

## Antecedents of Organizational Politics in the Education Sector of Pakistan

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Accepted 20 March 2016, Available online 26 March 2016, Vol.4 (March/April 2016 issue)

### Abstract

Organizational politics can affect the performance of the organization both positively or negatively. Through this paper researcher tries to examine the factors affecting organizational politics in the education sector of Pakistan. Data was collected, for this purpose, through self-administered questionnaires and previous studies were critically reviewed. Faculty members of different colleges and universities of Lahore were the respondents and for that purpose 300 questionnaires were distributed out of which 240 completed questionnaires were received with a response rate of 75.0%. Non probability convenient sampling technique was used for the collection of the data. Pearson product moment correlation and regression analysis were used to study the factors affecting the organizational politics. Findings indicated that workplace spirituality and trust climate affect the organizational politics negatively while job role ambiguity relates positively with organizational politics in the education sector of Pakistan.

**Keywords:** Job role Ambiguity, Organizational Politics, Trust Climate, Workplace Spirituality, Education Sector

### Introduction

All organizations have politics inside to some extent due to different interest and ideas of the people (Ferris *et al* 2012). Politics has playing vital role in organizations (Vigoda & Cohen, 2002). Organizations are consist of people with different beliefs, values, attitudes which bring changes in the way they perceive different events occurs at their workplace (Delle, 2013). Organizational politics arises in the organization life through the exercise of power and influencing others and it directly and indirectly in both ways has power to affect the employee's behavior and attitude at the workplace (Danish *et al*, 2014). Organizations which lack positive work behavior, positive job attitudes, and high employee turnover are those which are under greater influence of organizational politics. Such types of organizations are characterized as not suitable for the work environment because politics creates barriers to share information and communication (Poon, 2003).

Organizational politics are such types of activities in which people achieve their desired goals without following the set patterns. This shows that people in the organization are keen towards their own interest only and it may be at the cost of organizational goals or other employees (Gull & Zaidi, 2012). Organizations with limited resources and challenging competition for the employees face high level of organizational politics (Kacmar, Bozeman, Carlson, & Anthony, 1999). Two types of organizational politics prevail in the organizations that are

positive or negative depending on the perception. Organizations facing low productivity and employees' turnover are due to the negative organizational politics and with the help of organizational justice this problem can be solved (Baron, Greenberg, DeNisi, & Goddard, 1990).

Organizational politics depends upon the characteristics of organization and perception of individual that's why it refers to intuitive concept (Gandz & Murray, 1980). Organizational politics is an intentional activity because employees of the organization need appreciation for their work therefore they take reward by deceiving other employees (Andrews & Kacmar, 2001). The organizational politics is a questionable concept and there is no doubt that in every organization there prevail internal politics (Vigoda & Cohen, 2002).

The organizational politics is very important phenomena to study and more research in this field is required so that we may have clear understanding regarding the causes and the effects of organizational politics on the employees and organizational goals. The objective of doing research in the educational institute is to clear the role of organizational politics in that sector as previous research is done mostly in the business organization to find out the causes and effect of organizational politics and very little literature is available about the organizational politics role in education institute. Moreover the present research will find out the factors that contribute more toward the organizational politics and what factors have more influence on the

organizational politics like workplace spirituality, trust climate and job role ambiguity.

#### Literature Review

Everyone is working in the organization in order to gain some certain objectives. These may be social like high status, and economic like high pay. (Foa and Foa, 1974). In order to obtain these objectives, they work hard for it. (Taylor and Moghaddam, 1987). In different organizations, people adopt different style of works. They collaborate with each other to meet each other needs. When the organization becomes involve into gaining power and meeting their rewards through competition, the organization is political. The political organization causes different positive and negative aspects. The trust climate between the employers and employees even between the climate between the employees affect, the positive aspect arises that leadership discover in the organization.

