Organizational Politics in Human Behaviour

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Abstract: *Organizational politics is an individual strategy that is developed purposively in an organization. It is subjective, organically arise, influences people and affects human behavior. This study, aims to determine on how organizational politics works in human behaviour among employees in a certain organization. Using the deductive - axiomatic approach of theory development, a theory is formulated stating that organizational politics is an individual's technique that is exercised through the acquired power and politics. It is truly dependent on the individual's own interest and is used to manifest and influence people. Hence, with the modern technological society, it is really significant to abreast organizational politics in order to run a certain organization efficiently and effectively. Passionate and candid people will do much to make this effective and productive one.*

1. Introduction

Organizational politics is a subjective state in which organizational members perceive themselves or others as intentionally seeking selfish ends (Hochwarter et. al, 2010), has gone from an unmentioned, yet real, aspect of work life, to one that has amassed sizeable practical and scholarly attention (Buchanan, 2008). Hence, organizational politics is an individual strategy that is developed purposively in an organization.

Gotsis & Kortezi (2010) states that organizational politics is a multi - facet analytical construct, often viewed and construed under very different ways. It comprises intentional acts of influence, mainly through informal means, the intentional use and exercise of power, often through activities employed to give access to scant resources, actions and tactics to influence decision making, as well as behaviours occurring on an informal basis within organizational settings. Meanwhile, politics is a specific quality of the organizational dynamic which impacts all aspects of business life. The impact on the work of the human resource professional is marginally explored and examined in research literature (Ackroyd, 2009). In addition, politics is always concerned with power and power is defined as the ability to influence the existing energy or resources for definite goals and objectives.

Politics in any organization is a nature of life. It has emerged as an important concept in organizational research, which receives considerable attention from industrial and organizational psychologists and management scientists (Sowmya, & Panchanatham, 2011). Power is afact of system at rest; politics is the study of power in action. An individual or subunit may have power within organizational content at some period of time; politics involve the actions of power to get something cultured as well as those activities which are undertaken to expand the power already possessed or the domain over which it can be exercised (Kondalkar, 2009). Moreover, power and politics are human aspects of behaviour and necessary drives of results in organizations (Pardesi &Yousif, 2013).

To many, the word politics is viewed with disdain, conjuring up visions of shady behaviour that is manipulative, divisive, and exclusively self - serving. In just one of countless examples, Mencken noted that "a good politician is quite as unthinkable as an honest burglar. " Vocational and public policy researchers corroborate society's increasingly negative opinions by documenting politicians' status as one of the least trusted occupations (Hay, 2011). Noting their treacherous status, Qvortrup (2009) argued that "alongside car salesmen and lobbyists, politicians are probably the least trusted profession". Finally, Stoker (2010) advocated for research in social politics despite the fact that it represents "a subject matter that many of our fellow citizens assert to despise".

Studies have examined the negative implications of perceived organizational politics for various work attitudes, behaviours, and performance measures, including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job burnout, stress, turnover intentions, and negligent behaviour (Chang et al., 2009 & Miller et al., 2008), career success, job effectiveness, and work performance (Buckley & Schneider, 2011).

According to Rosen et al. (2009) the daily hassles associated with organizational politics arouse negative emotional responses, which link perceived politics with job satisfaction and other work outcomes. They found that frustration partially mediates the relationship between **Perception of Organizational Politics,** and job satisfaction, and that frustration and job satisfaction together mediate the effects of perceived politics on task performance, organizational citizenship behaviour and turnover intentions. In addition to, Vigoda - Gadot and Meisler (2010) studies showed that emotional intelligence is significantly related to political skill but not to **Perception of Organizational Politics**. Other findings from the same study showed that emotional intelligence moderates the relationship between perceptions of organizational politics and organizational commitment, as well as the relationship between political skill and absenteeism among public personnel.

Based on these studies, only few of them stated an explanation on how organizational politics works in an

organization. This study, therefore, tries to determine on how organizational politics works in human behaviour among employees in a certain organization. Relevant studies would be examined in order to craft a relevant theory.

2. Theory Formulation and the Theory

This section reveals various facts and universal truths which would be the ground of formulating the theory on organizational politics in human behavior. The set of axioms were anchored on previous studies, journals, and analysis of articles. Following the deductive - axiomatic approach to theory development, axioms are derived and propositions are formulated which bounded the scope of this paper.

Axiom 1: Power and politics are strong forces that highly influence people.

Managers and leaders deal with power and politics in running their organization. Power and politics must go together in order to prosper and achieve the personal desired goals of the organization. They serve as its magnet that attracts people to fasten them in the organization's perspective. The concept of organisational politics is a key social influence process that can be either functional or dysfunctional to employees and organisations (Allen *et al*, (2008)). Organisational politics, as argued by various researchers, can be either positive or negative (Othman, 2008: 44). According to Lawrence *et al,* (2008) this perceived political tactic may benefit the organisation where a manipulated idea put forward is of benefit to the organisation, however it can also hinder workplace learning if it is inappropriately used. Buchanan (2008), states that politics may also be caused by structural relationships within an organisation (2008: 54); one group of employees may have particular performance indicators and tasks to fulfil that are very different to those of another group.

