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IMPORTANCE OF INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SECRETARY AND THE BOSS IN AN ORGANISATION

Iro-Idoro C. B. (Mrs) & Adebayo, F. A.

Abstract

This paper focuses on the interpersonal relationship between the secretary and the boss in an organisation. This is because the relationship that exists between the secretary and the boss goes a long way in realising the organisational goals and objectives. In doing this, three research hypotheses were formulated to test how interpersonal relationship between the secretary and the boss affects the achievement of organisational goals, how effectiveness of a secretary is influenced by the nature of the interaction she has with the boss and how the interaction between the secretary and her boss influences the growth and development of an organisation. The writers reviewed some relevant literatures and theories about interpersonal relationships and the factors conclude that there is need for cordial relationship between the secretary and her boss for organisational objectives to be achieved.

Introduction

In all organisations there is need for the secretary and the boss to develop and maintain cordial relationship. When a secretary and a boss work together there is a tendency that they both develop likeness towards each other which leads to the effective performance of their duties and this will also create a good rapport between them in such a way that the organisational goals and objectives will be achieved.

It has been noted that the secretary is the confidant of her boss, hence, she is referred to as "the mind of the boss". If this is the case, then there should be a high level of interpersonal relationship between them, so as to move the organisation forward. It is noted that some bosses and their secretaries misinterpret and abuse the relationship by going beyond the official relationship.

Statement Of Problems

The kind of interpersonal relationship between the secretary and her boss goes a long way to determine how effectively and efficiently their jobs would be performed. It has been noted, for instance, that the work flow in some offices is often hampered due to lack of good working relationship between the secretaries and their bosses. In the same manner, extra ordinary cordiality (especially where it is amorous), also impact negatively on job performance. This paper therefore

examines the effect of interpersonal relationship between secretary and the boss in various offices in an organisation.

Purpose Of Study

The purpose of the study is to examine the different kinds of interpersonal relationship existing between bosses and their secretaries in various offices of an organisation. It is also aimed at knowing why the different kinds of interpersonal relationships exist and the impact of each on the job performance of the officers concerned on one hand and on the workflow on the other hand. The ultimate aim of the paper is to help solve the problems caused by bad or undesirable relationship between secretaries and their bosses.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were proposed to guide the conduct and analysis of the study.

- (a) The effectiveness of a secretary is not largely influenced by the nature of the interactions he has with the boss.
- (b) The interpersonal relationship between a secretary and her boss does not affect the realization of an organizational goals and objectives
- (c) The nature of interaction between the secretary and her boss does not influence the growth and development of an *organisation*.

Review Of Literature

1 Interpersonal Attraction

Interpersonal attraction is the extent to which a person develops liking for another. It is an important concept in any social discipline because it goes a very long way in determining the extent of human social interactions as well as how order, conformity and cohesion are maintained within a society. This concept also explains what factors guide inter-relationships among members of a group. The concept has received the attention of many pronounced researchers in the field of psychology, management and sociology.

According to Brockner and Swap (1976) "we tend to become more favourably disposed towards the person we encounter most often. Harrison and Crandall (1972) point out that the people we see often are complex and unpredictable enough. Lott and Lott (1956) say "no one is surely surprised to learn that the individual frequently comes to like those who have been responsible for her pleasures." French (1956) suggests that "if the group members are to do well in their work, they are apt to prefer

people who will help them reach their goals and will turn to those who have above-average skills in job related activities." Considering the above authorities' views, since the secretary is the closest worker to the boss, one could therefore say that they tend to become more favourably disposed towards each other.

To further this study, the theories of interpersonal attraction will be briefly reviewed, the factors affecting interpersonal attraction will also be discussed while the nature of interpersonal relationship will be looked into.

2 A Review of Theories on Interpersonal Attraction

Many theories and several theoretical models have been propounded by social psychologists to explain the basis of interpersonal attraction. For the purpose of this paper four theories on interpersonal attraction are briefly reviewed. These are the Reinforcement Model, the Social Exchange Model, The Equity Model and the Attachment Model. Akinleke (2005).

i The Reinforcement Model

This model is propounded by Byrne and Clore and it claims that we are attracted to people from whom we can benefit. It should therefore not be surprising that the secretary is always attracted to her boss because most times she gains more knowledge on-the-job from her boss. This means she is rewarded with more knowledge about the type of job she is to carry out in the organisation especially when she is new on the job. But when she finds out she is not gaining anything from her boss, she tends to always avoid him.

ii Social Exchange Model

This model is propounded by Kelly and Thibault. According to the model, what matters most is a comparison of the costs and benefits of establishing or maintaining a relationship. It takes into account a series of comparative judgments that people make in social situations. Being attracted to someone else is not just a matter of "is this a good thing?" It is more a matter of, "is the reward one might get from the relationship worth the cost, and what other alternative exists at the moment."

iii Equity Model

This model, propounded by Greenberg and Cohen, is the third theory approach to interpersonal attraction. It is an extension of the social exchange theory. However, while Social Exchange theory adds the notion of cost to that of reward, equity theory simply adds the appraisal of rewards and costs for both parties in a social relationship. Thus, if a party

feels that a relationship is worth the effort he has been putting into it, while the other party feels otherwise, the relationship is likely to break. The essence of equity theory is that both parties must get a fair deal in the relationship.

