

**EXAMINING JOB SATISFACTION THROUGH UPWARD
INFLUENCE TACTICS USED BY EMPLOYEES PERCEIVING
ORGANIZATIONAL POLITICS**

Frasat Kamran*

Institute of Management Sciences

&

Sarwat Sultan

Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan

ABSTRACT

The present study was an attempt to explore the level of job satisfaction through upward influence tactics used by employees perceiving organizational politics. Participants were the 327 employees of 25 -49 years age, working in a manufacturing organization. All employees provided data on the questionnaires of perceived politics, upward influence tactics, and job satisfaction survey. On the basis of obtained scores on perceived politics, employees were grouped into two; 222 employees with perception of politics and 105 employees with no perception of politics. Employing descriptive and inferential statistics, results indicated the existence of high perception of organizational politics among employees. Findings suggested that employees perceiving politics used different upward influence tactics and were found with low job satisfaction than those who perceive no politics at their workplace. Findings also provided the significant main and interaction effects of perceived politics and influence tactics on job satisfaction.

Keywords: Perceived politics, Organizational environment, Influence tactics, Job satisfaction

* Correspondence Address: * Sarwat Sultan, PhD, Chairperson, Department of Applied Psychology, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Pakistan.
E-mail: sarwatsultan@hotmail.com

Kamran and Sultan

INTRODUCTION

Perception always determines the behavior of homos in their every field of life particularly at their work place. Homos' perception of organizational politics functions on shaping attitudes towards their jobs and organizations. Employees usually practice the upward influence tactics to maintain their job attitudes positive particularly when they experience the politics in organization. Today the popular area of research in organizational field is the perceived politics in organizations. Organizational psychologists and management experts have shown their attention on this variable. From a view of common person, the concept of organizational politics brings a host of condemnable perspective including behind-the-scenes maneuvering, self-serving posturing, backroom manipulation (Ammeter, Douglas, Gardner, Hochwarter, & Ferris, 2002).

An organization is considered a social entity where an individual works for resources, tries to resolve personal conflicts, and uses several kinds of tactics to influence co-workers and supervisor to gain advantages and tasks (Molm, 1997). To the better understanding of organizations, we should take them as political constitution. This political trope then provides a clear picture of power relationships in work place relationships. If existence of power relations is assumed in organizations, then organizational system cannot be viewed without politics and politicking. When an employee uses his power as politics in organization, he experiences his existence. Politics is basically linked to the ways employees collect and operate authority. Therefore, organizational politics refers to the utilization of authority and power at workplace (Kacmar, Bozeman, Carlson, & Anthony, 1999).

Judging the political environment in any organization is a complicated chore but it is essential to fully understand the work unit. Organizational politics is generally considered a negative function. For instance, when an employee is told by another employee that he is a very political man, then the employee would certainly feel insult (Block, 1988). Gandz and Murray (1980) also mentioned that whenever the employees are asked to define organizational politics they usually defined it as a skill to influence or control others to get own advantage that is considered a negative action.

Several studies conducted on the role of organizational politics in working performance have provided the notions that process of politics is a most fundamental obstruction to the potential performance of employees at working

Pakistan Journal of Psychology

place (Vigoda, 2000). Now the direction of investigations on perceived politics in organization has been centered to employee' point of view about the aspects of a political climate. Robbins (2001) argued that all activities in organizations are political. In spite of previous investigation into the factors of politics, Drory (1993) concluded that work place environment is independent of employees' perception of politics. They described that perceived politics is developed by a complete course of situations and conditions specifically explained by the employee.

Organizational politics is significant in terms of its possible aftermaths and its impact on job success and consequences. Concerned primarily with theoretical consideration, politics usually hindrance with positive organizational functioning such as promotion, incentives, and decision making, and harm to employee production and organizational functioning. Empirical support to these findings has evidenced an adverse association of perceived politics with job satisfaction (Drory, 1993; Ferris, Frink, Bhawuk, & Zhou, 1996). Much of the latest research has postulated that politics increase dissatisfaction with job that turn into withdrawal behaviors, absenteeism, and turnover (Vigoda, 2002), but others found no such relationship (Hodson, 1997).

In a very latest study, Harris, Andrew, and Kacmar (2007) reported that fairness, justice, and equity mediate the association between employee satisfaction and organization. The construct of job satisfaction is defined as a attitude of employee toward his or her work and working conditions. The negative impact of politics on job satisfaction and the positive effect of politics on turnover intentions are higher if organization has injustice and inequity. The work of Ferris, Russ, and Fandt (1989) is more significant in respect of perceived politics which posited employees who perceive greater degree of organizational politics experience dissatisfaction with their jobs.

