Perception of Organizational Politics and Job Outcomes in a Public Sector Organization: The Moderating Role of Teamwork

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Abstract: In this study, we proffered a model along with its empirical testing of moderating effect of importance of teamwork on organizational politics and job outcomes by applying multiple regression analysis on observations collected from 200 employees of a public sector bank in Pakistan. The results of three stages regression supported the authors proposed hypothesis that those employees who value teamwork in organization are less affected by organizational politics in term of job satisfaction and particularly, affective organizational commitment in contrary, to others who give little value to expression of teamwork. Therefore, based on statistically significant, interaction of teamwork and organizational politics in proposed model, it is infer that the potential adverse consequences of organizational politics can be mitigated through promoting importance of teamwork within organization.

Key words: Organizational politics · Teamwork importance job-satisfaction · Affective commitment · Teamwork importance

INTRODUCTION

In last decade, increasing number of studies around the globe has verified organization politics to be useful predictor of job performance and job outcomes [1-3]. Prominently, detrimental impacts of perceived organizational politics [POP] on job outcomes (e.g. commitment and satisfaction) along with its indirect relationship that may either moderate or mediate these relationships. The motives of current writing are to testify and to amplify the theory on organizational politics as proposed by Ferris, Russ and Fandt [4], afterwards, supported by many studies [5, 6] especially, a study by Ferris, Adams, Kolodinsky, Hochwarter and Ammeter [7] that remodelled the original paradigm of Ferris and his co-workers by incorporating seven new outcomes (e.g. trust, justice reactions and organizational commitment). Consequently, proposed paradigm in this study will derive support from these models of Ferris and his colleagues. Therefore, current study will not only retest the indirect role of importance of teamwork on POP-job satisfaction relationship [8] but also, extend it to affective organizational commitment [AOC] by employing the notion of social exchange [9, 10] and collaborative

learning [11].Internationally significant numbers of investigations concerning POP and its effects on job outcomes have been conducted in universities or in private sectors organizations [12-14]. However, same is true for Pakistan especially, there has been dearth of studies related to perceive organizational politics in Pakistan's public sector, only mixed samples of private and semi-public sectors have been explored [15-17]. Whereas, government owned organizations provide greater job security and stable work environment along with a task of officiating large and varying population as compare to private or semi-public institutes. Therefore, the likely different effect of internal politics on government organizations and public employees is still ambiguous and requires greater attention.

Literature Review
Social Exchange Theory: According to social exchange theory, the relationships between individuals in collaborative learning team are often based on the exchange of the resources (information and knowledge) in order accomplish collective goals [18]. However, this process of self-disclosure in which individual shares information with each another in form of social

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recognition, self declaration, relationship development and social control provides collaborative learning team an explicit unified orient especially, through role identification and members intimacy [19]. Furthermore, under social exchange process members accomplish their goals via successful exchange of resources with an intention of pay back, similar to relationships between team members which were developed on the principle of equality that creates an environment of trust and mutual benefits and ultimately strengthen the philosophy of collaborative learning in team members. Additionally, this idea of equalized levels of reciprocity in a social exchange increases employees/members level of commitment and satisfaction in organizational setting besides their motivation to maintain such social exchange [20,9].

Organizational Politics: Power, influence and self interest among employees have given birth to the notion of organization politics which have always been present in working environment of an organization in shape of striving over dearth resources, conflict during imperative decision making and the existence of varying interests among groups or individuals which as consequence have ignited the quest of power seeking, either inside or outside the boundaries of organization [21]. According to March [22] organizations are political collation where decisions are made and goals are set through bargaining process by revising organization theory on ground of few key political constraints. Furthermore, organization politics was interpreted as management of influence to achieve results not sanctioned by organization or attaining sectioned ends via non-sanctioned influence means [23] however, connotational meaning of organizational politics have obscured its comprehensive elaboration without being circumspect [24]. Drory and Romm [25] have defined organizational politics based on three fundamental elements: i) self-serving concept of attainment of goals irrespective of the means employed. ii) use of informal means of influence by consideration them as political regardless of the nature of anticipated outcomes iii) using means and achieving desired outcomes as per situational requirements. Additionally, in recent literature organizational politics was elaborated as informal, unauthorized and at times backstage mean to clinch notion, control an organization, gain power, or to attain other specific objectives [3].