Two things can be noticed in the equity model

- (1) The ratio of cost to rewards must be equitable for both members, they do not have to share rewards equally.
- (2) All members must receive an equal ratio of rewards to costs.

The implication of the equity model to the secretary-boss relationship is that in as much as the secretary is well motivated by her boss, he would expect the secretary to reciprocate correspondingly by performing her duties well and doing them at the right time.

iv *Attachment Theory*

This model was developed by Folkes and Sears (1977) and it suggests that interpersonal relationship can be classified into one of the three types discovered by Leonard (1996). These types are Secure Relationship, Avoidant Relationship and Anxious/Ambivalent Relationship.

- *Security*: This type finds it relatively easy to get closer to others, depending on others and depending on one. Not bothered being moved closed to or being abandoned.
- *Avoidance*: This type feels uncomfortable being close to others, that is, finding it difficult to trust and depend on others. Even when others try to move closer to them, they feel nervous and uncomfortable.
- *Anxious/Ambivalent*: This feels that others are reluctant to get closer to them. They are worried when people or partners do not love or get closer to them. Always want to merge completely to another person but this desire sometimes scare people away from them.

3 **Factors Affecting Interpersonal Attraction**

There are four common determinants of interpersonal attraction, namely: Reciprocity, Proximity, Physical Attractiveness and Similarity.

i *Reciprocity*

This means we tend to value and like people who like and value us. This principle applies to the relationship between the secretary and her boss. If it happens that the boss does not like his secretary and always have negative attitude towards anything she does, the secretary will, in turn, find it difficult to like and value him.

ii Proximity

This principle suggests that closeness produces attraction. From personal experience which has been conformed by behavioural scientists, people tend to establish friendship with others with whom they have grown up, worked, or gone to school together. People tend to become friends with other residents living close to them. Being around others gives a person the opportunity to discover who can provide the interpersonal rewards he seeks in friendship. The more often people meet, the greater the chances that they will come to like each other.

Since the boss and the secretary work closely together, this increases the chance that they will come to like each other. This explains why, most often, the secretary and the boss are so close if not inseparable.

iii Physical Attractiveness:

People are aware of the role of appearance in interpersonal relations and may spend hours each week doing what they can to improve the way they look because someone who is good-looking is pleasant to look at. Josh (1995), research suggests that attractive persons are often assumed to have desirable characteristics. Since secretaries are always attractive in their general dispositions, this sometimes, makes their bosses to want to be close to them.

iv Similarity

The principle of similarity states that there is a strong positive relationship between interpersonal attraction and the proportion of attitude held in common. In other words the more similar another person is to you, the more you will tend to like that person and the more you are likely to believe that, that person likes you. Also we sensibly tend to be put off by person (s) we believe to be dissimilar to us. This was the postulation of Byrne (1969).

4 Nature Of Interpersonal Relationship

Peter (1975), a psychologist, observed the nature of interpersonal relationship, in his opinion, in order to achieve the stated objectives of an organisation, there should be a cordial relationship between the boss and his secretary, since the boss relies on her for smooth running of affairs in the office. The secretary on her part should take interest in her boss's work. She should be loyal, believe in her boss in good light, knowing him, understanding his working habits, his likes and dislikes. She should accept her mistakes and avoid repeating such mistakes in order to be able to get along with him. The relationship between the secretary and the boss should be a clean and clear one and should be limited to official activities.

Methodology

In carrying out this study, a descriptive research design was adopted. Therefore, a field survey involving a sample of thirty (30) respondents was conducted. The sample was selected from a population of secretaries and bosses in the services of the Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro. The samples of thirty (30) secretaries and bosses was selected based on random sampling. Data were collected from the respondents with the aid of structured questionnaire. The frequencies of the relationship between the boss and his secretary were measured using five (5) ranks namely, not effective, not very effective, no idea, effective and very effective. Analysis of test of relationships between the secretary and the boss were carried out using chi-square test at 5% significance level.

Results And Discussion

The data collected from the survey were analyzed to achieve the objectives of this paper. The results of the analysis are presented as follows.

Test For Hypothesis (a)

The effectiveness of a secretary is not largely influenced by the nature of the interactions he has with the boss.

