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DOES WORKPLACE POLITICS WEAKEN COMMITMENT? THE PERCEPTION OF ORGANIZATIONAL POLITICS AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT, AND AGE-BASED ATTITUDES AMONG BANK EMPLOYEES

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between the perception of organizational politics organizational commitment and attitude differences towards working in an environment with organizational politics, with respect to age cohorts. It is hypothesized that employee's perception of organizational politics will correlate negatively with the levels of organizational commitment and there will be a statistically significant difference in attitude towards organizational politics among older and younger employees. The sample of this study included 150 corporate organization employees (bank Tellers) with similar working dynamics. The participants were provided with "Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ)", to assess their organizational commitment, along with "the Perception of Organizational Politics Scale (POPS)", to assess their perception of organizational politics in their current working organization, and a self-added question regarding employees' attitude towards working with organizational politics. After collecting the responses of participants on both questionnaires, their data was analyzed through Pearson's correlation, to assess the relationship between the employees' and perception of organizational politics and organizational commitment. The analysis shows negative correlation between the employees' perception of organizational politics and organizational commitment, $r(148) = -.196$, $p<.01$, for the total sample. Concluding that there is an inverse relationship between the employees' perceived organizational politics and organizational commitment. The analysis also showed a statistically significant difference among younger and older employees with respect to having a positive attitude towards working in an organization with organizational politics, with $t(148) = -27.06$, $p <.001$.

INTRODUCTION

Organizations usually follow a hierarchy system, which subsequently leads to an uneven division of power and authority. Some employees have a greater desire to be the part of the most authoritative positions than others, and to reach that particular position, employees often adapt such behaviors that effectively help them achieve

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their goals, which can be considered political behavior in the workplace. Organizational politics is at play in many organizations. Employees often experiences the sense of organizational politics throughout their careers, whether positive or negative. For some, it means engaging in office gossip or acting as part of a clique, while for others, it might mean climbing the career ladder and adopting self-serving and manipulative actions (Aamodt, 2016: 549).

If employees believe that in their organization, workplace politics exists or few individuals are taking advantage from that organizational politics, they may become demoralized and feel a sense of injustice in their organization – regardless of whether or not their belief is based on actual facts. This perception of employees often affects their job performance, eventually leading to affecting their job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Larsen, 2012).

Literature Review:

Organizational commitment can be described as a job attitude. It is one of the most thoroughly researched areas in organizational behavior. Organizational commitment is defined as "a condition where an employee identifies with a particular organization and its goals, and wishes to maintain membership in the organization" (Blau & Boal, 1987). The research shows negative relationships between organizational commitment and both absenteeism and employee turnover (Angle & Perry, 1983). Furthermore, studies demonstrate that an individual's level of organizational commitment is a better indicator of employee turnover than the far more frequently used job satisfaction as a predictor. Organizational commitment is probably a better predictor because it is a more global and enduring response to the organization as a whole than is job satisfaction (Porter et al., 1974).

Organizational politics covered different areas of behaviors and attitudes of employees in order to achieve their desired goals irrespective of organization's goal. This study specifically focuses on the employees' perception of organizational politics as a variable which entails behaviors and attitude including general political behavior, focusing on dimensions such as, favoritism and group influence, going-along to get ahead such as, yes-man attitude, and irrelevancy of policies regarding promotions and pay.

Organizational commitment is described in terms of employees' trait of loyalty and intention to stay committed with their respective organization.

Positive and negative attitudes were determined by the employee's own feelings about working in an environment where organizational politics was present.

The study's is focused on the investigation of the relationship between the perception of organizational politics and organizational commitment among corporate employees and how the employees' attitude towards working in an organization where organizational politics is present. It was hypothesized that there will be a statistically significant inverse relationship between the perception of organizational politics and organizational commitment and there will be difference in the positive attitude towards working along organizational politics among younger and older employees. Through the acquired result from this research, it can be inferred how employees' perception of their organization regarding political behavior can affect their commitment to their organization. Management can focus on their organizations' dynamic and their employee behavior to have an effective workflow and employee commitment to their organization.

Hypothesis:

1. There will be a statistically significant negative relationship between the perception of organizational politics and organizational commitment.
2. There will be a statistically significant difference regarding the attitudes towards working in an organization where organizational politics is present, among younger and older employees.

