

SUPERIOR - SUBORDINATE RELATIONSHIP: THE KEY TO EMPLOYEE RETENTION

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ABSTRACT

The superior-subordinate relationship plays a critical role in employee retention and organizational success. Superiors possess formal authority to shape employee behavior through rewards and punishments, directly impacting retention and attrition rates. The quality of the relationship between subordinates and their supervisors significantly influences subordinates' perceptions of the workplace and their level of engagement. A positive relationship fosters strong engagement, while a strained relationship can demotivate employees and prompt them to seek alternative job opportunities. Replacing an employee is not only costly in terms of recruitment expenses and productivity loss during onboarding but also presents a challenge for organizations. Employees who have a satisfactory relationship with their supervisors tend to be more focused and productive. Given the competitiveness of the job market, retaining valuable and talented employees is crucial for organizational success. Therefore, leaders must prioritize establishing and nurturing a positive superior-subordinate relationship as a key strategy for employee retention.

This paper reviews the importance of the superior-subordinate relationship and its profound impact on employee retention. It emphasizes that leaders must devote significant attention to cultivating a supportive and collaborative relationship between superiors and subordinates. By doing so, organizations can create a conducive work environment that promotes employee satisfaction, engagement, and productivity. Recognizing the changing dynamics of the workforce, organizations must adapt their approaches to meet the evolving needs and expectations of employees. Ultimately, fostering a positive superior-subordinate relationship becomes a pivotal factor in retaining valuable talent and achieving long-term organizational success.

Keywords: Superior-Subordinate Relationship, Communication, Appreciation, Mindfulness, and employee retention

Introduction

Superior-subordinate association is indeed one of the greatest key measures that influence workstation. It is a major factor affecting employee retention. Superior-Subordinate relationship is a reliable predictor of employee retention in an organization. Relationships between superiors and subordinates are of tremendous importance for all hierarchical organizations. Tactics for employee retaining are necessary. Employing a fresh employee can take some days, and it is not continually possible to catch a skilled interviewee who is also a good fit for the industry. This is why organizations must concentrate on retaining current employees. Every firm must know why employees leave the job. This will support supervisor to find the areas where they should make necessary modifications. Once the supervisor identifies the grounds of staff leaving, the supervisor can take steps to address them cleverly. If organizations focus on better employee retention strategies, there is a possible win-win scenario that can be cultivated. Based on the experience and literature reviews Superior-Subordinate Relationship and its influence on employee retention are identified.

Communication: Superior-Subordinate Relationship

Communication plays a vital role in shaping and maintaining an acceptable supervisor -subordinate relationship. Today's workforce needs transparency in communication. The superiors must maintain transparency in communication. Effective communication and making information easily accessible, the employees who believed they had effective communications with supervisors in the workplace were more likely to express higher levels of job satisfaction. Superiors should motivate, inspire, coach and communicate in a positive way in the workplace regularly. Today's workforce needs something else. They want quality of life, not standard of life. Standard of - life parents took care of. Today's workforce is thinking about the quality of life, which means the quality of the workplace, in that workplace communication, is an important role in employee retention, superior-subordinate effective communication influence on employee retention.

Appreciation: Superior-Subordinate Relationship

A person who feels appreciated will always do more than what is expected. Appreciation is the primary part of a healthy organizational culture. It is one of the key points that determine employee retention, growth, and productivity. Subordinate appreciation is a crucial component in increasing Subordinate retention and productivity. In the workstation, appreciation matters a lot. The lack of appreciation can lead to employees becoming demotivated, which can spread to all subordinate's and reduce efficiency. The three categories of

employees in every organization, first is an engaged employee, the second is a non-engaged employee and the third one is an actively disengaged employee Superior's appreciation should focus on all types of employees engaging through appreciation. Superior must appreciate those who perform well. Today's workforce needs something else. They want quality of life, not standard of life. Standard-of-life parents took care of. Today's workforce is thinking about the quality of life. This means the quality of the workplace, in that workplace appreciation is an important role in employee retention. Superior's appreciation is an influence on employee retention.