Job Satisfaction: It has been observed that the recognition of JS had not decreased, but alternatively it continued to evolve as more than 12,400 studies analyzing

JS, the feeling of like or dislike of employees about various aspect of their job had been published before the end of last century [26]. In other studies the concept of JS has been elaborated as affective direction towards individuals work roles which they are currently performing [27]. Furthermore, Aziri [28] referred JS as feeling that comes to existence as the perspicacity that job caters as material and psychological requirement.

Organizational Commitment: Allen and Meyer [29] have delineated organizational commitment as a mental state that bonds employees to an organization and in aftermath decreases turnover which can be conceptualized on three simultaneous dimensions i) affective commitment, based on positive work experience, (ii) continuance commitment, based on the perceived economic and social costs of leaving the organization (iii) normative commitment, drawn from perceived obligation towards organization. Although all three dimensions of organizational commitment are pivotal but, this study will only focuses on AOC which was referred as 'extent to which people experience a sense of identification and involvement with an organization, appears to be most closely related to various work aspects' [30, p.717].

Teamwork: Consgriffe and Dailey [31] have explained teamwork as act of two or more persons/employees working cohesively to accomplish common goals by sharing their time, knowledge and skills through methods acceptable to every team members (p.82). Moreover, Salas, Sims and Burke [32] have interpreted teamwork, as multivariate complex process based on big five core dimensions, i) team leadership: assisting team effectiveness by synchronizing each member's contribution along with the comprehension of interdependent, ii) mutual performance monitoring: awareness of team functioning by monitoring team members through open and cohesive climate. iii) backup behaviour: autonomy of resources and task-related effort to inherently solve prevalent issues through collaboration and coordination, iv) adaptability: action and readjustment of actions as per desire outcomes, v) team orientation: attitudinal tendency which boosts individual quality of work life which entails JS, trust and organizational commitment with in team.

Perception of Organization Politics and Job Outcomes: Organizational politic is subjective and dysfunctional phenomena, basically perceived by employees as purely selfish act of individual to accomplish subsequent goals

where as minimization or its understanding could lead to reduce absenteeism, burnout, job stress and turnover intention [33] Likewise, better comprehension of POP could enhance the job outcomes such as, organizational commitment and JS [8,14]. In past, Drory [2] reported negative relationship among POP- JS and POP-OC particularly, intense at lower level employees. Whereas, employees' who perceived lower level of politics, found to have higher level of satisfaction with promotion and pay policies, reward system and merit system along with long-term desire to pursue their career with organization [15]. Moreover, Vigoda and his colleague [14], in their study (n=142) reported negative relationship among POPand job outcomes (e.g. job satisfaction [JS] and organizational commitment). Additionally, their empirical findings also supported the moderating role of trust and social support on POP and job outcomes relationship.

Cropanzano et.al [34] writings discovered mix results; in their first study (n=69) found a positive relationship between organizational politics and organizational commitment. Subsequently, second study (n=185) conflicting negative relation was found between organizational politics and organizational commitment. However, recent literature has supported the negative relationship between POP and job outcomes (i.e. JS and OC) for example, Miller, Rutherford and Kolodinsky [35] in their extensive investigation of total 138 studies, consisting of 25,059 participants, has affirmed the strong negative relationship between POP and OC and between POP and JS. Similarly, in another meta-analytical study negative relationship has been found between; POP- JS and POP-AOC ($\beta = -0.57$, $\beta = -0.54$ respectively) [36]. Therefore based on afore-mentioned findings, following hypothesizes are proposed:

Hypothesis 1: Perception of organizational politics will be negatively related to job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2: Perceptions of organizational politics will be negatively related to affective organizational commitment.

Teamwork: It's Moderating Impact on the Organizational Politics and Job-outcomes Relationship: Omnipresent nature of organization politic in corporate arena has allured researchers to identify antidote variables that could neutralize its negative effects on job related outcomes. Ferris, Russ and Fandt [4], have suggested that in order to reduce the negative impact of POP on job outcomes, it is of great importance to enhance employee