Table I: Computation of Test Statistic for Hypothesis A

Variables	o_i	e_i	$(o_i - e_i)$	$(o_i - e_i)^2$	$\frac{(o_i - e_i)^2}{e_i}$
Strongly Agree	20	6	14	196	32.66
Agree	9	6	3	9	1.5
Strongly Disagree	1	6	-5	25	4.16
Disagree	----	6	-6	36	6
Disagree	----	6	-6	36	6
No Idea					
Total	30	30	----	322	50.32

$$e_i = \frac{30}{5} = 6$$

$$\chi^2 = \sum (o_i - e_i)^2 = 50.32$$

$$\text{Degree of Freedom (d.f)} = r - 1$$

$$= 5 - 1 = 4 \text{ at } 5\% \text{ Significant Level}$$

$$\text{Critical Value } \chi^2_{(d.f = 4, \alpha = 0.05)} = 9.49$$

Decision: The test statistics for $\chi^2_t = 50.32$ is greater than the critical value $(\chi^2) = 9.49$. Thus, the research hypothesis (H_1) which states that the effectiveness of a secretary is largely influenced by the nature of the interaction she has with the boss is accepted.

Test For Hypothesis (b)

The interpersonal relationship between a secretary and her boss does not affect the realization of an organisational goals and objectives.

Table II: Computation of Test Statistic for Hypothesis B

Variables	o_i	e_i	$(o_i - e_i)$	$(o_i - e_i)^2$	$\frac{(o_i - e_i)^2}{e_i}$
Very Effective	21	6	15	225	37.5
Effective	7	6	1	1	0.16
Not Very	2	6	-4	16	2.66
Effective	---	6	-6	36	6
Not Effective	---	6	-6	36	6
No Idea					
Total	30	30	---	314	52.32

$$e_i = \frac{30}{5} = 6$$

$$\chi^2_t = \sum (o_i - e_i)^2 = 52.32$$

Degree of Freedom (d.f) = $r - 1$
 $= 5 - 1 = 4$ at 5% Significant Level

Critical Value $\chi^2_i (d.f = 4, \alpha = 0.05) = 9.49$

Decision: Since the test statistics $\chi^2_t = 52.32$ is greater than the critical value $(\chi^2_i) = 9.49$, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) which states that interpersonal relationship between the secretary and her boss affects the realization of organisational' goals and objectives is accepted.

Test For Hypothesis (c)

The nature of interaction between the secretary and her boss does not influence the growth and development of an organisation.

Table III: Computation of Test Statistic for Hypothesis C

Variables	o_i	e_i	$(o_i - e_i)$	$(o_i - e_i)^2$	$(o_i - e_i)$ e_i
Strongly Agree	24	6	18	324	54
Agree		6	-1	1	0.16
Strongly Disagree	1	6	-5	25	4.16
Disagree	---	6	-6	36	6
No Idea	---	6	-6	36	6
Total	30	30	---	422	70.32

$$e_i = \frac{30}{5} = 6$$

$$x^2t = \sum (o_i - e_i)^2 = 70.32$$

$$\text{Degree of Freedom (d.f)} = r - 1$$

$$= 5 - 1 = 4 \text{ at } 5\% \text{ Significant Level}$$

$$\text{Critical Value } x^2i(d.f = 4, \alpha = 0.05) = 9.49$$

Decision: The test statistics for $x^2t = 70.32$ is greater than the critical value $(x^2i) = 9.49$. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) which states that the nature of interaction between the secretary and her boss influences the growth and development of an organisation is accepted.

Discussions And Implications

- That since the secretary interacts with her boss most often; they are favourably disposed towards each other.
- * That due to good relationship established between the secretary and the boss, they are always eager to work with each other and the boss feels confident to delegate responsibility to her regularly.
- That if a secretary's relationship with the boss is not cordial, this will affect their job and the goals and objectives of the organisation will be affected.

- That the effectiveness of a secretary is largely influenced by the nature of the interaction between the secretary and the boss.
- That the interpersonal relationship between the secretary and her boss affects the realization of organisational goals and objectives.
- That the nature of interaction between the secretary and her boss influences the growth and development of an organisation.

Recommendations

Based on the data collected from the survey, the following recommendations were extracted from the study:

- * Every organisation should seek a way of making the secretary and the boss to develop and maintain a cordial relationship.
- * Secretaries should endeavour to be closer to their bosses, since working together cordially will help both of them in the achievement of the organisational goals. This will also help the secretary to acquire more experience and knowledge.
- * There should be cordial relationship between the secretary and the boss since effectiveness has been found largely to be dependent upon the nature of interactions the boss and the secretary have.
- * Interactions should be encouraged between the secretary and the boss since this will promote the growth and development of the organisation.
- * For an organisation to achieve its goals and objectives, the interpersonal relationship between the secretary and the boss must be clearly defined.

It is hoped that if the above recommendations are implemented in an organisation, the boss and the secretary will not only experience cordial and positive interpersonal relationship but will also lead to the realization of the goals and objectives of the organisation.

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