

**POWER-BASE AS A PREDICTOR OF INGRATIATORY BEHAVIOUR
AMONGST UNIVERSITY TEACHING HOSPITALS' STAFF
IN OYO STATE**

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Abstract

The study examined power-base as a predictor of ingratiation behavior of University Teaching Hospitals' Staff. Survey research design was adopted while purposive and convenient sampling techniques were used in sampling 210 male and female participants for the study. Result of the multiple regression analysis shows that, there is a significant prediction of ingratiation behaviour by power base ($R^2 = .713$, $F(5,204) = 2.813$, $p < .05$). Moreover, expert power ($\beta = .214$; $t = 3.116$, $p < .01$), reward power ($\beta = .213$, $t = 3.075$, $p < .05$), referent power ($\beta = .328$, $t = 3.454$, $p < .05$) and coercive power ($\beta = .270$, $t = 2.504$, $p < .05$) independently predicted ingratiation behaviour, but legitimate power did not. This study concludes that power base is a significant predictor of ingratiation behavior. Hence, it is recommended that hospital management boards should pay adequate attention to the salient psychological factor of power-base and ensure that employees are well trained on relevant social relation skills.

Keywords: Power-based, Ingratiation behaviour, Teaching Hospitals, Staff, Oyo-state.

Introduction

Ingratiation behaviour is one of the common impression management behaviours that focus on the ways individuals behave in order to create and manipulate images and perceptions of themselves in the minds of others. Ingratiation refers to a set of related acquisitive impression management tactics that collectively aim at making the affected individual more liked and attractive to others (Jones, 1990). Jones (1964) specially defined 'ingratiation' as: "a class of strategic behaviours designed to influence a particular other person concerning the attractiveness of one's personal qualities" (Jones 1964, p. 11).

The focus of ingratiation behaviours is oriented on the target, by agreeing with the target's opinions, conforming to the target's personal values, and offering the target praise and flattery. Whether an employee will or not exhibit ingratiation behaviour depends on many factors, among which are organizational related and personality factors. However, notable among these factors is power base.

There are different sources of power at play in the social realm. The five sources of power which people described were: reward power, coercive power, legitimate power, referent power and expert power. Reward power refers to power based on the ability to reward another for his/her behavior. Coercive power is a form of power derived through the threat of punishment to follow or conform to the influence attempts of the more powerful individual. Legitimate power means the cultural or social expectation which results in internalized valuation of the more powerful individual according to the role in which she/he occupies. Referent power describes power based on an individual's ability to identify with the more powerful individual (for example, the less powerful individual strives to achieve similar qualities seen in the more powerful individual) while expert power is a power based on the perception that the more powerful individual has more knowledge or skill than the less powerful individual (French & Raven 1959).

Traditional views of impression management focused more on influence tactics than ingratiation behavior (Bolino & Turnley 1999). Also, traditional views of the role of organizational and personal factors in ingratiation behaviours lack strong, consistent results. Some of the studies in the past did not discuss the effects of power base directions on ingratiation behaviours in which the utility of some directions is limited (Bolino & Turnley 2003). Another problematic issue is the selection and measurement of ingratiation behaviors, which differed substantially from study to study (Kacmar, Harris, & Nagy 2007). In consideration of the above, this study examines the predictability of ingratiation behaviour by power-base such that such that broaden the scope of studying impression management. Hence, this study stands to answer the following research questions:

Would expert, reward, referent, coercive, and legitimate power-base of supervisors jointly and independently predict ingratiation behaviour of subordinates?

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the joint influence of supervisors' expert power-base, referent power-base, reward power-base, coercive power-base and legitimate power-base on ingratiation behavior of subordinates while the study specifically investigates if expert, reward, referent, coercive and legitimate power-base of supervisors would independently predict ingratiation behaviour of subordinates.

How employees behave at work contributes either positively or negatively to the success of their organizations. Hence, employees' ingratiation behaviour should be the main focus of employers in Nigeria to effectively manage the diverse forms of impression created by employees. Nevertheless, employees' behaviour at work is important to productivity and delightful service, which consequently affects the national economy, in turn implicates the standard of living of citizens and finally depicts the image of the nation. In view of the above, findings in this study will contribute immensely to the understanding and management of employee behaviour at work. Findings in this study will actually enhance employees' and employers' knowledge of the importance of power base in impression management process most especially in the area of ingratiation. This study will further attract more intellectual research in the area of impression management and organizational politics. Hence, it will add to the literature on ingratiation.

