

FACILITATORS AND IMPEDIMENTS OF JOB SATISFACTION IN AN ORGANIZATIONS POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE

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Abstract: Organization is the structuring of individuals and functions into a productive relationship. Presence of politics in Organizations is a bitter truth which should not be ignored. Studies generally agree that political climate within an organization affects organizational outcomes including Job Satisfaction. It becomes challenge for workforce to cross the river of Organizational politics and attain their objectives. Through a secondary study this paper poses to examine the impact of Organizational Politics on employees. Hence, this study looks forward to provide a better understanding of the relationship between Organizational Politics and Job Satisfaction which employees accumulate in their working environment.

Key words: Organization Politics, Job Satisfaction, Political skill, Perception, Behavior.

INTRODUCTION

An organization is a social unit of people that is structured and managed to meet a need or to pursue collective goals. Organization consists of individuals and units with different values and interests. These individuals give their opinion at different point of times in the organization and want their thoughts to be heard; hereby presence of conflicting views becomes a very often panorama. Charles Darwin's theory of "Survival of the fittest" on the Origin of the Species fits well in organizational scenario as all individuals showcase their best in an organization. In this competitive era individuals have to keep on trying to reach their desired objectives, they compete with each other to succeed in their respective areas. This turf war between individuals to succeed creates a political environment within the organization.

Political environment of organizations in itself is a controversial issue. Politics involves activities undertaken to gain access of power and exercise of power to achieve goals (Kondalkar, 2007).

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Organizational politics is concerned with citizens within the periphery of organization. In the struggle of making headway they adopt different ways to influence others decisions, this creates an environment in the organization in which individuals adopt different tactics to succeed. These tactics may be licit or illicit.

The evolution of the concept of Organizational Politics took place by coherent attempts of academicians and practitioners of various fields. Despite of the fact that politics has become a necessity to acquire limited resources of an organization people do not admit that they are indulged in any kind of political activity. The reason behind it is that politics has always been considered as darker side of politics (Ferris and King, 1991). Each and every member of organization has some power or authority and it is used in their own fashion to benefit them self which leads to different organizational outcomes.

Some scholars argue that political behavior can be either functional or dysfunctional for the organization, depending on whether that behavior assists or deters the organization in attaining its goals. Presence of certain factors helps employees to escape from dysfunctional aspects of organizational politics. As Employees' satisfaction on their job has emerged as a promising area of research, this study focuses on job satisfaction which is outcome of politics within organization. The study remains consistent with the prior research that Job dissatisfaction is one of the outcomes of organizational politics.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of organizational politics has grabbed attention of researchers and scholars for quite some time and a variety of perspectives are exhibited to understand politics in organizations. Studies agree that organizational politics is a social-influence process in which behavior is strategically designed to maximize short term or long term interest (Ferris *et al.*, 1989). Organizational politics is also explained as activities taken within organizations to acquire, develop and use power and other resources to obtain one's preferred outcomes in a situation (Pfeffer, 1981). Conventionally organizational politics has been viewed from two perspectives; macro and micro politics. Macro politics was the focus of attention in most of the earlier studies (Kaufman, 1964; Pandarus, 1973). It addressed structural bases of organizational power and the role of coalitions in promoting collective agendas. Lately researchers started working on micro-political approach which is dominated by a positivist perspective, micro approaches focus on individual behavior, relationships and perceptions (Ferris *et al.*, 1996; Gandz and Murray, 1980; Kacmar and Ferris, 1991).

Pericles, an influential Greek statesman wrote over 2500 years ago, "Just because you do not take an interest in politics doesn't mean politics won't take interest in you." Politics is a reality and one must not ignore it. One of the penalties for refusing to participate in politics may be that you end up being governed by your inferiors. So whether one wants or not he/she will have to participate in political game. It has been

found that Organizational politics has different outcomes which affect the overall functioning of organization. Job satisfaction, Job anxiety, organizational withdrawal are some of the outcomes of politics in organizations (Ferris, Russ and Fandt, 1989).

Researchers have found that politics at workplace affects Job satisfaction. Study in the area of Job satisfaction has turned out to be very useful for organizations. Individuals highly satisfied with their jobs respond in an emotionally positive attitude towards that job in the other hand individuals who are not satisfied show a negative response towards job (Pushpakumari, 2008). Organizations well being is also enhanced due to job satisfaction as it influences job productivity, employee turnover, absenteeism and life satisfaction (Sempene, Rieger & Roodt 2002; Spector 2008). Job satisfaction has been also examined before as an outcome of politics (Kacmor & Baron, 1999).

