Impact of organizational politics & favoritism on employees job satisfaction

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of favoritism and organizational politics on job satisfaction in public sector organizations of Pakistan. A convenience sampling technique was used to collect the data. 250 Questionnaires were distributed to full time employees of 15 public sector organizations. 222 usable questionnaires were retrieved. The main findings of this research are that favoritism and organizational politics have a positive relationship with job satisfaction in public sector of Pakistan. Conclusion, Recommendation and limitation of the study are also discussed.

Introduction

Politics in the organization has become the most common phenomena around the world for the past three decades. It usually exist more in upper management due to authorities & power rather than lower management. Organizational politics exist to control the monopoly in the organization. According to Pfeffer (1992) Organizational politics is an attempt to achieve the desired results by obtaining resources & securing authority. In most cases it has been assumed that subordinates may be of higher caliber & skills than manager or supervisors but due to OP & upper management monopoly the subordinate may have to settle with his post. Managers or supervisors may also take personal favors from subordinate as well.

POPS found to have negative relationship with job attitudes & positive intention to leave the organization & strong positive intention of negligent behavior (Eran Vigoda, 2000). Politics in the organization was related to decrease in job satisfaction & job commitment (Ferris Etal 1989 & Drory 1993). Higher will be the POPS lower will be the level of justice & equity (Kamchar & Ferirs). An employee may remain with in the organization but neglect his duties & Assignments as he has no job alternatives (Farrell & Rusbult 1992). The disappointment may increase in workplace of the organization which may damage productivity. Drory (1993) found POPS has damaged effect on lower status employees but no negative effect on higher status employees. Feris Etal (1989) mentioned three potential reasons.

a)   Increase job anxiety
b)   Decrease job satisfaction
c)   Withdrawal from the organization

Unlike most countries wages of public sectors in Pakistan has increased as compare to private sector. Other incentives such as fuel, house rent, telephone & internet allowance etc has also been raised. Work environment is also stable & job security is also higher. But all these rewards are not generally related to outcomes. This may be another factor of organizational politics. Higher ranked officer will be higher in authority and he may misuse this authority to his subordinate which he considers as a future threat of his career. This can be done by slowing down promotions, increasing the burden of work & morally discouraging the sub-ordinates. In recent years due to heavy projects in Pakistan, the government has also introduced contract base jobs.

Employees may pay handsome package but the contract may valid for one to three years. This may not attract the employee who is already serving in other organization with intention to leave the organization but the employee may not consider contract base job as a better option. What is favoritism after all? What are it forms. How can it be so powerful? Generally speaking favoritism is an unfair favor given to one person at the expense of others which can be very harmful. Whereas the favoritism has become the main threat for the employees in past two decades due to increase in population & other factors like employments costs and political involvement in organizations. Favoritism is a sensitive topic. It exists may be in every organization, but nobody really wants to talk about it.

That is why on one hand, it is a little hard topic to be researched and so interesting on the other hand keeping in view favoritism has become the weak point for the employees. Employers are paid with less reward as compared to their caliber. It was found that the practices of favoritism create considerable stress in the workplace, which leads to job dissatisfaction and increases the possibility of intention to quit (Arasli & Tumer, 2008). Employees tend to work more than expected return in order to ensure security due to which job security is declining day by day. It is also observed that subordinate jobs mostly rely on manager's behavior. Though favoritism is a very vast topic and favoritism is also practiced almost everywhere in the organizations, there are only a few economic studies of favoritism in organizations while most studies of favoritism focus on its harmful effect on organizations (Arasli & Tumer, 2008; Kwon, 2005; Prendergast & Topel,

1996). Favoritism should be counter balanced if managers do not want to lose valuable workforce.

Literature Review

Organizational Politics

Few studies have examined the issues of Organizational Politics and favoritism in public sector in Pakistan. Organizational Politics is not perceived positively around the world. Organizational Politics is normally perceived as self interest behavior, selfishness, advantages at the expense of other employee's interests and also organizational interests. Ferris and Kacmar (1992) In other words OP is perceived as a source of frustration for the employees & employees react to this frustration by showing negative attitude towards the organization. According to Drory (1993) in many public sectors of Pakistan employees are appointed in 17th scale even though they meet all the requirements of 19th scale jobs. Now such high caliber employees are considered as a threat for upper management. Upper management will use all the resources to sideline these kinds of employees in order to grip the monopoly of the organization.

