

**PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF INGRATIATION ON ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE
AMONG SOME GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES IN KWARA STATE**

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Abstract

Ingratiation represents a mundane behavior in business life. It takes place in both public and private sectors. With traditional researches on the subject of influence within organizations often directed on that of management on the subordinates, it is therefore relevant to go in a different direction by examining the perceived influence of subordinates on the management in organizations. It becomes relevant to explore how ingratiation has led to reduced meritocracy. It is in line with this that this study sought to find out the basis on which ingratiation occurs most in organizations. The study was carried out via the lens of the social exchange theory. The data used in this study were obtained from 250 respondents selected with the use of multistage sampling technique. The collected data were analyzed with the use of the Pearson correlation method. The study revealed a strong relationship between the factors of religion, ethnicity, gender and ingratiation leading to low organizational performance. Based on this, the study recommends that organizations should employ the principle of meritocracy in a stringent manner in all issues relating to organizational behavior.

Keywords: Ingratiation, Organization, Business life and Performance.

Introduction

Ingratiation is a sort of social behavior persistently affecting social relations in all societies (Ralston, 1985). In this sense, everybody may either intentionally or not, ingratiate someone or be in the receiving end of ingratiation. In the view of Jones (1964), ingratiation represents a psychological technique through which an individual endeavors to sway, control or manipulate another by flattering their target. This can be accomplished through numerous methods which include; self-presentation, favour-doing, as well as the expression of humor.

Kipnis and Vanderveer (1980) regarded ingratiation to be analogous to "flattery." It is seen as a soft tactic to gain commendation from superiors. Jones (1964) posited that ingratiation is not simply a single tactic but a strategy that is composed of multiple tactics. Ingratiation, to him, could take any form through which interpersonal attraction may be beseeched. Since there are dissimilarities in attraction seeking behavior, there are as well tactical disparities in the employment of ingratiation (Byrne, 1971).

Ingratiation in organizations exists outside the formal authority, involving the attraction of management with a scheming mindset. It has consequently been viewed as "a set of strategic behaviors covertly intended to sway an individual regarding the allure of one's personal qualities" (Jones, 1964). It ensues when the employee is unable to advance his or her aims within the system itself and when he or she trusts that the target exhibits a certain level of freedom in developing as well as modifying the standards of evaluating performance (Jones, Gergen, Gumpert & Thibaut, 1965). It is employed to make headway with superiors.

Organizational performance refers to the extent to which an organization is able to achieve its vision and goals. It is therefore usually determined by the achievement of goals. Organizational goals represent the strategic objectives which the management of a company makes known in order to highlight the expected results as well as to guide the efforts of employees. Establishing the goals of an organization comes with abundant benefits, such as providing a means of justifying a company's existence, serving as constraints when employees derail from their functions. (Searchio.techtarget.com, 2017).

The proper performance of an organization is critically required for its continued survival. With an efficient and effective performance, goals are achieved, objectives are met, and the organization keeps on blooming. However, a dereliction in performance ensues the stagnation of the organization, a withering in its capacity to be of relevance to the society at large. Hence, it becomes critical for an organization to ensure the functioning of all cogs and wheels if it is to achieve its stated objectives.

Statement of Problem

In Nigeria due to the current economic situation, jobs are not adequately available in both private and public sectors. The little jobs that are open are shared amid the prominent people in the country. In a great number of African nations, senior officials tend to get employment quotas allocated to them in industries. There is scarcely meritocracy in the filling of vacant positions. Therefore, corruption thrives in these organizations (Arshad, Hafiz, Muhammad & Ramay, 2012). With traditional discourse on the subject of influence within an organization typically geared towards that of the management on subordinates, it becomes enlightening

by going in the opposite direction in examining the perceived influence of subordinates on the management. There have been reported cases in which interviewees for a particular job deemed it fit to appeal to the interviewer in terms of religion, tribe as well as gender.

However, this goes beyond that. When it comes to promotion, ingratiation tends to rear its ugly head as well. Some employees might seek the promotion by resorting to flattery rather than to achieve it through merit. These employees appeal to the promotional board on various basis; religion, gender, tribe, amongst others. In this scenario, achieving promotion has been politicized. With all these in mind, how is the performance of an organization affected? Employees that ingratiate are to a great extent not good enough at their jobs. They know that they cannot climb the promotional ladder through meritocracy. As they are not good enough at their jobs, the organizational performance is grossly affected. Also, when workers get employed on the basis of flattery without taking their skills into consideration, organizational performance will be severely hampered. Flattery, cannot on its own bring an organization into its Elysium.

