

Organizational Politics and its Influence on Work Outcomes

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Abstract: This study investigates the relationship of organizational politics and work outcomes such as job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) and, organizational commitment and the influence of organizational politics on the turnover intentions of 120 supervisory employees in the garment industry. Questionnaires were distributed among supervisory level employees across all functional departments of the selected companies and 23 executives and twenty focus groups interviews were conducted in five large multinational companies involved in the garment industry. Consistent with the propositions, the study revealed that high organizational politics lead to lower commitment, job satisfaction and high turnover intentions. The findings support previous studies indicating 92.5 % of the respondents confirming the existence of organizational politics even though they are employed in multinational companies in the garment industry who have shown high interest in human resource development. The study reveals a very high turnover intention of 93.6 %. However OCB does not show a significant correlation with organizational politics. Supervisor ratings were limited by the fact that OCB was not observed as essential characteristics in the work environment, and surprisingly executives believed OCB was not a fundamental requirement in achieving targets. The study reveals that team oriented employee involvement programmes act as a moderator to organizational politics and employees engaged in such programmes are less affected by organizational politics.

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Introduction

It is argued that the workplace can be viewed as a marketplace where multiple individuals engage in many transactions, each seeking to obtain a favorable return on investment (Rusbult and Farrell, 1983, Rusbult et al. 1988). By engaging in work, the returns could come in the form of pay, and also through intangible rewards such as esteem, dignity and personal power, fellowship, and social status (Cropanzano, Kacmar and Bozeman, 1995). In order to secure the above benefits, the individuals may have to divert a portion of their energy, time and effort over to their employers. Randall et al. (1999) argue that the decision to get engaged in work is like an investment, has its own risks, and individuals are likely to monitor their investments carefully, seeking out and remaining with those organizations that offer them the best probability of an advantageous return. They further argue that the workplaces provides for returns but are dependent on the interpersonal transactions that are taking place in the marketplace.

The significant notion of work is that best performance may depend on the cooperation of many people rather than just a few (Randall et al, 1994). For this reason, it is mandatory that an individual pays minute attention to the interpersonal climate at work. Cropanzano et al., (1977) identified two constructs that seem to describe the attributes of the social market place: organizational politics and organizational support. He argued that these constructs affect the positive or negative attitudes of people in the workplace. Previous studies support the view that the concept of right (positive) attitude and behaviour lead to positive work outcomes such as higher commitment, increased job satisfaction, lower absenteeism and turnover intentions and most importantly promotes good citizenship behaviour. This study attempts to investigate the effects of organizational politics on various work outcomes, such as job satisfaction, commitment, turnover intentions and citizenship behavior in manufacturing companies involved in the garment industry in Sri Lanka.

While previous studies (Fernando et al., 2002) attempted to attribute factors such as motivation, cultural differences to the named factors related to the garment industry, this study takes up the position that internal politics would play a significant role creating negative effects on job satisfaction, commitment, citizenship behaviour and positive effects on turnover intentions. It may be noted that internal politics do not always result in negative work outcomes. For instance, many leaders use political influence to "buy in" organizational members to a group. This study will examine the influence of politics in bringing about negative work outcomes.

Research Problem

The garment industry of Sri Lanka is facing tremendous pressure. Firstly, it is required to contribute to the national interest in terms of providing employment. Secondly, it has a strong commitment in generating income and acting as the major export earner of the Sri Lankan economy. Thirdly, it is facing severe competition from various countries that have a lower cost base. Finally, it is continuously pressed by the buyer to bring down prices.

With increased pressure exerted from external forces, the industry has strived to place itself at a competitive advantage by employing literate, educated and dynamic individuals. In a pilot study conducted in two garment manufacturing companies, it was revealed that the average turnover for the six months in the first half of 2003 was 10%, and absenteeism was 4% while the overall plant efficiency was 50%. An important feature observed in this study was that the supervisors of each company were directly responsible for reducing turnover and absenteeism and increasing efficiency in their respective production lines. The supervisor interviews indicated that they were heavily pressurized both ways: by the management to achieve desired work outcomes and by the operator who gave many reasons for not achieving desired results.

Significance

The apparel industry is relatively labour- intensive and would continue to remain so in the short to medium term. It is argued that the process from concept to manufacture to final delivery to customers contains a large number of steps that are dependent on human performance. Hence, manpower would be a key success factor in the industry. In this context, it is important that any factor that could influence work outcomes is investigated and the degree of influence identified. Since the study specifically attempts to investigate a possible relationship between politics and work outcomes, it fulfills a timely requirement.

As one of the preliminary studies undertaken in the area of internal politics, the research findings could be of immense value to corporate executives as well as academics. The findings of this study are expected to create opportunities for further studies in this area.

