Employee's Perceptions of Organizational Politics and Stress at Workplace; A Comparative Study of Public and Private Sector Universities

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to analyze the impact of employee perceptions of organizational politics and job stress at the work place. Previous researches were critically reviewed for this purpose and through questionnaire data is gathered from different education sectors of Pakistan.200 questionnaires were distributed in administrative staff, faculty members, and employees. 142 complete questionnaires were received at response rate of 71%. After preparing a detailed literature review, a non-probability random sampling technique was used to select the sample. Pearson's moment quotient and linear regression was applied to study the relationship between perceptions of organizational politics and Job Stress. This study will help managers and employees how the organizational politics and stress level of the employees should be tackled in the organization and enhances the organizational performance of the employees. The future guidelines are that we should also consider the stressors which are the main cause of the stress and organizational.

Keywords: Organizational politics, perceptions, stress, education sector, employees, organizational climate.

Introduction

Organizational politics is a common and integral feature of organizational life which stems out from the use of power, authority or influence. It has direct as well as indirect influences on employees' attitudes and behaviors. Organizational politics has been defined in various ways in literature, for example, Organizational politics in the broad perspective is the study that how the individuals using their authority or power and influences the activities of the systems[1]. It indicates the attempt to influence individuals and processes in a work setting. A narrow definition of politics defines it as an attempt to promote self-interest which is not legitimate. Organizational Politics is a subjective concept because it depends upon the perceptions of individuals and organizational characteristics[2]. Tushman[3] describes the organizational politics that it is the capability of using the optimal combination of the resources the right information in the right time by keeping in view of the desired goals of the organizations. Different researchers present many theoretical models in order to understand the organizational politics in the organizations[4] present the model that politics is the combination of job environment, organizational and individual influences and it creates the negative effects on the individual outcomes and organizational citizenship behavior of the employees due to the riding stress level of the employees then in 2002 Ferris, Adams and associates restructured their model in which they suggest that accountability mechanism enhance the political activities in the organization in order to gain competitive edge over the other employees.

Organizational politics can be viewed as a intentional action by the individuals in order to gain benefit at the expense of others because everyone in the organization want a recognition of his work that's why they played organizational politics with one another[5]. According to Kacmarand Carlson[6] there is always high politics in such a type of organizational climate where organization resources are limited and there is challenging situation for the employees at the workplace. Although politics behavior exist in the organization are of two types depending upon the perceptions either it is positive or negative. The negative politics behavior in the organization create the unfavorable affect on the employees and the repute of the organization resulting employee turnover, low productivity etc.[7] and it can be minimized by using organizational justice and creating a positive relations with the employees.

Stress is one of the important factors in the organization which is created when the individual physical and emotional capabilities didn't match with the job demands and it create a physiological and psychological pressure on the employees at the workplace[8]. According to Matteson and Ivancevich[9] it is a adoptive response as a result of certain action or situation. Stress is created due to different external and internal cues of the working environment which can be overcome by conflict management[10], and the discrimination in the power and authority among the employees. which is created due to the clashes of personalities at the workplace stress is normally of two types Eustress which is moderate level of stress needed to enhance the motivation level and performance of the employees[11]in which the employees with the help of its

knowledge, skills and abilities handle the work pressure in the organization and the other is Distress which causes adverse affects on the performance of the individuals as well as the organization[12]in which the employees knowledge and abilities didn't meet up with the work demand and not fulfill the duties and responsibilities of the organization efficiently and effectively.

Pfeffer[13] suggests that Political skill is very useful skill in getting the benefit from others the peoples in the organizations spotted the right opportunities and grab that competitive edge from others but most of the time it creates win- loss situation because one gets benefits at the expense of other. According to conservation research theory[14] the political skill is the systematic mechanism in which employees get trained to cope up with the stressors and improves his performance during the job and the individual which have high political skills are affected least in the organization[15].

