
Organizational Politics with Industrial Relation Managers in Pakistani Organizations A Qualitative Exploratory Study

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Abstract: This qualitative exploratory study explores the real life experience of organizational politics from the frame of mind of industrial relations managers. The data was collected from five industrial relations managers and experts who have more than 10 years of experience in the industrial relation field. The study employed a qualitative research design. Research data was extracted from the open ended questions from the participants. The methodology was based on an inductive approach. It was used to explore experiences, opinions and thoughts of the participants. Data were studied for specific themes and then collected into large groups of ideas that delivered information that maintained the themes. For data analysis pattern matching was used. The study explored that the overall perception of organizational politics is unsupportive in industrial relations practices. 60% participant understand that organizational politics is harmful for the organization because it creates hurdles for management rather than providing relief to the employees. The union leaders are trying to create gaps between Management and the workers. Politics between management and non-management staff leads to road block for an organization.

Keywords: Organizational Politics, Industrial Relations, Exploratory Qualitative Research

INTRODUCTION:

Organizational politics (OP) has appeared as an area of extensive importance by communities ranging from general public to the behavioral science scholars. Academic consideration has been keen to OP in recent years, with dynamic scientific outlines being followed by researcher from a number of diverse disciplines containing psychology, economics, sociology, management and political science.

Vigilant analysis of the research literature, mostly in the previous two decades, shows that methodical research in OP has fallen into 2 classifications, and these classifications have been seen, at least indirectly, as largely exogenous. One category concerns the situation with the nature of real political-behavior, types of strategies and tactics, and its consequences. The other area emphasizes on views of politics in work-environments by different employees, the antecedents of such views, and their consequences. It is this later type that is the key emphasis of the current paper, even though, we also recommend some combination of the political behavior study with politics insights in an struggle to bring together these generally equivalent bodies of work.

OP is fundamentally discussed to firm behavior of the individuals in the organization which comprises informal and deliberate engagements in order to effect the choices of the high-ranking and middle ranking succeeds to keep or improve their professional jobs. Politics in the organization not only disturbs any individual it also intensely influences the complete business of the organization. Industrial relation is an interdisciplinary field which tries to address employment relationship. It is growingly being called employee relation or employment relation. Recently, researcher define HRM as synonyms with employee relation. According to Bruce E. Kaufman, Industrial relations consist on the following main subjects of field i.e. trade unionism, labor management relation, labor laws, collective bargaining, national labor policy. This study is grounded to explore link between organizational politics and industrial relations.

The relevant literature review illustrates that the influence of politics within an organization on industrial relations has not been considered thoroughly. To fill this literature gap, this study consequently tries to explore the effect of organizational politics on industrial relations, interviewing five industrial relation managers and industrial relation experts from Karachi. In order to explore the central research questions the respondent will be requested to answer following questions:

1. What kinds of politics have they experienced or seen in an organization that they have served their services for?

2. How do they link this seen or experienced politics in their organization with Industrial relation? What is the effect of organizational politics on Industrial relations?
3. What they think whether politics in their organizations is supportive (good) or un-supportive (bad)? And why they classified it as supportive or unsupportive?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Many researchers allude organizational politics (OP) to a set of actions which are (1) Not officially permit by organization (2) linked with efforts to defend, boon or build up self-interest, this self-interest might be long-term or short-term and might be persistent or inconsistent to the interest of other member in the organization, and (3) involved in irrespective of the well-being of the organization or interest of its members (Chang, Rosen, & Levy, 2009); (Ferris, Russ, & Fandt, 1989); (Mayes & Allen, 1977).

(Buchanan, 2007) defines OP as power taking measures by applying different course of actions, and (Rosen, Harris, & Kacmar, The emotional implications of organizational politics: A process model, 2009) said OP indulge in activities of affecting which have the intention of achieving to increase the interest of member or interest of the organization. When we look on organizational politics from employees' side it commonly takes unfavourable and unsupportive form. It is preferable to entitle 'organizational politics' as 'perceived organizational politics' because it has been indicated that OP is not a real life objective which would be observed as same by every member in the organization, every member observe individually different (Ferris & King, 1991). From employees sides OP has been found unsupportive variable at work-place.