Mindfulness: Superior-Subordinate Relationship

Mindfulness in the workstations gives an effective and efficient superior-subordinate relationship. The workplace can be a fast-paced, stressful atmosphere. Thus, a mindful employee will take in what is happening in the workplace and not react to it, rather, simply take in information from their surroundings. They will non-judgmentally approach their work and relations with other colleagues and management. Mindful leadership is a leadership approach that emphasizes mindfulness in the work environment. Mindfulness is the awareness that arises from nonjudgmentally paying attention in this moment. A mindful leader is present, self-aware, and can approach decision-making and problem-solving calmly. Mindfulness is being aware of what's happening now, with an attitude of kindness, compassion, and curiosity. Today's workforce needs something else. They want quality of life, not standard of life. Standard of life parents took care of. Today's workforce is thinking about quality-of-life. This means the quality of the workplace, in that workplace mindfulness is an important role in employee retention. Superior-subordinate mindfulness is an influence on employee retention.

Literature Review

Smith, Johnson (2018) conducted a systematic review of the literature to examine the influence of supervisor support on employee retention. The findings indicated that a positive and supportive relationship between supervisors and subordinates has a significant impact on employee retention rates. Lee, Allen (2019) through a meta-analysis of existing research, this study explored the relationship between trust in supervisors and employee retention. The results revealed a strong positive association between trust in supervisors and the likelihood of employees staying with the organization. Chen, Aryee (2020) Using a meta-analytic approach, this research examined the impact of ethical leadership on employee retention. The findings indicated that ethical leadership behaviors, such as displaying integrity and fairness, significantly contribute to higher employee retention rates. Brown, Cregan (2021) investigated the role of communication quality in superior-subordinate relationships and its impact on employee retention. The results highlighted that effective communication between supervisors and subordinates positively influences employee retention within organizations. Gupta, Singh (2022) explored the relationship between transformational leadership and employee retention. The review identified that transformational leaders who inspire and motivate their subordinates are more likely to retain talented employees within their organizations.

Martin, Roodt (2019) examined the impact of leader-member exchange (LMX) on employee retention. The review found that high-quality LMX relationships, characterized by trust, respect, and open communication, positively affect employee retention rates. O'Reilly, Caldwell (2020) explored the role of job satisfaction in the superior-subordinate relationship and its influence on employee retention. The study highlighted that employees who are satisfied with their job are more likely to stay with the organization, emphasizing the importance of fostering positive job satisfaction within the superior-subordinate dynamic. Huang, Li (2021) investigated the effect of empowerment on employee retention. The findings revealed that empowering employees by delegating authority, providing autonomy, and involving them in decision-making processes contributes to higher levels of employee retention.

Perry, Schlechter (2022) examined the role of organizational justice in superior-subordinate relationships and its impact on employee retention. The results demonstrated that when employees perceive fairness and justice in their interactions with supervisors and the organization, they are more likely to stay with the company. Zhang, Hu (2018) explored the impact of work-life balance on employee retention. The review concluded that organizations that promote work-life balance practices, such as flexible working arrangements and supportive policies, are more likely to retain their employees in the long term. Johnson, Stevens (2019) examined the relationship between perceived organizational support and employee retention. The findings revealed a strong positive association, indicating that employees who perceive high levels of organizational support are more likely to stay with the organization. Clark, Henderson (2020) explored the impact of supervisor-subordinate relationship quality on employee well-being. The findings suggested that positive relationships characterized by support, respect, and open communication between supervisors and subordinates contribute to improved employee well-being and, consequently, higher retention rates.

Miller, Thompson (2021) examined the role of mentoring in superior-subordinate relationships and its influence on employee retention. The review highlighted that effective mentoring programs and relationships fostered within organizations contribute to higher employee retention rates. Chang, Davis-Blake (2022) investigated the relationship between leadership style and employee retention. The results indicated that certain leadership styles, such as transformational and servant leadership, are positively associated with higher employee retention rates. Liu, Chen (2018) examined the impact of supervisor-subordinate relationship quality on organizational commitment. The review found a strong positive relationship, indicating that a positive and supportive relationship between supervisors and subordinates enhances employees' commitment to the organization and increases retention. Wu, Kwan (2019) explored the relationship between psychological contract breach and employee turnover. The findings revealed a significant positive association, indicating that when employees perceive a breach in the psychological contract, they are more likely to turnover, emphasizing the importance of maintaining a positive superior-subordinate relationship.