Literature Review: A large number of studies were conducted after the emergence of Ferris et al. model[4]. They admitted that behavior of employees in every organization is political in nature but many antecedents and consequences are still unexplored. As the setting becomes more political, an individual may not to guarantee high payoffs. He or she may even be fearful of threats, thereby raising stress levels even more. The politics adversely affects the market conditions because political environment create imperfect market conditions in which all individuals do not have the same opportunities in the market place. It mostly depend upon the perceptions of individuals that how they infer the organizational compatibility with market place[16]. Those individuals who are involved in organizational politics are always thinking about themselves that how they get maximum benefits from the market place or in the organizational environment. Ferris et al. [17] and Bozeman et al. [18] indicated that the individual who have strong capability of adaptation and quick responsive behavior are affected less by the high organizational politics environment because they modify themselves according to the situation as compared to those who are rigid and less adaptive. Drory[19] observed that Strong and concrete decision making minimizes the affect of organizational politics in the absence of effective judgmental control creates the ambiguous situation in the organizational climate and everyone in the organizations making his own interpretations and act accordingly[20].

The individual perceptions of politics are more important than the actual presence of organizational politics and that's why different studies were conducted to explain the relationship of organizational politics and the perceptions of individuals and organizational outcomes[21]. According to Kacmar the organizational politics depend upon the individual's perceptions, observation, and self-interest and their way to manipulating the organizational policies it is also depend upon the individuals that how they created the situations on basis of their observation regarding the political environment[22]. The

employees in the organizations needed to focus on desired goals and objectives rather than making different views and opinions on the basis of some uncertain facts[23].

Organizational politics is an inevitable reality of the life for the employees at workplace and it affect their work outcomes and it is upon the perceptions of individuals how they can handle it whether taken as a positive manner and faces all the challenges or taken as negative manner which causes dissatisfaction among them[24,] the politics didn't affect equally on all employees. Organizational politics is not related to the positive organizational values such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment and it makes the organization to less innovative supportive which causes the increase stress level and employee turnover of the employees[25]. He also found that lower employees are in high political stress as compared to higher status employees they are easily influence by the Political tactics of the organization because the lack the power to control which results in emerging the negative attitudes towards the organizations.

Different researches in the past is conducted on the unfavorable effects on the organizational structure and performance which results in different physiological effects such as poor health and grievance and psychological effects such as employee turnover, job stress, lack of transformational leadership, employee commitment, job motivation, representative disposition, for example, work fulfillment and hierarchical responsibility[26]. But most of these studies were conducted in Western context. There are no significant studies in our region, however, few papers are found in Malaysia on politics. Job stress is responsible for low organizational commitment when the stressors is increases in working environment it leads to job dissatisfaction among the employees[27] when the stressors is removed from the organization such as political tactics it enhances the performances of employees[28]. Stress is created when the work burden surpasses according to his capabilities and it becomes difficult for him to cope up with the pressure that is arises from the work overload[29]. House and Rizzo[30] measure the job stress with their four items version original scale later on Vigoda and Kapun[31] in his studies of organizational politics confirmed their studies.

According to stress framework[32] the politics is associated to the ambiguity and uncertain situation and the employees at the workplace didn't get the clear information and then stress is mounting on them. Politics is also considered as a source of stress in the organization climate and its creating many harmful consequences of stress .The organizational politics have a positive relationship with the employee stress level, these employees which feel high pressure greater stress is created on them but it also depend upon the tolerance limit of the employees but such a type of situation where politics is high due to favoritism and any other factors lead the employee to deviate from its job[33] which causes the employee switching from the organization[34, 35] and it also effects on the job performance of

the employee because the psychological pressure created on them[36] but some findings suggest that organizational politics is negatively related with the organizational commitment and job satisfaction[37].