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Methodology

To initiate this study, the sample was collected from Private Banks in Karachi, Pakistan. The sample of this study contained of 150 participants, with the cross-section of 75 participants between the age of 20-35 and 75 between the age of 36-55, since age related autonomy and can be determining factor for commitment (Brimeyer et al., 2010). The sample includes employees from different corporate organizations (private banks in Karachi, Pakistan) with similar working dynamics, through convenient sampling techniques. Sample only included private Bank employees in Karachi, Pakistan, working under the positions of bank tellers, with the same salary package and have served their organization for over a year. The age bracket of these employees was 20-35 and 36-55. Employees below the age of 20 or above the age of 55, are working in an organization for less than a year, and/or appointed at any other position rather than a bank teller were excluded from this study. Employees for any other organization except the private banks in Karachi, Pakistan were also excluded from this study. Before collecting responses on the measures, informed consent was taken from the participant through a form, which they signed to give their consent to use their responses for this study.

The measure that was used to assess the employees' perception of organizational politics is "The Perception of Organizational Politics Scale" (POPS), developed by Kacmer, Ferris, & Carlson (1997). It is a 12-item scale, with response category of 5-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Psychometrics of this scale shows its reliability with coefficient alpha values ranging from .87 to .91 and validity with negative correlation with perceived organizational support, job satisfaction, and job involvement. Perceived organizational politics correlated positively with turnover intentions (Kacmar & Ferris, 1991).

To assess the employees' organizational commitment, the measure that was used is "Organizational Commitment Questionnaire" (OCQ), developed by Mowday, Steers, & Porter (1997). The questionnaire includes 15 items, with the response format of 7-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Psychometrics of this scale shows its reliability with, Cronbach alpha of .81 (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1997).

To measure the positive and negative attitude towards organizational politics, a self-made qualitative question was employed, inquiring about the employees own feelings related to working in an environment where organizational politics was present. This measure was assessed in terms of simple themes drawn from participant's response. Response clearly indicating positive attitude towards working in an organization where organizational politics is present were categorized as "yes". If the participant's response is vague or uncertain, it was categorized as "Maybe". If the participant's response in clearly negative, it was categorized as "No". These three categories were further used to quantify the data, where "Yes" was coded as 2, "Maybe" as 1, and "No" as 0 on the SPSS.

Procedure:

To conduct this study, 150 corporate bank employees (specifically private bank tellers) were selected as participants, from different bank organizations with similar working dynamics, through convenient sampling techniques. Participants were then provided with an informed consent form. After giving their consent, they were provided with "the Perception of Organizational Politics'' scale, to assess how the employees perceive organization in terms of organizational politics. This had an additional question, asking the participants about their preference towards working in an organization where such behavior is present. Participants were also provided with "the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire", to assess the employees' levels of organizational commitment. After collecting the participants' responses on both scales, data was further analyzed through statistical technique of Pearson's coefficient, to conclude that whether there is a statistically significant negative relationship

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between the employees' perception of organizational politics and organizational commitment and t-test was used to analyze whether there is a statistically significant difference between older and younger employees regarding their attitude towards the organizational politics. Since the data was collected through convenient sampling, to configure Common Method Bias, a post-hoc analysis, Harman's Single Factor analysis was also employed on participants' responses.

Results

Table 1.0 Pearson's Product Moment of Correlation of the Employees' Perception of Organizational Politics and Organizational Commitment.

Variable	*N*	*M*	*SD*	Pearson's r	Sig (1-tailed)
Total Sample					
POPS	150	38.22	13.98	-.196**	.008
OCQ	150	61.02	25.62		
Employees under the age group (20-35)					
POPS	75	40.30	13.15	-.176	.065
OCQ	75	58.89	24.82		
Employees under the age group (36-55)					
POPS	75	36.13	14.54	-.194*	.048
OCQ	75	63.16	26.37		

Note: **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).*
**Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).*

The table 1.0 shows Pearson's product moment of correlation of the employees' perception of organizational politics and their organizational commitment. The analysis shows negative correlation between the employees' perception of organizational politics and organizational commitment, $r(148) = -.196$, $p<.01$, for the total sample. Showing that the employees' perception of organization politics is negatively associated with their organizational commitment.

The correlation coefficient for the employees under the age group of 20-35 is not statistically significant, showing no relationship between their perception of organizational politics and organizational commitment, with $r(73) = -.176$, $p>.01$. However, the correlational analysis for the employees under the age group of 36-55 showed an inverse relationship, with $r(73) = -.194$, $p<.05$.

