IS ORGANIZATIONAL POLITICS DESTRUCTIVE FOR FAVORABLE EMPLOYEE OUTCOMES? AN APPRAISAL USING THE LENS OF ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTIFICATION.

Aiza Hussain Rana[1]

Amir Riaz[2]

Hafiz Zahid Mahmood[3]

ABSTRACT:

The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship of employees' perceptions of organizational politics with various employee outcomes (turnover intentions, employee engagement, job satisfaction and counterproductive work behaviors). Further, this study also hypothesised that employees' organizational identification mediates the direct relationship between perceived organizational politics (POP) and employee outcomes. For the purpose of this study, data were collected from 678 faculty members working in the higher education institutes (HEIs) operating in Pakistan through self-administered questionnaire. Descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, correlation and regression analysis were applied for data analysis. Results revealed that POP was negatively related with job satisfaction, employee engagement and organizational identification whereas it was positively related with employee turnover intentions and counterproductive work behaviors. Further, organizational identification partially mediated all the four direct relationships between POP and employee outcomes. Results and implications of the study are discussed in the end.

KEYWORDS: Perceived Organizational Politics, Higher Education, Employee Outcomes, Organizational Identification, Employee Engagement, Job Satisfaction

[1] Author is PhD Scholar in Department of Management Sciences at National College of Business Administration and Economics and Assistant Professor in Department of Management Sciences at Lahore Garrison University, Lahore, E.Mail: aizahussainrana@lgu.edu.pk

[2]Author is Assistant Professor in Department of Management Sciences at COMSATS University Islamabad, Lahore Campus

[3]Author is Associate Professor in Department of Economics at COMSATS University Islamabad, Lahore Campus

Aiza Hussain Rana, Amir Riaz & Hafiz Zahid Mahmood

Introduction

Higher education institutes (HEIs) play key role in nation building and highly qualified academicians are foundation stones for the sustainability and progress of any HEI. Pakistan is a developing country and from last two decades, Government of Pakistan is heavily investing in physical and human resources infrastructure of the HEIs operating in the country.

To reap the maximum benefit of this investment, there is a dire need to improve the working environment for academicians and researchers in HEIs. As Asrar-ul-Haq, Ali, Anwar, Iqbal, Suleman and Haris-ul-Mahasbi (2019) explained how internal politics impacts employee outcomes. Their study clearly described the need to reduce politics from HEIs in order to enhance their performance by keeping employees satisfied and retained for long-term in their employer institutions. They highlighted the fact that in Pakistan, especially in public sector educational institutes, the rules are quite flexible that allow individuals to temper these rules in their self-interest and personal benefits. Higher education sector is very much disposed to politics due to the organizational culture in Pakistan. Particularly in universities, where people come from diversified background, there is likelihood of politics, as every employee

wants to satisfy personal needs or accomplish desired aims without making much effort in their prescribed roles. In today's dynamic organizational environment, competency and efficiency of workforce is most demanded by the contemporary organizations. The retention of competent and efficient employees is a matter of immense consideration for all type of organizations. Not only retaining but engaging workforce productively is pertinent for organizational success. Employees' engagement is found to influence subsequent employee outcome positively and, in long-run, contribute to organizational outcome which is desirable by the organizations for the achievement of their goals (e.g. Xiong and Wen, 2020; Arciuli, Emerson, and Llewellyn, 2019; Al-Dalahmeh, Khalaf, and Obeidat, 2018; Tuna, Ghazzawi, Yesiltas, Tuna and Arslan, 2016).

Further, studies conducted by Buil, Martínez and Matute, (2018) and Dechawatanapaisal, (2018) disclosed the importance of relationship between organizational identification (OID)and employee outcomes and highlighted the fact that strong organizational identification represents employees' strong sense of identification/ affiliation with the organization. So, if there is a strong sense of identification in employees then they will portray responsible

behavior and will depict their full involvement in the assigned tasks. It exhibits the work related discretionary behaviors, enhanced employee engagement, higher level of job satisfaction and finally intention to stay in current organization for longer period of time (Buil, et al., 2018; Dechawatanapaisal, 2018; Martin, Karanika-Murray, Biron and Sanderson, et al., 2016). It is not wrong as we can easily judge that higher level of OID creates a considerable impact on employee outcomes. Al Mehrzi and Singh, (2016) also suggested that the role of a manager involves resolving the issues faced by its employees by means of discovering the workplace meaningfulness for them. That's why current study has explored this unique set of employees behaviors that clearly bring considerable change in organizational performance.

Consequently, organizations tend to work more on the management of perceived organizational politics (POP) and make efforts to improve the sense of identity of their employees with them. Organizational politics may influence almost every member of an organization to some extent (Yam et al., 2019; Rawwas et al., 2018). POP is considered as an important concept which leads to put significant influence on employees work related outcome either in the form of decreased job satisfaction (JS), or increased employee turnover intentions, or

their psychological and physical withdrawal from the work, increased job anxiety and decreased commitment towards work and organization. This justifies that success will only be a dream for an organization which has dissatisfied employees (e.g. Jameel and Ahmad 2020; Castellacci and Viñas-Bardolet, 2020; Al-Dalahmeh et al., 2018, Di Paolo, 2016; Tuna et al., 2016, Yang, 2016; Labrague, McEnroe-Petitte, Gloe, Tsaras, Arteche and Maldia, 2016). Thus, POP negatively affects individual and, thus, subsequent organizational productivity, and as a result organizational growth is effected badly (Labrague et al., 2016).