The use of influence tactics is interwoven throughout the climate fabric of every kind of organization. The reason might be linked to the fact that influence is a crucial process that employee use to organize their attempts and activities in accord to gain their objectives in organization. Influence has different facets. Sometimes it is used towards down, for instance executives ascertain that their subordinates have completed desired assignments. Sometimes it is used towards across where employees influence peers and coworkers to assist them with their work tasks. Sometime it is used towards up where

Kamran and Sultan

subordinates remain involved in upward influence tactics to get the favorable, desired, and expected decisions from supervisor (Yukl & Falbe, 1990).

The identification of different types of influence tactics has remained a central attention for the organizational investigators. But the latest findings have provided a list of most frequently used tactics in organizational settings. The tactics through which the behaviors are coercively changed are known as hard influence tactics such as the first five listed here. Research has shown that all kinds of tactics are used to take the benefits or in other words to maintain the job satisfaction (Ansari & Kapoor, 1987).

Studies indicate that personal values guide our preference for some influence methods more than others. The general trend in the United States and elsewhere is toward softer influence tactics because younger employees tend to have more egalitarian values compared with those near retirement. As such, silent authority and assertiveness are tolerated less than a few decades ago. Acceptance of influence tactics also varies across cultures. Research indicates that American managers and subordinates alike often rely on ingratiation because it minimizes conflict and supports a trusting relationship. In contrast, managers in Hong Kong and other high power distance cultures rely less on ingratiation, possibly because this tactic disrupts the more distant roles that managers and employees expect in these cultures, instead, as we noted earlier, influence through exchange tends to be more common and accepted in Asian cultures because of the importance of interpersonal relationships.

Literature review has clearly evidenced that perception of politics in organization has been found negatively related generally with all job attitudes but specifically with job satisfaction, and positively connected with aim to leave the organization. Examining the literature also has suggested that employee use different influence tactics to gain their objectives. This study is an effort to examine the job satisfaction in respect of perception of politics and upward influence tactics. It was hypothesized that employees who perceive politics at workplace will report low job satisfaction, and the employees using different types of influence tactics will have different levels of job satisfaction. Focusing only the upward influence tactics in this article, it was also proposed that employees perceiving organizational politics use upward influence tactics, and therefore experience different degrees of job satisfaction.

Pakistan Journal of Psychology

METHOD

Participants

A sample of 327 male workers aged 25-49 ($M=33.47$, $SD=9.72$) of Pepsi Cola manufacturing organization in Multan participated in the study. On the basis of obtained score on perceived politics scale, the workers were categorized into two groups; with ($n=222$) and without ($n=105$) perceived politics in organization. The participants with perception of politics were further categorized as working under low ($n=107$), middle ($n= 90$), and top ($n= 25$) level of management. All the participants were with different education (graduation to post graduation levels) and income (low to middle) status. Of them, 178 were married and 44 were unmarried employees.

Measures

Data were collected on the following measures:

Perception of Politics Scale (POPS)

Employee' perception of politics was measured using Perception of Politics Scale (POPS; Kacmar & Carlson, 1997), a 9-item scale rated on 1-5 Likert scale. It assesses how an employee perceives his/her job conditions as political based. Two items (2 and 3) are first reverse scored and then to obtain the total score, the responses on all items are sum up. High level of perceived politics is indicated by higher score on scale.

Upward Influence Scale (UIS)

Employee' upward influence tactics were measured using Upward Influence Scale (UIS; Schriesheim & Hinkin, 1990), a 19-item scale rated on 1-5 indicating lowest to highest choices. The scale measures the different ways of influencing people upwards and also identify the preferences of tactics for upward influence. Items 8,15,16 measure *Assertiveness*, 2, 5, 13 measure *Exchange*, 4, 12, 17 measure *Upward Appeal*, 1, 11, 18 measure *Coalition Formation*, 3, 6, 9 measure *Ingratiation*, and 7, 10, 14 measure *Persuasion*. Tactic are identified by adding the scores on each tactic. The tactic with high score suggests the most preferred tactic used by the employee.

Kamran and Sultan

Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS)

Employee satisfaction with job was measured using Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS; Spector, 1992), a 36-items scale with nine significant features rated on a summated scale 1-6. This scale assesses the attitude of employee toward overall job and its aspects. The nine facets are; Pay, Promotion, Fringe benefits, Supervision, Operating procedure, Contingent rewards, Coworkers, Communication, and Nature of work. Each of the nine facets is estimated with four items, and a composite score is obtained by summing up all items. Some of the items are negatively stated and are must reverse scored first before a total score. Scores on every subscale range between 4 and 24 while a total score range between 36 and 216.