Moreover, politics is always concerned with power and power is defined as the ability to influence the existing energy or resources for definite goals and objectives. In the case of power, Lawrence *et al* (2008) provide an explanation of two types of power in organisations: episodic power and systematic power. These forms of power offer guidance on how organisational politics affect the flow of information between individuals, groups and the organisation (Lawrence *et al*, 2008: 182). Episodic power refers to distinct and premeditated political behaviour that is initiated by self - interested actors who are most able to influence organisational decision making (Lawrence *et al*, 2008: 182). On the other hand, systematic power is directed throughout the social systems within organisations, and includes socialisation and accreditation processes. Some argue that the attention to power stems from the fact that social relations and learning processes do not happen in a vacuum but take place in a setting of interests and different power positions (Easterby - Smith *et al*, 2009). Therefore, employees tend to be keen observant on their assigned tasks and show - off their utmost best towards their work. Hence, **people are strongly influenced by power and politics** (*Proposition 2).*

Axiom 2: Power and politics organically arise in accordance with the situation.

Power and politics are human aspects of behaviour and necessary drives of results in organizations. Both leaders and employees have unique power in an organization they are working with. They acquired it based on their personalities, characters, activities and situations in which they operate. Others argue that organisational politics are highly culture dependent (Drory & Vigoda - Gadot, 2010), may be a natural phenomenon in organisations (Poon, 2008) and research on organisational politics has always treated politics as an emotional assemble (Othman, 2008: 46).

Vince (20010) states that organisations are *'political containers'* that include individual and collective emotions. Likewise, (Cacciattolo, 2014) refers to organisations as *'political structures'* in which the careers of employees, especially managers, are developed (1971: 53). Gotsis & Kortezi (2010) argue that political concerns can make up an inextricable part of organisational life due to the inevitable power systems within (2010: 497). Though, they came from different sources, they only have equal importance in the organization. They may vary on its effect but still both contribute a big help in the organization. With this, power and politics naturally exist. Hence, **both leaders and employees regardless of their functionshave their own personal interests to their organizations that would lead power and politics naturally occur** (*Proposition 3).*

Axiom 3: Politics affects someone's behaviour.

Political acts by oneself and others can be viewed aswork events that trigger emotional reactions, which serve as a core mechanism through which POP affect attitudes and behaviours such as burnout, cynicism, job satisfaction and affective commitment (Liu et al. (2009). The affirmation of Vredenburgh & Shea - Van Fossen (2010), organisational politics can also be functional, and; it may have an inhibitive effect or no effect at all on the workplace learning of employees. This is contrary to Drory & Vigoda - Gadot's (2010) affirmation that workplace learning is only likely to occur when there is low political behaviour in an organisation. All participants manage to learn and in the majority of cases, where a political behaviour was experienced, it had both a supportive and an inhibitive effect on their learning.

Moreover, from the study it transpired that any particular political behaviour may affect employees disparately and this conforms with Kurchner - Hawkins & Miller's affirmation that what is considered politically negative in one culture may be considered otherwise in another (in Vigoda - Gadot & Drory, 2012: 343). An example of this concerns two participants who encountered the same political behaviour of 'Attacking or Blaming Others' and who percieve the same effect differently: one considers the attitude of nonchalance or relaxed approach towards learning as inhibitive whilst the other perceives this same attitude as supportive. Nevertheless, such differences may not be due to cultural variation; they could also be due to personality, identity or dispositional differences towards learning at the individual level (Hodkinson, 2008). A few of

the participants who were affected by this political behaviour did not necessarily experience this from withinthe department in which they are situated but from certain parts of the central administration with which they had some sort of liaison.

According to Rosen et al. (2009) the daily hassles associated with organizational politics arouse negative emotional responses, which link perceived politics with job satisfaction and other work outcomes. They found that frustration partially mediates the relationship between POP and job satisfaction, and that frustration and job satisfaction together mediate the effects of perceived politics on task performance, organizational citizenship behaviour and turnover intentions.

In conclusion, managers and leaders must be concerned about the effects of politics in the organization. They must be sensitive enough, must not be biased and sincere on their intentions using their political power towards the organization as well as the people in it. Hence, **politics is powerful and it can truly affect someone's behaviour and emotions (***Proposition 4).*

Axiom 4: Organizational politics is subjective and is self - centeredness.

Human beings have different views and perceptions in the context of organizational politics. There may be some that have the same views but not the entire scenario. It is because we perceive and feel indifferently. It is instinct to us as a human being to feel and act this way. Hochwarter et. al, (2010) defined organizational politics as "a subjective state in which organizational members perceive themselves or others as intentionally seeking selfish ends in an organizational context when such ends are opposed to those of others, has gone from an unmentioned, yetreal, aspect of work life", to one that has amassed sizeable practical and scholarly attention (Buchanan, 2008). This means that our perceptions on politics definitely vary in different ways. Hence, **organizational politics depends on the manager or leader's self - interest and is therefore, subjective (***Proposition 1).*

Theory

Organizational politics is an individual's technique that is exercised through the acquired power and politics. It is truly dependent on the individual's own interest and is used to manifest and influence people.

3. Implication to the World

With the modern technological society, it is really significant to abreast organizational politics in order to easily fill in the gaps. Passionate and candid people will do much to make this effective and productive one. Because it is anticipated, perceived and believed that organizational politics is one of the most effective ways in running a certain organization, if only that, it is brought efficiently, proficiently and professionally. Its sustainability will just depend solely to the concerned and involved people.

Moreover, to strengthen the developed theory, it is recommended that it should be validated.

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