Theorists and researchers (Fedor, Harrell, & Russ, 1998), (Kacmar & Ferris, Perceptions of Organizational Politic Scale (POPS): Development and construct validation., 1991) proposed 3 factor classification scheme, these three factors are consist of (a) Pay and Promotion Policies-PPP, and (b) General Political Behavior-GPB and (c) Go Along To Get Ahead-GATGA.

Pay and promotion policies recommend whether promotion of the employee is done and pay increase on merit bases or other, political technique find the organization's perk structure. For example pay increases or some other benefits may be done on favoritism or may be due to other political act. General political behavior assumes common measures and acts of politics for example for the mistake inculcate someone else at workplace, taking commendation of some co-worker . Go along to get ahead assumes those action of where someone remain tranquil and takes no measures in order to retain valued end products and that non-terrifying quite members are rewarded because these people do not try to take measures against other and do not try to intervene with the actions of influential others (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997; Kacmar & Ferris, 1991) (Roosen & Et, 2009). These measures are the outcomes of vagueness where no undeniable rules are exist and are usually demonstrated when the actor desire to address insufficient resources.

Industrial relation can be defined as relation of employee(s) and employer for occupying themselves in a way to exaggerate the profitable activities. Industrial relation is an interdisciplinary field which tries to address employment relationship. It is growingly being called employee relation or employment relation. Recently, researcher define HRM as synonyms with employee relation. According to Bruce E. Kaufman, Industrial relations consist on the following main subjects of field i.e. trade unionism, labor management relation, labor laws, collective bargaining, national labor policy. If employee relation is a characterization that can be supposed to sum up both human resource management and industrial relations. Formerly, it is foremost suitable to dis-aggregate and state its two elements. Thus:

According to (Stone, 2002) 'Human Resource Management' as a theoretic model comprises of the (a) acquisition, (b) development, (c) remuneration, (d) motivation and (e) maintenance of an organization's workforce. Its practical activities are incorporated, preemptive and strategically positioned to the accomplishment of business objective(s). And they contain the organizational practices of (a) human resource planning, (b) job analysis, (c) job design, (d) recruitment (e) selection, (f) training (g) career development, (h) performance appraisal, (i) compensation (j) benefits, (k) health & safety (l) evaluation. Its placements and actions are based on both individualist assumption and unitarist assumption. These assumptions contradict the chance of in-built conflict in workplace-relations.

According to (Gospel & Palmer, 1992) 'Industrial relations' as a theoretic model encompasses the procedures leading workplace affairs and the bodies recognized to oversee and implement these laws. These 'laws' are characterized in the terms & conditions of work set out mutually and individually decided common law contract and labor contract. As well as (a) grievance procedures, (b) dispute settlement processes, (c) statutory regulations, (d) codes of conduct, (e) industrial laws and similar. Its preparation is got through practices such as (a) negotiation, (b) conciliation, (c) arbitration, (d) collective bargaining, (e) individual bargaining. And its implementation and governance are arbitrated through 'associations' such as (a) trade unions, (b) employer associations, (c) industrial tribunals, (d) state-sponsored regulatory bodies and (e) the civil courts. Its numerous orientations and events are established on both collectivist assumption and pluralist assumption. These assumptions admit the chance of in-built conflict in workplace-relations.

According to Eurofound, European IR Dictionary, Industrial relation is not the individual aspect of the employee relation, it is primarily discussed with collective aspect. Its focal point is the relationship between employers' and workers' representatives. It could take at numerous levels including organization, establishment, regional, national and international level.