Since the sample of this study was collected through convenient sampling technique, Herman's Single-Factor test was employed on participants' responses for all measures, to do a post-hoc analysis for Common Method Bias. The Harman's Single-Factor analysis shows 47.2% squared variance, slightly less than 50% from the recommended threshold, indicating that the correlation is might not be artificially inflated.

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Table 1.1 Mean Difference among the Younger and Older Employees Regarding their Positive Attitude Towards Working Along with Organizational Politics.

Variables	Younger Employees (20-35 years old) (73)[a]		Older Employees (36-55 years old) (73)[a]		*t*(148)	*p*	Cohen's *d*
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*			
Positive attitude towards working with organizational politics	.08	.31	1.86	.47	-27.06	<.001	-4.42

Note: *Levene's test of significance, shows that equal variance is assumed.* [a] *= n of the subsequent sample.*

The above table 1.1 shows the mean difference among younger and older employees regarding positive attitude towards working in an organization, where organizational politics is present. The analysis shows a statistically significant difference among younger and older employees with respect to having a positive attitude towards working in an organization with organizational politics, with t(148) = -27.06, p <.001.

Table 2.1
Results of t-test showing mean differences among employees under the age group of 20-35 and employees under the age group of 36-55, regarding their perception of organizational politics and organizational commitment.

Variables	Employees under the age group (20-35) (73)[a]		Employees under the age group (36-55) (73)[a]		*t*(148)	*p*	Cohen's *d*
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*			
Perception of organizational politics	36.13	14.54	40.30	13.15	-1.842	.067	-.301
Organizational commitment	63.16	26.37	58.89	24.82	1.02	.309	.167

Note: Levene's test of significance, shows that equal variance is not assumed.
[a] = n of the subsequent sample.

The table 2.1 shows the results of an independent t-test, applied to compare the mean differences in the perception of organizational politics and organizational commitment of employees under the age group of 20-35 and employees under the age group of 36-55. As the analysis showed, there was not a statistically significant difference between the perception of organizational politics

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of employees under the age group of 20—35 and employees under the age group of 36-55 with $t(148) = -1.842$, $p > .05$, and neither between the organizational commitment of employees with less than 10 years of experience and employees with greater than 10 years of experience with $t(148) = 1.02$, $p > .05$.

Discussion

The present study was aimed to investigate the relationship between employees' perception of organizational politics and their organizational commitment. This study presented some valuable insights into the dynamic of organizational environment and behaviors as well as its impact on employees. The key findings of this study showed a statistically significant inverse relationship between employees' perception of organizational politics and their organizational commitment, which aligned with previous research concluding that perceived organizational politics is inversely related to organizational commitment This relationship highlighted the importance of addressing and alleviating organizational politics, as it can be negatively associated with employees' organizational commitment (Utami et al., 2014).

Organizational politics is often associated with creating different issues for employees, which might decrease their job satisfaction (Munyeka & Setati, 2022). This decrease in employees' job satisfaction can be associated with job anxiety, job conflicts, dissatisfaction with their work values might result in cognitive dissonance among employees, hence, an ambiguous and outlaw environment does not allow employees to give their full extent to their jobs (Ferris et al., 1989). Although, job satisfaction and organizational commitment might not have a significantly inverse relationship, it can indicate that employees having to be dissatisfied from their jobs are often not committed to their organization for long terms (Ćulibrk et al., 2018). These determinants of job satisfaction are factors that contribute to the political environment. When employees perceive heightened levels of organizational politics, it often creates a strong negative influence on their work-related feelings, decreasing in their workplace engagement (Vigoda-Gadot, 2000). They often reflect psychological and physiological defects in their work performance if they perceive that they are contributing for an organization that is highly political and where people who are more powerful will receive maximum benefits from their organization (Cropanzano et al., 1997).