Job satisfaction can be resultant of different facets in an organization which further influences people's attitude towards their jobs and various aspects of their jobs (Spector, 2008). Here, facet of job satisfaction can be described as any part of a job that produces feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Job satisfaction has been a topic of interest for researchers because of its potential to affect employee behavior in an organization. Job satisfaction is under the influence of series of factors; hence to understand Politics in organizations it is also necessary to infer the factors responsible for Job satisfaction.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The focus of this research work is to promote understanding of the relationship between employee behavior, challenges he has to face and job outcomes like job satisfaction. An attempt has also been made to shed light on different mediating variables which affects relation between organizational politics and job satisfaction.

ACHIEVING JOB SATISFACTION: CHALLENGES FACED

The axiom "a happy worker is a productive worker" has been traditionally accepted by organizations for many years. Thus keeping an employee satisfied or happy is very important for every employer. Drivers of employee job satisfaction includes working conditions (Nolan *et al.*, 1995) with interactions co-workers/managers (Aiken *et al.*, 2001), work itself (Lundh, 1999), remuneration (Price, 2002), praise and recognition (Nolan *et al.*, 1995; Lundh, 1999), control and responsibility (Price, 2002), job security (Nolan *et al.*, 1995).

- Working condition – Working condition includes external factors like temperature, humidity, dust, smoke as well as internal factors like work schedule, work pace, work shift etc.
- Relationship with peers – Superior subordinate relation is an important factor which contributes to job satisfaction in the workplace. The way in which a subordinate perceives a supervisors behavior can have both positive and negative effects on job satisfaction.

- Work itself – If the work includes intrinsic interest, opportunity for growth, challenging tasks one may be more engrossed in their work.
- Remuneration – Relationship between employees remuneration and Job satisfaction is very interesting, Lower level employees remuneration does correlate with Job satisfaction but once an individual reaches a level of comfortable living, the relationship vanishes.
- Praise and Recognition – Accolade for accomplishments, credit for work done, criticism etc. leads to Job satisfaction.
- Control and responsibility- Employees who are given authority to take part in important decisions feel that they have control over their job and hence they are satisfied with their job.
- Job Security- Job security is an abstract as well as tangible variable that everyone seeks during employment with a company. Job security ensures that one is motivated to be committed to organizational goals and objectives and hence they are also satisfied with their jobs.

Within an organization employees face different situations and above mentioned drivers further develop his attitude towards his work and organization. Job satisfaction is the collection of feeling and beliefs that people have about their current job. Any Organisation which wants its employees to be satisfied with their job focuses on aforesaid drivers.

Interaction of different factors and challenges before employees under organizations political environment which leads to job satisfaction.

Any organization with two or more than two workers has political environment. It would be making oneself fool if one believes that politics is not present in their organization. An organizations political environment consists of different factors which influence outcomes of the widespread political actions taken within the organization.

Organizations political atmosphere is dominant with different employee behaviors. These behaviors can be categorized into “general political behavior”, “going along to get ahead” and “pay and promotion policies” (Samad, S., 2011). General political behavior is the self serving behavior or the behavior adopted to reach one’s goal (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997). The tendency of individuals to remain silent or not involving in any arguments so that one can achieve their goals is going along to get ahead (Samad, S., 2011). Employees of an organization sometimes try to politically modify pay and promotion policies of the organization.

These behaviors affects political atmosphere of organizations to a great extent. An individual who is friendly, complies others and cooperate with others in a positive way (Hogan & Holland, 2003) generally wants to get along on the other hand individuals who want to get ahead seek responsibility, are competitive and try to be recognized (Hogan & Holland, 2003). Different personalities form the basis of getting

along or getting ahead behaviors. Personality traits like agreeableness, conscientiousness, and emotional stability are grouped into getting along behavior and personality traits of extraversion and openness to experience into getting ahead behavior (Hogan & Shelton, 1998). Getting ahead and getting along are harbinger of organizational politics, as politics here dwells because of acquisition of resources, promoting self interest, influencing to obtain ends either to win or to survive.

Political environment also acts as cause for different employee behaviors in organization. According to the concept of perceptions of Organizational Politics, people behave politically if they believe that their organization is political. Perceptions of organizational politics have been defined as "The degree to which employees view their work environment as political or unfair or unjust". So their perception about organizational politics makes them express different behaviors as they want growth and promotion or relationship with peers.

Different studies have made it pristine clear that organizational politics have an effect on Job satisfaction. Above literature also have some morsels supporting the notion that organizational politics has an impact on Job satisfaction. Various researchers have found that high level of understanding reduce adverse impact of politics on job anxiety, attendance, job satisfaction, self- promotional political behavior, job performance and organizational commitment (Ferris *et al.*, 1996; Kacmar, Bozeman, Carlson & Anthony, 1999; Witt., 1998).

