study, the study participants were called to arrange an appointment for a personal, semi-structured interview. According to Rabionet (2014), face-to-face semi-structured interviews allow researchers to discuss topics related to the study questions. Ten people working as casual

labourers were interviewed by the researcher. The interviews were conducted in locations that were convenient for the study participants. The duration of the interviews ranged from ten to twenty-four minutes.

3.7. Data Analysis

The researchers used thematic analysis to identify and analyse recurring themes in the collected data. The computerised qualitative analysis system NVivo supported the researchers in the thematic analysis. Buetow (2010) argues that thematic analysis allows the researcher to identify important themes and patterns that regularly emerge from the data. In analysing the interview data, the researchers also adhered to Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework for thematic data analysis. The steps that the researchers took in analysing the data are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Thematic analysis stages

Step	Description of the step
1. Becoming familiar with the data	-Reading and re-reading transcripts to become familiar with the data and its content.
2. Generating initial codes	-After reviewing the interview responses, relevant codes were created in light of the participant's comments. -Organising information into segments of text and writing a word that represents a category (codes)
3. Searching for themes	-Different codes were grouped together under broader themes, and separate themes were generated in certain cases
4. Reviewing themes	-Themes were reviewed to make sure they represent the code-Themes were refined and themes that share same meaning were combined
5. Defining and naming themes	-Names were given to final themes identified -Themes were defined according to their meaning
6. Producing the report	-Quotes from interviewees were used to support the themes presented in the findings section. -Themes were aligned to the study objectives and literature

Source: Braun and Clarke (2006)

3.8. Strategies to ensure data quality and integrity

The researchers ensured research rigour by using the criteria of reliability, credibility, transferability and confirmability described by Lincoln and Guba (1986). Table 4 below shows the strategies used to measure trustworthiness and the strategies used to ensure data quality and integrity.

Table 4: Strategies to ensure data quality and integrity

Criteria	Strategies used
Credibility	-Peer debriefing - prolonged engagement with the participants
Transferability	-Data saturation -providing thick description of the interviews
Confirmability	- Results of the study were interpreted without the influence of researchers' personal opinions.
Dependability	-Compilation of rich description of research method and process

Source: Authors' fieldwork

3.9. Ethical considerations

The research participants were informed about the objectives of the research and their rights as participants. Participants in the study were also given the assurance that their participation was completely voluntary and they could withdraw at any moment. Finally, study participants were informed that their identity and confidentiality would be protected using pseudonyms.

3.10. Profiles of research participants

Participants in this study were identified by the letter "IM". The research participants' experience, qualifications and interview length are summarized in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Participants' profiles

No.	Pseudonyms	Age	Sex	Experience	Highest Qualification	Interview time
1	IM1	20	F	5months	A level certificate	15mins
2	IM2	24	F	24months	Diploma	16mins
3	IM3	27	M	13months	Bachelor's degree	17mins
4	IM4	21	F	9months	Diploma	11 mins
5	IM5	29	M	11months	Bachelor's degree	10mins
6	IM6	33	M	48months	Master's degree	24mins
7	IM7	30	F	24months	Bachelor's degree	20mins
8	IM8	32	M	36months	Bachelor's degree	21mins
9	IM9	19	F	7months	O level certificate	12mins
10	1M10	34	M	24months	Diploma	14mins

Source; Authors' fieldwork

4. Findings

After face-to-face semi-structured interviews were carried out, three broad themes emerged as shown in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Themes and sub-themes

Theme	Sub-themes
Getting a better job	-Landing a better job -Getting a permanent job -Promotion
Increase in social and economic capital	-Salary increment -Positive image -Getting extra rewards
Performance appraisal evaluations	-Better performance evaluations -Good performance appraisal rating -Better performance score for promotion

Source; Authors' fieldwork

4.1. Theme 1: Getting a Better Job

Most research participants stated that they use impression management to improve their chances of getting hired by the global firm in Zimbabwe. The responses of the participants are displayed in this regard in Table 7.

Table 7: Participants' quotes on getting a better job

Pseudonym	Quotes
IM1	<i>'Impression management is the best way to get a permanent job here'</i>
IM4	<i>'Appearing competent is the only way to contract renewal'</i>
IM5	<i>'Impression management and being promoted work hand in hand here my brother'</i>
IM6	<i>'It's hard to get a permanent job, so I try impression management to convince my superiors to give me a fulltime job'</i>
IM7	<i>"Considering the precarious nature of my contract, I don't have an option but to pretend as a dedicated worker. The ultimate goal is to get a promotion or contract renewal"</i>
IM8	<i>'Tinengetichidakutitigarepabasa, (The goal is to have a number of contract renewals)'</i>

Source: Authors' fieldwork

As demonstrated above, the majority of research participants stated that they used impression management in an effort to improve their employment prospects. They talked of getting a promotion, a permanent employment, and a better job.

4.2. Theme 2: Social Capital and Economic Gains

The results of the study show that eight of the ten research participants identified gaining social capital and economic gains as their motive for engaging in impression management. Their related quotes are presented below.

- “*Showing your positive image at work means you will be in good books with your supervisors.*” (IM1);
- “*As a casual worker you need favors from your bosses in terms of getting extra rewards through overtime, so the best is to appear good and dedicated in their eyes.*” (IM2);
- “*If you appear to be competent, there is room for contract renewal or promotion. Once promoted it then means salary increment.*” (IM3);
- “*Impression management helps me to gain social capital and being loved by my bosses.*” (IM5);
- “*Supervisors will always consider you first for better job opportunities if you appear to be dedicated. Better job opportunities mean getting extra incentives.*” (IM7);
- “*There is positive correlation between impression management and social capital.*”(IM8)
- “*Baba totoita yose yosekutiufarirwepabasanevakuruvedu ava, kuitirakutipakamuka something ndiweunopihwazvobvazvatofambapanyanyadzehomweidzi. (Impression management improves your financial position through promotion or contract renewals).*” (IM9); and
- “*Showing your positive image at work goes hand in hand with getting extra rewards through contract renewals.*” (IM10).

