A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF POLITICAL SKILLS ON ORGANIZATIONAL ENGAGEMENT AND CONSTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOR

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Abstract

One of the most significant yet understudied literary subjects is political skill, which has recently received the attention it deserves. The current study examines how political acumen is a crucial component of constructive behavior and organizational engagement. Three questions were posed in the current study in order to determine the effects of political skills on employee engagement, how the organization's political skills affect employees' positive behavior, and how political skills affect employee satisfaction and loyalty. Saunders' research onion technique was employed in the study. A descriptive research approach is used in this study. The study's findings showed a strong correlation between organizational engagement and political skill, which in turn affects constructive behavior. Organizations are fundamentally political arenas. It is assumed that while intelligence and hard work are important factors in performance, effectiveness, and success, other factors like placement, savvy, and social skills are also crucial

Keywords: Political Skills, Organizational Engagement, Constructive Behavior, Employee Satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

Political Skills

According to Mintzberg (1985), "political arenas" are a harsh reality for businesses looking to maximize both short-term and long-term self-interest (Shahani et al., 2019). Because of its bad reputation among workers, it is viewed as a threat to businesses' efficacy and efficiency. Previous studies have demonstrated that workplace politics negatively affect a range of work outcomes (Mena et al., 2010). The idea that "political skill" is a necessary quality for success in the workplace was established more than twenty years ago (Ng et al., 2021; Sun et al., 2021). Pfeffer (2018), one of the first academics to use the term in the academic literature, asserts that political talent is necessary for employees. According to Waring et al. (2023), organizations are political arenas that require political savvy to succeed. According to Ferris et al. (2019), political skills are "the capacity to successfully comprehend peoples at work and to utilize such information to influence others in ways that advance one's personal and/or organizational goals" (Jordan et al., 2021). Additionally, they determined that the four most essential components of political skill are social savvy, relationship quality, networking ability, and the appearance of sincerity (Jordan et al., 2021).

In other words, organizations in Asian nations can be viewed as a power-gaming arena where individuals compete for scarce resources in a variety of ways to further their own interests (Fong et al., 2021). Political competence is seen as essential to becoming a successful employee and navigating the political realities of businesses. We will investigate the relationship between political skill and employee voice because we are curious about how political talent influences an individual's behavioral inclinations (Fong et al., 2021; Jordan et al., 2021; Srivastava & Madan, 2020). The management literature has maintained for over thirty years that politics are ubiquitous but harmful to the majority of individuals, groups, and organizations (Islam et al., 2020).According to negative perceptions, politics is a zero-sum

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game in which people prioritize their own interests over those of others, leading to backroom deals, innuendos, and betrayal. Both managers and researchers are either avoiding or hiding the use of these tools, or they are blaming them when negative outcomes happen (Islam et al., 2020). Positive outcomes like increased productivity, career advancement, innovation, and consensus in decision-making have been demonstrated by the research, and these merit more investigation (Srivastava & Madan, 2020). In order to achieve desired results that would otherwise be impracticable, "political behavior" refers to "deliberate actions from a wide repertoire which includes influence strategies, self-presentation, brand consciousness, voice, and helpful behavior to govern such as creating, maintaining, modifying, or abandoning the common meanings of organizational circumstances." A broad definition is required because supervisors' and employees' attempts to achieve organizational and/or personal goals may be motivated by both self-interest and altruism (Ng et al., 2021).