In the theory of reaction[38] founded that organizational politics increases the job dissatisfaction and increases the employee turnover because when the some organizational members deliberately used to the politics it affects adversely on the other employees of the organization which cause decreases in their job commitment and then they quit or try to switch their job from that organization. Organizational politics mostly based on the employee's perceptions and the behavior of their subordinates it also depend upon the organizational climate in which they worked that's the reason the perceptions of politics is different in public as well as the private sector[39]. Different studies were conducted by the researchers in the past to understand the organizational politics in public as well as private sector[40] suggests that the working climate and the way of servicing in public sectors is different from the private sector that's why the level of perceptions of politics in public sector is greater as compared to the private sector because in public sector promotion is slower the reward are normally not related to the work outcomes[41] and in the other hand private sector have stable and dynamic competitive environment where the managers applying different strategies to minimize the effects of organizational politics and providing different training to their employees how to maintain their performance in the presence of stress level.

It is observed that organizational politics increase the job stress level of the employees that's why it is creating the negative effects on the job satisfaction level[42] the organizational justice is also play an important role in that relationship as a mediating variable[43] in those organization where organizational justice is weaker the employee turnover is increases as compared to those organization where organizational justice is strong because it increases the job commitment of the employees. Harris, Kacmar and Zivnuska[44] also found that organizational justice play a mediating role between the organizational politics and performance relationship. Organizational politics also influence on the decision of the management such as supervisor rating in performance appraisal[45].

Methodology

In order to get the information which is needed for the research the questionnaires are distributed in different education sector of Lahore, Pakistan in public as well as private sector and to be filled by administrative staff, faculty members, employees and managers as a respondents in order to examine the perceptions of organizational politics on the job stress of the employees at the workplace. The questionnaire is split into two sections demographic and subjective. Gender, Age, Marital Status, Sector, Industrial Sector, and Job tenure are included in demographic section and Organizational Politics and Job stress of the employees encompassed in subjective section. 200 Questionnaires are distributed in the public and private and private education sector in which 142 complete questionnaires were received at the response rate of 71%. Non probability random sampling technique is used in gathering the data from different universities of Lahore, Pakistan Administrative staff and faculty members of the university, employees were the unit of this study. A survey instrument in the form of close ended questionnaire was developed for the purpose of data.

Hypotheses: On the basis of above literature following hypotheses can be developed; i. H1: There is a positive relationship between organizational politics and job stress, ii. H2: There is no difference of organizational politics on the gender, iii. H3: There is no difference of Job stress on the gender, iv. H4: There is no difference of Organizational politics on the Public and Private sector, v. H5: There is no difference of job stress on the Public and Private sector.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows that majority of the respondents are male (74.6%), married (54.9%) and aged between 30-39 years old (27.5%) and belongs to the private sector (61.3%) all the data is taken from Education sector that's why the industrial composition education shows (100%). It is also observed that majority of the data is gathered from those organizations whose establishment size is less than 25 employees (40.1%) then 25-99 employees (35.2%) and the majority of the respondents belong to non-managerial positions (56.3%) with a job experience of 1-2 years (26.8%).

Table 2 shows that mean of perceptions of organizational politics in Public sector is 3.29 and in private sector is 3.14. The standard deviation of Public sector is 0.63 and for private sector is 0.72.

Table 3 shows that the Levene`s test for equal variances yields a p-value as .170 this means that the differences between the variances is statistically insignificant and the sig. (2-tailed value) is .204 which is greater that p=0.05 shows that there is no significant difference between perceptions of organizational politics for public and private sector.

Table 4 shows that mean of Job stress in Public sector is 3.14 and in private sector is 3.07. The standard deviation of Public sector is 0.83 and for private sector is 0.74.

Table 5 shows that the Levene`s test for equal variances yields a p-value as .606 this means that the differences between the variances is statistically insignificant and the sig. (2-tailed value) is .638 which is greater that p=0.05 shows that there is no significant difference between Job Stress for public and private sector.

