Impression management and embarrassment

People go to great lengths to manage the impression people have of us. We often change our behaviors drastically to fit some stereotype or just to impress. Thus self-presentation is the process of pushing a certain image to others. According to Goffman (1959), self-presentation is the information management process.

He distinguished the expressions one gives off and the expressions one gives. The expressions one gives off, are often more contextual, theatrical and gestural. An individual can control the expressions he or she gives than those they give off. Individuals' impressions are made from the information given or given off (Goffman, 1959). A vital skill in man's social life is portraying oneself meritoriously to others. By maturity, one probably has conversant ways of presenting oneself but it may be straining to make a desired impression under tense circumstances.

However, at times, one may communicate information about oneself to others in an effortless way and show the desired image. Information about oneself may be expressed in a conversant, well-learned conduct, while other self-presentation forms may require one to cautiously and keenly manage expressive conduct. Some self-presentation forms require monitoring and modification of conduct to attain a particular public image. This means that impression management reactions are naturally self-regulatory and various self-presentation styles are strenuous in different ways. Impression management requires strenuous or effortful self-presentation, thus taking more than familiar resources.

According to Cooley (1922), pride and shame emotions arise from self-monitoring. In attempting to comprehend the socialization process by self-realization, Cooley splits the ' self' into: i) People's imagination of how their bodily appearances, friends, goals and their self-presentationii) People's perception of other's opinion about them iii) Self-feeling or response on the judgments of pride or embarrassment. Goffman claimed that, embarrassment has a worldwide, pan-cultural significance in social interaction. On the issue of impression management, Goffman says that, every individual is inordinately subtle to the admiration being experienced by other people. A slight difference in what is required and what is gotten can bring embarrassment and other sore emotions. In the 1980 presidential elections Ronald Reagan's personal life was put under huge scrutiny since he was divorced.

At that time most of American population respected a conventional family structure. Voting Reagan into the presidency would have been conflicting to the people's values (Cornog, 2004). In the 1992 presidential contest, between George Washington Bush and William Jefferson Clinton, claims suggesting that Clinton was unfaithful to his wife, Hillary Rodham Clinton sprang up. The accusations suggested that throuughout his time as the Governor of Arkansas, Clinton was involved with many women, and one was identified as Gennifer Flowers. More accusations of this sort went forth and heated up during the presidential race. So as to mend the damage on Clinton's image, he came out on national television with his wife to admit fault.

The American public viewed Mr. Clinton as apologetic and they viewed Rodham as an endearing wife. Having managed to keep a good impression, Clinton ultimately won the presidential race. In 1987, presidential contender Gary was caught in an affair and the press instantly publicized Hart's behavior so that the American public can make out their own opinions. A week after the emergence of Hart's accusations, he was pushed to pull out his presidential bidding and consequently he was forgotten (Seib, 2009). Fear of negative appraisal motivates the constraint of people.

This makes people who have things they want to self-regulate for the impression management's sake and end up not saying those things. Self-regulatory resources are very precious and expensive thus, the impression management value should clarify why people willingly use their resources in the self-presentation service effectively. The rivalry for acceptance in the society may have made the natural selection process to favor people who self-regulate in a better way. This way, interpersonal possibilities will help impart self-regulatory capabilities.