Managers and employees must operate within a framework in which they can participate both actively and passively in order to accomplish their goals. Organizational politics can be viewed from either a macro or micro perspective (Ng et al., 2021)."The ability to successfully understand people in the workplace and to use such information to encourage other individuals or groups to behave in a manner that enhances one's personal and/or organizational goals" is how political skills are defined. It is not a clone of ideas like self-monitoring, social intelligence, or social competence, despite what many people think (Fuller et al., 2006). Political skill is a complicated concept that centers on an individual's ability to understand others for their own benefit, which can be applied in the workplace. Conversely, the other elements of social effectiveness are more general in character and place more emphasis on the growth of interpersonal connections (Fuller et al., 2006). Political skills are not limited to "face-to-face" conversations; they can be applied in a number of situations. Technological developments have strengthened a number of communication channels, such as voice mail and electronic mail (Gallagher et al., 2019). Those with high levels of political ability can effectively communicate through technological means, including textual communication and speech and tone of voice. Here, we're not just referring to the ability to display particular behaviors that are regarded as beneficial in interpersonal relationships. To achieve a set of relationship communication and successful execution that leads to success in the workplace, however, political talent allows people to create synergy between discrete actions that goes beyond the sum of the parts (Gallagher et al., 2019).As a mediator between political skill and important organizational outcomes like work performance, tenure, and stress, research on political skill has primarily focused on the nomological net that surrounds it, with a particular emphasis on its own antecedents and effects. Overall, the findings indicate that political acumen positively affects these predictor variables, especially task performance (Michaelis et al., 2021).

Given the abundance of information regarding the relationship between political ability and performance, a meta-analysis of political skill is therefore required. The type of performance being evaluated and the social environment in which workers carry out their responsibilities may limit political skill's capacity to predict work performance with any degree of accuracy (Yeboah-Ofori & Islam, 2019). There isn't just one trait or skill that makes someone politically astute. Rather, it is a collection of skills and abilities that are compatible, mutually reinforcing, and internally consistent, a synergistic social dynamic that is difficult to describe (Gallagher et al., 2019). When we say "political skills," we mean a style-type component, which is why we are using that term. (1) "A method or form of expression in language; a means of putting ideas into words," or (2) "a particular and characteristic manner of presentation, execution, building or design in the art, period, work or occupation of any kind." Furthermore, we believe that political talent can be developed or learned, but we also believe that it is

somewhat innate in people (Templer, 2018). By making this statement, the writers might appear to be hedging or trying to have it both ways. The combination of dispositional and situational perspectives on behavior suggests a more modern understanding, whereas trait-versus-situation approaches to behavior were once thought to be mutually exclusive. In light of this, we contend that although political savvy may be innate, it may never fully develop if the required triggers or influences are not present (Bentley et al., 2017; Munyon et al., 2021; Templer, 2018).

The ability to modify one's behavior to fit the complexities and environmental requirements of a particular situation is essential for political talent to be truly successful. Similar to general intelligence or mental capacity, political skill enhances behavioral flexibility, which is essential in the dynamic business environments of today (Bentley et al., 2017). We think that both types of flexibility are essential to effectiveness, even though cognitive flexibility is less amenable to training. We focus on political skill development as a potential new area of interest when it comes to management development programs and hiring and promotion decisions (Karatepe et al., 2019; Williams et al., 2017). Ferris et al. (2019) assert that political competence is a skill that can be taught to individuals through socialization, mentoring, and training. It is also believed to be the outcome of an individual's distinct combination of characteristics and experiences. According to previous research, most of the studies in this field concentrated on the relationships between political skills and outcomes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, self-confidence, professional career success, loyalty to one's employer's mission, and productivity at work (Ng et al., 2021).Even though scholars have offered some explanations for how politics are perceived, practiced, and held accountable for negative effects, such as with little discussion of their positive influences, many important issues still need to be addressed and require substantial theoretical and empirical attention. Stated differently, what personal, social, and situational factors determine whether politics has a positive or negative effect on teams or organizations, and how do managers' divergent opinions about workplace politics affect their political activity? This special issue aims to foster a constructive dialogue about the positive and negative effects of workplace politics from a theoretical and practical multidisciplinary standpoint. The idea that organizational politics could produce positive outcomes is unsupported by empirical data. Depending on the type of support and politics they encounter at work, employees' levels of commitment may differ significantly (Landells & Albrecht, 2017; Malik et al., 2019). According to the challenge-stressor paradigm and organizational support theory, people who work for organizations that are very supportive and political might find their jobs to be demanding. Employees in these organizations will feel obligated to return the favors they receive because of the high level of organizational politics. Workers are more likely to be engaged when they work in environments with low politics and high support, but they won't be constrained by the workplace or confronted with political challenges. People are more likely to participate if they feel encouraged. Consequently, they will be less involved than people in highly politicized and encouraging settings, but more involved than people in highly politicized and unsupportive settings (Malik et al., 2019).