Procedure

The study was completed in two phases. In first phase, the measures were carefully examined by the educationalists in terms of their appropriateness to the culture. All scales were found relevant and easy to understand except two items from POPS (item; 1 & 7). The statements of these items were restated in the light of experts' opinions in a way that any one may understand them easily. In second phase, data were collected on all measures. Prior to collect the data from employees, an institutional permission was obtained first and then the questionnaires were initially administered to the 327 participants with their positive consent. Purpose of the study was explained and instructions were given to the employees keeping the ethical consideration. Privacy of their identification and confidentiality of their responses were assured to them as well. Based on the scores on POPS, the employees were separated within two groups; the employees with perception of politics and the employees without perception of politics. Hypotheses were analyzed at 0.05 level of significance using descriptive and inferential analyses through Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS-17).

RESULTS

To see the differences in the level of job satisfaction in relation to the extent how much employees perceive their organizations with politics. Results were computed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Mean, SD, and total frequency were calculated to identify the upward influence tactics used by employees (Table 1). Independent sample *t*-tests was computed to measure the

Pakistan Journal of Psychology

differences in the job satisfaction of two groups of workers with and without perceived politics (Table 2). Means and SDs were also computed on job satisfaction for six groups of employees using upward influence (Table 3). To measure the main and combined effects of perceived politics and upward tactics on job satisfaction, Two-way ANOVA was done (Table 4). One Way Analyses of Variance were computed on job satisfaction to check the differences in six groups of employees using upward influence tactics (Table 5). Post-hoc tests were also performed to see what mean differences are leading to any significant effects for six groups of employees using upward tactics (Table 6).

Table 1
Descriptive Information for the Scores of Six Upward Influence Tactics used by Employees who Perceived Politics in Organization (n = 222)

Upward Influence Tactics	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Assertiveness	18	2.13	1.38
Exchange	51	4.25	0.44
Coalition Formation	17	2.36	0.34
Upward Appeal	25	3.88	0.54
Ingratiation	43	4.25	1.45
Persuasion	68	4.36	0.09

Statistics in Table 1 indicates the mean and *SD* for the scores of employees on six upward influence tactics. Results indicate that persuasion tactic is most popularly used by the employees. However, exchange and ingratiation tactics are also commonly preferred by employees for upward influence.

Kamran and Sultan

Table 2

Comparison of Job Satisfaction between two Groups of Employees; Perceiving (n=222) and Not-perceiving Organizational Politics (n=105)

Scale	Employees Perceiving Organizational Politics		Employees Not Perceiving Organizational Politics		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Job-Satisfaction	98.21	10.19	131.10	09.11	-2.41	.003**

df = 325, ** *p* < 0.01

Table 2 provides the statistical details about the differences in the employees' job satisfaction. Employees perceiving politics in their organizations experience low satisfaction with job than those who perceive politics at work place.

Table 3

Mean & SD for the Scores of Employees using Six Upward Influence Tactics on Job Satisfaction (n = 222)

Upward Influence Tactics	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Assertiveness	18	56.20	10.03
Exchange	51	120.80	09.95
Coalition Formation	17	74.77	09.78
Upward Appeal	25	111.54	11.26
Ingratiation	43	110.09	10.12
Persuasion	68	125.99	9.86

Table 3 indicates mean scores and standard deviations for six groups of employees using upward influence tactics on job satisfaction which imply that employees perceiving organizational politics when use different upward influence tactics report different levels of job satisfaction. Results suggest that tactics used to influence account low job satisfaction, however the tactics of persuasion and exchange lead to slightly higher job satisfaction than the other four tactics.

Pakistan Journal of Psychology

Table 4

Two-way ANOVA for the Main and Interaction Effects of 2(groups; perceiving & not perceiving politics) × 6(Influence tactics) on Job Satisfaction

Source Main Effect	F	p	Partial Eta Squared	Observed Power
Perceived Politics	9.54	.007*	.713	.701
Influence Tactics	11.31	.000*	.670	.639
Interaction				
Perception of politics	13.46	.003*	.663	.626
Influence tactics				

*p < = 0.001

Table 4 showing the main and interaction effects of perception of politics and upward influence tactics suggests that perceived politics and used tactics are independent factors for determination of job satisfaction. Findings further demonstrate that significant interaction effect of both factors on job satisfaction.