In job ambiguity, employees are not clear about their positions, job, purpose and rewards that they have to get. When the roles, job duties are doubtful, the employees are to be engage in different politics to safe guard themselves by involving in different dumb activities. (Ashforth and Lee, 1990). Furthermore, they identify that organizational decisions are determined by politics rather than by impartiality. Then they decide to accumulate power, trust on personal relationships, or to rely on radical resources for safeguarding their benefits. On the other side, when the roles, job duties are clear, they know their areas for work. That's why the employees are faithful to their organizations and they regret to be involved in any political activity. (Ferris *et al.*, 1996)

Job role ambiguity is the key point that provides the lift to politics in the organization (Ferris *et al.*, 1991). When the employees doubted about the job roles, organizational objectives, and the different incentives as a reward by the organizations, it become the cause of politics in the organization. The employees who are doubtful about their duties, the select the way to defense their rights by engaging in different activities that are unethical and not suited for the organizational performance (Ashforth and Lee, 1990). In that case, they perceive that the decisions are taken through politics rather than by merit. In that case, they use power politics, based on personal relations for safeguarding their self-interest. While in the case, when the duties, rights and criteria's are clear, there is less the chances to be indulged in such activities.

Trust is a personal form of positive expectations that is exit at personal, organizational, within the organization and at international level (Das and Teng, 2001). A positive trust climate is there, when the members of the organizations have positive reactions and trust relation to each other (Kramer, 1999). The trust climate is a tool that prohibits the employees to be engaging in politics and they took the politics as a menace for their job (Parker *et al.*, 1995). when members of the organizations are ambiguous about their fellow members objects, and their

works, the negative trust climate are there. In such cases the organizational politics exit and it affect the performance of the organization.

Trust climate affect the organizational performance and the level of trust of the employees likely to strengthen or week with respect to high and low trust climate. When there is high level of trust at work place and among the employees, they likely to ignore the minor politics which are surely existing at all level and every organization at different levels. On the other hand, the negative trust climate affects the employees and they look every activity of their fellow members and other management with them as politics.

Workplace spirituality can be recognized by "the employee inner life commitment which is fed by influence of community" (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000). Spirituality is not a specific belief system or about a religion (Cavanagh, 1999). It is based on a personally values and beliefs rather than by sticking with any specific belief or religion. It is about the persons, who view themselves as who are committed and are have a sense of loyalty with the organization (Milliman *et al.*, 2003). Religion create dispute between the employees regarding their beliefs and values, but it is open minded (Mitroff, 2003). The work place spirituality concept growing reason is the result of changes in places, religion and improvement in the way of living. The Hicks (2003) stated that these are factors that become the cause of workplace spirituality concept. The reason for the growing of this topic is that the employees are like to be work in such a place which has less complex structure.

Organizational politics is an important concept in the workplace that requires more work and analysis on it. (Mayes and Allen, 1977). Organizational politics has been introduced as the activities that (a) are not accepted with the organizational rules and regulations (b) these are used for safe guarding their self (c) and these are used without fever of anyone except of self and mostly the organizational objectives are also sacrifice for this (Valle and Witt, 2001). Gandz and murray explains that politics perceptions arises due to individual and organizational characteristics. They claim that it just only represents the wishes of only a few persons and it has a minor reality rather than a majority claims. Thus organizational politics affect the employee behavior, attitude, and their performance in the organizations. Certain researchers relate the definition of organizational politics with the employee's behavior of safe guarding self-interest, use of authority, and the employees actions towards others (Vigoda- Gadot 2003). Flemming, (2008) define the organizational politics as "the use of authority to be influence on organizational decisions, and the planned act of effectiveness on others". Thus organizational politics is the influence intentionally to effect on the decisions and safe guard self-interest (Innes, 2004). However the research has different dimensions to view the organizational politics. Gotsis (2011) classifies from the last two decades, the researcher focuses on the three

lines of research and among them one is the organizational politics.

**Hypothesis**

There is an impact of job role ambiguity on organizational politics.

There is an impact of trust climate on organizational politics.

There is an impact of workplace spirituality on organizational politics.