control and understanding. Additionally, empirical evidences were found that perceived job control and understanding moderates the negative relationship of POP and JS [37, 38]. Similarly, Kacmar, Carlson, Anthony and Bozeman [39] have partially supported the foregoing notion by suggesting that only understanding moderates the relationship of POP on JS and organizational commitment. Whereas, Control was referred, the use of effective influence over event and persons which means one's ability to effect decisions for desired outcomes within an organizational environment and understanding was elaborated as knowledge of why and how event are being taking place at organizational work places [40]. Moreover, a survey report by Eurofound [41] has elaborated, control as the plausibility of the group or individual to engage in the decision-making process in connection to assignments, working practices, organization of working time and quality of self work evaluation. (p.17). Further, study concluded that teamwork offers employees to achieve higher control, greater opportunity for learning new methods and relatively higher satisfaction in working environment (p.36) that can be rationalized through writings which argued, organizational environment with low employees involvement and participation in decision making is perceived as more political and their by hamper their commitment [42]. Moreover, teamwork facilitates an environment that boosts flow of information among employees, increases staffs understanding of work and finally improves employees work morale [43] and also, Woodman and Sherwood [44] suggested that teamwork creates an environment of trust among its members through collaboration, interaction that increases understanding of company's affairs and information about co-workers. Whereas, an empirical investigation (n= 355, fulltime employee in United States) has found significant positive relation between JS and teamwork [8]. More recently, Kalisch, Lee and Rochman [45] in their cross-sectional study among 3,675 nursing staff has also supported the affirmative relationship of teamwork and JS. However, Griffin, Patterson and West's [46] study of employees in manufacturing organization (n=48) has depicted negative impact of teamwork on JS because of contradictory relationship with supervisory support.

During the last decade and so, empirical writings have verified that teamwork and AOC are positively related [47-49]. Employees in majority of modern organizations want to work in teams [30]. However, this transition from conventional to contemporary team structure empirically has yield mix results [50, 51].
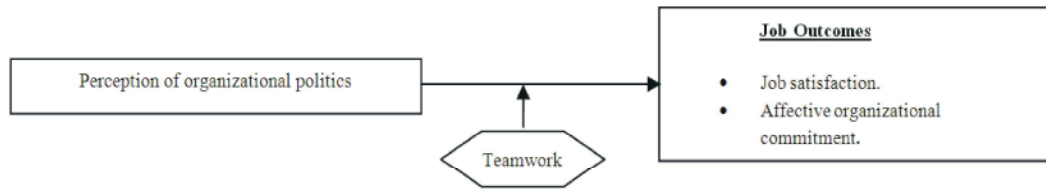
Fig. 1: Proposed model of moderating role of teamwork

For example, Wageman [52] suggested that traditional corporation, where decision power is attached with a work ethic based on individual accomplishment reason team members to halt at the notion of cooperation among each others to get work done. Moreover, literature has endorsed that successful implementation of teamwork is dependent on organizational structure, culture, climate and rewards and also, on level of employee's autonomy [53].

For instance, few organizations that have considered teamwork as hollow words and have done nothing to guard conducive environment for teamwork functioning may cause their employees to perceive internal work environment to be more political and hence, adversely affect staff's AOC and JS. Consequently, lead the experimenters' to propose that corporation's structuring work to inculcate teamwork for long-term advantage may tranquillize the negative aftermath of corporation wide politics. At very lowest level collaboration among team members improves their information about other members, increase understanding and leads to development of control. Whereas, teamwork provides control and formulates an environment of cooperation between employees. Therefore, it may be right to state that teamwork as part of corporate climate may moderate the relationship between POP and job outcomes specifically, AOC and JS. Therefore it is posited:

Hypothesis 3: Employees perceive high level of teamwork importance will be positively related to job satisfaction and negatively related to perceived organizational politics.

Hypothesis 4: Employees perceive high level of teamwork importance will be positively related to affective organizational commitment and negatively related to perceived organizational politics.

Hypothesis 5: Teamwork importance among employees will moderate the relationship between perceived organizational politics and job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 6: Teamwork importance among employees will moderate the relationship between perceived organizational politics and affective organizational commitment.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The technique employed for selection of participants was convenience sampling which is most commonly used type of non-probability sampling in practical situations. The reasons for selecting convince sampling for current study was: i) expeditious, convenient and economical way of data collection ii) adequate data for quick diagnosis of the situation iii) time stipulation needs to be addressed. Further, data was collected by using survey technique in a large public bank in Lahore, Pakistan through an English version of questionnaires which was administrated between May and June 2013. Total of 250 questioners were distributed among all white collar employees throughout the several departments of the company after getting approval from their management. Consequently, 200 questionnaires were received that constituted the response rate of approximately, 80%. Participation in the current study was willingly and employees anonymously filled the questioners in their own time. The perception of politics were measured by using 12-items, scale developed from Kacmar and Ferris [54]. All items in scales were gauged by using 5-points likert-scale (5 = Strongly-Agree to 1 = Strongly-Disagree).The four items measure for JS formerly developed by Churchill *et al.* [55], was used. Moreover, AOC was measured by employing 8-items from Allen and Meyer [29]. Finally, the measure of teamwork was adopted based on previously developed instrument by Lau and Idris [56] on five points-likert scale ranging from scale 1 (Strongly-Disagree) to 5 (Strongly-Agree).