Table 5

One Way Analysis of Variance for the Differences in Six Tactics Groups of Employees using Influence Tactics on Job Satisfaction

Sources of Variance	SS	df	MS	F	p
Between Groups	531.88	5	106.37	12.71	0.002**
Within Groups	54327.55	456	137.88		
Total	54859.44	461			

**p < 0.01

The data in Table 5 depict significant differences in the levels of job satisfaction of employees who use six different upward influence tactics. To see what mean differences are contributing to significant effects found in ANOVA (Table 5) for six groups of respondents regarding their use of upward tactics, Tukey-Test; a Post Hoc Test was computed (Table 6).

Kamran and Sultan

Table 6
Multiple Comparisons for Six Groups of Employees using upward influence tactics on JSS

Tactic (i)	Tactics (j)	Mean Difference (i-j)	Standard Error	p
Assertiveness	Exchange	-64.60(*)	4.63366	.009**
	Coalition Formation	-18.57	4.11770	.995
	Upward Appeal	-55.34(**)	4.25597	.002
	Ingratiation	-53.89(**)	4.09760	.001**
	Persuasion	-69.79(**)	4.05693	.004**
Exchange	Coalition Formation	46.03(*)	3.25480	.021*
	Upward Appeal	9.26	3.42805	3.00
	Ingratiation	10.71	3.22933	.607
	Persuasion	-5.19	3.17757	1.000
Coalition Formation	Upward Appeal	-36.77	2.69001	.130
	Ingratiation	-35.32	2.43171	.987
	Persuasion	-51.22(*)	2.36254	.035*
Upward Appeal	Ingratiation	1.45	2.65913	.413
	Persuasion	-14.45	2.59603	1.000
Ingratiation	Persuasion	-15.90	2.32732	.197

*p < 0.05, **p < 0.01

Table 6 demonstrates the means differences and multiple comparisons of six groups of employees on job satisfaction. Findings suggest the significant mean differences of assertiveness, exchange, upward appeal, ingratiation, and persuasion. It means that employees using these four tactics report high job satisfaction than those using assertiveness. Results further explained that exchange tactic utilization produces more job satisfaction than coalition formation.

DISCUSSION

This research was intended to explore the job satisfaction through upward influence tactics of employees perceiving organizational politics.

Pakistan Journal of Psychology

Research basically was focused to know if employees perceive politics in their organizations, what kind of tactics they use to influence their upward boss. This study further aimed at knowing that when employees perceive politics and use tactics in result of this perception what different degrees of satisfaction with job they experience.

Based the objectives of present study, the hypothesis was stated as employees perceiving organizational politics will use different upward influence tactics. Findings supported the hypothesis and it was found that employees when perceive politics in organization employ the several tactics to influence upward (Table 1). Results indicated that persuasion tactic was most popularly used by the employees. It was also found that exchange and ingratiation tactics are also commonly preferred by employees for upward influence. These results are in line with the results of Bass (1998) and Yukl (1998) who found that people generally react more favorably to "soft" tactics such as friendly persuasion and subtle ingratiation than to "hard" tactics such as up- ward appeal and assertiveness. Bass in 1998; Yukl in 1998 also provided the support to the hypothesis and pointed out that successful management and job satisfaction holds on the skill to influence others.

It was hypothesized that employees who perceive politics will experience job satisfaction than those who don't perceive politics. Results are also in consistent with the assumption and it was noted that employees with perceived politics reported low job satisfaction than those who perceive no politics in organization (Table 2). These findings are in tune with the results of an investigation conducted by Ferris et al. (1989). Ferris' work is mostly focused on exploration of perceived organizational politics. They prepared a theoretical account on dynamics of politics in organization which explains that employees when experience political environment in organizations report low job satisfaction. Authors also argued that employees who are with external locus of control and who are at lower position in hierarchy perceive high politics in organization.

Another assumption was stated that employees reporting politics in organization who use upward influence tactics will experience different levels of job satisfaction. The results analyzed in Table 3 showed the supportive evidence for the hypothesis. The employees were categorized into six groups according to their use of upward influence tactics. Table 3 indicated that employees perceiving organizational politics when use different upward influence tactics report

Kamran and Sultan

different levels of job satisfaction. Results suggested that nonetheless the workers who use tactics account dissatisfaction from their jobs, however the workers who practice tactics of persuasion and exchange report somewhat greater satisfaction with job than those who practice other tactics. This analysis can also be confirmed by the work of Ferris et al (1996). Consistent with these findings we are likely to consider that an environment perceived as political in agencies would must lead to negative job attitudes.

One Way Analysis of Variance (Table 5) also depicted significant differences in among employees' job satisfaction when incorporate the different tactics to influence upward. Results described that six groups of employees having perception of politics differed on reporting the job satisfaction due to the preferences of using the tactics for upward influence.