For this purpose the upper management will promote like minded sub-ordinates which may discourage the other employees and these employees tend to leave organization even if job security is higher because such employees take career growth more important. However if employee is in financial crisis then he may have to settle down with politics as he considers financial assistance as a better option rather than career growth. Cropanzano *et al* (1997) suggested employees who view the organization as political in nature, unequal, or promoting only the aspirations of the powerful members may be encouraged to leave it physically and also psychologically. In recent times, when unemployment is on high, OP emerged as a big factor in employees' performance. To control the expense of the organization in terms of salaries wages & other benefits the company may start downsizing of employees and assign heavy duties to other employees.

The employees may still attach with the organization even with low rewards and increasingly burden of work due to unemployment. A change in job attitudes may be an immediate reaction of OP (Drory, 1993). This fact may loose the faith of employees. Employees will not put their 100% effort. Employees may also intentionally delay official assignments which are assigned to them. Employees may also show no creativity according to their caliber as they think that their efforts will go unrewarded. Employees are not mentally present in the organization as they have no interest in the organization's progress. Employees may stay in the organization but they do not consider themselves as the part of the setup. It may happen that employees may consider themselves as liability for the organization.

A group of employees is paid with handsome packages & other benefits and maybe provided with stable work environment while the other staff is rewarded with low pay scale and no other benefit and work burden may be frustration for them. Employees may feel abused by internal politics but still they are not in a position to leave the organization. All these factors may cause decline in employee performance. Political organizations direct many assets towards internal power influence struggles, assets are usually used at the expense of the actual production or human relations in the organizations. As public organizations are more closely attached to the political system, they operate in a less flexible, less responsive and less participatory organizational environment (Perry and Rainey,

1988). This may result in a stronger 'spillover effect' of political norms and values from the political sphere into the Organizational/professional sphere (Sieber, 1974; Peterson, 1990).

OP also reflects lack of commitment & clarity among organizational members especially for mutual goals for the organizations. Kacmar and Ferris (1991) argued that the higher the perceptions of politics are in the eyes of an organization member, the lower in that person's eyes is the level of justice, equity, and fairness. On the other hand, these may be of less importance for employees who rely more on career growth rather than pay scales.

Favoritism

Among the problems facing contemporary business management are the practices of favoritism, which also often ignore requirement for expertise, professional attitudes and knowledge (Fisher, 2001).Favoritism is also influenced by political, environmental & cultural issues. Favoritism usually relies upon strong political reference rather than merit base entry by the employee. When favoritism is wide-spread, it is very hard to be removed from organizations. Stronger will be the reference of the employee job security may be higher. In several countries favoritism may also arise due to racism whereas in developing countries favoritism may arise due to caste and reference system.

In addition, public administration systems provide a better job security to the employees as compared to private sector. Favoritism in workplace can be very de-motivating for the employees who are at the unwanted end. Favoritism in the workplace can also result in one person being promoted faster than the others unfairly, being paid more to do the same job as others, being more tolerated etc. The end result is that they appear to be treated better than others and for no valid reason (Mueller, 2006). Favoritism in a workplace can result in increasing packages & incentives unfairly or by promoting faster than other employees. Favoritism is one of the most important sources of stress. Another main source of favoritism is the personal preference of decision makers to the particular employee. It is also cause of loss motivation & productivity. In most studies it is observed that root of favoritism is management's personal preference to a particular employee. Another main point to be discussed is favoritism generates the value for the supervisors or principals.

They value their power to affect the subordinate's welfare either positively or negatively. If the supervisors/principals observe by giving the equal chances of promotions to all candidates will increases the expense or reduces the profit, then he will promote his preferred employee/subordinate. So it can be said that if the supervisor is replaced by neutral one, favoritism may disappear from the organization. Favoritism can also be in-group and out-group favoritism. In-groups comprises of the people who belong to same religion, same gender, same caste, same hometown etc. while out-group favoritism comprises of the people who do not share their characteristics. In organizations, in-group favoritism has been shown to keep themselves secure and also for the allocation of rewards to team members.
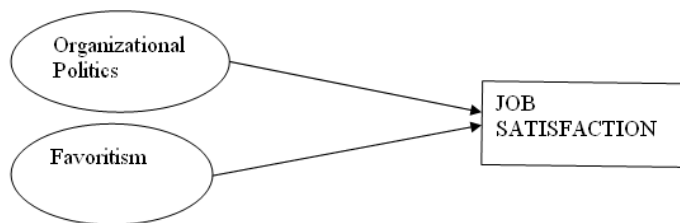
Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction describes the attitude of employees regarding their work. In addition, job satisfaction has been treated as both a global concept referring to overall satisfaction and as a facet-specific concept referring to various aspects of work, such as pay, supervision, or workload (Cook, Hepworth,

Wall, & Warr, 1981). Job satisfaction effects many operations in the organizations. If the level of satisfaction is high in employees, it will boost up the organization or vice versa. When the satisfaction level is high, employee will give all their best to the organization & management will observe that turnover is gradually decreasing (boles et al., 1997). Every organization has an objective to boost up the productivity in order to lead the competitors in the market.