How organization control problems of employee relations for this 4 style of management have been proposed by (Newell & Scarbrough, 2002), these management styles are Sophisticated human relations, Traditional style, Consultative approach, Constitutional style. In sophisticated human relations employees are considered as the most important asset of the organizations, focused on appraisal of employees and communication's immense method. In this style trade unionism is not suitable. This style is adopted by so many United States organization. In traditional style employee is seen as a minimal contributing factor of production, this style represent approach of Taylors Management. Union are strongly opposed in traditional style. Consultative approach is mostly used in European countries, especially in Germany. It is similar to the first style only trade unions are acknowledged. Constitutional style is similar to the second one in this approach only unions are accepted and recognized. There is limitation of this theory that various management approaches may be used in the same organization. For instance traditional approach can be used when managing other employee while sophisticated HR approach can be used when managing managers.

Employer- employee relations are connected with different leadership aspects and proposed 3 development strategies by (Savolainen, 2000) these are (a) Participative Strategy or Trust Building (b) Negotiative Strategy (c) The entrepreneurial cooperative strategy.

Majority of the research on areas of industrial relations have concentrated more on the influence of human resource management practices on organization performance, but few scholars have tried to work on Industrial relations or employment relations and how it impact organizational politics. The justification for this study is to elucidate the understanding of the relationship and how organizational politics create win-win situation to bring harmony in industrial relations.

Method

This research paper is a Qualitative Exploratory Study of the experiences of Industrial Relations managers with the phenomenon of OP-Organizational Politics. Thirteen (13) managerial level Industrial-Relations Managers were interviewed. Convenience, purposive and judgmental sampling were used in this study. These IR-Managers were interviewed in a semi structured format. The core question of research was: What kinds of politics have you experienced or seen in an organization that you have served your services for? These industrial relation managers were also asked: How do they link this experienced politics in their organization with Industrial relation? And last question was: What you think whether politics in your organizations supportive (good) or un-supportive (bad)? And they were asked for the reason: Why you classified it as supportive or unsupportive?

A qualitative exploratory study was reasonable for this research. Because the main focus of this research was to identify and explore the latest perception of industrial relation managers on the organizational politics issue.

It has been ensured to protect confidentiality of every respondent, protected well-versed consent of each study respondent and right to privacy of every participant was also ensured (Cooper & Schindler , 2008). Data were studied for specific themes and then collected into large groups of ideas that delivered information that maintained the themes (Stake, 1995) (Moustakas, 1994) . For data analysis pattern matching was used (Creswell, 2007).

Data Analysis

Following are the participant responses of 1st question; Response of Participant 01: Mostly you see the quest for taking credit or letting down others. Main aim is to get more importance, power and benefits more than others. Response of Participant 02: Saying yes to something while not meaning it down the road. Backbiting. Response of Participant 03: The workplace has become highly competitive environment. Team members within one team try to out do each other and therefore are involved in dirty politics to make themselves appear better than their own team members. Rather than excel based on their skill and talent, you find individuals in organizations that despite having skill and talent want to ridicule other peers/office colleagues to appear The Best. However recent studies have shown that teams/organizations having members/employees who develop trust and have empathy excel. Response of Participant 04: I have experienced trade unions activities in several companies however the policies of trade unions are not employer friendly as the unions are politically influenced and use workers as the tool to create pressure on the management to get undue benefits. Response of Participant 05: The politics in my organization is typical of a Public Sector Organization's politics. The unions draw their power from the allegiance they have with National or regional political parties. These unions have their legacies attached to their way of working. They just want power in their own hands. Leaders just exploit votes to move up the ladder and they are successful in their efforts. They contact voters at their residences through their parents than through ideologies. From the above responses of industrial relations managers and professionals the study found various

kinds of politics in their organization that they have experienced in their work life. They have highlighted following things; i.e. quest of taking credit, letting down others, to get more importance, power and benefits more than others, backbiting, try to out each other, to make themselves appear better than others, ridicules other peers to appear best, unions are politically influenced, use workers as a tool to create pressure on management to get undue benefits, unions draw their power from the allegiance they have with national or regional political parties, unions want power in the own hands, unions exploit votes to move up the ladder, unions approach workers through parents than ideologies. For the question one of this study, we can concluded that unions play a very important role to bring harmony in the industrial relations.