Organizational Engagement

The authors claim that there is a growing trend toward a more approachable, "social organization," where employees are calling for more "face time" to interact directly with one another in teams and with those who require decisions and action, and where leadership is expected to be aware of what is happening (Hermans & Prins, 2020; Ouyang et al., 2021; Suyono et al., 2020).As interpersonal engagement increases, so does the significance of social and political skills in the workplace (Mehralian et al., 2020). Social effectiveness in the workplace is a relatively new idea. Political skill, or the ability to change or

influence circumstances, is of special interest to researchers. Douglas (2002) defines "social effectiveness" as the ability to successfully build, maintain, and govern relationships. In recent years, organizational psychology experts and scholars have placed greater emphasis on social effectiveness dimensions, especially political skill (Kapoutsis et al., 2011).Social effectiveness is essential for any meaningful interaction between coworkers, especially in the workplace. The social effectiveness constructs impact the emotional and behavioral reactions in the workplace (Hussain et al., 2018).

Interpersonal personality variables are those aspects of personality that center on the capacity to communicate with others in an effective manner. Significant advancements have been made in the definition and application of social effectiveness concepts during the past 25 years. The importance of political competence has recently been highlighted in the quantitative literature on organizational sciences (Hussain et al., 2018). Engagement is viewed as having all-encompassing implications and accusations for both employee performance and organizational outcomes. Employee dedication to their company will be strengthened with the aid of an engaging environment if engagement is effectively managed. Additionally, it can motivate workers to go above and beyond to produce results relevant to their jobs. Employee engagement is regarded as a critical component for attaining innovation and competitiveness as well as for increasing organizational effectiveness.

According to Chandani et al. (2016), employee engagement is the term used to describe a person's contentment, involvement, and excitement for the work they perform. The key elements that help the company accomplish its overall objectives are engaged workers. Conversely, disengaged workers cause financial hardship for the organization by reacting to others with resistance, mistrust, blame, and a lack of commitment (Chandani et al., 2016).When an employee is engaged in their work, they are investing their emotional, mental, and physical energy into it. Employees are more likely to be engaged in their work when they believe they can express their preferred selves and relate psychologically to the task. Employee engagement is a result of psychological attributes like safety, accessibility, and meaningfulness. Employees are happier and more productive when they feel like they belong and have a purpose at work. The concept of "psychological availability" describes employees' belief that they have the tools they need to complete their tasks and are not distracted by things unrelated to their jobs.

Finally, when employees believe their actions won't negatively affect their position or career, they feel at ease at work. People may engage in their professional roles if they satisfy one or both of these psychological requirements. Businesses benefit from engaged employees in a number of ways. They are productive because they are committed to their work and the business. Additionally, they display actions linked to good corporate citizenship (Landells & Albrecht, 2017).It has been demonstrated that challenges and obstacles have predictable effects on engagement. For instance, involvement is positively correlated with workplace challenges like increased responsibility and time constraints, while it is negatively correlated with stressors like bureaucracy, conflict, overload, and politics.

Using organizational support as a work resource is also positively connected with engagement. Although other studies show that political perceptions may also be linked to high levels of engagement, a lack of involvement has been linked to an organization's politics. Mehmood et al. (2023) found an intriguing relationship between the degree of employee engagement in highly politicized contexts and that of employees in less politicized settings. The degree of political unrest within a company appears to be closely related to the degree of employee involvement. Comparatively little research has been done on the effects of political skills on constructive behavior and organizational engagement.