This objective may not be achieved if the employees are not dedicated for the growth of their organization. If the employees are satisfied then it will help the organization to produce the best possible results among its competitors. It can easily be said that only satisfied employees will be dedicated in organization growth whereas motive of unsatisfactory employees will only be consider their organization as a source of income. In service organizations such as schools, institutions, hospitals, a high level of morale is required the purpose to increase efficiency & effectiveness. In order to ensure these outcomes, the managers should be aware of the fact that how these awards and other incentives are related to outcomes.

Theoretical Framework

H1: Favoritism is negatively related to employee Job Satisfaction.
H2: Organizational Politics is negatively related to Job satisfaction.

A negative relationship is expected between OP & employees' performance. Employees with higher caliber and handsome package may still tend to leave the organization due to this factor.

Table 1: Demographics

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
20-30Years	103	46.4
31-40	83	37.4
41-50	23	10.4
51&Above	13	5.9
Gender		
Male	162	73.0
Female	60	27.0
Education		
Secondary	2	.9
Higher Secondary	9	4.1
Graduation	69	31.1
Masters	98	44.1
MS/ M Phil/ PhD	44	19.8
Marital Status		
Married	150	67.6
Single	72	32.4
Experience		
1-5 Years	85	38.3
6-10	73	32.9
11-20 years	41	18.5
More than 20	23	10.4

Research Variables

Research conducted on the basis of organizational politics, favoritism and job satisfaction. Research determined the impact of organizational politics and favoritism on employee job satisfaction.

Research Methodology

This section identified the methodological strategy. Data collection tools selected to analyze the relationships between variables. Research targeted the 250 employees from public sector to identify the impact of organizational politics and favoritism on job satisfaction. Of the 250 questionnaires distributed, 222 questionnaires were retrieved with a response rate of 88.8%. As demonstrated in Table 1 majority of the respondents (73 %) were male. Married respondent rate was 67.6%. More than 46% respondents were between the age group of 21 to 30 years and only 5.9 % of the respondent's fall in age group of than 51 years and above. 44 % of respondents have master level whereas, 0.9% was of secondary school education. 38.3 % respondents have got 1 to 5 years experience and only 10.4% have more than 20 years experience.

Table 2: Summery Item Statistics

Variables	Mean	S.D	Cronbach's Alpha	No of Items
Favoritism	3.45	0.75	0.81	9
Organizational Politics	3.35	0.69	0.83	8
Job Satisfaction	3.22	0.38	0.53	4

Measure

The exploratory and descriptive research conducted. Research conducted at one point in time i.e. cross sectional study. Questionnaire used for collecting the data. To measure the organizational politics, 15-items version of the POP scale is used (Kacmar and Carlson, 1997). A 5 point Liker scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree was used to measure the answers. 9 items for measuring favoritism were taken from (Aydogan, 2012). For job satisfaction 4 item scales was used developed by Babin and Boles (1998).

Regression and correlation analysis used to identify the connection among organizational politics, favoritism and job satisfaction. Descriptive statistics used to test and analyze the data collected from the respondents. Responses analyzed through the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 17. Independent t-test and one way ANOVA used for analyzing the association of demographic characteristics with job satisfaction.

Data Analysis

As a first step in the analysis of results, reliability of the scales was confirmed by calculating cronbach's alpha for each dimension of scale. Cronbach's Alpha of each dimension is 0.81 for favoritism, .83 for organizational politics and 0.53 for job satisfaction as shown in table 2. Overall, finding shows that each coefficient exceeds the minimum acceptable level as recommended by Nunnally (1978). After that, the mean scores (Table 2) with standard deviation of the questions in instrument were calculated. The result shows that generally respondents agree with the statements provided in the instrument. For example the average response of favoritism is 3.45, which means that respondents agree that favoritism exists in their organizations. The finding demonstrates correlation among all variables and dimensions, the result shows positive relationship among them as shown in table 3. After analyzing the correlation

among study variables and dimensions, regression models were also estimated.