Following are the responses of question 2nd question; Response of Participant 01: Power politics has considerable impact upon IR. Unions and management compete to exercise maximum power and control over the workers. Response of Participant 02: Internal politics do not seem to have a very strong or coherent effect on the external environment. Though if the company is unionized, internal politics may cause struggles because of said political effect. Response of Participant 03: The effect of organizational politics on employee relations is two pronged; 1. Poor performance on part of individuals and 2. High turnover. As the saying goes people do not leave bad organizations they leave bad bosses/teams. Also since there is a lack of trust in team members there is no open communication or sharing of ideas that will create a dynamic progressive organization. From an IR perspective office politics b/w management & non-management staff can serve to be a road block for an organization. Management and non-management staff are two wheels of a cart and office politics can drive a wedge between them leading then on their own diverged paths than achieving the unified Organizational Vision. Response of Participant 04: The trade unions are representative of worker however due to their affiliation with political parties they don't serve the workers in true letter and spirit and follow the agenda of their parties most of the time. Response of Participant 05: So far the impact is limited. The IR has to act proactively to hunt down any potential issues. Everything has to be planned in advance. The unions have to be seen in typical relationship between Management and the Workers perspective. The workers always think Management as aggressors and vice versa. From the responses of participants for question 02, we can found that there is a strong impact of organizational politics on industrial relations. To get control over workers, management and unions use various political tactics to get maximum power. One of the respondent said if the company is unionized then internal politics of organization may cause struggle. Another respondent split impact of organizational politics on industrial relations in to two thing i.e. individual poor performance and high turnover. Because people do not leave bad organization but they leave bad bosses and teams. Lack of trust in team members is also one of the effect due to no open communication or sharing of ideas. Politics between management and non-management staff leads to road block for an organization. If the relations between management and non-management is not harmonious then it will be very difficult to achieve unified organizational vision. Due to political parties influence and involvement, the trade unions usually do not represent workers with true letter and spirit. These unions follow their parties' agenda. The workers always think management as aggressor just because of unions' typical relationship.

Following are the responses of participants about 3rd question; Response of Participant 01: Politics is generally bad for any organization. However, when we have to achieve some positive objectives we use politics that is generally termed as diplomacy. Response of Participant 02: It depends on the case. If it helps the company grow and resolves disputes effectively without the utilization of extra resources, I would think it is a good thing. Response of Participant 03: It's hard to see office politics as being good and support. Politics is inherently dirty, such is the nature of the beast. Not all individuals in an organization are going to be equally competent, each will have their own area of expertise. By supporting each even the weakest link in a team will perform at its ensuring an organization runs like a well-oiled machine. Office politics will cause the cogs of the machine to rust and eventually come to a standstill and break down. Response of Participant 04: In my opinion politics in the organization is unsupportive and creates hurdles for management rather than providing relief to the employees. Response of Participant 05: So far it's not supportive and most work is done by IR Dept. The union leaders are trying to create gaps between Management and the workers. They are also using these gaps to widen the crack. From the responses of participants for question 03, we can found that three out of five industrial relations managers think that organizational politics is un-supportive. But two industrial managers said to achieve some positive objectives they use political tactics generally termed as diplomacy. One of these two IR managers think if it resolves the disputes effectively without extra resources' utilization in this sense politics is supportive or good for organization. From the above responses of IR managers, we have found various reasons which clearly show that organizational politics is un-supportive. One the respondent said not all individuals in an organization are going to be equally competent, each will have their own area of expertise. By supporting each even the weakest link in a team will perform at its ensuring an organization runs like a well-oiled machine. Another respondent said politics in the organization is unsupportive and creates hurdles for management rather than providing relief to the employees. These three managers of industrial relation argue that the union leaders are trying to create gaps between Management and the workers. They are also using these gaps to widen the crack. That's why they think that organization politic is bad and it is totally un-supportive.

RESULTS & FINDINGS

The following tables provide results obtained from the analysis of the IR-Managers responses to the questions they were interviewed. TABLE 01 shows the General Perception of Organizational Politics, TABLE 02 represents Experienced Political Moves in Organization, and TABLE 03 highlights the Supportive and Un-supportive Reasons for the Importance of Organizational Politics in Industrial Relations.