Study Objectives

The following are the objectives of the study:

1. Determining the extent to which ingratiation is affecting organizational performance.
2. Determining the basis on which ingratiation occurs most.

Review of Literature

Ingratiation

Ingratiation occurs in a work environment when employees target their superiors to impress them. In a scenario, making use of survey data, Westphal and Stern (2006) delivered proof that managers make use of interpersonal influence acts as a substitute to acquire boardroom appointments. Ingratiation may occur from a desire to diminish social distance with managers and does not essentially originate in irregularities. Ingratiation has largely been reinvigorated by the subjective appraisals of employees (Lazear & Gibbs, 2014). Ingratiation may be stimulated by the event that managers often reward acts apart from the strict job performance of employees. One of the strategies that could be used in the exhibition of ingratiation is the act of impression management.

Subordinates may attempt to make use of ingratiation in an effort to increase the pay, attain promotions, as well as recognition within the organization. This is an issue in an organization when employees with low productivity skills (but with robust ingratiation behaviours) attain greater career success than those who are better productively, but refrain from engaging in ingratiation acts. Also, it should be noted that ingratiation tactics, much like organizational politics, do not automatically contain activities that are unlawful or sanctioned against by the organization. As a matter of fact, a great number of ingratiation strategies are not unlawful (Wortman & Linsenmeier, 1977). Nonetheless, ingratiation can be damaging to an organization if it becomes extreme.

Organizational Performance

Though, the concept of organizational performance is quite common in the academic arena, defining it is tough because of its numerous meanings. As a result of this, there is no generally recognized definition of the concept. During the '50s, organizational performance was seen to be the level to which organizations, seen as a social system achieved their objectives (Georgopoulos & Tannenbaum, 1957). The evaluation of performance during this period was dedicated to work, organizational structure and people. In the late 60s and 70s, organizations began to advance novel means of evaluating their performance. Hence, performance was defined as an organization's capability to exploit the limited resources in its environment in the achievement of its goals (Yuchtman & Seashore, 1967).

The 80s and 90s were fraught with the comprehension that the recognition of organizational objectives is more difficult than originally thought. Managers started to realize that an organization is termed to be successful if its goals are accomplished (effectiveness) using a minimum level of resources (efficiency). Lebas and Euske (2006) provide a set of definitions to illustrate the concept of organizational performance:

- Performance represents a set of both financial and nonfinancial gauges that indicate information on the extent to which objectives have been met.
- Performance is largely dynamic, necessitating judgment as well as interpretation.
- Performance may be demonstrated by making use of a causal model that defines how present actions may influence future results.

Theoretical Framework

Social Exchange Theory

Social exchange theory represents a wide-ranging paradigm that cuts across a number of fields, such as social psychology, economics and sociology. All social exchange theories see life as comprising of runs of chronological dealings between two parties or more (Mitchell, Cropanzana & Quisenberry, 2012). Resources are traded over a procedure of reciprocity. The worth of these exchanges is at times swayed by the affiliation between the actor and the target (Blau, 1964). Exchanges in the economic sense tend to be “quid pro quo”, involving less trust and extra monitoring, while social exchange is more open-ended, involving larger trust as well as flexibility.

Application of the Theory to the Study

The social exchange process originates in the organizational sector when an actor (subordinate) treats a targeted individual (superior) in a positive manner. This is referred to as the “initiating action”. Positive initiating actions might comprise of flattery, which is a form of ingratiation.

As a reply to the initiating action, the target (superior), may choose to act in reply to this treatment with decent behavior. This is referred to as “reciprocating response”. Social exchange theory envisages that in response to positive initiating actions, the targets will be inclined to reply in kind via engagement in positive reciprocating responses and less negative reciprocating responses. Applying this, in response to flattery, the superior might reward the subordinate.

Methodology

The research work was carried out in Kwara state, Nigeria. Kwara is situated within the north-central geopolitical zone, commonly called the middle belt. The state is composed of magnitudes of cultures, filled by Igbo, Yoruba, Nupe, Fulani, Hausa, Baruba, etc. In the aspect of religious composition, there are substantial numbers Christians as well as Muslims. A great number of religious ceremonies take place in the city throughout the year. The study made use of the survey technique. Multistage sampling was used in the selection of 255 respondents. This commenced with the use of simple random sampling to select five ministries out of nineteen. The ministries selected are; Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Ministry of Education and Human Capital Development, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Commerce and Cooperatives, Ministry of Justice. Following this, quota sampling was then used in the categorization of the respondents into top, middle and low level management. A total of 50 respondents were allocated to the top-level management, 80 respondents to the middle level management and 125 respondents from low level management. This is based on the population of the workers in each level of management. Following this, the convenience sampling technique was then used in the selection of respondents to be consulted. From the questionnaires distributed, a total of 250 was found to be completed and useful. The analysis was carried out with the correlation method, using of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Data Analysis