Table 3: Correlation

Variables	1	2	4
Favoritism	1		
Organizational Politics	.48**	1	
JOBSATISFACTION	.29**	.42**	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The regression analysis of the first hypothesis indicate a low-level positive relationship between favoritism and job satisfaction (R = .29). The favoritism can explain 9 % variance of job satisfaction (R square = .09) as shown in table 4. ANOVA values shows that there is no issue regarding the significance of the model's explanatory power (F = 20.854, p = .000) as shown in table 5. The estimated regression model parameters are all individually significant (at 5% significant level). The constant term is 2.312 and favoritism coefficient is .243. It means when there is one unit increase in favoritism there is .243 unit increases in job satisfaction, as shown in table 5.The estimated regression model rejects our H1 and accept Ho. Which means the favoritism will have a positive relationship on job satisfaction. The coefficient values obtained by regression analysis are shown in table 4 and table 5.

Table 4: Model Summery

Variables	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	Sig.
Favoritism	.29a	0.09	0.08	0.59005	20.854	0.00
OP	.42a	0.18	0.18	0.55918	48.182	0.00

Predictors: (Constant), Favoritism, Organizational Politics
Dependent variable (Job satisfaction)

The second hypothesis indicate a medium-level positive relationship between OP and job satisfaction (R = .42) and the OP can explain 18 % variance of job satisfaction (R square = .18) as shown in table 4. ANOVA values show that there is no issue regarding the significance of the model's explanatory power (F = 48.182, p = .000) as shown in table 5.The estimated regression model parameters are all individually significant (at 5% significant level). The constant term is 1.831 and OP coefficient is .392. It means when there is one unit increase in OP there is .392 unit increases in job satisfaction, as shown in table 5. The estimated regression model rejects our H1 and accepts Ho. Which means the OP will have a positive relationship on job satisfaction. The coefficient values obtained by regression analysis are shown in table 4 and table 5.

Table 5: Coefficientsa

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
			Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.312	.187		12.330	.000
	Favoritism	.243	.053	.294	4.567	.000
2	(Constant)	1.831	.194		9.462	.000
	OP	.392	.056	.424	6.941	.000

Dependent Variable: JOB SATISFACTION

Discussion

In this study an investigation was carried out to check the impact of favoritism and organizational politics on job satisfaction in public sector organizations of Pakistan. The results show a positive impact of favoritism and organizational politics on job satisfaction. The study of Khatri et al., (2003) also found a positive relationship between these variables whereas, the finding of the studies conducted by Arasli et al., (2006) and Arasli & Tumer (2008) contradict with our study as they found negative effect of favoritism on job satisfaction. The possible reasons of our results for showing positive impact of independent variables/dimensions (organizational politics and favoritism) on dependent variable (Job satisfaction) are:

- Better pay structure
- Job security
- High volume of leaves
- Flexible working days/hours
- Low work load
- High perks and privileges
- One of the possible explanations for this peculiar finding is the general acceptance and approval of favoritism by the Pakistani society. The culture factor is very important as this relationship between the variables/dimension is due to the overall culture of Pakistan, and if we change the cultural context our whole results can drastically change. Mostly in small and less developed countries the conditions and culture encourage people to accept favoritism as identified by the study conducted by Arasli et al., (2006).

Due to the existence of favoritism organizational politics the performance of public sector organization in Pakistan has deteriorated considerably as the case of PIA, Steel Mill, WAPDA, PTCL and Railways etc.

Conclusion & Recommendation

Although this study found positive impact of independent variables/dimensions (favoritism and organizational politics) on dependent variable (job satisfaction) but decreasing the organizational performance as referred in our discussion above, hence for better organizational performance we recommend the following:

- The favoritism and organizational politics culture may be discouraged.
- In government organizations admin department looks after the work of human resources and the officials of admin department have not a relevant knowledge and skills to perform this all important task Human resource management department should be established and functionalized which can create awareness among employees.
- For minimizing the effect of favoritism and organizational politics on public sector organizational performance rules and regulation may be imposed strictly to control injustices regarding induction of employees their promotion/transfer in government sector also recommended by Arasli & Tumer (2008).
- The job quota to elected public representative for recommendation should be banned by the federal government.

Limitation of the study

This study has a several limitations.

- The sample size of this study is smaller and convenience sampling technique is used but in future studies larger sample size with different data collection techniques should be used to generalize the results of the study.
- In future studies the variable combination such as organizational performance, employee performance, commitment and monetary factor like salary, rewards and different aspect of job satisfaction with our studied variables and dimension may be used to check the possible relationship among them.

● This study is done in public sector organizations future studies should be conducted in private sector especially.

● Future studies should be done from the organizational prospective as this study is conducted from employees point of view.

● A study with similar theoretical frame work can be determined in western societies to confirm that our results are due to the cultural context in Pakistani society.

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