TABLE 01: General Perception of Organizational Politics		
General Perception	Participant Numbers (n)	Percentage %
Supportive (Positive)	2/5	40%
Un-supportive (Negative)	3/5	60%

TABLE 02: Experienced Political Moves in Organization		
Political Moves Experienced	Participant Numbers (n)	Percentage %
Quest of taking credit/power	04	80%
Unions are politically influenced	03	60%
Backbiting/Ridicules other peers	03	60%
Worker pressure on management	02	40%
Unfair unions election/ Undue Influence	03	60%

TABLE 03: Supportive and Un-supportive Reasons for the Importance of Organizational Politics in Industrial Relations		
Reasons of Importance	Participant Numbers (n)	Percentage (%)
Achieve positive objectives	2	40%
Way of diplomacy	2	40%
Creates hurdles for management	3	60%
Lack of trust in members	2	40%
Unions trying to create gap with worker and management	3	60%
To get control over worker	3	60%
Political parties influenced unions/ union do not represent workers	3	60%
High turnover	1	20%
Road block for an organization	2	40%

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The outcomes contained in tables 1 to table 3 indicated that sixty percent (60%) of the participants still understand politics in organizational is mostly unsupportive (negative). Table 01 represent the overall perception of industrial relations manager regarding organizational politics. 40 percent respondent think that politics in organization is supportive they think that using political tactics to create harmonious relationship among workers, unions, management and employer is always supportive. Politics in diplomatic styles in organization is in favor of all stakeholders. In short, organizational politics can resolves the disputes effectively without extra resources' utilization in this sense politics is supportive or good for organization. 60% percent participant view that organizational politics is harmful for the organization because it creates hurdles for management rather than providing relief to the employees. The union leaders are trying to create gaps between Management and the workers. They are also using these gaps to widen the crack. That's why they think that organization politic is bad and it is totally un-supportive.

In table 02, the study represents eighty percent (80%) industrial relations managers and professionals seen politics in their organization for the quest of taking credit, letting down others, to get more importance, power

and benefits more than others, sixty percent (60%) viewed backbiting, try to out each other, to make themselves appear better than others, ridicules other peers to appear best, sixty percent (60%) experienced that unions are politically influenced, forty percent (40%) said use workers as a tool to create pressure on management to get undue benefits, unions draw their power from the allegiance they have with national or regional political parties, unions want power in the own hands, and sixty percent (60%) seen undue influence, unions exploit votes to move up the ladder, unions approach workers through parents than ideologies. It can be concluded that unions play a very important role to bring harmony in the industrial relations.

Table 03, shows Supportive and Un-supportive Reasons for the Importance of Organizational Politics in Industrial Relations that there is a strong impact of organizational politics on industrial relations. To get control over workers, management and unions use various political tactics to get maximum power. 40% percent IR managers think if it resolves the disputes effectively without extra resources' utilization in this sense politics is supportive or good for organization. 60% IR managers viewed organizational politics creates hurdles for management, 40% said lack of trust in members is the reason. not all individuals in an organization are going to be equally competent, each will have their own area of expertise. By supporting each even the weakest link in a team will perform at its ensuring an organization runs like a well-oiled machine. 60% managers of industrial relation argue that the union leaders are trying to create gaps between Management and the workers. They are also using these gaps to widen the crack. That's why they think that organization politic is bad and it is totally un-supportive.

If the company is unionized then internal politics of organization may cause struggle. Impact of organizational politics on industrial relations can be split in to two thing i.e. individual poor performance and high turnover. Because people do not leave bad organization but they leave bad bosses and teams. Lack of trust in team members is also one of the effect due to no open communication or sharing of ideas. Politics between management and non-management staff leads to road block for an organization. If the relations between management and non-management is not harmonious then it will be very difficult to achieve unified organizational vision. Due to political parties influence and involvement, the trade unions usually do not represent workers with true letter and spirit. These unions follow their parties' agenda. The workers always think management as aggressor just because of unions' typical relationship.

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