Table-1
Demographic Profile of Respondents

Category	Classification	Frequency	Percentage%
Age	19 or Less	1	**.7**
	20-24	35	**24.6**
	25-29	28	**19.7**
	30-39	39	**27.5**
	40-49	26	**18.3**
	50-59	6	**4.2**
	60 and above	7	**4.9**
Marital Status	Married	78	**54.9**
	Single	64	**45.1**
Gender	Male	106	**74.6**
	Female	36	**25.4**
Sector	Public	55	**38.7**
	Private	87	**61.3**
Establishment Size	Less than 25 employees	57	**40.1**
	25-99	50	**35.2**
	100-199	12	**8.5**
	200-499	15	**10.6**
	500 and more	8	**5.6**
Job Tenure	less than 1 year	10	**7.0**
	1-2	38	**26.8**
	2-3	27	**19.0**
	3-5	18	**12.7**
	5-10	20	**14.1**
	more than 10	29	**20.4**
Position	Managerial	62	**43.7**
	Non Managerial	80	**56.3**

Table-2
Descriptives

	Sector	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	St. Error Mean
Perceptions of Organizational Politics	Public	55	3.2939	.63987	.08628
	Private	87	3.1418	.72315	.07753

Table-3
Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Perceptions of Organizational Politics	Equal variances assumed	1.899	.170	1.276	140	.204	.15218	.11925	-.08358	.38793
	Equal variances not assumed			1.312	125.171	.192	.15218	.11600	-.07739	.38174

Table 6 shows that the significant value is 0.382 which is greater than 0.05. It means that there is no significant difference between perceptions of organizational politics of different age groups.

Table 7 shows that the significant value is 0.861 which is greater than 0.05. It means that there is no significant difference between Job Stress of different age groups.

Mean value of Job stress is 3.10 and .77 is the standard deviation. 3.10 is close to 4 that indicate job stress in increases

with the involvement of organizational politics while .77 indicates 77% variation among responses.

Table 9 shows the correlation value between organizational politics and job stress is .410(**) which indicates that there is moderate positive relationship between perceptions of organizational politics and job stress means that if organizational politics is increases it will also leads to increase in job stress level of the employees.

Table-4
Group Statistics

	Sector	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Job Stress	Public	55	3.1409	.83716	.11288
	Private	87	3.0776	.74055	.07940

Table-5
Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Job Stress	**Equal variances assumed**	.267	.606	.472	140	.638	.06332	.13424	-.20207	.32872
	Equal variances not assumed			.459	104.573	.647	.06332	.13801	-.21033	.33698

Table-6
ANOVA

Perceptions of Organizational Politics					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.087	6	.514	1.072	.382
Within Groups	64.776	135	.480		
Total	67.863	141			

Table-7
ANOVA

Job Stress					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.581	6	.263	.426	.861
Within Groups	83.564	135	.619		
Total	85.144	141			

Table-8
Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Perceptions of Organizational Politics	3.2007	.69376	142
Job Stress	3.1021	.77708	142

Linear regression is applied in order to test the relationship between the perception of organizational politics and job stress and Durban- Watson test is applied to check the autocorrelation in the residuals from the linear regression analysis. Table 10 shows that the value of Durban Watson test is 2.0556 which is close to 2 so there is no auto correlation.

Table 11 shows R=.410 shows 41% variation in organizational politics and job stress. R Square is the coefficient of determination which shows that 16.8% total variation with its linear relationship of organizational politics and job stress.

Table 12 of ANOVA shows level of significance since the value of "P" is less than .05 so it is accepted that impact organizational politics on job stress is highly significant.

In table 13 A=1.634 is the average of job stress when the perceptions of organizational politics is zero whereas .459 is the value of "beta" that indicates one unit increase of perceptions of organizational politics will bring .459 unit increase in Job stress level in the organization.