Therefore, the rationale of this study is to address the missing link between POP, OID and the employee outcome (i.e. employee engagement, job satisfaction, turnover intention and counterproductive work behaviors) in the context of higher education institutions (HEIs) of Pakistan.

Literature review

Given the rapidly evolving geo-economic climate, it comes as no surprise that the paradigm of job satisfaction (JS) has been studied and investigated most comprehensively which is evidenced by the extensive literature available (Currivan, 1999; Lester, 1987). More specifically, in the research area of organizational behavior, the concept of JS has been explored from diverse perspectives in order to broaden existing

literature in a quest to bring satisfaction to global workforce to ensure efficient productivity (Lee, et al., 2009). From the lens of organizational psychology, the variable of JS is subject to multiple factors pertaining to the interactions between employees and their workplaces. Hence, when an employee observes difference between his inputs-based reward and reward of other employees based on their inputs then he/ she becomes dissatisfied and disenfranchised from the organization (Amo and Cichocki, 2019; Anthony, Gow, Hinschen and Warren, 2008). It has been also unveiled in the recent research that, in the absence of paternalistic and servant leadership, employees are most likely to have lower level of JS, employee engagement (EE) and commitment owing to the POP (Khuwaja, Ahmed, Abid, and Adeel, 2020). Research findings of Park and Lee (2020) also highlighted that POP has a negative influence on the individual outcomes i.e. JS, EE and organizational commitment.

Theories pertaining to the organizational behavior inform that the perceptions of the workplace politics affect employees' outlook, attitudes, and behaviors (Folger et al., 2005). Taking into consideration normative treatment theory, if employees begin to perceive that the organization is an embittered mass of silent hostilities then that

perception will probably translate in decreased JS and increased job anxiety. In the same vein, if there are no or low perceptions of organizational politics then the employees will probably exhibit JS and enhanced job performance (Bicchieri, Dimant and Sonderegger, 2019; Anderson, et al., 2018).

As a matter of fact, it has been proven time and again that the POP has the far-reaching implications in terms of employee outcomes within the organizational framework (Glavas, 2016). Therefore, there is a predominant need to examine employee outcomes through the lens of POP in order to further the understanding of organizational behaviors.

It has been established that the employees' turnover intentions are the results of various factors, for instance, communications, organizational support, motivation, promotion, and rewards (Hu, et al., 2018; Brown and Rayn, 2003). Therefore, the perceived atmosphere of organizational politics instigates demotivation and demoralization in an employee's overall attitude and behavior (Eldor, 2017). Haider, Fatima and de Pablos-Heredero (2020) investigated the relationship between perception of politics and employee turnover intentions (ETO) alongside the role of political skills and job anxiety. The results highlighted that, in the presence of POP,

employees face higher levels of job anxiety which ultimately lead towards higher turnover intentions. The impact of POP on turnover intention was significant in the presence of job anxiety whereas political skills acted as moderator in this relationship (Haider et al., 2020). Even in case of the faculty serving in the higher education, the intention to leave the employer depends in a great deal on the JS and working environment. When faculty perceives that, there is injustice in terms of resource allocation, it results in a decline in their JS and as a result they are more likely to leave the organization upon finding a better job opportunity (Alemu and Pykhtina, 2020). The theory of reactions to organizational politics promulgates that the POP may result in negative consequences of job dissatisfaction, neglect, and intention to quit due to intense power struggle within an organization (Vigoda, 2000; Chachere, et al., 1994; Leck and Suanders, 1992).

Adam's (1965) equity theory explains how the perceptions of the existence of politics or fairness about organization influence employees' attitudes and behaviors. In an organization, where employee feels that they are not treated equally they may express their displeasure through counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs). Existence of political climate at workplace restricts employee input about possible job improvements, even if incremental, tend to be perceived as counterproductive by the employees, because such climates hamper their personal growth and career advancement (De Clercq et al., 2019; Grimland, Vigoda-Gadot and Baruch, 2012; Byrne, 2005). That's why, Cohen (2015) predicts that recent justice theories state that employees who are not treated equally are more likely to engage in the CWBs.

Employees who face discrimination may become dissatisfied with their jobs, as well as organization may suffer with the serious threats of CWBs. Therefore, based upon above discussion, following hypotheses have been developed for empirical investigation:

H1a: Perceived organizational politics has positive influence on employee turnover intentions.

H1b: Perceived organizational politics has negative influence on employee engagement.

H1c: Perceived organizational politics has negative influence on job satisfaction.

H1d: Perceived organizational politics has positive influence on counterproductive work behaviors.

Employees classify themselves as members of their workplace, that later on become a reason for them to behave in the interest of their employer organization (Foote, 1951). Building upon Foote's line of attack on the social classification, it has been rationalized that the sense of identification in an organization is self-defining in nature in that it is structured around the norms of social relationships (Smith, 1976; Loess and Brown, 1969). Thus, when a workplace provides unbiased opportunities for growth and promotion, the level of identification with the employer tends to increase (March and Simon, 1993). Conversely, when the employees feel disillusioned and stripped of any identification, they are more likely to become the victims of the POP (Kondili, Parikh-Foxx and Shiverdecker, 2019; Brandle, Galpin and Trenz, 2018; Witt et al., 2002). POP negatively effects the OID (Asrar ul Haq et al., 2019). The relationship between POP and OID suggests that an employee's work identity might also affect how he/ she respond towards the organizational politics in an organization (Perrewe and Spector, 2002). Extant research studies have also necessitated that, apart from support from supervisor and from organization to minimize the negative work-related outcomes of the employees, provision of an ethical working climate is also essential. For instance, Zagenczyk et al. (2020) argued that the OID and commitment is rather high in the presence of the perceived ethical climate.