Constructive Behavior

When it was first introduced, the term "constructive" was intended to denote positive and "organizationally functional" actions. People who are willing to take accountability for their actions are likely to believe that their actions are justified because they were intended to be good for other people. 'Prosocial' behavior is defined as intentionally helpful behavior that is centered on the welfare of others. Since they are intended to benefit the business as a whole, problem solving, improvement ideas, process elimination, and the adoption of new, more efficient work techniques are all considered forms of constructive behavior. This perspective on "constructive transformation" holds that certain behavioral elements, such as speaking up and assuming leadership roles, are constant (Melnyk, 2024).

Conversely, "deviant" behavior might be intended to benefit the organization even if it goes against its rules and guidelines. Examples of 'positive deviance' include facilitative resistance and pro-social rule breaking. Conduct aimed at a customer or the general public rather than the company itself can also be considered positive deviance. It's important to remember this. Whistleblowers and principled organizational dissent are examples of "positive deviance" that is primarily focused on advancing super organizational interests rather than the organization itself. The intention to harm the business or its stakeholders is another way to define "destructive" deviant behavior. Examples of "destructive" behavior include, for instance, theft and organizational dysfunction. Because the FRCC is primarily concerned with increasing the organization's efficacy or efficiency, we think its actions will be constructive (Bentley et al., 2017).

In addition to encouraging employees to work harder, corporations are also pushing them to be more personally accountable for solving issues and seeing opportunities for advancement. In fact, many contend that proactive behavior and individual ambition are becoming increasingly crucial for economic success and competitiveness. In other words, during the "new job relationship," positive change-oriented behavior has become a duty. For instance, Seiling (2001) claimed that the first step in handling crises in businesses is "putting the responsibility for change on each person." Therefore, assigning accountability does not always ensure that workers will feel accountable or accept responsibility for their actions. In other words, constructive change-oriented behavior is likely to result from an individual's belief that they are "personally bound" to effect positive change (Fong et al., 2021; Wihler et al., 2017). A proactive psychological state like felt responsibility for positive change is unlikely to be sufficiently explained by job characteristics theory, the most popular theoretical framework for comprehending felt responsibility in the workplace. First of all, it's all about "working harder," not motivating individuals to take a more active role in their work. The job characteristics model has been criticized for having too narrow a focus, given that modern businesses require greater flexibility and change. According to Parker (2020), the fundamental argument of work design must include a greater range of job characteristics, new situations that could affect how effective these job characteristics are, a greater range of results, and extra mechanisms that link all of these elements. According to experts, theories of job characteristics need to include proactive personality, proactive motivation, and proactive action if they are to be applicable in today's businesses. In particular, further theoretical research and testing are necessary before the proactive work design models proposed by Parker (2020) can be implemented in the workplace.

By focusing on the perceived responsibility for positive change and advancing toward a theory that more effectively directs the design of work in contemporary organizations, we expand upon Parker and colleagues' updated models (Butt et al., 2017; Wihler et al., 2017).The study examines constructive behavior and organizational engagement with the goal of fostering and promoting their political skills within the organization, taking into account the organization-centric approach. McCoy, Cummings, and

Davies (2009) found that the interest in constructive behavior has grown in tandem with the interest in procedures and techniques that emphasize the development of positive qualities and dynamics that directly lead to extraordinary performance on both an individual and organizational level. Reducing tension, resolving conflicts to a large degree, and supporting the organization in achieving its objectives are all examples of constructive behavior. According to Soriano (2008), organizations are regarded as a "political arena." Local politics, on the other hand, are a harsh reality of the organizations that seek to maximize their own interests in the short and long term. According to Ferris et al. (2019), political skills are the ability to effectively comprehend another person at work and use that understanding to motivate and influence others to take actions that further the goals of both the individual and the organization (Arrowsmith & Parker, 2013; Kidron & Peretz, 2018).