**Research Methodology**

The present study is quantitative and cross sectional in nature. This study explores the factors affecting the organizational politics in the education sector of Pakistan. The target population for the present study is the faculty of private educational institutes from Lahore, Attock and Islamabad city. We approached 320 faculty members out of which 240 complete surveys responses were received. Convenience sampling technique was used to collect the data from the respondents. A Five Point Likers Scale ranging from 1= Strongly Disagree to 5= strongly Agree was used to measure the construct. Statistical Packages for Social Sciences SPSS version 21 was used to analyze the collected data. Cronbach’s alpha was used to confirm the reliability of the construct; regression and correlation analysis were used.

**Results and Analysis**

**Table 1**

Category	Classification	Frequency	Percentage
Age	21-30	108	45.0
	30-40	83	34.6
	40-50	41	17.1
	over 50	8	3.3
Marital status	Married	132	55.0
	Single	106	44.2
	widowed	1	.4
Gender	Male	97	40.4
	Female	143	59.6
Experience	Less than 1 year	42	17.5
	1-5	106	44.2
	5-10	48	20.0
	10-15	24	10.0
	15-20	10	4.2
	20-25	4	1.7
	More than 25	6	2.5

This table shows that the major respondents are female that is 59.6%, and between them are married at 55% and the age group of major these respondents are between 21-30 years that is 45%. The data collected from

respondents are major of the experience have 1-5 years that is 44.2%.

**Correlation**

		JR	TC	WS	OP
JR	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
TC	Pearson Correlation	.173**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007			
WS	Pearson Correlation	.080	.479**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.218	.000		
OP	Pearson Correlation	.101	.216**	.283**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.120	.001	.000	

Table of the correlation shows that organizational politics and Job role ambiguity is .101 which shows that Organizational Politics and Job Role ambiguity is positively weak correlated and the value of Organizational Politics and Trust Climate is .216\*\* which indicates that Organizational Politics and Trust Climate are positively weak correlated while the value of Organizational Politics and Workplace Spirituality is .283(\*\*) which shows that Organizational Politics and Workplace Spirituality is moderately correlated and they are highly significant to each other.

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.304 <sup>a</sup>	.093	.081	.47022

a. Predictors: (Constant), WPS, JRA, TCL

Table of Model summary shows that R=.304 which is 30.4% variation in the Job role ambiguity, trust climate, workplace spirituality and organizational politics. While R square identifies that the coefficient of determination which shows that 9% variation with the linear relationship of Job role ambiguity, trust climate, workplace spirituality and organizational politics

**ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	5.326	3	1.775	8.029	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	52.181	236	.221		
	Total	57.507	239			

a. Dependent Variable: POP  
b. Predictors: (Constant), WPS, JRA, TCL

The table of ANOVA identifies that value of F is 8.029 which shows about the fitness of the model and the level of significance, the value of “P” is less than .05 that is .000 so it is accepted that Job role ambiguity, trust climate, workplace spirituality on organizational politics.

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.790	.193		14.474	.000
	JRA	.045	.043	.066	1.045	.297
	TCL	-.051	.039	.093	1.308	.192
	WPS	-.145	.044	.233	3.294	.001

a. Dependent Variable: POP

The table of coefficient shows that A=2.790 the average of organizational politics and the value of “beta” that identifies one unit increase in job role ambiguity will increase .045 unit increase in organizational politics and the value of “beta” is .051 which shows that one unit increase in trust climate will increase .051 unit decrease in organizational politics and workplace spirituality “beta” is .145 which shows that one unit increase in workplace spirituality will increase .145 unit decrease in organizational politics.

**Conclusion**

Organizational politics affect the personal values and beliefs (Chang *et al*, 2009; Lephine *et al*,2005, Atinc *et al*,2010). More the employee thinks about the organizational justice the more they feel injustice and result of it lead to organizational politics. The employee feeling doubtful about their roles, the criteria of rewards, the risk of punishment, the perception of doing right work, because of organizational perceptions of politics(Harris *et al* , 2007). Formalize rules and procedures obviously made an impact on the performance of the employees because if the rules are well defined then the employee of the organization know what task they have to perform and how to execute that task but the if they are confuse then they will diverge into politicking activities (Tubre & Collins, 2000). Trust and workplace spirituality is always the prime factor in developing the relations among the subordinates the organization have to develop strong intranetworking skills among their employees in order to restrict the wasteful activities of the employees (Dannison, 1996).

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