Bacharach and Lawler (1981) believe that an understanding of organisational politics requires an analysis of power, coalitions and bargaining and a new perspective: an image of organisations grounded in social psychological research on power, coalitions, and bargaining. Power in organisations comprises two dimensions; these are authority (stable, formal and normatively sanctioned) and influence (fluid, informal and dynamic).

Yukl and Tracey (1992) note the importance of appealing to people's emotions and ideals through the use of inspirational appeals. Ingratiation and inspirational appeals are focused primarily on satisfying the psychological needs of the target. Salespeople's use of ingratiation and inspirational appeals is consistent with literature that notes the importance of attractiveness similarity and liking in professional selling (Ahearne, Gruen, & Jarvis 1999).

Sussman and Vecchio, (1982) shows that subordinates with high level of ingratiation behaviours are likely to be more susceptible to influence if their superiors use reward, coercive and expert power. In the same vein, Rahim and Buntzman, (1989) study ranked referent and expert power as the most favorable and legitimate power the lowest among the non-coercive power bases in influencing subordinates' behaviour.

Harris, Kacmar, Zivnuska, and Shaw (2007) noted that politically skilled individuals are more likely to display ingratiation behaviors that are appropriate for the given context, thereby serving as a way to distinguish between those who appear sincere and those who appear self-serving. By using political skill, Treadway, Ferris, Duke, Adams, and Thatcher (2007) mention how subordinates are able to effectively mask their self-serving intentions, thereby making the ingratiation attempts seem altruistic in nature while only legitimate power does

not.

Forgas (1995) argues that positive affective arousal leads to more positive expectancies and, thus, to higher levels of compliance. Inspirational appeals may attempt to motivate people to go beyond their personal interests for the greater good by appealing to higher-order psychological needs (Yukl & Tracey 1992).

Kipnis (1976) contended that people who have a strong need for power and the ability to gain control of resources are likely to experience a desire to influence others. As a result, those being influenced will be gradually devalued, with the powerful individuals preferring to maintain social and psychological distance. Yukl, Kim, and Falbe (1996) indicated that influence outcomes are affected by the influencer's power, the influence tactics they apply, and content-related factors of the request itself.

The results of Burke (1986) and House, Filley, and Gujarati (1971) indicated that, downward power depended on the individual's upward power and lateral power where it could be seen as combining to influence an individual's total personal power. This implies that managers would adopt different influence tactics depending on whether they want to influence a subordinate, a colleague, or a supervisor. Jones and Pitman (1982) described ingratiation as behaviors performed by individuals that have the effect of making the actor seem more likeable, such as flattery or favor doing.

Research by Anderson et al. (2008) emphasized that an individual's personal characteristics provide them with power particularly when those characteristics provide a good fit with organizational values. Rahim and Afza (1993), Rahim et al., (1994), and Robie et al., (1998) studied job satisfaction and concluded that expert and referent power bases have a positive relationship with job satisfaction and that the coercive power base has a negative relationship with job satisfaction. It is hypothesized that expert power, referent power, coercive power, reward power, and legitimate power of supervisors will jointly and independently predict subordinates' ingratiation behavior.

Method

This study adopted a survey research design. The design was considered appropriate, because no active manipulation was performed on any of the variables. The independent variables were the five bases of social power (Expert power-base, legitimate power-base, coercive power-base, referent power-base, and reward power-base), while the dependent variable

Research Setting

The study was conducted in Ladoke Akintola University of Technology Teaching Hospital and University of Ibadan Teaching Hospital.

Research Participants

The main objective of the study was to obtain subordinates' perceptions of their supervisors or bosses and their sources of power; and subordinates' perceptions about themselves regarding ingratiation behaviours. Some non-medical staff of the two Nigerian Tertiary Health Institutions, who had immediate supervisor or bosses to assess, participated respectively in the study. A total of two 210 (Males=126, Females=84) participants participated. Their age ranged from 20 to 48 years of age with a total mean age of 32.72 years ($SD=6.10$). The mean age of the male participants was 33.94 years ($SD=8.8$), while the females had a mean age of 35.59 years ($SD=5.9$). Marital Status of the respondents shows that 129(58.9%) were single, 77(39.2%) were married, 4(1.9%) were divorced.