In the light of social identity theory, OID plays the critical role in constructs of job satisfaction and job performance at workplace (Hogg and Terry, 2000; Elsbach and Kramer, 1996; Mael and Tetrick, 1992). OID encompasses cohesiveness, organizational support and shared features with other employees (Ronan, 1970). Along the same lines, OID is demarcated as a concept which displays belongingness, faithfulness, and shared characteristics (Lee, 1971). Social identity theory deliberates upon the interaction patterns of inter-group behaviors and intra-group discernment in terms of individuals' self-definition, therefore, in an organizational context, employees' self-images and self-respect are fashioned by the social identity to a large degree from memberships to several organizational cliques (Van Dyck, Frese, Baer and Sonnentag, 2005; Van der Linden, Sonnentag, Frese and Van Dyck, et al., 2001; Tajfel and Turner, 2001; Tajfel, 1978a; Tajfel, 1978b).

Organizational politics has negative impact on organizational identification (Wagner,

Lampen and Syllwasschy, 1986; Skevington, 1981; Lemaine, Kastersztein and Personnaz, 1978). Witt et al. (2002) conducted a study on the relationship between POP and OID and the results suggested that the person's work identity might also affect how he/ she responds towards the organizational politics in an organization. They also elaborated that by applying social identity theory at workplace (e.g., Hogg and Terry, 2000; Elsbach and Kramer, 1996; Ashforth and Mael, 1989), they believe that work identity effects the relationship between politics perceptions and work outcomes.

Over a period of time, investigators have worked to enlighten the literature about the intricacies of OID through evolving studies focused on the paradigm of antecedents as well as consequences (Qia and Ming-Xia, 2016; Walumbwa, Mayer, Wang, Wang, Workman and Christensen, 2011; Edwards and Peccei, 2010). In this regard, to further the interest of scientific inquiry into the variables of POP and OID, this study hypothesizes the following relationship:

H2: Perceived organizational politics is negatively related with organizational identification.

POP may quickly lead to make employee form their opinion for leaving the organization. Buckley, et al. (2017) found that POP especially make frontline employees to form turnover intention. DeConinck, and Johnson, (2009) found that in presence of organizational and supervisor support for the work, organizational justice further helps to retain employees in the organization. High OID indicates that employees search for self-identities consistent with those of organizations, often resulting in increased members' job satisfaction and, thus, organizational effectiveness (Ashforth and Mael, 1989).

Knippenberg and Schie (2000) recommended that organizational identification is proved to be emphatically identified with job satisfaction since individuals tend to consider things related with oneself. Similarly, Dick and colleagues (2004) also suggested that organizational identification effects job satisfaction because of the reason that employees with high level of organizational identification recognize their job as a proof of their association and their positive job evaluation in consistence with their organizational identity. As an employee's self-concept comprises the same qualities as those covered in the perceived

organizational identity, stand-in on behalf of an organization should carry with them the emotional satisfaction in the jobs they performed. In the light of leader member exchange (LMX) theory, Loi, Chan and Lam (2014) concluded that high quality LMX improves employees' organizational identification that consequently leads towards the higher level of job satisfaction among the employees.

A study conducted by Klimchak, Carsten, Morrell and MacKenzie (2017) highlighted the importance of OID for work behaviors both proactive and counterproductive. Their study concluded that low OID results into high CWB. Highly entitled individuals become counterproductive when lower level of organizational identification is reposted in organizations. According to social identity theory, an individual's employer is a key social group that provides status, self-esteem, and other social benefits (Hogg and Terry, 2000; Rubin and Hewstone, 1998; Tajfel and Turner, 1985). Meta-analytic work of Riketta (2005) identified OID an important indicator of valuable employees and organizational related outcomes.

Thus, based upon above discussion, following hypotheses are developed for empirical testing:

H3a: Organizational Identification has negative influence on employee turnover intentions.

H3b: Organizational Identification has positive influence on employee engagement.

H3c: Organizational Identification has positive influence on job satisfaction.

H3d: Organizational Identification has negative influence on counterproductive work behaviors.

Further, based upon the above discussion of (i) the relationship of POP with the OID and (ii) the relationship of OID with various employee outcomes, following hypotheses for the mediating role of OID between POP and employee outcomes (turnover intentions, employee engagement, job satisfaction and counterproductive work behaviors) are also expected and formulated for empirical testing:

H4a: Organizational identification mediates the relationship between perceived organizational politics and employee turnover intentions.

H4b: Organizational identification mediates the relationship between perceived organizational politics and employee engagement.

H4c: Organizational identification mediates the relationship between perceived organizational politics and job satisfaction.