Table-9
Correlations

		Perceptions of Organizational Politics	Job Stress
Perceptions of Organizational Politics	Pearson Correlation	1	.410**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	142	142
Job Stress	Pearson Correlation	.410**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	142	142

Table-10
Durbin Watson Test

Model	Change Statistics		Durbin-Watson
	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	140a	.000	2.056

Table-11

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics		
					R Square Change	F Change	df1
1	.410a	.168	.162	.71145	.168	28.214	1
a. Predictors: (Constant), Perceptions of organizational Politics							
b. Dependent Variable: Job Stress							

Table-12
ANOVAa

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	14.281	1	14.281	28.214	.000b
	Residual	70.863	140	.506		
	Total	85.144	141			

a. Dependent Variable: Job Stress, b. Predictors: (Constant), Perceptions of Organizational Politics

Table-13
Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.634	.283		5.777	.000
	Perceptions of Organizational Politics	.459	.086	.410	5.312	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Job Stress

Job Stress = 1.634 + .459 (Perceptions of Organizational Politics)

Above linear equation shows that one percent perceptions of organizational politics will bring 45.9% change in Job stress.

A=.864 is the average of job stress when Perceptions of Organizational Politics is zero whereas .459 is the value of "beta" that indicates one unit increase in perceptions of organizational politics will bring .459 unit increase in Job stress.

Table-14
Coefficients

Model		Collinearity Statistics	
		Tolerance	VIF
1	**(Constant)**		
	Perceptions of Organizational Politics	1.000	1.000

a. Dependent Variable: Job Stress

Table 14 shows that the tolerance value is 1 and variance inflation factor (VIF) value which is inversely associated with the tolerance value is also 1it means there is no collinearity among the variables.

Conclusion

It is inevitable reality that politics exists in everywhere in public as well as private sector we can't eliminate Politics completely but managers try to minimize its effects in the organization and used politics as a positive tool to enhance the performance of the employees. Organizational politics is basically created due to difference of ideas and opinions in the organizations which is conformed with the studies of Vigoda-gadot E.[46]. It is not purely a negative factor for the organization in fact its consequences create positive effects which include employee's commitment, enhance productivity, organization citizenship behavior and negative effects which includes Job Stress, Employee turnover, dissatisfaction[47.]This study supports the previous studies that organizational politics have positive relationship with job stress at the workplace and it major consequences is that it increases the job stress level of the employees which leads to diminishing organizational commitment and increases the switching level of the employees form one organization to other organization. This study give the clear understanding of the perceptions of organizational politics that it adversely influences in the organizations environment which leads to lack of trust and commitment level in the organizations. Harris et al[48]confirmed that organizational commitment and job stress level is increases due lack of environmental justice and the ambiguous situations created by the employees.

This study`s unique contributions is by showing that there is no difference of perceptions of organizational politics and job stress in the male and female in addition to that there is no significant difference in the perceptions of organizational politics and job stress in the public as well private sector whereas according the previous research studies show that there is significant deviation in the perceptions of organizational politics in gender due to their differences of their attitudes, behavior and priorities and in the public and private sector due to their infrastructure, working conditions managers leadership capabilities and performance evaluation process but our unit of analysis is the employees in the education sectors that's why our result vary because in the education sector there is no differences in the working styles of public and private and male and female tackling most of their problems in the same manner that's why it there is no difference in the perceptions of organizational and job stress.

Limitations and Future Implication: The implication of the current study is that organization should consider how the employee best fit in the organizational environment and try to minimize the organizational politics and stress level of the employees. It also give the manager a wide range of information about the positive and negative aspects of the perceptions of organizational politics and helps the managers to handle the detrimental effects of the organizational politics by using different organizational tools including Employee assistance program and rehabilitation program provided to the employee so that they convert their distress into Eustress.

Future research may be conducted with large population and other sampling technique in this study the population size is small because data is only gathered from one city in order to get more concrete result data should be gathered from different cities that's why its generalizability is affected.

A future longitudinal research is needed for the extensive study of the relationship between organizational politics and stress level of the employees. Organizational politics shows negative relationship with stress level of the employees. Different dimensions of organizational politics can be considered in conducting research in the future. Larger sample size can be taken for more accurate results by applying different statistical tools and techniques which helps them to implement their research works in this modern era and can bring the transformational changes in the organizational climate.

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