Literature Review

One of the preliminary studies of politics by Harold Lasswell (1936) defined politics as the study of who gets what, when, and how. Although the recent organizational literature has not witnessed much writing on the concept, the issues of politics within organizations were central to classical theorists such as Webber and Michels. Studies of politics draw an inevitable relationship between power and politics. The renaissance of literature relating to power and politics, which could be dated back to the late 1970s was mainly caused by the penetration of organizations by the employees socialized into politics during the protests of the 1960s. If power is a force, a store of potential influence through which events can be affected, politics involves those activities or behaviours through which power is developed and used in organizational settings. Power is the property of the system at rest; politics is the study of power in action (Pfeffer, 1981).

The first condition of the use of power is interdependence, a situation in which what happens to one person affects what happens to the other. Interdependence is an important phenomenon because it ties the entire organization and its participants together. The second condition is the heterogeneous goals, or the goals that are inconsistent with each other. Similarly, a related condition would be heterogeneous beliefs about technology, or the relationship between decisions and outcomes. Differentiation within the organizations acts as a source of disagreements on goals and beliefs about technology. Differentiation means that in most large organizations, there is specialization of the participants and subunits by task (division of labor), which enables an organization to achieve certain economies. Also, the effects of task specialization within the firm are accompanied by the effects of the environment on subunit goal and technology heterogeneity. Environment represents the preferences and beliefs, which the participants bring with them when they join an organization.

The third factor that produces power is scarcity. This entails the decisions to be made concerning the allocation of scarce resources. As indicated in the model, the three conditions- interdependence, heterogeneous goals and beliefs of technology and scarcity- produce conflict. As Pfeffer (1981) notes whether the conflict eventuates in politics or not will depend on two conditions. First, is the importance of the decision issue or resource. In cases where the decision may be perceived as less critical, power and politics may not be employed. The second condition is the distribution of power. Here Pfeffer (1981) argues that political activity and bargaining occur where power is dispersed. Hence, in highly centralized and bureaucratic organizations where a centralized authority makes decisions, politics is minimal.

Several studies have been conducted to determine the relationship of perception of organizational politics perceptions to job satisfaction. For example, Ferris et al. (1989) suggested that an inverse relationship between perceptions of politics and job satisfaction has been established by prior research. Ferris and Kacmar (1992) argued that when employees engage in political activities, the perceptions of others concerning the political nature of the organization may increase and such perceptions in turn increase job anxiety due to ambiguity of the environment.

Kacmar and Baron (1999) cited eleven studies that reported a relationship between politics and job satisfaction. The adverse effects of organizational politics are derived from its impact on the social contract between the employee and the employer (Cropanzano, Howes, Grandey & Toth, 1997), which consists of both economic and social exchanges (Organ and Konovsky, 1989). Management provides compensation increases and employability-enhancing training opportunities whereas peers provide social relationships. Valle and Witt (2001) observe that organizational politics affects both the economic and social aspects of the employer- employee exchange. For example, network-based relationships advanced self-interest, common in highly political environments which may compromise the quality of promotion decisions. On the other hand, the norm of withholding important information can harm social relationships and in turn cause a negative effect on job satisfaction.

The outcome of commitment in work settings was investigated in detail. For instance, commitment is related to "job challenge", the amount of feedback and to work experiences as group attitudes (Desai, 1991). White and A. Ruh (1973) conclude that employees who were highly involved, motivated and identified with the company are more likely to perceive a high degree of participation. Becker et al (1996) examined the commitment-performance relationship and found that job performance was predicted more strongly by commitment to one's supervisor than by the commitment to the organization. They concluded that the proximity and the interaction with the supervisor resulted in this link between commitment to the supervisor and job performance. Cropanzano et al (1997) and Drory (1993) identified political perceptions to be negatively associated with organizational commitment.

Turnover intention has been observed as a cognitive process of comparing the value of costs and benefits of the current job with one's aspiration level in determining both job effect and termination decisions. (Hulin, Roznowski and Hachiya, 1985) Turnover intention has been assumed and found to be the only antecedent having a direct effect on actual turnover (Coverdale & Terborg, 1980).

Cropanzano et al (1997) found that turnover intentions were predicted by perceptions of politics. One potential response of an employee who views the work environment as political is to withdraw from the organization. Frost (1987) also has

made this suggestion, arguing that employees may leave to avoid engaging in an organization's political games. Withdrawal can take one of two forms: absenteeism or turnover. This type of behaviour is expected when perceivers do not wish to become involved in the political games of the organization. Although some employees may be fortunate in terms of external mobility, others will be compelled to stay back due to lack of mobility or other organizational features that they find appealing. It is possible that there may be high absenteeism amongst those who elect to stay (Ferris and Kacmar, 1992). According to Organ (1990), the OCB construct comprises of five key dimensions: altruism, civic virtue, conscientiousness, courtesy and sportsmanship. Altruism is defined as undertaking voluntary actions that help another person with a work related problem (Podsakoff & Mackenzie, 1994). It involves taking time off one's schedule to assist someone. Civic virtue characterizes a person who participates in and is concerned about the life of the company (Podsakoff & Mackenzie, 1994). This symbolizes ardent commitment to the organization and its well being. Conscientiousness means giving priority to attendance, use of work time, and adherence to various rules (Organ, 1990). Courtesy refers to engaging in actions that help prevent work-related problems with others from occurring (Podsakoff & Mackenzie, 1994). Sportsmanship evokes willingness to tolerate the inevitable inconveniences and imposition of work without complaining.