Respondents varied in their educational qualifications: Secondary School Certificate 19(9%), Ordinary National Diploma Certificate 47(22.4%), First Degree/Higher National Diploma 18(8.6%), Master Degree 57(27.1%), and PhD 61(31%). Their year of employment ranged from 1 to 18 years with a total average of 7.18 years ($SD=4.41$). 76(38%) of the participants were executive officers, 65(31%) were administrative officers, 16(8%) were technical staff, 7(3%) were engineers, 17(9%) were library staff, 19(10%) were drivers, 2(.8%) were telephone supervisors.

Sampling Technique

Purposive and convenient sampling techniques were used in sampling the population of study. This sampling technique was adopted because of its simplicity and specificity that the sample tested was a true representation of the population of study.

Instrument for Data Collection

The study used a validated questionnaire in collecting data from the respondents. The questionnaire was divided into three sections named A to C.

Section A: Socio-Demographic Information

This section consisted of the demographic variables of the respondents. The variables were sex, age, job position, marital status, educational qualification, and years of working experience in the teaching hospital. Sex was scaled on a nominal scale with 0 (male) and 1 (female). Marital-Status was also scaled on a nominal scale from 1(single), 2(married), 3(widow/widower), 4(divorce) and 5(separated). Educational Qualification was scaled on an ordinal scale from

1(Secondary), 2(OND), 3(HND/B.Sc), 4(M.Sc), 5(Ph.D). Other demographic variables were left blank for respondents to fill.

Section B: Ingratiatory Behaviour

In Section B, the ingratiatory behaviour of subordinates was measured using an ingratiatory behavior scale developed by Bolino and Turnley (1999). This scale consists of 4 items of which the responses were scaled from 1(Never) to 6(often). High scores on each of the items imply a stronger ingratiatory behavior of the respondents, while low scores imply a weaker ingratiatory behavior. For the purpose of this study, a Cronbach Alpha coefficient value of 0.78 was obtained for this scale.

Section C: Power Base

In Section D, the five French-Raven bases of supervisory power measured by using the Rahim Leader Power Inventory-RLPI (Rahim, 1988). This multi-item instrument uses a 5-point Likert scale to measure perceptions of subordinates regarding their supervisors' bases of power. The instrument is made up of 29 items. These item responses were scaled from 1(strongly disagree) to 5(strongly agree). High scores on each item indicate a higher perception of the power base by the respondent, while low scores indicate lower perception of the power base. The indices of the five power bases were constructed by averaging the subject's responses to the selected items belonging to each power base. This resulted in the creation of five subscales measuring the five bases of power namely expert (items 1-6), reward (items 7-12), referent (items 13-18), coercive (items 19-23) and legitimate (items 24-29) power bases. Items 4, 9, 15 and 18 were reverse coded. For the purpose of this study, a Cronbach Alpha coefficient value of 0.81 was obtained for this scale.

Procedure for Data Collection

Researcher visited University College Hospital, Ibadan and Ladoke Akintola University of Technology Teaching Hospital, Oshogbo to administer instrument to the Non-Medical Staff of the two Tertiary Health Institutions.

To administer the instrument, permission was sought from authorities of the two Tertiary Health Institutions as a way of getting their consent for the study. A convenient sampling procedure was used to select participants purposely to obtain subordinates' perceptions of their ingratiatory behavior and their immediate supervisors' power-base. Individual participants were approached personally and the purpose of the study was briefly explained to them as a way of seeking their consent and cooperation for the study. Questionnaires were administered to the participants in their work places and they were required to respond to all items at their convenient time. Participants were made to know that

participation was voluntary and they were assured of confidentiality of their information supplied.

Although, not all the workers could be reached immediately for various reasons therefore, some questionnaires were given to some supervisors to give to their subordinates whenever it was convenient for them to fill. It took about two months to collect data from 210 sincere respondents out of 250 originally administered, while 15 of the remaining questionnaire forms were not properly filled, 13 were returned unfilled and 12 could not be accounted. The collected data was then used and its respondents formed the participants for the study.

Statistical Analysis

The data collected for the study was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Software version 17.0. Multiple Regression Analysis was used in analyzing the stated hypothesis. The reason for this choice of statistics was to test the joint and independent predictions of dependent variable by the independent variables.