H4d: Organizational identification mediates the relationship between perceived organizational politics and counterproductive work behaviors.
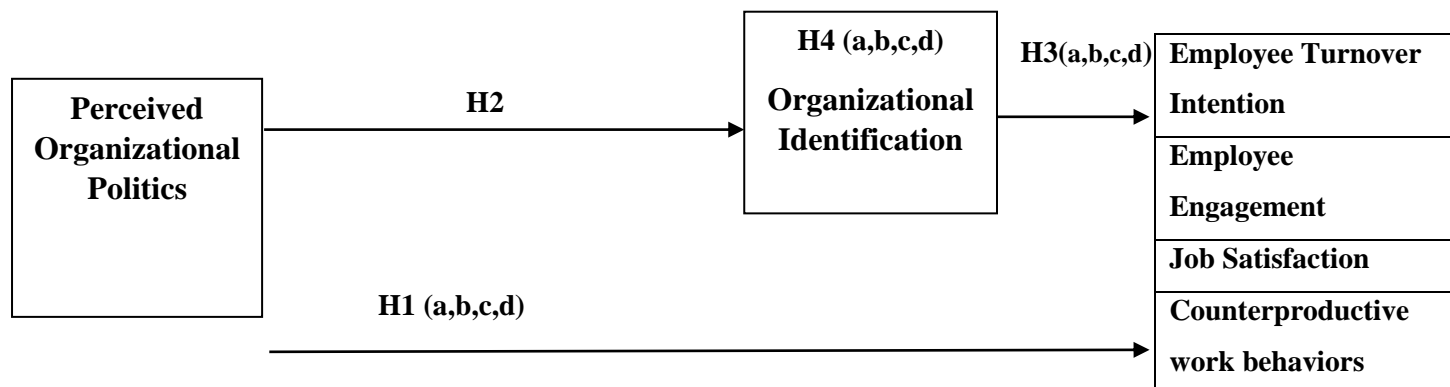

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework of the study

Methods

Sample and Subjects:

The participants selected for the purpose of this study were the faculty members providing their services in higher education institutes (HEIs) registered under HEC, Pakistan. In this quantitative research study, 780 faculty members were contacted and finally data obtained from 678 full time faculty members of these HEIs were used in this study. According to Kothari (2004, p.62, 63), stratified sampling technique is used when sample needs to be drawn from two groups that are not homogenous. So, this technique was used to get a demonstrative sample. For this purpose, a total of 204 HEIs recognized by HEC Pakistan were divided into public (n=123) and private sector (n=81) strata. In order to have an appropriate sampling size, proportional allocation of sampling was applied from each stratum. Proportional allocation method was used to select universities from each

stratum through random sampling. In this way, the public universities stratum comprised of 60% of HEI in Lahore and private universities accounted for 40% in Lahore. A self-administered survey was used to collect data from targeted faculty members. Almost 64% (435) respondents were from public sector and 34% (231) belonged to private sector HEIs .The respondents were requested to share their demographical characteristics, which included their gender, age, designation, qualification and tenure with their current employer. Majority of the respondents were female (n=381). With reference to their qualification, majority of the respondents (466) holds MS/ Mphil degree. The detailed demographic description of the sample is presented in Table 1.

Measures

In order to collect data for the variables used in this study, following, already validated from previous studies, scales were used.

Perceived Organizational Politics: A 12-item scale of perceived organizational politics (POP) by Kacmar and Ferris (1991) was used to gauge employees' perceptions of politics. The responses ranged from 1(strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Organizational Identification: To measure organizational identification, a five-item scale developed by Smidts et al. (2001) was used. Scale responses ranged from 1(never) to 5 (always).

Employee Turnover Intentions: For measuring ETO, a 3-item scale was used developed by Landau and Hammer (1986). The scale ranged from 1 (not at all true) to 5 (exactly true).

Employee Engagement: Engagement level of the participating employees was measured by an 11-item scale developed by Saks (2006). The scale ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Job satisfaction: Job satisfaction of the employees was measured by using a 4-item scale developed by Jun et al., (2005). The scale ranged from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied).

Counterproductive Work Behaviors: An 11-item scale of counterproductive work behaviors was used developed by Luqman et al., (2015). The items comprise of five organizational deviance items and six interpersonal deviance items.

Selected items from each dimension were among those which had maximum reported occurrence in Fox and Spector's (1999) work. Response scale ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Control Variables

According to Witt et al. (2000), the effects of demographic variables like age, gender, tenure in organization and education are required to be controlled in order to get unbiased results. Therefore, current study used age, gender, tenure in organization and education as control variable in this study to control their effects while examining the impact of independent variable(s) on dependent variable(s).

3. Results and discussion

Descriptive Statistics

The detailed demographics of the participants of current study are presented in Table 1. Among the participated approached, 6.6% (45) employees were Professors, while 48.1% (326) were Lecturers. Likewise, 29.9 % (203) were Assistant Professors and 6.9 % (47) mentioned them as Associate Professors. Further, participants were asked to mention their age where 34 years was the average age for the participants of the study. Majority of the participants were female i.e. 56.2 % (381) whereas 43.8% (297) were male.

Table1: Descriptive Statistics

Category	Frequency	Percentage	Experience (In Years)		
Gender			1-5 years	343	50.6
Male	297	43.8	6-10 years	165	24.3
Female	381	56.2	11-15 years	108	15.9
Age group (Years)			16-20 years	26	3.8
22-27 Years	155	22.9	20 years or above	36	5.3
28-33 Years	175	25.8	**Stay in Current Organization**		
29-34 Years	216	31.9	1-4years	427	63.0
35-40 Years	67	9.9	5-8years	148	21.8
41 Years or above	65	9.6	9-12years	54	8.0
Designation			13-16years	29	4.3
Professor	45	6.6	17 years or above	20	2.9
Associate Professor	47	6.9	**Type of Institute**		
Assistant Professor	203	29.9	Public	435	64.2
Lecturer	326	48.1	Private	231	34.0
Other	51	7.5	Other	12	1.8
Qualification					
Masters	89	13.1			
MPhil/MS	466	68.7			
PhD	117	17.3			
Post Doc	6	.9			