In its relationship with perceptions of organizational politics, OCB has produced mixed results. Wayne et al (1997) and Settoon et al (1996) deemed citizenship behaviour an important group or supervisor level outcome, with Settoon et al focusing more specifically on citizenship behaviours classified as having consequences on interpersonal relationships. Since antecedents of citizenship behaviour such as satisfaction (Organ, 1990), leader member exchange (Settoon et al., 1996), and organizational justice (Moorman, 1991) are generally positive aspects in work groups, the assumption of politics as a negative construct suggests that it has a negative relationship with citizenship behavior. However, some research evidence has produced results contrary to the above. For instance, Cropanzano et al (1997) proposed and tested a negative relationship, but did not find a significant result. Maslyn and Fedor (1998) found that at the higher levels of the organization, the perceptions of politics were not predicted by OCB. As a response to politics in the work group, citizenship may serve as a defence mechanism or as a means of peacemaking.

Study Framework

The discussion of previous studies on organizational politics leads to the following conclusions:

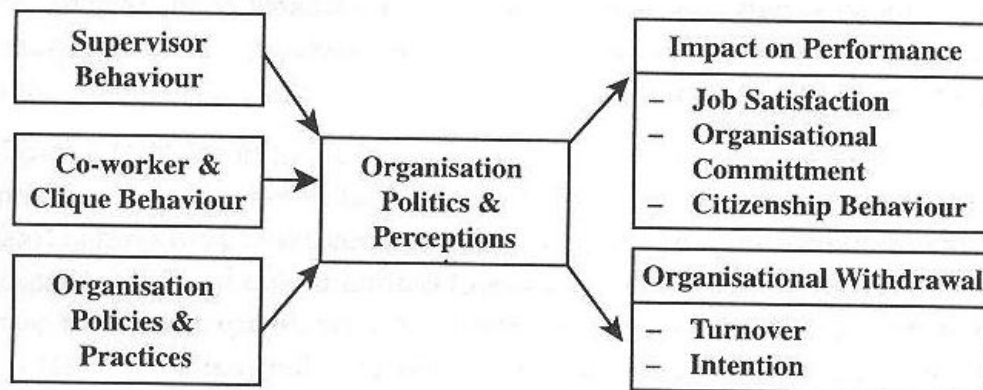
The multidimensional construct of organizational politics perceptions could be broadly classified into three areas: supervisor behaviour, co-worker and clique behaviour, and organizational policies and practices (Ferris and Kacmar, 1992).

As a consequence of the individual's of perceptions of organizational politics work outcomes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, turnover intention and organizational citizenship behaviour, have been identified (Cropanzano et al., 1999).

This study takes up the position that Organizational Politics means those actions that are inconsistent with accepted organizational norms, designed to promote self-interest, taken without regard for, even at the expense of, organizational goals Mintzberg's (1983).

Supported by the above findings, the following framework is proposed.

FIGURE 1: Conceptual Model



Propositions

The conceptualization leads to the following propositions..

- ☐ Higher organizational politics will lead to lower job satisfaction, organizational commitment and citizenship behaviour
- ☐ Higher organizational politics will result in higher turnover intentions.

Operational Definition of Key Concepts

Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB)

According to Organ (1990), the organizational citizenship behaviour construct comprises five key dimensions: altruism, civic virtue, conscientiousness, courtesy and sportsmanship. For the purposes of the present study three elements were identified.

Altruism

Undertaking voluntary actions that help another person with a work related problem (Podsakoff & Mackenzie, 1994). It confers taking time out of one's own schedule to give assistance to someone who needs it.

Conscientiousness

Placing priority to "attendance, use of work time and adherence to various rules, that far surpasses any enforceable minimum standards (Organ 1990). A conscientious person voluntarily takes on extra responsibilities, is punctual, places importance on detail and quality of tasks and generally goes "above and beyond" the call of duty.

Sportsmanship

Willingness to tolerate the inevitable inconveniences and impositions of work without complaining (Organ 1990). Sportsmanship entails not making issues of matters that, although bothersome and irritating, are of little consequence in the broader scheme of things. Good sportsmanship is exhibited when a positive mind set is maintained, abstaining from exhibiting dissatisfaction when their suggestions are rejected or made to endure inconveniences caused by others.

Job satisfaction

The individual's general attitude towards his or her job. A person with a high level of job satisfaction holds positive attitudes towards the job, while a person who is dissatisfied with his or her job holds negative attitudes to the job (Robbins, 2001).

Organization Commitment

Organizational commitment is the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in an organization (Mowday, Steers & Porter, 1979).