Results

The hypothesis, which states that expert power, reward power, referent power, coercive power and legitimate power of supervisors would jointly and independently predict Subordinates' ingratiation behavior, was analyzed using multiple regression analysis. The result is presented in Table 4.1

Table: 4.1 Summary Table of Multiple Regression Analysis Showing the Joint and Independent Predictions of Subordinates' Ingratiation Behaviour by Supervisors' Expert Power, Reward Power, Referent Power, Coercive Power and Legitimate Power

Variables	B	T	P	R	R ²	F	P
Expert Power	.214	3.116	.002	.854	.713	2.813	.018
Reward Power	.213	3.075	.040				
Referent Power	.328	3.454	.048				
Coercive Power	.270	2.504	.034				
Legitimate Power	.038	0.550	.583				

Results from the above table show that the five supervisors' power bases jointly accounted for 71% variation on subordinates' ingratiation behaviours. Thus, there was a significant joint influence of the five supervisors' power bases on subordinates' ingratiation behaviour ($R^2 = .713$; $F(5, 204) = 2.813$, $P < .05$). It further indicates that expert power ($\beta = .214$; $t = 3.116$; $P < .01$), reward power ($\beta = .213$; $t = 3.075$; $P < .05$), referent power ($\beta = .328$; $t = 3.454$; $P < .05$) and coercive power ($\beta = .270$; $t = 2.504$; $P < .05$) of supervisors' significantly and independently, predicted ingratiation behaviour of subordinates. That is, the more the

subordinates perceive their immediate Supervisors having some of the power bases, the higher the level of their ingratiatory behaviour. On the other hand, the result shows that legitimate power of supervisors was not a significant predictor of Ingratiatory Behaviours of Subordinates. Based on the above interpretation of results, the stated hypothesis was partially confirmed.

Discussion

The hypothesis stated that expert power, reward power, referent power, coercive power and legitimate power of supervisors would jointly and independently predict subordinates' ingratiatory behaviours. This hypothesis was partially confirmed. In a clear term, expert power, reward power, referent power and coercive power predicted ingratiatory behaviour while only legitimate did not. This finding conforms to the report of Sussman and Vecchio, (1982) which shows that subordinates with high level of ingratiatory behaviours are likely to be more susceptible to influence if their superiors use reward, coercive and expert power. In the same vein, Rahim and Buntzman, (1989) study ranked referent and expert power as the most favorable and legitimate power the lowest among the non-coercive power bases in influencing subordinates' behaviour.

Harris, et al. (2007) noted that politically skilled individuals are more likely to display ingratiatory behaviors that are appropriate for the given context, thereby serving as a way to distinguish between those who appear sincere and those who appear self-serving. By using political skill, Treadway, Ferris, Duke, Adams, and Thatcher (2007) mention how subordinates are able to effectively mask their self-serving intentions, thereby making the ingratiatory attempts seem altruistic in nature while only legitimate power does not

Conclusion

This study concludes that supervisors' expert power-base, referent power-base, reward power-base, coercive power-base and legitimate power-base are significant joint predictors of subordinates' ingratiatory behavior. Moreover, expert power-base of supervisors is a significant predictor of subordinates' ingratiatory behaviour. Similarly, reward power-base of supervisors is a significant predictor of subordinates' ingratiatory behaviour. Also, referent power-base of supervisors is a significant predictor of subordinates' ingratiatory behaviour. However, legitimate power-base of supervisors is not a significant predictor of subordinates' ingratiatory behaviour.

Recommendation

Based on the findings above, it is strongly recommended that: Employers in public and private sectors should enhance the ability of employees to positively influence one and other through related training and development programmes

such as seminar and workshop. Furthermore, management of organizations and scholars should take into cognizance the potent of social power base influencing ingratiation behaviours therefore, encourage only the positive effect on individual members of organization. Similarly, management of organizations and scholars should be proactive in managing interpersonal relation of employee with adequate attention on the positive usage of social power in influencing organizational members' behaviours. Lastly, Employers should proactively develop and implement measures against counterproductive political behaviours in organization by creating awareness of the detrimental effects of such behaviours on organizations.

Limitation of Study

The following were the issues beyond the control of this study, which might have one way or the other limited the conclusions: This study employed only self-report method for data collection. Furthermore, time was a major constraint of this study, as many of the targeted participants did not participate because, they were busy with official and personal assignments. Lastly, this study considered only the administrative staff of University College Hospital (UCH) and Ladoke Akintola University of Technology Teaching Hospital.

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