Reliability, correlation and regression analysis were conducted with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS-22) to analyze data. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to calculate the reliability of already developed measures used in this study. The reliability values are presented in parentheses in Table 2. Further, Pearson correlation was used for the assessment of the inter-relationships between the variables of the study. The value of correlation coefficient gives a clear picture of the association between the variables, correlation values are represented in Table 2. Correlation results showed a significant correlation between POP and OID ($r = .50$, $p < .001$); POP and EE ($r = .54$, $p < .001$); POP and ETO ($r = .59$, $p < .001$); POP and JS ($r = .56$, $p < .001$) and POP and CWB ($r = .64$, $p < .001$). All these correlation values are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Means, Standard Deviations, Reliability Scores and Correlation Analysis

Sr. #	Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1.	Gender	----	----										
2	Age	2.56	1.21	-0.23**									
3.	Qual	----	----	0.08	0.23**								
4.	Tenure	1.62	1.01	-0.00	0.50**	0.03							
5.	OID	3.63	.43	-0.27**	0.07	-0.02	-0.03	(0.84)					
6.	POP	3.74	.49	0.23**	-0.05	-0.04	0.04	-0.50**	(0.87)				
7.	CWB	4.12	.54	0.30**	-0.11*	-0.01	0.01	-0.73**	0.64**	(0.84)			
8.	EE	4.34	.02	-0.26**	0.14**	0.02	-0.01	0.66**	-0.54**	-0.84**	(0.82)		
9.	JS	4.39	.02	-0.30**	0.15**	0.02*	-0.02	0.66**	-0.56**	-0.68**	0.73**	(0.77)	
10.	ETO	3.88	.66	0.29**	-0.11*	-0.00	0.01	-0.67**	0.59**	0.70**	-0.68**	0.73**	(0.77)

Note. ** correlation is significant at .01; * correlation is significant at .05; reliabilities are given in parentheses.

Qual = Qualification; OID = Organizational Identification; POP = Perceived Organizational Politics; CWB = Counterproductive Work Behavior; EE = Employee Engagement; JS = Job Satisfaction; ETO = Employee Turnover Intentions

4.3 Hypotheses Testing

The regression analysis was used to examine the influence of the independent variable(s) on the dependent variable(s). In the case of this study, the regression analysis demonstrates the influence of perceived organizational politics (IV) on organizational identification and on employee outcomes (DVs). The results of regression analysis for all the direct relationships are reported in Table 3.

Table 3 Results of Regression Analysis

Hypotheses	Paths	B	C.R	P	Supported
H1a	POP-ETO	0.44	9.73	.00	Yes
H1b	POP-EE	-0.10	-7.40	.00	Yes
H1c	POP-JS	-0.20	-8.34	.00	Yes
H1d	POP-CWB	0.40	12.15	.00	Yes
H2	POP-OID	-0.42	-11.61	.00	Yes
H3a	OID-ETO	-0.83	-15.99	.00	Yes
H3b	OID-EE	0.40	16.11	.00	Yes
H3c	OID-JS	0.30	15.57	.00	Yes
H3d	OID-CWB	-0.76	-20.16	.00	Yes

Note: POP= Perceived Organizational Politics, OID= Organizational Identification, JS= Job Satisfaction, ETO= Employee Turnover Intention, EE= Employee Engagement, CWB= Counterproductive Work Behaviors

Regression results revealed a significant positive relationship between POP and ETO, CWB as depicted in H1a, H1d (β = 0.44, 0.40 respectively, $p < 0.01$), therefore, H1a and H1d of the study are empirically accepted. The positive sign shows that if POP is increased in the organization, ETO and CWB would also increase and if POP is decreased, ETO and CWB will also decreased as shown in Table3. Whereas in the case of POP's relationship with EE and JS, as expected, significant negative relationships were found in the case of both the direct relationships (β = -0.10, -0.20 respectively, $p < 0.01$), these results reflected a significant negative association between the variables, consequently the hypotheses (H1b, H1c) are also accepted. However, the negative sign shows that POP has negative relationship with EE and JS which means that if POP is increased, EE and JS will be decreased and conversely, as shown in Table 3.

Further, Hypothesis 2 of the study states a negative relationship between POP and OID (β = -0.42, $p < 0.01$), i.e. the relationship is significant and the variables are negatively associated with each other. It means that with one variable moving up will cause an opposite move in the other variable. These results provided empirical support for the H2.

Next, in the case of third Hypothesis, H 3a and H 3d results reflected a significant negative association between OID and ETO, CWB (β = -0.83, -0.76 respectively, $p < 0.01$), which means that there is a significant relationship between the variables. The negative sign also shows negative impact of OID on ETO, CWB, thus, as expected, thus, these hypotheses are accepted empirically, as shown in Table 3.

In the case of H3b and H3c which Hypothesized the relationship between OID and EE, JS (β = 0.40, 0.30 respectively, $p < 0.01$). These values show a significant positive relationship between the variables, as expected. The positive sign shows that if OID increases, EE, JS will also increase and conversely. Therefore, these hypotheses are also accepted as shown in Table 3.