Turnover intentions

Turnover intention is a predictor of turnover (Hom & Griffeth, 1995). This concept emphasizes the importance of cognitive process; comparing of the value of costs and

benefits of the current job to one's aspiration level in determining both the job effect and termination decisions (Hulin, Roznowski, & Hachiya, 1985).

Sample and Methodology

The study was carried out among staff grade employees and executives of five companies engaged in the garment industry. Quantitative methods such as questionnaires and qualitative methods such as observations and focus group discussions were carried out as well. Five multinational organizations engaged in the garment industry were selected for the study. The data was gathered from 120 supervisory level employees reporting to twenty-one executives. Of the initial sample, 108 staff level questionnaires and 293 executive questionnaires (based on OCB) were accepted. The questionnaires were distributed across selected functional departments of each organization covering the areas of finance, information technology, quality control, human resources, logistics, administration, production, cutting and finishing. A stratified sampling technique was used in the sample selection. Twenty focus group interviews, ten executive interviews and field observations were carried out with the intention of validating the responses to the questionnaire.

Perceptions of organizational politics were assessed using a 12-item scale adapted from Perceptions of Organizational Politics Scale (POPS) by Kacmar and Ferris (1991).

- ☐ Job Satisfaction was measured using a four-item questionnaire constructed using the work of Warr et al (1979).
- ☐ Commitment was measured using a three-item questionnaire by Cook and Wall (1980).
- ☐ Organization Citizenship behaviour and its five dimensions was measured through eleven items taken from scales developed by Podsakoff & MacKenzie (1994).

Data Analysis and Findings

TABLE 1: Organizational Politics and Turnover Intentions

	Mean N=108	Std. Deviation	Correlation	High %	Low %
Turnover Intention	8.8	2.3	.462	14	6.4

P<0.05

Source: Survey data

The above data depicts that turnover intentions are positively related to perceptions of Organizational Politics, with a mean of 8.8 and a standard deviation of 2.3. The total weight allocated to turnover intentions was 15 points. Hence, a mean of 8.8 represents high turnover intentions and a low standard deviation confirms the validity of the mean. This factor is further replicated as only 6.4% of the sample admitted low turnover intentions and 93.6% persons had high and moderate turnover intentions.

TABLE 2: Company-wise distribution of Turnover Intentions

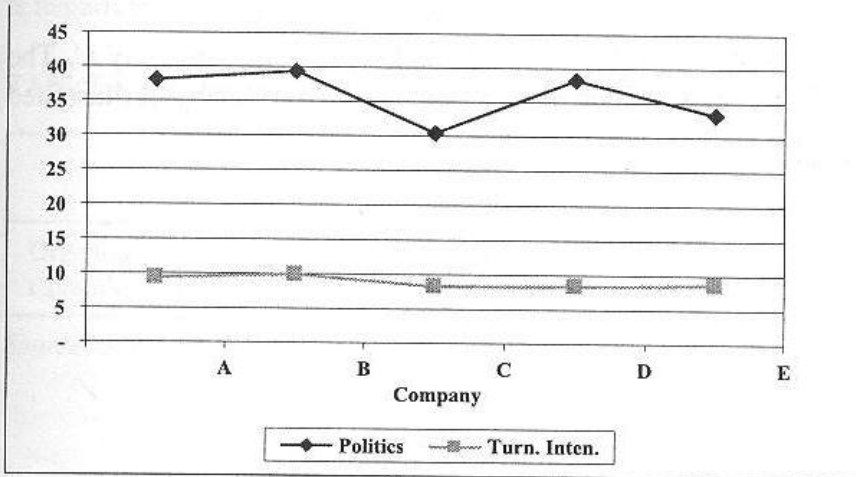
	A	B	C	D	E
Turnover Intentions	9.37	9.90	8.28	8.36	8.67

Source: Survey data

Turnover intentions were highest in Company B. The written focus group interviews revealed that the policy of promotions, advancement and other benefits were perceived to be extremely political. They were made to understand that "only the favoured parties will be promoted and advanced (Focus group interview Company B, June 2003). Similar comments were made in regard to company D; "when a person was at fault, instead of correcting her, she was continuously harassed till she became emotionally weak, or till she left" (Focus group interview Company B, June 2003).

The following is a graphical illustration of the survey data relating to the relationship between the organizational politics and turnover intentions for each company.

FIGURE 2: Distribution of Turnover Intentions



Source: Survey data

The interviews with the executives revealed the following:

"The companies pay more attention to best performers, as they are the pioneers in achieving targets. The weak performers may need to be replaced; if an employee was given low increments he/she should decide whether to stay and correct his/her shortcomings or to look for better prospects" (Finance and Administration Manager Company B, June 2003). However, they admitted that in the absence of continuous assessments, such low performers would discover the executive's assessment of their performance at the end of the year.

These findings confirm the second hypothesis that organizational politics is positively related to turnover intentions.

