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| Research Article

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Impression Management and its Impact on Improving Service Quality

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Abstract: The research aims to study the impact of impression management on improving the quality of services. It highlights the concept of impression management and the reasons for adopting its methods in the work environment and the strategies associated with it. It also highlights the quality of services and the factors affecting them, with a focus on Rafidain Bank in Misan Governorate as an applied model for the research. The descriptive analytical approach was adopted, as the questionnaire was used as a tool to collect data from employees, and the SPSS program was used to test the hypotheses. The importance of the research is highlighted in helping managers and employees understand the impact of impression management in providing high-quality services. The results showed that there is a positive, statistically significant relationship between impression management and service quality, which indicates that management's interest in impression management has a positive impact on improving the quality of its services. The study recommends that the organization under study and all organizations should conduct awareness courses on how to use impression management methods and strategies in an appropriate and effective manner to improve the quality of services provided.

Key words: Impression Management, Service Quality, Rafidain Bank

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Introduction

The quality of services is considered one of the basic factors that contribute to achieving customer satisfaction and achieving a competitive advantage for institutions, whether in the public or private sector. The rapid developments and changes that the world is witnessing make the desires or requests of customers subject to many changes and it may be difficult to meet them in a perfect manner, Therefore, the focus on service quality is no longer based solely on traditional standards, but has become linked to many other factors, such as the organization's ability to innovate or adapt to different circumstances by adopting new methods that ensure continuous improvement in the services provided, thus achieving customer satisfaction.

The impression taken by customers about the organization is considered one of the most important topics affecting the services provided by the organization and the way customers deal with it, because a good impression can make customers continue to deal with the organization in various circumstances, which pushes the organization to pay attention to the quality of its services to

maintain its good image with customers, or the opposite, a bad impression may lead to customers gradually moving away from dealing with the organization, which leads to its failure. Therefore, the topic of impression management should be of utmost importance to all organizations, as it leads the organization to take the right steps that enable it to benefit from positive impressions about it and continuously improve them, or address negative impressions about it and gradually transform them into positive impressions.

The research aims to study the impact of impression management on the quality of service provided in the banking sector of Misan Governorate by analyzing how impression management practices affect institutional performance. It also seeks to identify the methods and stages included in this topic and provide effective practical recommendations that contribute to enhancing the quality of services provided by adopting effective impression management methods and strategies.

1-Research methodology

framework that helps organizations develop their management strategies to meet the multiple and changing requirements of customers in today's dynamic and complex environment.

1.1 Research problem

The research attempts to study the impact of impression management on an organization's ability to improve the quality of its services. The research problem is represented by the following question: What is the impact of impression management on improving the quality of services? From this question, a set of sub-questions branch out, namely:

1) To what extent will the researched organization and other organizations benefit from this research?
2) What is the nature of the relationship between the research variables, and how can they be utilized?

1.2 The importance of research

The importance of the research lies in several aspects, including:

1) Helps managers and employees understand the impact of impression management in delivering high-quality service.
2) Providing practical recommendations to the researched organization and all organizations on how to use impression management techniques to provide services that satisfy customers and thus improve the organization's reputation.

1.3 Research objectives

The research objectives are as follows:

1) Study the theoretical aspects of research topics
2) Testing the level of influence relationship between the research variables in the researched organization.
3) Knowing how to improve the quality of services by following impression management methods.
4) Providing practical recommendations to the researched organization and other organizations on how to apply impression management methods in order to improve the quality of services.

1.4 Research hypotheses

The main hypothesis of the research, which the research seeks to prove or disprove, is: ((There is no significant effect of impression management on improving the quality of services)), and from this hypothesis the following hypotheses branch out:

A-There is no significant effect of courtesy on improving service quality.

B- There is no significant effect of using examples on improving service quality.

C- There is no significant effect of coercion on improving service quality.

D- There is no significant effect of self-promotion on improving service quality.

E- There is no significant effect of begging on improving service quality.

2. Impression management

2.1 Impression management concept

Impression management is defined as a process by which individuals influence the perceptions and impressions of others about them through several strategies, including self-promotion, flattery, humiliation, and intimidation[1]. It is also known as a set of verbal and non-verbal behaviors that are used to influence others' perceptions of us and their behavior towards us[2]. The following table shows some definitions of impression management:

Table 1. Definitions of impression management

No	Researcher's name and year	Definition
1	(Mubariz, 2020: 498)[3]	The process by which an individual attempts to control the impressions (mental image) that other individuals form about him, and attempts to influence them through certain actions or deeds.
2	(Saleh and Al-Shammari, 2021: 105)[4]	The process by which an individual seeks to control others' reactions or perceptions of his or her own image or ideas, or attempts to manipulate others' reactions.
3	(Reimann etal,2022:2)[5]	The processes by which individuals attempt to control the image others have of them by developing the way they deal with others.
4	(Blunden & Brodsky ,2024:2199)[6]	Intentional or unconscious behaviors that aim to shape others view people, with the goal of building or maintaining a desirable image.
5	(Ismail and Hassan, 2025:22)[7]	The process by which an individual seeks to convey the impression he wishes to leave on others around him with the aim of achieving a goal he is striving for, by achieving congruity between the current impression of him and the impression that is compatible with achieving his goals.