Socio-demographic data	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	132	53
Female	118	47
Age		
18-20	2	1
21-30	53	21
31-40	99	40
41 and above	96	38
Religion		
Christianity	122	49
Islam	128	51
Occupational Sector		
Top level	50	20
Middle level	80	32
Low level	120	48
Marital Status		
Single	72	29
Married	176	70
Divorced/Widowed	2	1
Ethnic Group		
Yoruba	118	47
Hausa	46	18
Igbo	22	9
Others	64	26
Total	250	100

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork (2017)

Discussion of Findings

It was discovered from the research findings that 53% of the respondents are male while 47% are female. The findings as well show that 1% of the respondents are in the age range of 18-20, with 21% being in the age range of 21-30, 40% in the age range of 31-40 and 38% being aged 41 and above. Also, the findings indicate that 49% of the respondents are Christians with the remaining 51% being Muslims. In addition, 20% of the respondents are from the top level management, 32% are from the middle level management and the remaining 48% from the low level management. Furthermore, 29% of the respondents are single, 70% are married with 1% being divorced/widowed. Also, 47% of the respondents are Yoruba, 18% are Hausa, 9% are Igbo and 26% are from other tribes.

Hypothesis One

H0= Ingratiation based on religious basis is not strongly correlated to organizational underperformance.

H1= Ingratiation based on religious basis is strongly correlated to organizational underperformance.

Table 1:

		Ingratiation on religious basis	Ingratiation leading to underperformance
Ingratiation on religious basis	Pearson Correlation	1	0.776
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	199	199
Ingratiation leading to underperformance	Pearson Correlation	0.776	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	199	199

Researcher’s fieldwork (2018)

DECISION RULE

Since **0.776** is closer to **1** than it is to **0**, the alternate hypothesis is therefore accepted.

Hypothesis Two

H0= Ingratiation based on ethnic basis is not strongly correlated to organizational underperformance.

H1= Ingratiation based on ethnic basis is strongly correlated to organizational underperformance.

		Ingratiation leading to underperformance	Ingratiation on ethnic basis
Ingratiation leading to underperformance	Pearson Correlation	1	0.703
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	199	199
Ingratiation on ethnic basis	Pearson Correlation	0.703	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	199	199

Researcher’s fieldwork (2018)

DECISION RULE:

Since **0.703** is closer to **1** than it is to **0**, the alternate hypothesis is therefore accepted.

Hypothesis Three

H0= Ingratiation based on gender basis is not strongly correlate to organizational underperformance

H1= Ingratiation based on gender basis is strongly correlate to organizational underperformance

		Ingratiation leading to underperformance	Ingratiation on gender basis
Ingratiation leading to underperformance	Pearson Correlation	1	0.680
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	199	199
Ingratiation on gender basis	Pearson Correlation	0.680	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	199	199

DECISION RULE:

Since **0.680** is closer to **1** than it is to **0**, the alternate hypothesis is therefore accepted.

Conclusion and Recommendations

A positive relationship was discovered in the hypotheses tested in this study. The first revealed that ingratiation based on religious basis is strongly correlated with organizational underperformance. The second revealed that ingratiation based on ethnic basis is strongly correlated with organizational underperformance. The third revealed that ingratiation based on gender basis is strongly correlated with organizational underperformance. Of the tested hypotheses, ingratiation on religious basis has the strongest correlation with organizational underperformance. The implications of these findings lie in the fact that when critical decisions are to be made relating to the organization, employees are more likely to ingratiate (using Kwara state as a case study). Female employees in most cases are more likely to ingratiate than male employees. Promotion, bonus wages, etc. are some of the basis on which ingratiation takes place. When this occurs, the principle of meritocracy is stamped upon. In the absence of meritocracy, promotion is therefore not based on skills and hard work. As a consequence of this, organizational performance might take a blow as the qualified and deserving employees who do not ingratiate might not be able to realize their full potential by their inability to contribute to the organizational performance to their fullest capacity. Based on these, the study recommends that organizations should make meritocracy their watchword. With meritocracy in operation, employees are able to occupy the positions they have the skills for. As such, organization performance would improve.

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