TABLE 3: Organizational Politics and Job Satisfaction

	Mean N=108	Std. Deviation	Correlation	High %	Low %
Job Satisfaction	14.9	2.6	-.48	27.78	.93

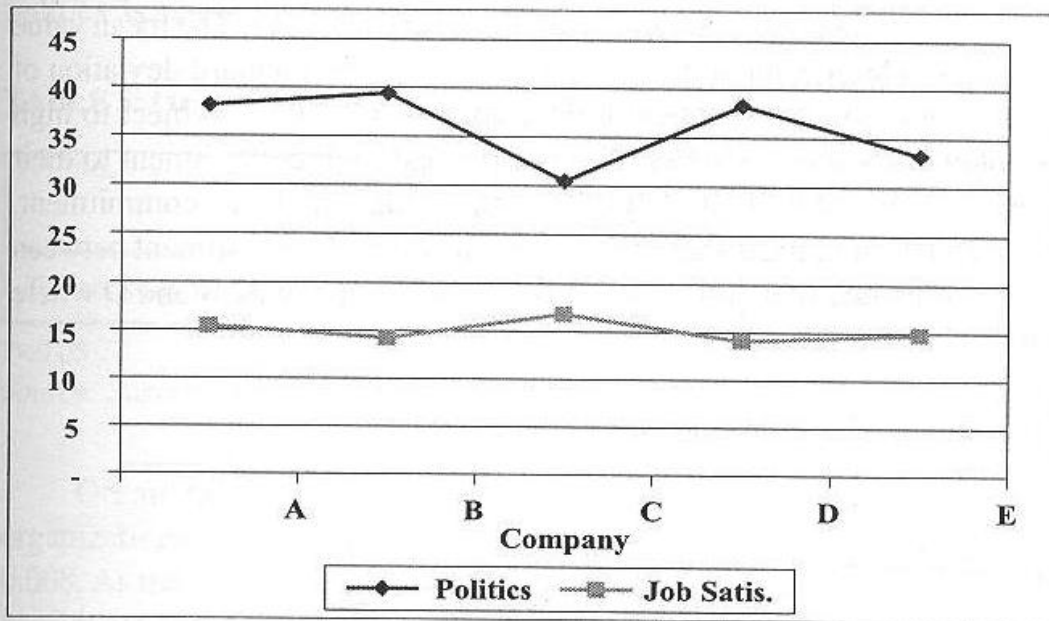
$P < 0.05$

Source: Survey data

The data indicate that job satisfaction is negatively related to organizational politics. The coefficient of correlation is moderately high similar to turnover intention. The mean value of 14.9 indicates that a significant proportion of the sample, approximately 27.78%, was highly satisfied with their jobs. As the standard deviation is at a low level, the mean value is assumed to be fairly constant throughout the sample.

Job satisfaction was lowest in Company B and highest in Company C. The influence of organizational politics on job satisfaction, for each company, is illustrated as follows:

FIGURE 3: Distribution of Job Satisfaction



Source: Survey data

The employees revealed at the interview, "we are satisfied with our job, but could do better, or take up more responsibilities. Some promotions were not justifiable" (Company E focus group interview, June 2003).

Some of the verbal comments made by the staff revealed that the mere fact of working in a prestigious multinational appealed to them as they were envied and looked up to by their friends. The executives felt that their general job satisfaction level was high due to handsome rewards that the companies offer (Logistics executive Company C, June 2003).

The above findings confirm the first hypothesis, in which organizational politics is negatively related to job satisfaction.

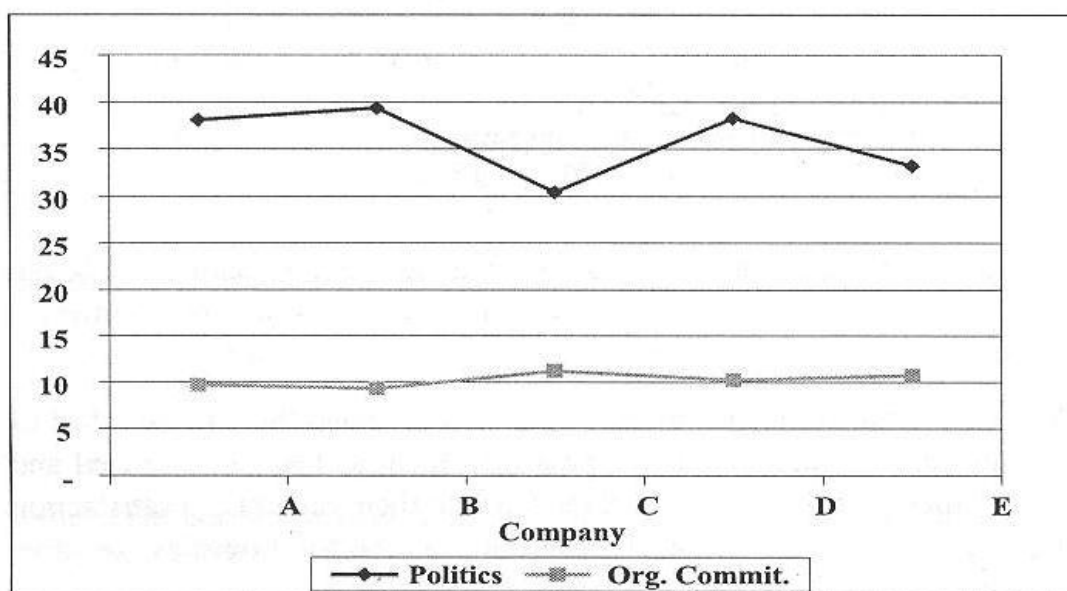
TABLE 4: Organizational Politics and Organizational Commitment