Data Analysis: We have conducted the baivariate correlations by using SPSS 17.00 for fundamental verification of hypothesis 1 and 2 afterward, a multiple regression analysis was used to testify the direct effect of POP on job outcome as mentioned in hypothesis along

Table 1: Mean, Standard Deviation, Inter-Correlations Matrix and Cronbach's Alpha

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Mean	SD	Cronbach's-α
1. Gender	1.00							0.32	0.47	
2. Designation	0.08	1.00						2.22	0.82	
3. Length of Service	0.07	0.04	1.00					2.28	0.85	
4. Affective Commitment	0.16**	0.05	-0.01	1.00				4.43	1.01	0.89
5. Teamwork	0.08	0.06	-0.14	0.54***	1.00			4.18	1.10	0.81
6. Job Satisfaction	0.12*	-0.11	0.07	0.69***	0.53***	1.00		4.80	1.12	0.79
7. Perceived organizational politics	0.04	-0.16*	-0.04	-0.50***	-0.69***	-0.47***	1.00	3.86	1.25	0.94

Note: N=200, *$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$ and * **$p < 0.001$

Table.2: Moderated Hierarchical Regression Results of teamwork on Job Satisfaction and Affective Commitment

Variables	Affective Commitment β			Job Satisfaction β		
	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
Gender	0.20*	0.28**	0.30***	0.15	0.18	0.16
Designation	-0.01	0.05	0.03	0.08	0.16	0.14
Length of Service	0.10	0.12	0.15	0.12	0.15	0.16
Direct Effect						
Perceived organizational politics		0.02	-0.19*		-0.01	-0.21*
Teamwork		0.40***	0.02		0.36***	0.04
Interaction effect						
Perceived organizational politics x Teamwork			0.49***			0.42**
R^2	0.04	0.22	0.32	0.02	0.21	0.27
ΔR^2		0.18	0.10		0.19	0.06
F	2.71	8.15***	10.01***	1.60	5.30***	6.21***

*$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$ and * **$p < 0.001$

with gender, length of service in current organization and job position (designation) as control variable. Subsequently, in second stage POP and teamwork were entered in regression analysis for their direct effect and finally the product of teamwork and POP was included in model to test the interaction effect.

The Table 1 highlights the descriptive statistics along with inter-correlation matrix in order to support the hypothesis 1 and 2 that perception of organizational politics were inversely related with JS (r= -0.47, p<0.001) and affective commitment (r= -0.50, p<0.001). Moreover, findings of inter-correlation matrix has supported the consequent hypothesis 3 and 4 that teamwork was negative correlated with POP (r= -0.69, p<0.001) and positively correlated with JS (r= 0.53, p<0.001) and affective commitment (r= 0.54, p<0.001).

The crux of regression results regarding teamwork as moderator has been shown in Table 2. As depicted in table-2 POP had a negative direct effect on JS (β = -0.21,

p > 5%) and affective commitment (β = -0.19, p > 5%) where as positive main effect relationship was found between teamwork and JS (β = 0.36) and between teamwork and affective commitment (β = 0.40) at 0.1% level of significance however, with the further inclusion of interaction effect (perceived organization politics x teamwork) in third step this relationship has decreased where as interaction has shown significance positive relationship for affective commitment (β = 0.49, p > 0.1%) and JS (β = 0.42, p > 1%). More prominently the interaction term has explained significantly increase share of variance in affective commitment and JS, total $\Delta R2$ =0.10: R2 = 0.32 and R2 = 0.27: $\Delta R2$ =0.06 at 1% level of significance respectively were beyond the variance provided by main effect of control variables, teamwork and POP provides a support to our hypothesis 5 and 6 as this meagre increase in R2 for both JS and affective commitment is within the ambit of moderator effect of non-experimental studies [56].