Understanding is a skill which helps one to get aware of causes of an event taking place at workplace. Increasing understanding reduce adverse impact of politics on attendance, satisfaction, performance. If employees are able to infer political game well favorable outcome should result. Later researchers also found that organizational politics and team work have interactive effects on job outcomes like job satisfaction. Valle and Witt (2001) conducted a survey on United States employees and came out with the conclusion that individual perceptions of team work importance lessens the negative effects of politics perceptions. In a research carried out by Abbas, Raja, Darr and Bouckenooghe (2014), it was find that negative relation of Perceptions of organizational politics with job satisfaction and supervisor rated performance was weaker when psychological capital was high. Here psychological capital refers to the mental ability of an individual. It is more than just human capital or social capital. Psychological capital deals actual self development.

There are some factors which negatively influence Job satisfaction. Workplace incivility acts as an enhancer of job dissatisfaction (Cortina *et al.* 2001). "Workplace incivility is defined as low-intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect" (Andersson, L. M. and Pearson, C. M., 1999). Envy among employees negatively influence job satisfaction. It is a dangerous but natural emotion. Emotions of envy and jealousy have negative impact on organizational performance, increases turnover rate of employees and plays a major role in reducing job satisfaction (Duffy and Shaw, 2000). Similarly behaviors

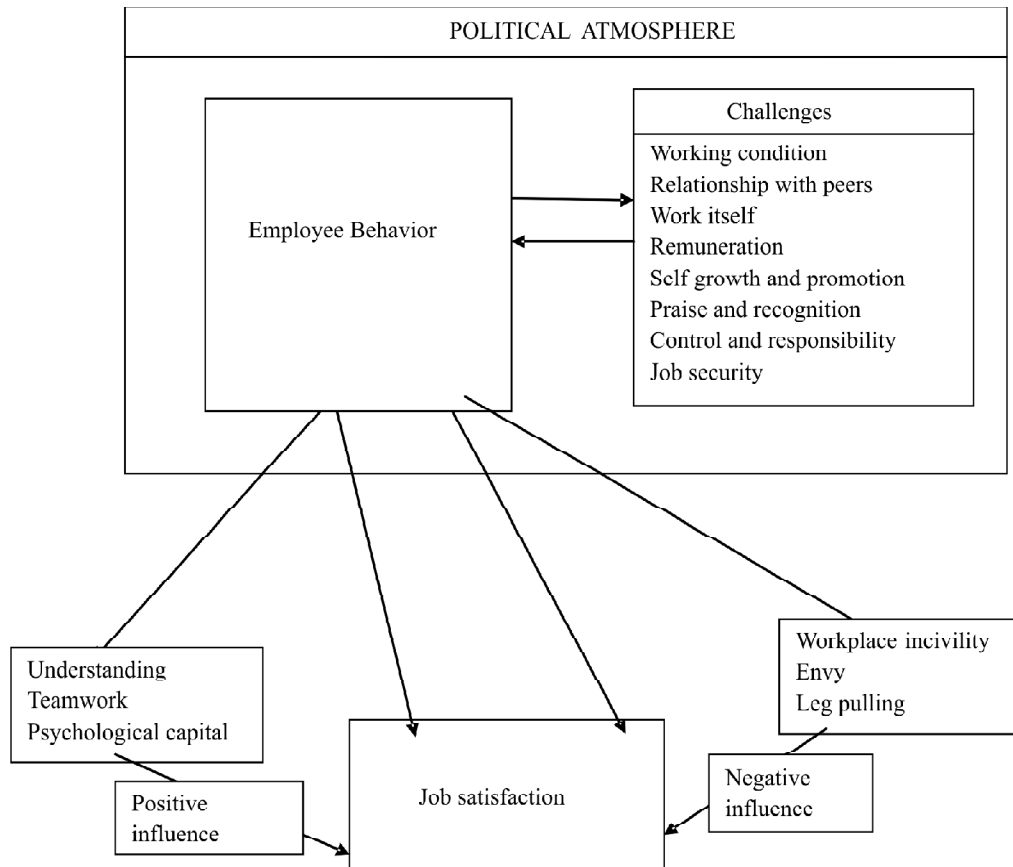


Figure 1: Model showing interaction between Employee behavior and Challenges faced by employees resulting in job satisfaction

Source: Self Developed model from secondary studies

like pulling legs of peers and subordinates are also behavior which reduces job satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

It is evident that politics is found in every type of organization regardless of its type or size. Since Job satisfaction is a very crucial area which influences employee's performance and productivity it becomes very important to focus on factors influencing these activities. Employee behavior largely affects Job satisfaction. This study helps us understand importance of few mediating variables like understanding, teamwork, psychological capital which harmonizes the relation between political workplace and job satisfaction.

LIMITATIONS

This paper is an attempt to understand both pre and post of organizational politics. For this exhaustive review of literature has been done. Still, there is a chance to miss some of the research papers. Shortage of resources like time and capital is also major limitation.

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