	Mean N=108	Std. Deviation	Correlation	High %	Low %
Organisational Commitment	10.4	4.6	-.56	16.67	.93

Source: Survey data

Organizational Politics has a high negative correlation with Organizational Commitment. The Pearson's coefficient of correlation is .56 negative. The mean value of the sample is 10.4, which is moderately high. However, the standard deviation of the mean is relatively high at 4.6, indicating that the mean value is subject to high variation. It is noteworthy that 16.67% of the sample had high commitment to their organizations, which leaves approximately 83% with low and moderate commitment. The graphical presentation of the distribution of organizational commitment between the five companies illustrate that commitment is low in Company A, B and D where politics was pronounced.

FIGURE 4: Distribution of Organizational Commitment



Source: Survey data

The main causes for low commitment were revealed at the focus group interviews.

“The rules and regulations of the organizations were too rigid and were forced on the employee” (Company D, focus group interview, June 2003). Even the Human Resource Department itself had traditional “work to rule” procedures (Company A, focus group interview, June 2003). In general, the interviews reflected that those rules that were not flexible served more as a tool to inconvenience an employee rather than to protect his rights and maintain discipline.

The executives of the companies commented that “Rules and regulations were instrumental in maintaining equity and order” (Human Resource manager Company A, June 2003). However, they admitted that sometimes these may not serve their purpose if not assessed on a case-by-case basis.

These findings further support the first proposition that organizational politics is negatively related to organizational commitment.

TABLE 5: Organizational Politics and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour-Findings

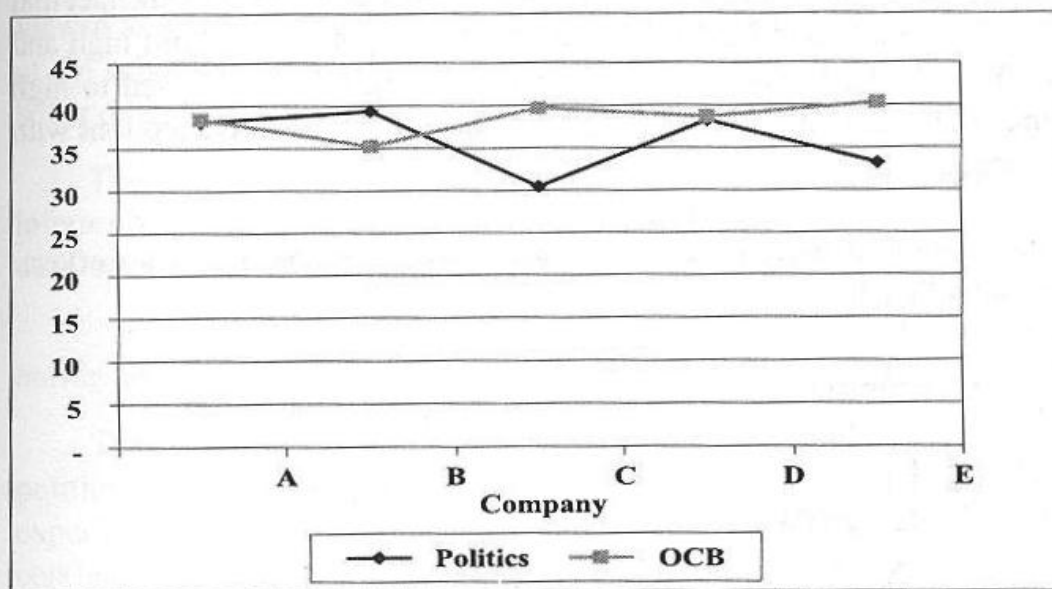
	Mean N=93	Std. Deviation	Correlation	High %	Low %
Citizenship Behaviour	39.3	6.18	0.008	19.35	1.08

$P < 0.05$

Source: Survey data

Organizational Citizenship Behavior showed a positive correlation with organizational politics perceptions. However, Spearman's correlation coefficient was 0.008. As the coefficient was beyond 0.05 and did not give a significant value at 95% confidence levels, it is assumed to be statistically insignificant. Although, the mean of the sample was relatively high at 39.3, the standard deviation of the mean was 6.18, depicting a relatively volatile situation. A notable observation was that high citizenship behaviour was identified to exist for only 19.35% of the sample, and 79.57% showed moderate citizenship behaviour. The graphical presentation of the citizenship behaviour ratings for each company is as follows.