One of the distinguishing findings of this research is the difference in attitude towards the working of organizational politics. Similar to the findings of Khan et al, (2020) between younger and older employees and the impact of stress on their job satisfaction, older employees had a more positive attitude towards perceived organizational politics as compared to younger employees. There is a varied amount of discussion indicating that older employees feel less stressed at work as they have vast experience in possessing multiple coping strategies and more work experience than the younger colleagues (Aldwin & Levenson, 2001). Erikson's social development stages, can be well incorporated in the workplace where you can see the difference between younger employees and older employees with relation to their response towards organizational politics, as Kelloway (1994) described in his book review of Baum (1990), the posited Erikson's social developmental stages in the terms individual expectations about work, that is pre-work (initiative, recognitions, power autonomy), work (ability, affiliation, identity), & post-work (mentoring, making, sense, advising), these features of each stage aligned with this research findings as, the need for recognition and initiative that is a part of pre-work stage, is often associated with younger employees, having them to have negative attitude towards organizational politics. Meanwhile, the post-work stage features, advising, mentoring, are often related to older employees, resulting in them having a positive attitude towards organizational politics.

Organizational politics is also deemed as one of the factors creating workplace stress (Harris & Kacmar, 2005). (Malik & Danish, 2009) wrote that POP had mixed correlations with job satisfaction and age, in terms of stressful

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conditions. These findings provide insight over the need to see age-related differences while addressing the phenomenon of perceptions of organizational politics and employee commitment in an organization.

Furthermore, if we delve into the social psychology perspective, it is also important to consider the concept of social influence. Social influence factors, namely conformity and obedience, can play a vital role with relation to employees' response to organizational politics and their resultant commitment. Some employees are more likely to conform or to resist the prevailing social norms and power structures within the organization, which may be associated with their commitment (Baumeister, 1982). Furthermore, social identity theory suggests that individuals' own perception of relating or belonging to a certain group reflects their attitudes and behaviors. In the context of organizational politics, employees may perceive themselves belonging to a particular group within the workplace, and this group identity can influence their commitment to the organization, since it is an antecedent of social identification in an organization (Wiener, 1982).

Additional findings of this study were related to the investigation of employees' experience associated with the relationship between their organizational commitment and perception of organizational politics. Surprisingly, the analysis indicated no statistically significant difference in the perception of organizational politics or organizational commitment between employees under the age group of 20-35 and employees under the age group of 36-55. This indicates that the impact of organizational politics on employees' commitment may not be influenced by the employees' age groups in the workplace.

Moreover, it is necessary to look into individual personality traits in the context of organizational behavior. Research in psychopathology and personality showed that employees who have certain traits are more prone to feel negative effects of organizational politics. For instance, employees who scored high on neuroticism may be more likely to perceive office politics intensely and are more prone to experience higher negative effects on their commitment. In contrast, individuals who have high levels of conscientiousness can be more resilient towards the impact of organizational politics and have strong commitment (Jain & Ansari, 2018). While on the other hand, as Baloch et al. (2017), suggest that the dark triad – Psychopathy, Narcissism, & Machiavellianism - leads to an increase in organizational politics, which could play a mediator in counterproductive work behaviors and commitment. In addition to age and experience, it is important to investigate the influence of different psychopathological factors, such as anxiety and depression, in creating employees' perception and response to organizational politics. These psychological factors may help in creating heightened stress with response to organizational politics and reduced organizational commitment (Pasquier & Valéau, 2011). Identifying these individual differences can help organizations tailor interventions and support to better address the needs of their employees.

Finally, this study showed that perceived organizational politics and organizational commitment are inversely related. This relationship can be associated with several factors and determinants, such as age, psychological as well as social states. Although, a limitation of this study can be seen with reference to sample specificity, as government or any other working sector employees were excluded in this study. Government employees are often content with their job security while on the other hand, private employees' job security is highly dependent on their performance. This discrepancy of having to worry about job safety may be a limiting factor, regarding employees' organizational commitment and their perception of organizational politics.

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Conclusion

This study was mainly focused to investigate the relationship between the perception of organizational politics and organizational commitment and their attitude towards working in an organization with politics, with respect to age differences. The resultant findings of this study showed an inverse relationship between organizational politics and organizational commitment and more positive attitude from older employees for working in an organization with politics as compared to younger employees. In conclusion, this study tries to contribute to the wide array of literature on organizational behavior and could provide valuable insights on interaction of organizational politics and organizational commitment. These findings can help in initiating management strategies aimed at promoting a more committed and engaged workforce and how to control organizational politics according to their employee preferences. Understanding the interplay of age, personality traits, and psychopathological factors in organizing perceptions and attitudes towards organizational politics and commitment is critical but it can also help in employee training and development programs, which can be tailored specifically to address these differences.

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