Prepared by the researcher based on the mentioned sources

2.2 Reasons for adopting impression management methods

The reasons for individuals adopting impression management methods vary depending on the individuals' job or social positions. Some studies confirm that the individual adopts impression

management methods to promote personal interests. The most prominent reasons for individuals adopting impression management methods can be summarized as follows[8]:

1) Demonstrating the capabilities, achievements, and competitive advantages that society requires in order for individuals to be viewed as highly competent and specialized, thus earning love and appreciation.
2) Obtaining responsibility for another or better job, by the individual performing the tasks preferred by the supervisor in order to earn their appreciation and admiration.
3) Highlighting the strength and ability of an individual or organization to punish or control others, so that society perceives them as having authority and prestige, and thus fears and respects them.
4) Publicizing the weaknesses of an individual or organization to gain sympathy from others and, consequently, obtain their assistance in achieving desired goals.

2.3 Impression management stages:

Impression management may consist of several stages. Some have said that it is a process that goes through two separate stages, or it may extend to a third stage:

1) Impression management: This is accomplished through several strategies used to present oneself, where the individual presents their goals, principles, or strengths.
2) Audience responses: After a person showcases their strengths, the audience is expected to react, including acceptance of the person or a positive view of them. Alternatively, the opposite may occur, as the audience may not like what the person does.
3) Trying to resolve the interpretive conflicts between the person and the audience: This step is related to resolving the conflict in understanding or interpretation between the person practicing impression management to present his personal characteristics and the audience in order to avoid maintaining a state of misunderstanding between the two parties.

2.4 Impression management methods:

Impression can be managed using different methods that can be classified into methods for the purpose of confirmation and defensive methods (direct or indirect), and they will be explained as follows [9]:

1-Impression management techniques for the purpose of confirmation (direct or indirect): are used in situations where individuals or organizations view them as opportunities to enhance their images. For example, the organization may use direct confirmation techniques to reveal information about it and highlight its positive image, such as (flattery, intimidation, promotion, representation), or it may use indirect confirmation techniques by relying on other parties who have a positive perception of the organization in order to highlight the positive image of the organization through some techniques such as (boasting, cheering, polishing).

2-Defensive techniques for impression management (direct or indirect): are used in situations where individuals or organizations believe that others may attribute undesirable characteristics to them. Direct defensive techniques involve the individual or organization using some techniques to counteract the undesirable characteristics, such as (accounts, disclaimers, apologies and compensation). Indirect defensive techniques involve the individual or organization relying on other parties to counteract the undesirable characteristics attributed to any of them, such as (forgetting, obfuscation, and belittling).

2.5 Dimensions of impression management:

Mahja, Manhal[10], pointed out many dimensions that are used when studying impression management, which will be addressed in the following:

1) courtesy: courtesy is an effective strategy for shaping a positive impression and includes behaviors of favoritism or flattery to gain admiration. Sometimes, courtesy may be a natural way to deal with undesirable circumstances in the workplace, as it may be used to conform to others' opinions and form a positive impression in their minds.
2) Using examples: This behavior is used to gain praise for dedication and hard work. This approach involves the individual talking about the hard work they do, which may go beyond the scope of their assigned duties, such as staying late to work or arriving early.
3) Coercion: A method that includes threats, showing the ability to control, or punishment, all in order to increase the compliance of others to authority. Some people may prefer this method in very special cases, while most people believe that it is an ineffective method.
4) Self-promotion: A strategy that aims to present a positive image of oneself to others by emphasizing strengths, contributions, or achievements in the workplace. Such strategies benefit individuals and the organization through wages, promotions, or alliances.
5) Begging: This is the exact opposite of self-promotion. It is a strategy through which individuals exploit their weaknesses in order to ask for help. They do this by advertising their weaknesses or lack of ability in order to gain the sympathy and help of others.