$Y=3.921+0.138Z+(-0.39+0.802Z)X$

JS

— Low teamwork
····· Average teamwork
—■— High Teamwork

Perceived Organizational Politics

Fig. 2:

$Y=4.40+0.012Z+(-0.26+0.835Z)X$

AOC

— Low teamwork
····· Average teamwork
—■— High Teamwork
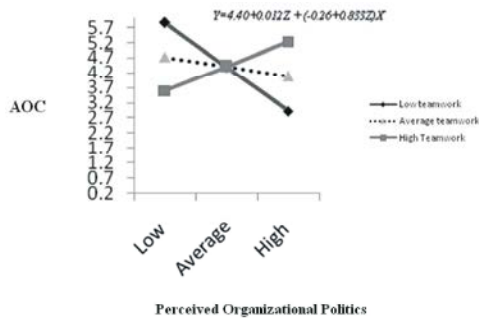
Perceived Organizational Politics

Fig. 3:

In Figure 2 and 3 include the scheme of interactions for JS and affective commitment which provides an additional support to hypothesis 5 and 6. Moreover, those employees who show higher level of teamwork importance respond more affirmatively to organizational politics as compare to other fellow employees who depict lower level of teamwork. Therefore, the adverse effects of organizational politics will be on personnel's who do not consider the importance of teamwork during the work place especially, in term of lower JS and reduced AOC.

The Figure 2 and 3 show the plotting of interaction by calculating the values for high =1 SD and low = -1 SD, POP as a function of high = +1 SD and low = -1 SD values on the teamwork [58].

DISCUSSION

In accordance with theoretical model by Ferris and his co-workers and numerous other former literatures [39, 14, 59], it was revealed that organizational politics were inversely related to job outcomes (i.e. affective commitment and JS). In addition, the expression of teamwork importance among employees have shown relatively strong meaningful moderation effects on both,

POP and JS [8] and also, POP and affective commitment relationship which means, employees who give high value to teamwork have stronger immutability towards negative impact of organizational politics as compare to other fellow workers who give little importance to teamwork especially, at average to high level of organizational politics which has empirically proven the teamwork as antidote variable for adverse effects of organizational politics [60-62]. Therefore, the process to ensure inculcation of teamwork importance among staff create an environment of collaborative learning and social exchange which may have provided them with greater control and understanding of organizational environment and thereby mitigates the effects of organizational wide politics. The formulation of teams at work place requires adequate training in overcoming conflicts, developing trust and conducive work environment for collaborating learning which may subsequently, significantly enhance team members understanding of organizational affairs, group working and finally the notion of collaboration arising from stressing on teamwork, assists employees in developing unified goals and control in their work environment.

The substantial finding of current study that deserve to be highlighted was the interaction effect (organizational politics and teamwork) on JS and particularly, on affective commitment were statistically significant even after the potentially confounding and direct effect of teamwork and POP where as other small notable finding was the gender which was found to be significantly positively correlated with affective commitment and JS which adds further to the present literature of organizational politics and provides more precise understanding of the impact of organizational politics on JS and AOC.

Limitations and future study

The present studies have several limitations which should be considered by future researchers. First, the study was cross-sectional which does not allow causal validation therefore, a longitudinal research is required for more precise evaluation of impact of POP and team work on JS and affective commitment. Second, the surveyed sample was not sufficient enough to allow tests of a measurement and a structural model to be performed therefore, the study requires to be reproduced using a larger sample of personnel's. Third, the study explanation is only relevant to studied sample and it cannot be generalized outside the banking industry of Pakistan. Finally, the study results may be affected by common method bias and single source which may have shown an arbitrarily increased amount of variance in main effects.

Significant numbers of empirically researches have comprehended POP as negative phenomenon as shown by its detrimental effects on employee JS, AOC and turnover intention [34, 59] however, we consider all types of influence in corporation comes under organizational politics which can have either good/positive and bad /negative connotations where as managers who are aware, employ political influence for the better working of organizations therefore, future researchers may get direction by adopting more impartial way to address organizational politics in order to differentiate the negative and positive circumstance of politics as well as, they may further extend current study's framework to other outcomes variables [7, 59].

CONCLUSION

In end, this investigation empirical supports, Valle and his colleague's [8] finding that teamwork's value among employees reduce the negative impact of organizational politics on JS and further, extends the basic paradigm of Ferris and his colleagues that importance of team work among employees also equally vital to dampen the negative effects of organizational politics of AOC especially, when intensity of politics are average to high therefore, from manager's prospective efforts should be made to promote teamwork within work environment which may boost their level of JS and AOC.

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