The Rationale of the Research

According to Block's (2016) research, political skills have been assessed as a significant component of the workplace. It is a complex idea that is thought to be suitable for evaluating relationships and interactions within the organization, with a focus on a person's capacity to comprehend and assist others for their own gain (Nurhayatia et al., 2017). According to the Ferris et al. (2019) study, political skills have historically been seen as a liability in the company (Haider et al., 2020). Nonetheless, some prior research has been conducted on the beneficial effects of political skills within the organization. As a result, the current study will concentrate on the advantages of political skills within the company. The impact of political acumen on the employee's positive conduct will be taken into account. Additionally, more research will be done on how political skills affect organizational engagement (Butt et al., 2017).

Problem Statement

Management researchers have tried to identify the most important traits and skills of individuals in leadership roles within the organization. In the early literature on managing skills, political skill was described as distinct from other traditionally important management skills and as a remarkable and evident aspect of a manager's conduct that results in success and positive behaviors (Haider et al., 2020).It's commonly acknowledged that a manager's political savvy can significantly impact a variety of organizational outcomes. Positive behaviors like helpful behavior and compassion are still unexplored and call for more research, even though some data points to a connection between political ability and organizational citizenship (DuBrin, 2013).There is no proof that political skill affects knowledge, even though it might help managers better understand and influence people. They can therefore communicate their own ideas and thoughts to others and understand and value the needs and values of others. Through the fit and link mechanisms, a manager's political knowledge also aids in tying them to their role. This makes it easier for managers to establish networks and professional relationships, and it appears that managers are more directly related to the work they perform (Wu et al., 2024). Further research is required to examine specific mediating variables, even though direct links between political skill and positive behaviors like helping, compassion, knowledge sharing, and job embedding have been studied. These consist of personal reputation, relationship quality, and organizational self-esteem. Political competence is believed to increase interpersonal trust and managers' self-esteem by creating a sense of purpose at work and maintaining a positive personal credibility in the eyes of employees. This implies that it would be wise to evaluate how political acumen enables managers to see how they might benefit their organization and discover purpose in their work when specific mediators are

present. Therefore, more investigation is needed into the mediating factors of self-esteem, trust among friends and family, and personal reputation (Konakli, 2016).

Doldor et al. (2013) were correct when they said that "political will" was an essential component of political behavior. Only by examining the role of political intention as a moderator will the relationship between political talent and results become clearer. This point was raised by Kimura (2015) in his investigation into the connection between outcomes and public skill. Even though political skill is a fundamental concept and empirical evidence is readily available, there is a lack of research on its expanding implications, especially in developing nations like Pakistan. In Pakistan, where the idea is still relatively new, there is a dearth of research on political talent. For instance, Kaur and Kang (2023) examined the role that political skill played in mediating the relationship between employees in the public and private sectors' perceptions of organizational justice and work stress, desire to quit, emotional commitment, and contextual effectiveness. It was demonstrated that the relationship between proactive personality traits and employee performance was mediated by self-monitoring and three political skills: interpersonal influence, network capacity, and social savvy. In Pakistan, no research has been done on the relationship between positive behaviors and political competence and work embeddedness. The current study will close the knowledge gaps and offer suggestions for bank managers based on Munyoun et al. (2015)'s recommendations for additional research into the role of political skill on prosocial behavior, compassion, knowledge sharing, and job involvement in the presence of designated mediators and moderators (Konakli, 2016).

Research Significance

According to Jain and Ansari (2018), organizational politics have become an essential and significant aspect of the entire organization, influencing each employee to a certain degree. It has been observed that when employees feel victimized by organizational politics, generally negative behavior has developed in the workplace and toward their jobs. Employee performance suffers as a result of this bad behavior. Because they have different personality dimensions, employees respond differently to similar situations (Khodabandeh & Sattari Ardabili, 2015). The goal of the current study is to determine the significant role that an employee's political skills play in the organization, as well as how these skills affect the employee's constructive behavior and organizational engagement. The efficiency and effectiveness of the organization are thought to be threatened by organizational politics because they leave a bad impression on the minds of those who work there. Numerous researchers have previously looked into how organizational politics affect the various job outcomes. But now that many studies have examined the positive aspects of organizational politics, like effective persuasion, conflict resolution, justice restoration, etc., the trends have shifted more. Managers in today's world need to be effective in their organizations, but they also need to adapt their skill sets to deal with the challenges and changes that arise in the workplace if they want to survive in the political climate. Additionally, these skill sets will assist managers in transforming threats into opportunities and weaknesses into strengths (Konakli, 2016).