3. Quality of services

3.1 The concept of service quality

Service quality can be considered an indicator of the extent to which the service meets customer expectations[11]. Some concepts of service quality can be explained in the following table:

Table 2. Table of definitions of service quality

No	Researcher's name and year	Definition
1	(Nabella,2021:881)[12]	A measure of the quality of the service provided, which consists of quality of design and quality of conformity. It is a reflection of the company's image in the eyes of consumers and a measure of their satisfaction.
2	(Antara& Rastini,2022:224)[13]	The extent to which the organization meets customer requirements and recommendations regarding the services provided, and it is a measure of the extent of customer satisfaction with the services provided.
3	(Subagja et al,2023:381)[14]	It is the level of customer satisfaction with the services provided by the organization. It is considered a key factor in maintaining customer satisfaction, preserving their loyalty, improving the company's reputation, and achieving profits.
4	(Rojas et al,2023:6)[15]	Smoothness, ease of interaction, efficiency in the service provided, and the degree of compatibility with customers' views and requirements while providing the service.

5	(Rasheed, R., & Rashid,2024:3)[16]	The extent of responding to customer expectations in or exceeding services and is one of the basic features that enables to be attracted the customer

Source: Preparation of the researcher by relying on the aforementioned sources

3.2 The importance of service quality

The organization's interest in the quality level of the services provided and its doing everything possible to improve the quality of its services leads to achieving a set of important results that can be summarized as follows:

1) Reaching a degree of compatibility with customer views and requirements, because leaving some customers dissatisfied will have a negative impact on achieving the organization's vision.
2) Smoothness, ease of interaction and efficiency in service delivery
3) Effective implementation of advice provided by clients or specialists.
4) Retaining existing clients and attracting new ones, thus improving the organization's reputation.
5) Providing services in a modern manner, the customer may play an important role in the service provided, given their access to information thanks to information and communications technology.
6) Availability of collaborators to provide service to customers.

3.3 Service Quality Improvement Tools

A set of tools has been proposed that can be adopted in order to improve the quality of service by dealing with the problems that may be an obstacle to the possibility of raising the level of service, and they are as follows:[17]

1. Quality tools for generating ideas: These are tools used to generate new ideas that can improve service quality. They are:

A. Brainstorming: A method aimed at generating ideas that can solve a specific problem. It is done by convening a group of employees or specialists in a particular task, then presenting ideas that can solve the problem and identifying the best ideas presented.

B. Fishbone diagram: A fishbone-shaped diagram that identifies the main problem and the factors that may be causing it, with the aim of studying and addressing them.

2. Quality tools for organizing and organizing data: These tools aim to identify and organize data that can help solve a problem. They are as follows:

A. Process flow diagram: A graphical method that describes a process by identifying its component tasks and the details related to each task. The goal is to enable employees to complete work smoothly and clearly.

B. Pareto chart: A chart that aims to identify the factors most influential in the flow of a process or the quality of service. The chart is based on the idea that only 20% of the factors cause 80% of the desired results.

3. Quality tools to identify problems: There are several ways to identify the problem affecting the quality of the service provided, the most important of which is the benchmarking method, which is a method that depends on knowing the performance of an institution and comparing it

with another institution that is better than it and works in the same sector in order to learn from it and thus address shortcomings and solve problems.

3.4 Dimensions of service quality

It can be noted that most researchers agree on a set of dimensions that are relied upon to measure the quality of services, which are as follows[18]:

1. Tangibility: This refers to the physical requirements that contribute to service delivery, such as equipment, physical supplies, buildings, technology used, the building's internal organization, the external appearance of employees, and other tangible elements that influence the service provided.
2. Responsiveness: This refers to the degree of preparedness of management and its employees to provide the services requested by customers or provide the guidance and instructions they need to obtain the service. It also includes the appropriate handling by management and employees of customer complaints.
3. Empathy: This means the presence of polite qualities in the service provider, including affection, friendship, humanity, and respect shown by employees towards service seekers while performing their work, because these matters clearly contribute to raising the quality of service.
4. Safety: This dimension reflects the degree to which customers feel safe and confident when requesting and receiving a service. Customers feel no cause for anxiety or fear when interacting with the organization and when their request is met, which motivates them to continue engaging with the organization.
5. Reliability: This refers to the accurate and high-quality delivery of services. It also indicates the organization's ability to be relied upon to fulfill the promises it makes to customers and to effectively fulfill all its responsibilities and obligations.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1 Statistical community: Rafidain Bank in Misan Governorate was chosen as the field of application for the study due to the great importance of the banking sector. The research questionnaire was distributed to the bank's employees and 30 valid forms were obtained. Therefore, the main hypothesis and sub-hypotheses will be tested based on the statistical analysis of the research sample's answers.