FIGURE 5: Distribution of Organizational Citizenship Behaviour



Source: Survey data

The field observations revealed that most employees were of the strong belief that a job well performed is the best that can be given to the company. They were not convinced that citizenship behaviour had any effect in an organizational setting. The executives commented that:

“Citizenship behaviour is welcome at anytime, but is not something that they would stress or appraise in the subordinate. Employees with poor citizenship behaviour was difficult to change as it's their attitude” (Production Manager Company C, June 2003).

The above findings, on the other hand, contradict the first proposition that sought a negative relationship between politics perceptions and citizenship behaviour.

TABLE 6: Organizational politics

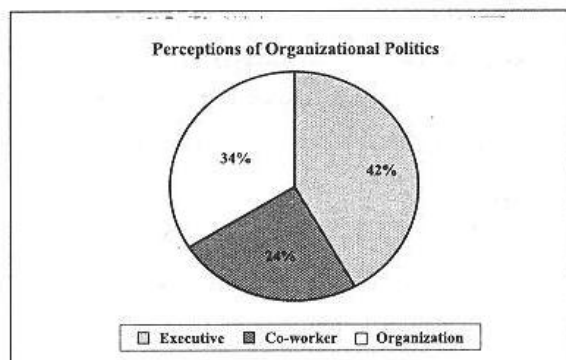
	Mean N=108	Std. Deviation	High%	Low%
Organizational Politics	35.22	6.77	5.56	1.85

$P < 0.05$

Source: Survey data

Organizational politics perceptions had a mean of 35.22, which was relatively high. The standard deviation of the mean depicts that the mean value of 35.22 could deviate within the range 41.99 and 28.45. This was further confirmed by the fact that only 1.85% of the sample admitted low politics, leaving 98.5% to admit high and moderate politics. Of the sample, 5.5% directly admitted being subjected to high politics. Figure 10 illustrates the dispersion of organizational politics perceptions with the use of a histogram.

FIGURE 6: Perceptions of Organizational Politics exerted by Supervisor, Co-worker and Organizational Policies



Source: Survey data

The quantitative analysis was also supported by the written focus group interviews of all five companies.

The existence of favoritism was revealed: "The solutions to certain problems that arose in implementing certain rules and regulations were not common to all individuals" (Focus group interview Company D, June 2003).

Penalizing of selected individuals was observed: "Some do their duties well; some don't. The reason is that the superior chooses to ignore the wrongdoings of certain parties (Focus group interview Company E, June 2003).

The inflexibility of rules and regulations was revealed in another interview: "There are just and equitable rules and regulations in the organization, but the implementation of these should be equitable as well. Especially there are situations where these policies are made flexible depending on personal contacts, friendship, etc. These should be minimal (Focus group interview Company A, June 2003).

In some companies, the employees revealed that politics was not instigated at the middle level, but at the very top itself:

"There were instances where certain benefits were passed on to some individuals based on their connections with the CEO or the department manager. These benefits, though requested, were not given to others; we are never given even an opportunity to question these decisions (Focus group interview Company B, June 2003).

The lack of communication between the executive and the subordinate was viewed as a notable cause for politics: "The executive should have a fair knowledge of the subordinate's personal life as well. This would definitely help to maintain a better relationship between the two (Focus group interview Company C, June 2003).

This was further illustrated in a focus group: "Some of us are suffering from an inferiority complex. What is needed is that the executive identifies these persons and develops better rapport with them (Focus group interview Company E, June 2003).

"An executive should work closely with the subordinates; be there for them during good times and bad times (Focus group interview Company C, June 2002).

The above excerpts from the focus group interviews illustrate the dominance of politics at the supervisor level and the organization level. This was personally experienced during the course of certain factory visits, where the respondents continuously inquired whether the feedback of the research would be given to the superior or the organization.

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"There were instances where certain benefits were passed on to some individuals based on their connections with the CEO or the department manager. These benefits, though requested, were not given to others; we are never given even an opportunity to question these decisions (Focus group interview Company B, June 2003).

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Conclusions

The findings depict that 92.5% admitted moderate politics, while 5.5% admitted high politics. These findings replicate Gandz and Murray's (1980) research on the experience of work place politics where 93.2% admitted that the existence of work place politics is common to most organizations. The study focused on a fair cross section of the companies covering all departments within the sample. It may be noted that the organizations selected for the study are large multinationals that dominate the garment industry. They are also the companies that are renowned for best practices. However, what the managers and the executives may have failed to realize is that their own political behaviour had created dissatisfaction among the employees.

Company A and B had comparatively high politics. Company A had a highly centralized structure, with power and control centred at the senior management level. Employees were not free to make decisions on their own; sometimes even the executive levels were not empowered. Strict policies and procedures were introduced in the form of handbooks, policy statements and manuals and the extreme situations of such adherence to rules and policies overlooked the human approach to problem solving and decision-making.