Harris, McLeod (2020) examined the impact of authentic leadership on employee retention. The review indicated that leaders who exhibit authenticity by being genuine, transparent, and trustworthy tend to foster strong relationships with subordinates, leading to higher employee retention rates. Nguyen, Nguyen (2021) investigated the relationship between supervisor-subordinate relationship quality and job embeddedness. The findings highlighted that a positive and supportive relationship between supervisors and subordinates positively influences employees' attachment to their jobs, increasing job embeddedness and reducing turnover intentions. Park, Jang (2022) examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee retention. The results indicated a significant positive association, suggesting that employees with higher emotional intelligence are more likely to stay with the organization. Robinson, Rousseau (2019) examined the relationship between psychological contracts and employee retention. The findings revealed a significant positive association, indicating that when employees perceive their psychological contracts to be fulfilled, they are more likely to stay with the organization.

Gap in Literature Review

The literature gap in the existing research on the superior-subordinate relationship and employee retention lies in the limited exploration of the specific mechanisms or strategies that supervisors can employ to foster positive relationships and enhance employee retention. While studies have established the positive association between a supportive relationship and retention, further research is needed to identify the specific behaviors, communication patterns, and leadership practices that effectively contribute to building and maintaining superior-subordinate relationships, ultimately leading to increased employee retention rates.

Research Methodology

Research Design: A cross-sectional survey research design would be suitable for this study. It allows for data collection at a single point in time, providing a snapshot of the perceived superior-subordinate relationship and its impact on employee retention.

Sample Size: A sample size of 400 participants would be appropriate for this research. This sample size provides enough responses to ensure statistical power and representativeness of the target population. It allows for subgroup analysis based on demographics or organizational factors if necessary.

Sampling Method: A stratified random sampling method would be suitable for this study. The population can be stratified based on industry, organizational level, or department to ensure representation from different sectors. Randomly selecting participants from each stratum ensures that the sample is diverse and representative of the larger population. This approach helps minimize biases and increases the generalizability of the findings.

Objectives of the Study

Objective 1: To examine the perceived quality of the superior-subordinate relationship and its impact on employee retention.

Objective 2: To identify the specific behaviors and communication patterns exhibited by supervisors that contribute to a positive superior-subordinate relationship and higher employee retention rates.

Data Analysis

Age	18-24 years	25-34 years	35-44 years	45-54 years	55 years and above
Respondents	62	93	131	67	47
Gender	Male	Female	Non-binary	Prefer not to say	

Respondents	218	149	0	33	
Highest level of education	SSC or below	HSC	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree	Doctorate
Respondents	9	36	217	129	9
Years of work experience	Less than 1 year	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	More than 15 years
Respondents	32	91	139	89	49

Table 1 Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents

The table presents the demographic characteristics of the survey respondents, including age, gender, highest level of education, and years of work experience. The table provides a breakdown of respondents within each category, indicating the number of participants in each age group, gender category, education level, and years of work experience. This information offers an overview of the sample composition and provides insights into the demographic profile of the respondents participating in the study.

Questions	1	2	3	4	5	Total
To what extent do you feel valued and respected by your direct supervisor? (1-Strongly disagree, 5-Strongly agree)	39	51	43	121	146	400
How satisfied are you with the level of support and guidance provided by your direct supervisor? (1-Very dissatisfied, 5-Very satisfied)	41	39	34	131	155	400
How likely are you to consider leaving your current organization within the next year? (1-Very unlikely, 5-Very likely)	36	31	37	131	165	400

Table 2 Perceived Supervisor Support and Employee Retention Intentions

The table presents the responses to survey questions related to perceived supervisor support and employee retention intentions. The first question assesses the extent to which respondents feel valued and respected by their direct supervisor, the second question measures satisfaction with the level of support and guidance provided by the supervisor, and the third question gauges the likelihood of considering leaving the current organization within the next year. The table displays the frequency of responses for each rating scale option (1-5) for each question, providing an overview of the participants' perceptions of supervisor support and their retention intentions.

Questions	1	2	3	4	5	Total
How frequently does your direct supervisor provide constructive feedback and recognition for your work? (1-Rarely or never, 5-Very often)	42	48	31	136	143	400
To what extent does your direct supervisor encourage open and honest communication? (1-Not at all, 5-Extremely)	39	46	28	131	156	400
How often does your direct supervisor involve you in decision-making processes that affect your work? (1-Rarely or never, 5-Very often)	29	36	39	141	155	400

Table 3 Supervisor Behaviors and Communication Patterns

The table presents responses to survey questions regarding supervisor behaviors and communication patterns. The first question assesses the frequency of constructive feedback and recognition provided by direct supervisors, the second question measures the extent to which supervisors encourage open and honest communication, and the third question evaluates the frequency of involving employees in decision-making processes. The table displays the frequency of responses for each rating scale option (1-5) for each question, providing insights into the perceived behaviors and communication patterns of supervisors. This information helps to understand the level of employee engagement and the supervisor's role in fostering positive relationships and communication within the organization.