Mediation Analysis (POP-OID- Employee Outcomes)

The relational paths among the observed variables perceived organizational politics, organizational identification and employee outcomes (ETO, EE, JS and CWB) are shown in Table 5. For the purpose of testing the mediating role of OID for the relationship between POP and various employee outcomes, the procedure prescribed by Baron and Kenny (1986) was followed. According to them, to be a mediator, four conditions must be met. First, the independent variable must be related significantly with the dependent variable. Second, the independent variable must be significantly related with mediating variable. Third, the mediator must be significantly associated with the dependent variable. In the fourth and last step, upon entering the independent variable and mediator in regression equation, if the beta value of independent variable is reduced compared to the first step equation but remains significant, its partial mediation and if the value of independent variable becomes insignificant, its full mediation. Based on the comparison of regression values, the results for mediation analysis are shown in Table 5. After analyzing the mediation results, it is determined that there is a significant path that exists between POP and OID (β = -0.45, p = 0.00), OID and ETO (β = -1.00, p = 0.00); OID and EE (β = -0.04, p = 0.00); OID and JS (β = -0.03, p = 0.00); OID and CWB (β = -0.91, p = 0.00). Furthermore, in all cases indirect paths were found either lesser than the direct path as shown in Table 5, thus showed the partial mediation in all the four cases (H4a, H4b, H4c and H4d). Therefore, it is determined that organizational identification partially mediated the relationship between perceived organizational politics and all four employee outcomes (turnover intentions, employee engagement, job satisfaction and counterproductive work behaviours). These results support the H4 (a,b,c,d), empirically.

Discussion of the Results

The results of the study supported the direct relationship of POP with employee outcomes. Specifically, POP was found to have positive effect on the turnover intentions of the employees working in the HEIs of Pakistan and it supported H1a. The findings of this relationship are in line with the research results of Abubakar and Abdullahi, (2017) who also validated that, a positive relationship exists between employee's POP and their intention to quit the organization which also leads to other negative organizational outcomes (Priesemuth and Bigelow, 2019; Frimer and Skitka, 2018). POP is one of the significant reasons to ETO as well as job dissatisfaction (Vigoda, 2000; Chachere, et al., 1994; Leck and Suanders, 1992). Moreover, the notion of theory of reaction (Hirschman, 1970) is also worth discussing in line with current findings. As per the notion of this theory, POP in organization results into negative job-related outcomes. Furthermore, it has been also noticed in past researches that supervisors in HEIs in Pakistan do not demonstrate strategic knowledge management about how to keep employees satisfied (Cao and Hamori, 2019).

Table 4 Hypothesis Testing and Steps of Mediation

Variables	B	S.E	F	R^2	p
Step 1 (Path c) Predictor POP					
Outcome: ETO	0.79	0.05	249.01	0.35	0.000<0.01
Outcome: EE	-0.03	0.002	187.01	0.29	0.000<0.01
Outcome: JS	-0.03	0.002	207.45	0.31	0.000<0.01
Outcome: CWB	0.72	0.04	323.91	0.41	0.000<0.01
Step 2 (Path a) Predictor: POP					
Outcome: OID	-0.45	0.04	156.01	0.25	0.000<0.01
Step 3 A (Path b) Predictor: OID					
Outcome: ETO	-1	0.05	370.02	0.44	0.000<0.01
Outcome: EE	0..04	0.002	366.42	0.44	0.000<0.01
Outcome: JS	0.04	0.002	352.78	0.43	0.000<0.01
Outcome: CWB	-0.91	0.04	520.35	0.53	0.000<0.01
Step 3B (Path c')					
Hypothesis 4a: Outcome: ETO					
Mediator : OID	0.46	0.55			0.000<0.05
Predictor : POP	-0.74	0.05			0.000<0.01
Hypothesis 4b: Outcome: EE					
Mediator : OID	0.03	0.02			0.000<0.05
Predictor : POP	-0.015	0.02			0.000<0.01
Hypothesis 4c: Outcome: JS					
Mediator : OID	-0.02	0.02			0.000<0.05
Predictor : POP	0.03	0.02			0.000<0.01
Hypothesis 4d: Outcome: CWB					
Mediator : OID	-0.69	0.04			0.000<0.05
Predictor : POP	0.41	0.04			0.000<0.01

Table 5 Summary of Hypothesized Mediation Relations

Hypotheses #	Hypothesized Relationship	Mediation Results
H4a	POP-OID-ETO	Partial Mediation
H4b	POP-OID-EE	Partial Mediation
H4c	POP-OID-JS	Partial Mediation
H4d	POP-OID-CWB	Partial Mediation
Note: POP= Perceived Organizational Politics, OID=Organizational Identification, ETO= Employee Turnover Intention, EE= Employee Engagement, JS= Job Satisfaction, CWB= Counterproductive Work Behavior		

The empirical results of data analysis also support H1b which indicates that, POP in the HEIs of Pakistan leads to a decline in employee's engagement which is a one of the most important employee outcomes. The research findings are in line with that of the Eldor's (2016) work who is of the view that, a high rate of POP in an organization often make employees demotivated

about their job and they are less inclined to engage (Wang et al., 2019). Thus, in the light of these result, it can be stated that, POP in the HEIs of Pakistan cast a negative impact on employee's engagement as when POP is high, employee's engagement decreases significantly. The results of current study also validated that in the case of POP prevalent in the HEIs of Pakistan, employees are not usually satisfied with their job (H1c). Our research findings support the research results of Kodisinghe (2010) and Harris, James and Boonthanom (2005) who are of the view that, employees tend to compare their benefits with those of colleagues and in case they experience less benefits, they get dissatisfied. Moreover, it can also be stated that, in the case of POP, employees feel discrimination which ultimately lead to negative employee outcomes, most specifically job dissatisfaction (Bodla and Danish, 2009). The empirical findings of our research study also support the inverse relationship between POP and JS of employees in HEIs of Pakistan.