However, Company B, comparatively had a less hierarchical structure, which permitted better control over resources and decision-making power at staff levels. It was a notable observation that Company B showed the highest percentage of politics perceptions. This could perhaps be due to the fact that there is a high degree of uncertainty within the organization. A new management team was appointed four years ago and there had been radical hierarchical changes since then. The employees especially at the staff levels were of the opinion that advancement and opportunities were offered mainly to the "in group" members only. A higher level of flexibility has also given the employees the freedom for achievement through any means. This could lead to political behaviour in certain instances. These findings also confirm the previous studies of Ferris et al (1989).

Approximately 93.6% had high to moderate turnover intentions. It is noteworthy that the attractive remuneration packages and other benefits that these companies have provided to its employees have outweighed the influence exerted by political behaviour. Almost 94% of the sample responded positively to the question, "I sometimes feel like leaving this organization". Some of the respondents commented that they were on the look out for employment elsewhere due to lack of career prospects within the company. Also, they felt that advancement was offered only to persons in the "in group". Furthermore, the focus group interviews revealed instances where only some persons were continuously pulled up for their mistakes that prompted them to look for employment elsewhere. Although retaliation was not indicated as a

significant predictor of politics, the above behaviour could even be brought about with an intention to retaliate as the respondents claim that such behaviour was directed only at certain individuals.

The comments made by executives during the interviews indicate that the persons who leave or are intending to leave are low performers. While it was difficult to verify whether they were actually low performers within the course of the study, it is also questionable whether the executives could justify the turnover based on low performance. In the case of Company A, it was noted that persons with high turnover intentions were those who served for shorter periods in the organization. This observation falls in line with previous work by Gilmore et al (1996), who found evidence that new-comers will be adversely affected by politics and are more likely to adopt withdrawal behaviours.

However, in Company B, those who served for longer periods indicated high turnover intentions. This observation should be viewed and discussed with reference to the organizational setting as well as the culture. The respondents commented that the reorganization offered by the present management saw no opportunities for the "old crowd". The organizational setting also reflected that the involvement of these individuals in the decision making process is very minimal. Thus, the perceptions are apparently shaped by the cultural influences prevalent in each organization. These results support the theoretical position developed by Ferris et al (1989), which suggested that perceptions of politics would be related to organizational withdrawal behaviours, particularly for those who have limited understanding of the work environment.

Most respondents were not satisfied with the duties they were assigned to perform. Some of them felt their advancement needs were overlooked. Job satisfaction is the individual's attitude towards work. This is also the strong bond that one develops starting from the day he/she is recruited. This may also depend to a great extent on preferences each person may have as to the type of the job. It is possible that individual preferences do not coincide with the actual tasks performed.

In addition, the perceptions of politics had a lower impact on job satisfaction among respondents who were engaged in less team oriented programmes and involvement programmes than their counterparts. This was noted in Company C and A where involvement programmes such as quality circles, work improvement teams, special task forces and *kaizen* teams were practised. On the contrary, even though the politics perceptions were low, Company E did not reflect a significant increase in job satisfaction. It can be deduced that in an environment of average to high levels of organizational politics perceptions, team oriented tasks act as moderators. The moderating effect is brought about as the employees begin to gain a greater sense of

control and an understanding of the work place, thereby being less affected by organizational politics. This finding is also a reflection of the study by Valle and Witt (2001).

Organizational commitment reflected a negative relationship to politics perceptions as indicated in previous studies (Cropanzano et al, 1997, Drory, 1993). Highly committed persons represented 16.67% of the sample and the low and moderate commitment represented 83.33%. The majority viewed their organizations with pride; this is mostly so as it gave them esteem and preference within their social circles. This effect was hampered by their intention to leave the organization. The main cause for low commitment was the perception that the rules and regulations were too tight. The rigidity of such rules did not offer a solution from a human angle and served more as a tool to inconvenience an employee rather than help him/her.

Although OCB did not show a significant correlation to politics perceptions and this study replicates the study of Cropanzano et al (1997) and Maslyn and Fedor (1998), it was observed that only 20% of the sample showed high citizenship behavior as rated by the executive. The ratings for Company C and E showed high citizenship due to low politics. However, the relationship was not established for Company A and D, where the politics did not show any correlation to politics perceptions

The supervisor ratings were limited by the fact that OCB was not observed as an essential characteristic in the work environment. The executives were of the opinion that OCB was not a fundamental requirement in achieving targets. Rather, it was viewed more as a virtue. Even where poor citizenship behaviour was noted, the executive intervention had been very low as long as the departmental targets were achieved. For example, if the employee was not conscientious, he/she would be made directly answerable to avoid repetition. Similarly the supervisory level employees did not believe that citizenship behaviours would be a fundamental requirement in a work environment.

Organizational politics could lead to lower work outcomes and create high turnover intentions in employees. In a competitive environment the success of an organization mainly depends on the commitment and involvement of employees in the organization. Organizations could benefit from positive work outcomes such as job satisfaction, commitment and organizational citizenship behaviour as it would lead to enhanced product quality and greater customer satisfaction. Thus, organizations should pay more attention to factors that create organizational politics and could be benefited by promoting employee involvement programmes that promote team work.

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