Employing Tukey-Test; a post hoc test, results rendered that the significant mean differences of assertiveness among exchange, upward appeal, ingratiation, and persuasion. It means that employees using these four tactics have high job satisfaction than employees using assertiveness. Results further explained that exchange tactic utilization produces more job satisfaction than coalition formation.

Conclusion

The current study has inferred that most of the employees perceive politics in their organization that affect their performance and productivity. Employees when perceive political atmosphere in organization employ various tactics to influence their upward authorities in order to maintain their satisfaction with work assignments. Different upward influence tactics explain the different levels of job satisfaction. Persuasion, exchange and ingratiation tactics were found frequently preferred by employees. Although the employees who expend the tactics experience greater dissatisfaction with their work, the employees who used persuasion and exchange tactics experienced slightly higher job satisfaction than the employees using other four tactics.

Limitations and Suggestions

Though the present study is significant in its findings to examine the job satisfaction but the acknowledgement of some limitations is also another important feature of this study. Though the whole population of employees from

Pakistan Journal of Psychology

an organization was approached without any sampling technique but the act of selecting the organization was carried out through a non probability sampling approach using convenient sampling technique. Thus the inferences from this study are not able to generalize to the employees of other companies and therefore external validity is at risk. Study has examined the influence of using tactics along with perceived politics on job satisfaction, but there are several other factors that could be linked with determining the job satisfaction, for instance, age, experience, and duration of job period. Quite possible that this study is confounded with these variables and if it is, then the internal validity of the study is also at risk. Keeping these deficiencies, it is proposed that other organizations should be taken for obtaining a representative sample, and the study should be replicated by incorporating some other factors linking to study variables.

REFERENCES

- Ammeter, A. P., Douglas, C., Gardner, W. L., Hochwarter, W. A., & Ferris, G. R. (2002). Toward a political theory of leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 13, 751–796.
- Ansari, M. A., & Kapoor, A. (1987). Organizational context and upward influence tactics. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 40, 39–49.
- Bass, B. M. (1998). *Transformational Leadership: Industrial, Military and Educational Impact*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Block, P. (1988). *The empowered manager: Positive political skills at work*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Drory, A. (1993). Perceived political climate and job attitudes. *Organizational Studies*, 14, 59- 71.
- Ferris, G. R., Frink, D. D., Bhawuk, D. P. S., & Zhou, J. (1996). Reactions of diverse groups to politics in the workplace. *Journal of Management*, 22, 23–44.

Kamran and Sultan

- Ferris, G. R., Russ, G. S., & Fandt, P. M. (1989). Politics in organizations. *Impression management in the organization*, 143–170.
- Gandz, J., & Murray, V. V. (1980). The experience of workplace politics. *Academy of Management Journal*, 23, 237–251.
- Harris, K. J., Andrews, M. C., & Kacmar, K. M. (2007). The moderating effects of justice on the relationship between organizational politics and workplace attitudes. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 22, 135–144.
- Hodson, R. (1997). Group relations at work: Solidarity, conflict, and relations with management. *Work & Occupations*, 24(4), 426-453.
- Kacmar, K. M., Bozeman, D. P., Carlson, D. S., & Anthony W. P. (1999). An Examination of the Perceptions of Organizational Politics Model: *Replication an Extension*. *Human Relations*, 52(3), 383-416.
- Kacmar, K. M., & Carlson, D. S. (1997). A further validation of the Perceptions of Politics Scale (POPS): A multiple-sample investigation. *Journal of Management*, 23, 627–658.
- Molm, L. D. (1997). *Coercive power in social exchange* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pfeffer, J. (1992). *Management with power*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.
- Robbin, S. S. (2001). *Organizational Behavior (9th ed.)*. Delhi: Prentice Hall of India private limited.
- Schriesheim, C. A., & Hinkin, T. R. (1990). Influence tactics used by subordinates: A theoretical and empirical analysis and refinement of the Kipnis, Schmidt, and Wilkinson Subscales. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 75, 246-257.
- Spector, P. E. (1985). Measurement of human service staff satisfaction: Development of the Job Satisfaction Survey. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 13, 693-713.

Pakistan Journal of Psychology

- Vigoda, E. (2000). Organizational politics, job attitudes, and work outcomes: exploration and implications for the public sector, *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 57, 326-47.
- Vigoda, E. (2002). Stress-Related Aftermaths to workplace politics: The Relationships among Politics, Job Distress and Aggressive Behavior in Organizations, *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 23(5), 571-577.
- Yukl, G., & Falbe, C. M. (1990). Influence tactics and objectives in upward, downward, and lateral influence attempts. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 75, 132–140.
- Yukl, G. (1998). *Leadership in Organizations*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.