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Theoretical Development

The functioning of the political skill construction and how it affects oneself, others, and organizational practices in ways that manage shared meaning are the main topics of Ferris et al.'s (2019) theory of political or social influence in organizations. Ferris et al. (2019) described the expected impact of political skill on the development of personal resources and goals as an intrapsychic process that molds a person's sense of self. The concept of influence on others encompasses citizenship, helpful behaviors, networking

and coalition building activities, persuasion and persuasion strategies and reactions, and performance evaluations. The intervention also had an impact on group-level procedures (Joo & Bennett III, 2018). The goal of the study was to improve the Ferris et al. (2019) model by providing a more nuanced perspective for examining the operation of political skill and identifying knowledge gaps. Therefore, in order to incorporate more outcomes and hypotheses regarding these outcomes in the study's extension of their framework, we extrapolate and interpolate the Ferris et al. (2019) model. For example, we take into consideration particular expressions of particular work outcome classifications they mention in their model, such as job attitudes.In general, we have considered the ways in which political skill influences self-evaluation, situational assessment, response to circumstances and responses from others, and group and organizational processes. Evaluations of scenarios and self-assessments can capture intrapsychic influences of political competence. The category of situational responses includes behavioral reactions that are impacted by political skill. Lastly, group and organizational dynamics frequently encompass multilevel behavioral processes where a person's political acumen influences others or compositions (Ferris et al., 2019; Joo & Bennett III, 2018).
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Political Skills in Organizations

According to many scholars, organizations are fundamentally political arenas. It is assumed that while intelligence and hard work are important factors in performance, effectiveness, and success, other factors like placement, savvy, and social skills are also crucial. In his initial use of the term "political skill," Rensink (2024) was promoting a political organizational approach. Success requires political competence, according to a number of writers, and he has called for further research on the subject. Political competence is the capacity to influence others through persuasion, manipulation, and negotiation (Ferris et al., 2019).Organizational politics has been the subject of numerous studies, but we have not been able to explain why influence attempts are successful because of a basic flaw in the assessment of influencers' political acumen. Some theories contend that merely demonstrating an influence effort's effectiveness is sufficient. It is insufficient to solely concentrate on studying the particular political behaviors or influence tactics that are representative of the influence. Understanding how influence functions, including the choice and application of appropriate influence techniques in various contexts, requires a close examination of political skill.

A six-item, one-dimensional scale with sufficient psychometric qualities was created by Ferris et al. (2001) to close this gap and enable early concept explorations of measuring political skills. "The ability to effectively understand and influence people at work, using such information in a manner that enhances one's personal and/or organizational goals" is what Ferris et al. (2019) defines as a political skill. Therefore, politically astute individuals can successfully influence and control the behaviors of others in a way that seems sincere, as well as adjust their behavior to a variety of shifting demands in a way that seems honest and inspires support and confidence (Ferris et al., 2019).

CONCLUSION

By expanding on earlier models and testing them in novel settings, the current work emphasizes the significance of cultivating political competence. This study's objective was to find correlations between the findings through literature. The relationship between PS and organizational engagement has been positively correlated, according to the literature (Munyon et al., 2021). This study therefore addressed the request to examine its influence on positive behavior and a review of the literature is presented in this study. Positive behavior has a positive effect, and PS has a positive effect on organizational performance,

according to the relationship. The study's findings are in line with earlier investigations. A significant positive correlation was found when the relationship between PS and organizational structure was estimated. The literature that found important relationships has confirmed this (Kolodinsky et al., 2004). Researchers can better understand some of the factors that affect relationship patterns, though, thanks to this recent study in the literature.

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