Equity Theory (Adams, 1965) provides theoretical underpinnings of negative association between POP and various subsequent employee outcomes. When employees feel that they are not being treated equally, or they face discrimination of any type, they tend to show counterproductive behaviors which is in line with the hypothesized relationship as H1d in current research study. These findings of current research study make contribution towards the equity theory which holds the assumption that employees who face discrimination may become dissatisfied with their jobs, as well as organization may suffer

with the serious threats of CWB. Furthermore, in some past research studies, a positive correlation was found between POP and CWB (Chang et al., 2009; Kacmar et al., 2013). The results of H1d got empirically supported and thus it can be stated that, POP in the HEIs of Pakistan tend to have a positive effect on the CWB.

In this research study, it has been argued that, when employees perceive that politics prevails in the organization, they are deprived of OID. Study results also revealed that there is a negative relationship between POP and OID. Here, it is interesting to discuss the research study of Witt et al. (2002) who investigated the relationship between POP and OID, and they also advocated that, the identity of employees in the workplace could also affect their attitudes or behaviors towards politics in the organization. Moreover, they signified the relevance of social identity theory which also explains role of job identity on the relationship between POP and work-related outcomes. Thus, our research findings also validate the results of Witt et al. (2002) and it was also confirmed that a negative association exists between POP and OID.

The hypothesis H3a proposed that OID has a negative effect on ETO. The results of this research study validate this relationship. Thus, our findings suggest that, in the presence of POP, it is less likely to positively affect ETO in the presence of OID. Our research findings of H3a are in line with the research findings of Dechawatanapaisal (2018). According to him, in the case of services sector, OID plays the role of predictor amid the association of OID and turnover intention. If OID is less than the ETO

will be high that not only damages organization in terms of high turnover intention but also effects the EE as well. Here it is worth discussing that when employees have high OID, they can handle POP in a much better way and thus produce positive outcomes in their workplace (Dai and Qin, 2016). H3b predicted that, OID has a positive influence on employee's engagement and the empirical findings of this study supported this hypothesis. This hypothesis assumes of social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978b). Social identity theory deliberates upon the interaction patterns of inter-group behaviors and out-group discernment in terms of individuals' self-definition. Our research findings on H3b also support the research evidence of Chen, (2012) who concluded that the level of POP determines the support for employees for their work. Thus, it can be stated that, OID of the employees working in the HEIs of Pakistan tend to mediate the link between POP and EE i.e. even in the presence of POP, employees with high levels of OID are likely to be more engaged towards their organization.

Extending the discussion on the mediating role of OID, H3c was also supported through empirical findings i.e. OID has a positive influence on JS. In the light of social identity theory, OID plays the critical role in constructs of JS and job performance at workplace (Hogg and Terry, 2000; Elsbach and Kramer, 1996; Mael and Tetrick, 1992). Therefore, OID is considered to be a form of social identification which advances organizational efficiency, output and employees' JS (Mael and Tetrick, 1992).Therefore, this research finding also relates with the research

studies of Dick and colleagues (2004) along with Knippenberg and Schie (2000) who found a positive relationship between OID and JS in the light of self-concept of the organizational members.

Further, H3d revolves around assumption that OID has a negative influence on CWB which is also supported in this research study. Thus, it can be stated that in the case of high OID of the employees, they are more likely to engage themselves in the productive activities. Witt and Spector (2012) highlighted that if there is less clarity between employees' performance and valued personal outcomes, then it often leads to high levels of POP and CWB among employees. According to H4a, OID mediates the relationship between POP and ETO which has been supported in the study results. At the same time, Dechawatanapaisal (2018) also concluded that, OID act as a predictor between OID and ETO relationship. A lower OID lead to higher ETO which also effects the EE as well, negatively. The relationship between boss and employee is also important as support of organization strongly influences the employee's engagement level (Jordan, et al., 2018; Salam, 2016). Dai and Qin, (2016) also concluded that the variable of OID partially mediates the relationship between organizational support and the engagement of employees in the workplaces where *H4b* also proposed that OID meditates the relationship between POP and EE. The relationship between organizational identification and engagement is situated within the theoretical ideation of social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978b). When employees are treated fairly within the framework of

organizational justice and their positive performance is judged and appreciated within the guidelines of organizational merit system, only then the same employees should be expected to increase their organizational engagement (Wang, et al., 2019; Jetten et al., 2018).

As per the assumption of H4c, the study meant to explore the intervening role of OID between POP and JS. Key results of the data analysis also support this hypothesis according to which employees working in HEIs of Pakistan tend to have high levels of OID which mediates the association between POP and JS of the employees. In the light of LMX theory, it can be stated that despite the high POP in HEIs of Pakistan, the level of employee's JS is high because of higher levels of OID. Where Loi et al. (2014) also stated that high quality LMX improves employees' OID that consequently leads towards the higher level of JS among the employees (Knippenberg and Schie, 2000; Dick, et al., 2004).