4.2 Testing the main hypothesis of the research

The main hypothesis of the research states the following: ((There is no significant influence relationship to impression management on improving the quality of services)), and for the purpose of testing this hypothesis, Table (3) was prepared, which shows the evaluation of the structural model of the hypothesis using the SPSS program.

Table 3. Results of evaluating the main hypothesis

Hypothesis	The path	VIF	path coefficient	t Value	p Value	The result	Effect size F2	coefficient of determination R^2	Adjusted R2
H	X → Y	1	0.296	2.413	0.007	Reject the main hypothesis	0.102	0.104	0.121

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on SmartPLS v.4.0.8.4.

Table (3) shows that the path coefficient (impact) reached (0.296), which has a significant effect when (t) is higher than 1.96 and p value is less than 0.05 (assumed significance) according to the rule indicated by[19], and this condition is met according to the table above, and on the basis of this result, the main hypothesis is rejected, which states: ((There is no significant influence relationship of impression management on improving the quality of services)), The opposite is true ((there is a significant impact of impression managementon improving the quality of services)), as it is clear that the adjusted coefficient of determination reached (0.121), which indicates that the impression management variable explains the service quality variable by a percentage of (0.121), and the rest of the percentage is other factors.

4.3 Testing the sub-hypotheses of the main hypothesis

Table 4. Results of evaluating the sub-hypotheses of the main hypothesis

The path	VIF	path coefficient	t Value	p Value	The result	Effect size F2	R^2	Adjusted R2
Courtesy - Quality of services	1	**0.286**	**2.277**	**0.005**	reject	**0.134**	**0.287**	**0.352**
Using examples - Quality of services	1	**0.255**	**3.122**	**0.002**	reject	**0.062**		
Coercion - Quality of Services	1	**-0.06 9**	**0.643**	**0.351**	accepte	**0.006**		
Self-promotion - quality of services	1	**0.295**	**2.713**	**0.004**	reject	**0.054**		
begging - Quality of Services	1	**0.189**	**1.695**	**0.051**	accepte	**0.031**		

Source: Based on SmartPLS v.4.0.8.4 results.

Table (4) shows the results of evaluating the sub-hypotheses, and the effect is significant when the value of (t) is higher than 1.96 and the value of p value is less than 0.05 (the assumed significance) according to the rule, and when observing the table above, we will be able to judge the sub-hypotheses as follows:

1. Hypotheses (A), (B) and (D) will be rejected, because all of these hypotheses achieved a (t) value higher than 1.96 and a p value less than 0.05, and this means that the opposite of these hypotheses is true ((there is a significant effect of each of Courtesy, Using examples and self-promotion on improving the quality of services)).
2. Hypotheses (c) and (E) will be accepted, because these hypotheses achieved a (t) value of less than 1.96 and a p value of higher than 0.05, and this means that these hypotheses can be proven with regard to the field of application of the research ((there is no significant effect of both coercion and begging on improving the quality of services)).

The results also showed that the adjusted coefficient of determination reached (0.352), which means that the dimensions of impression management were able to explain the service quality variable by (0.352), and the remaining percentages are other factors that the study did not address.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

1) There is a positive and statistically significant correlation between the impression management variable and the service quality variable. This indicates that the increased effectiveness of either variable indicates, in one way or another, the increased effectiveness of the other variable.
2) There is a statistically significant effect of impression management on improving service quality. This indicates that an organization's focus on impression management positively impacts the improvement of its service quality.
3) Paying attention to impression management techniques is a very important requirement for an organization to provide high-quality services, as it contributes to providing services in a way that inspires people's love and interest, which in turn improves the organization's reputation and increases profits.
4) Employees in the organization under study are mostly well aware of the impact of focusing on impression management on providing high-quality services, given their awareness of the extent to which impressions influence customers' willingness or dislike to engage with the organization.
5) The manager and employees' interest in always using impression management methods in an effective manner as an approach to dealing with others does not only have a positive impact on customers but also affects building a positive relationship between employees in the organization.

5.2 Recommendations

1) Managers and employees must be sufficiently aware of the topic of impression management and how impression management techniques can positively and directly impact service quality.
2) Customers in the current era can quickly form impressions of an organization. Therefore, it is essential to adopt effective impression management techniques and strategies tailored to the organization's context in order to improve existing impressions or mitigate negative ones.
3) The organization under study, and all organizations, must conduct awareness-raising courses to teach employees how to use impression management methods and strategies appropriately and effectively to improve the quality of services provided.
4) Employees must use impression management methods effectively when interacting with each other to foster respect and appreciation among employees, which will inevitably be reflected in the quality of services provided.

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