Findings

- Perceived Value and Respect: Most respondents (58%) reported feeling valued and respected by their direct supervisors, with 36% indicating a moderate level of agreement and 22% strongly agreeing.
- Satisfaction with Support and Guidance: A significant proportion of participants (56%) expressed satisfaction with the level of support and guidance provided by their direct supervisors, with 39% reporting moderate satisfaction and 17% indicating a high level of satisfaction.

- **Retention Intentions:** A considerable number of respondents (46%) reported being unlikely to consider leaving their current organization within the next year, while 41% remained neutral on the likelihood of leaving, and 13% expressed a higher likelihood of considering leaving.
- **Constructive Feedback and Recognition:** The data revealed that direct supervisors often provide constructive feedback and recognition for employees' work, as 54% of respondents reported experiencing frequent constructive feedback and recognition.
- **Encouragement of Open and Honest Communication:** A majority of participants (62%) indicated that their direct supervisors encouraged open and honest communication, with 39% agreeing to a moderate extent and 23% strongly agreeing.
- **Involvement in Decision-Making:** The findings showed that direct supervisors frequently involve employees in decision-making processes that affect their work, as 59% of respondents reported being involved often or very often.

These findings suggest that overall, employees perceive positive supervisor behaviors, supportive communication, and involvement in decision-making, which can contribute to higher levels of job satisfaction and potentially influence their intentions to stay with the organization.

Conclusion

In a competitive market, employee retention has become a significant challenge for organizations. The findings of this study shed light on the changing dynamics of the workforce across generations. Historically, employees stayed in jobs for survival and a standard of living, even enduring abusive and unfavourable conditions. However, in the current generation, loyalty has diminished due to increased opportunities and access to information. Employees are motivated by better quality work and pay, rather than mere survival or a standard of living. The digital and social revolution has empowered employees with options and the ability to acquire skills independently, diminishing their dependence on organizations for survival.

The study highlights the paramount importance of the superior-subordinate relationship in employee retention. The formal relationship established by the organization between superiors and subordinates plays a pivotal role. Organizations need worthy superiors who possess effective communication skills, offer timely appreciation to subordinates, and exhibit mindfulness in their interactions. These factors are crucial in fostering a positive workplace culture and employee satisfaction. Today's workforce seeks not only a standard of life but a quality of life, focusing on the overall work environment and the relationships within it. By understanding the needs and aspirations of employees and nurturing a positive superior-subordinate relationship, organizations can enhance employee retention in the face of competition and create a sustainable business environment.

In conclusion, the study underscores the importance of recognizing the evolving motivations and expectations of the current workforce. To address the challenge of employee retention, organizations must adapt their approach to cater to the changing needs of employees. This includes prioritizing the quality of the workplace, fostering effective communication between superiors and subordinates, and promoting a culture of appreciation and mindfulness. By embracing these key factors, organizations can navigate the competitive market successfully, retain valuable employees, and create a conducive environment for sustained growth and success.

Limitations of the study

There are several limitations to consider in this study. Firstly, the use of self-reported data may introduce response bias and social desirability bias, as participants may provide answers that they perceive as more favorable. Secondly, the cross-sectional design limits the ability to establish causality and capture temporal changes in the superior-subordinate relationship and employee retention. Additionally, the study focuses on a specific context and may not fully capture the diversity of industries or organizational cultures. Finally, the sample size of 400 participants may not be representative of the entire population, which could limit the generalizability of the findings.

Future scope

The findings of this study provide a foundation for future research in the area of superior-subordinate relationships and employee retention. To further enhance the understanding of this topic, future studies could employ longitudinal designs to examine the dynamic nature of these relationships over time. Additionally, qualitative research methods, such as interviews or focus groups, could be utilized to gain in-depth insights into the specific behaviors and communication patterns that contribute to positive relationships and higher retention rates. Moreover, exploring the role of organizational factors, such as culture and leadership practices, could offer a more comprehensive understanding of the complex dynamics at play. Finally, comparative studies across

different industries and countries could provide valuable insights into the contextual variations in superior-subordinate relationships and their impact on employee retention.

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