Highly entitled individuals become counterproductive when lower level of OID is reposted in organizations. Purpose of hypothesis H4d was to investigate if OID mediates the association between POP and CWB and the results also support the H4d of this study. Here, in social identity theory presented by Tajfel (1978a) provides theoretical underpinnings of this relationship i.e. for an employee, his/ her employer is the main social group that gives him/ her status, self-esteem, and other social perks and benefits (Hogg and Terry, 2000; Rubin and Hewstone, 1998; Tajfel and Turner, 2001). Therefore, in the presence of political work climate, the OID is negatively influenced which results in CWB (Klimchak, et al., 2016). Therefore, in the light of above discussion, it can be stated that OID mediates the relationship between POP and employee's outcomes in the HEIs of Pakistan.

Implications and conclusion

Theoretical Implications

The study at hand has attempted to fill the literature gap by expanding the literature around POP, OID and employee outcomes by utilizing the innovative instrumentation (OID, JS, OT, CWB, etc.) via which the effect of POP on a broad spectrum of employee's attitudinal (OID, ETO, JS and EE) and behavioral (CWB) outcomes has been thoroughly investigated. In doing so, mediating impact of OID has also been investigated for the relationship of POP with various employee outcomes, mentioned already. The findings highlighted the need to align the organizational goals with that of an employee is of paramount importance.

This study investigates the effect of POP on the employees' attitudes and behaviors in HEIs which indeed is the 1st of its kind in Pakistan's service sector since previous studies concentrated upon other sectors. Therefore, the results of this study offer forward looking approach to the research community active in the field study of the education sector of Pakistan, advances the extant literature on the variable of POP and its effect on the employees' attitudinal and behavioral outcomes mainly in a diverse sector of HEIs. Along with this, this study has added meaningful insights into existing body of literature by proposing and empirically

investigating the mediating role of OID for the relationship of POP with various employee outcomes. By doing so, this study has proposed and tested the intervening mechanism which explains how the effects of POP are transmitted to various employee outcomes.

Practical Implications

The outcomes of this study offer a consolidated foundation to the policy and decision makers in the higher education system of Pakistan for their knowledge about the realization of the optimum potential of education institutes of Pakistan. The education institutes need to introduce improvements to their existing system by eliminating or controlling the toxic variable of POP to enhance favourable employee attitudinal and behavioral outcomes (Sheng, et al., 2019). In a nutshell, employees feel inclined to support organizations in an act of reciprocation when they are made to believe that their organizations stand to support them in all concerned areas of their well-being. Consequently, in an interest to maintain brilliant human capital, education institutes should foster culture of accountability, justice, and merit in order to downgrade the element of organizational politics which has a real potential to deteriorate employee outcomes and impede overall organizational performance. In an attempt to optimally engage workforce, results of this research study pointed out that JS level of the workforce must be augmented as a way to gain the support of the employees as their negative attitudes and behaviors show capacity to bring decline to the organizational perform, reputation, and overall output. In this

increasingly globalized world driven by technology, it is of utmost importance to introduce system of efficient engagement through performance-based rewards and benefits to keep the golden employees motivated to remain with the organization.

In this respect, the study at hand provides framework to resolves the problems of turnover intention, job dissatisfaction, and counterproductive work behaviors. In the increasingly competitive environment, higher education sector can make use of this study in order to channelize their resources as a mechanism to enrich constructive attitudes as well as behaviors of their employees. Current framework encourages supervisors to comprehend and scrutinize the association between POP and various employee outcomes to efficiently apply organizational resources in a quest to obtain long term paybacks.

Conclusion

In today's contemporary organizations are characterized by increased competitiveness and diversity, organizational politics has become unavoidable phenomenon. There has been abundance of research which has emphasized on the two facets of organizational politics i.e. positive and negative sides. Due to the never-ending debate among researcher on POP in terms of its positive or negative outcomes, it has become a main subject of scientific inquiry and social observation from the last decade. Considering the research gap identified by past research in the negative direction of the POP, the current research study meant to investigate the

influence of POP on various employee outcomes via the mediation effect of OID.

The study examined the relationship between perceived organizational politics and various employee outcomes (turnover intention, employee engagement, job satisfaction and counterproductive work behaviours) in the presence of organizational identification as mediator. The aim behind this research was to explore that how perceived organizational politics effect emloyee outcomes that result in below par performance by the employees and badly affects the consequent organizational performance. Research results demonstrated a significant destructive impact of POP on OID, ETO, EE, JS, CWB in a very important service industry i.e. the higher education institutions (HEIs) operating in Pakistan. The data collected from the faculty members providing their services at different universities of Lahore, Pakistan, were analyzed statistically.

Study results revealed that employees' POP have direct positive influence on the ETO and CWB whereas direct negative influence on the JS, EE and OID. Further, the findings revealed that OID partially mediates all the direct relationships between POP and employee outcomes. Implications and limitations are also discussed accordingly.

Limitations and Future Directions

There were some limitations of this study, as all research studies have, taken into account when the results are intepreted. The most limiting factor in case of this study was its cross-sectional design. Further, it included only the faculty members providing their services in Lahore, Pakistan premises. This research was conducted in Lahore so a limited data was collected and due to overwhelming majority of the respondents are female, the results cannot be generalized. Moreover, the respondents were not provided the opportunity to explain their views about the perceived organizational politics due to closed ended questionnaire.

This research study can be taken as a template to conduct research into other sectors such as healthcare and law enforcement in Pakistan as well as other developing countries. In addition, there is another fascinating aspect that is of the perceptual difference between public and private employee that can be explored further. To put it simply, the concept and results of this research study demonstrates viability for more research into the relevant variables.

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