

Abstract

While researchers have known for some time that applicants attempt to manage the impressions they make on interviewers in the employment interview process, few studies have examined cultural and gender differences effects on interviewers' evaluations of applicants using various impression management (IM) tactics. The present study investigated 2 sets of IM tactics (self-focused and other-focused) used by applicants and observed the effects of applicants' gender, interviewers' gender, and cultural differences on interviewer decisions in an employment interview scenario. An employment interview scenario was distributed to 240 university undergraduates, 120 of a collectivist society, Hong Kong, and 120 of four individualist societies (the United States, Australia, England and France). Participants were asked to play the role of a personnel manager, rating their affective reactions to the simulated applicant, and evaluating applicant's interview performance and the appropriateness of IM behaviors used by the applicant. As predicted, results indicated that cultural differences of raters have a significant effect on evaluations on the use of IM: raters from a collectivist country favored other-focused IM more, while raters from individualist countries favored self-focused IM more. Gender differences of applicants on IM were small, but contrary to hypotheses: male applicants were rated higher when using other-focused IM; whereas females were rated more favorable when using self-focused IM. The findings are compared to past research, and suggestions for future directions for the study of IM in employment interviews are outlined.