4.3. Theme 3: Performance Appraisal Evaluation

The underlying commonality for the research participants is that impression management enables them to get positive performance evaluation at the case global firm in Zimbabwe. Research participants believe that impression management

fosters better performance evaluations and performance appraisal ratings. For example, IM3 stated:

“I want a positive performance rating. Performance ratings are used for contract renewal and promotion.”

IM4 and IM7 shared the same sentiments, stating:

‘It’s difficult to get a promotion if your performance appraisal ratings are low, so we use impression management to make sure we get positive performance ratings’.

IM8 and IM9 revealed that they engage in impression management to improve performance rating for promotion. In this regard, IM8 remarked:

“Tozviiitirakutitinzitoshandazvakanyanya then we improve performance ratings for promotion.”

5. Discussion of the Findings

The aim of this study was to explore the reasons why casual workers in a global organisation in Zimbabwe engage in impression management. Three themes emerged from the quotes of the study participants, namely getting a better job, better performance appraisal and increased social and economic capital. The following section contains a discussion of the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the study.

5.1. Getting a Better Job

A number of research participants revealed that they engage in impression management with the aim of getting a better job at the case global firm in Zimbabwe. These participants identified the desire to get more job opportunities within, limited permanent position prospects and desire for promotion and getting a permanent job as factors which induce them to manage their impressions at work. In this regard, IM6 stated; *‘It’s hard to get a permanent job, so I try impression management to convince my superiors to give me a fulltime job’.*

Kang et al. (2012) support the above viewpoints and state that impression management can serve as a ticket to permanent employment. Similarly, a study by Wittekind (2017) has shown that impression management, supported by an external quantitative and qualitative perceived employability, can lead to a dynamic between supply and demand that is favourable to workers and can eventually get

them into better jobs. In another study by Al-Shatti & Ohana (2021), it was found that the motivation for impression management among atypical workers is the possibility of a permanent job offer.

5.2. Increase in Social Capital and Economic Gains

Some participants indicated that they engage in impression management in order to increase their social capital and have economic gains. These participants indicated that positive image generated from impression management help them to get extra income which comes with new job opportunities offered to them within the organisation. Seconding the above statements is IM2, who has this to say; *“As a casual worker you need favors from your bosses in terms of getting extra rewards through overtime and new job opportunities, so the best is to appear good and dedicated in their eyes.”*

The perspectives of IM2 are in line with a study by Schlenker (2000) which showed that workers engage in impression management to strengthen social relationships and be liked by their targets. In addition, Rao (2015) posits that if workers make favourable impressions, they may gain many social rewards from their targets. In contrast, Leary (2019) posits that workers who frequently use impression management to gain social capital run the risk of being seen by others as sanctimonious and hypocritical.

5.3. Performance Appraisal Evaluations

A total of eight of the ten research participants indicated that they engage in impression management in order to get positive performance appraisal evaluations. These research participants identified the need to have high performance appraisal ratings which are used for promotion and contract renewal. In this regard, IM7 said: *‘It’s difficult to get a promotion if your performance appraisal ratings are low, so we use impression management to make sure we get positive performance ratings’.*

IM7 aligns with Krieg et al., (2018)’s sentiments that the motivation to manage impressions increases when workers want to achieve a job or achieve a better performance evaluation. Similarly, Chawla (2021) argues that impression management is a central psychological issue in the performance appraisal process. In addition, Tarraf (2018) argues that supervisors control employees’ access to important rewards such as positive performance ratings and as such their supervisor’s impressions of them are critical.

5.4 Contribution of the Study

This study makes both a theoretical and a practical contribution by giving fresh insights into the reasons why casual workers engage in impression management. Employers should understand the motivations for impression management and identify organisational factors that encourage impression management behaviours. For casual employees, projecting the appropriate image is essential to their success in both their professional and personal lives. This study would also make employees aware that if impression management behaviours are known to managers and are detrimental to the company, the good reputation that was built through earlier impression management will be damaged, and the overall loss will be greater than the gain.

6. Limitations and Direction for Future Studies

The study had certain shortcomings. The researchers sought to understand the unique motivations for practising impression management. Therefore, the study only included casual workers and the results cannot be generalised to workers with other types of contracts. Our specific research site, a global firm in Zimbabwe, raises questions regarding the generalisability of the study's findings to other global companies in Zimbabwe. This qualitative study utilised semi-structured interviews which have a number of limitations in terms of the research. A quantitative or mixed methods research approach might have helped to clarify further the findings of the study. Future studies investigating the reasons why casual workers engage in impression management should strongly consider gender as a moderating element. In addition, future research needs to look more closely at how effective impression management is in achieving the goals of casual workers.

7. Conclusion

The ability to impress superiors is vital for workers who intend to reduce job insecurity, achieve career growth and better employment opportunities. The study's findings show that in the face of work insecurity, casual workers seek alternative ways to reduce the threat of impression management. In summary, casual workers in the global case firm in Zimbabwe engage in impression management to see more employment opportunities, receive positive performance appraisals, and get better work opportunities in the labour market. The study recommends managers to encourage staff members to make true impressions that are advantageous to the company, and forbid workers from managing impressions when doing so is counterproductive.

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