

Perception of Organizational Politics and Workplace Deviance; Mediating Effect of Job Stress and Low Job satisfaction

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Abstract: The purpose of this article is to study about workplace deviance (theft and intent to quit) as an important outcome of perception of organizational politics and also to investigate whether job stress and low job satisfaction mediate this relationship. Using a sample of 145 employees belonging to different organizations of Peshawar, Abbottbad and Islamabad, this study tests the direct relations and mediators effect using standard regression and hierarchical regression analyses. The results suggest that perception of organizational politics positively affects theft, whereas, no direct link was found between intent to quit and perception of organizational politics. The results also indicate that job stress and low job satisfaction fully mediate the relationship between perception of organizational politics and workplace deviance behavior i.e. theft. In the context of developing countries this study is worth considerable in literature of organizational behavior and psychology. Practical implications and future avenues are also discussed in the end.

Keywords: Intent to quit, job stress, low job satisfaction, Perception of Organizational Politics (POP), theft, Workplace Deviant Behavior (WDB)

INTRODUCTION

Politics in any organization is simply a fact of life. The struggle over scarce resources, the conflicts that arise when critical decisions need to be made, personal conflicts, competition for power and leadership, building personal stature, not revealing real intentions, building coalitions and the need to get over one another for own survival in the competitive environment has all made the existence of politics very common in the work place. According to Drory (1993), organizational politics is deeply rooted in human nature and is an innate element of organizational life. Therefore, every person has to either overcome politics or to survive in spite of its presence.

Political behavior in organizations is highly covert, symbolic and subject to differences in perception of individuals (Kacmar and Ferris, 1991) therefore, the same behavior may be interpreted as either political or nonpolitical by different individuals, depending on each individual's prior experience and frame of reference. Although it is difficult to measure, organizational politics is of particular interest to management researchers because it represents a potential threat to the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization. It is also suggested that politics often interferes with normal organizational practices and damages productivity and performance of both individual and organization. If the more qualified employee perceives that organizational politics has

cheated him or her out of a deserved opportunity, he or she may exhibit negative reactions such as low satisfaction, stress, annoying behavior (such as theft) and turnover. In order to understand, predict and combat these potentially negative outcomes, an enhanced and thorough understanding of organizational politics is needed. Over the years, the interest in such political behavior, both actual and perceptual, has received growing appreciation and scholarly attention, a more rigorous set of theories and modern methodological tools have resulted in a better understanding of organizational politics, and impressive progression have been made in this field that once was theoretically captivating but empirically vague.

In the stream of research of organizational behavior, Perception of politics has been extensively investigated by organizational behavior scholars (Bennett and Robinson, 2003). It is a dilemma faced by almost every organization which may have its positive and negative outcomes (Cropanzano *et al.*, 1997). Profound researchers have establish perceptions of organizational politics to predict psychological states such as job stress (Kacmar *et al.*, 1999) employee attitudes such as job satisfaction (Witt *et al.*, 2000) and withdrawal and negligent behaviors such as intent to leave (Vigoda, 2000).

Until now very few attempts have been made to investigate empirically the link between perception of organizational politics and workplace deviance particularly theft, and intent to leave (in Pakistan). As

unemployment rate is very high in Pakistan this research will give an insight into the perception of employees towards the intention to leave organization due to politics. This study also focuses on the mediating role of job stress and low job satisfaction between POP and WDB. This research can help the managers to cope with political environment and protect themselves and their employees from negative consequences such as organizational theft and intent to leave. And also to provide an input to literature since a little study has been done to investigate this relationship (POP and WDB).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Perception of organizational politics-workplace deviant behavior link: Perception is adding meaning to the sensation, with the help of previous experience and learning. In more simple words, perception provides meaning and awareness to a particular sensation. Organizational politics may be perceived as posing either an opportunity or threat to the organization and employees (Ashforth and Lee, 1990). Politics in organizations is an inevitable and intrinsic reality. The earliest comprehensive definition was provided by Mayes and Allen (1977) which is, organizational politics is the management of influence and power to obtain ends not sanctioned by the organization or to obtain sanctioned ends through non-sanctioned influential ways. Organizational politics can also be defined as behavior intentionally designed to maximize the self-interests of individuals, behavior that thereby conflicts with the organization's collective goals or the interests of other employees (Ferris *et al.*, 1989b). Kacmar and Ferris (1991) described three dimensions of perception of organizational politics, '*General political behavior*' is focused mainly on self-serving ways of achieving own individual goals. Such behaviors develop when there are no proper rules and regulations to govern actions, when decisions are made under un-certainty and when there is scarcity of the resources. Second dimension is '*go along to get ahead*' where individuals proceed without resistance, showing lack of interest in actions and remaining silent in order to mold the situations in one's best interest and to get valuable resources Kacmar and Carlson (1997). The third dimension is '*Pay and promotion policies*' where employee is politically involved in pay and promotion policy implementation and decision making (Ferris *et al.*, 1989a).

Much of the empirical research on organizational politics has been based on the conceptual model proposed by Ferris *et al.* (1989a), who suggested that organizational politics is best conceptualized as a subjective state rather than an objective reality. From time to time, researchers have examined perception of organizational politics and

its adverse effects on individuals (Maslyn and Fedor, 1998). When people perceive their working environment as highly politicized, they feel threatened and endangered. Thus negative work attitudes such as job stress, low job satisfaction (Poon, 2003), withdrawal and negligent behavior i.e intent to leave (Poon, 2006) will arise.

Perception of organizational politics is believed to impose adverse effects on organization and is considered as a detrimental stressor (Ferris *et al.*, 1996). Workplace deviance however is an emotional response to the experience of such exasperating job stressors (Chen and Spector, 1992). Studies also suggest that job stressors (POP) have a direct link with aggressive acts, theft and the intention to leave (Appelbaum *et al.*, 2005).

Robinson and Bennett (1995) defined workplace deviant behavior as 'voluntary behavior [of organizational members] that violates significant organizational norms and in doing so threatens the well-being of an organization, its members, or both' (p. 556). To classify the workplace deviant behavior, Robinson and Bennett (1995) used the multidimensional scaling technique. There are two types of deviances: deviance directed or targeted towards the organization (organizational deviance) and at members of the organization (interpersonal deviance). The first type, organizational deviances refers to deviant behaviors targeting the organization such as theft, sabotage, being late to work or leave early, being absent and withdrawal (intent to leave). The second type, interpersonal deviances refers to deviant acts towards co-workers, peers, supervisors, and subordinates in the workplace. In this research focus is on the organizational deviance.

Ferris *et al.* (1998) applied the ideas of Hirschman (1970) to support a theory of reactions to POP. They found that POP may result in negative effects, such as low job satisfaction, and intention to exit. Employees who see themselves injured by power-seeking activities of organization may react in the form of an intention to leave the organization. Turnover intention refers to employees' thoughts of quitting their present job. Since people tend to view organizational politics as undesirable, they are not likely to remain permanently in a workplace they perceive to be highly politically active. Employees may choose to withdraw either physically or psychologically. Intent to quit is a form of psychological withdrawal referring to one's thoughts of quitting one's present job (Poon, 2004). On the other hand physical form of withdrawal is to actually quit the job. However not all employees, are able to quit. The possible short term option for those with less job mobility is psychological withdrawal, such as thinking about quitting. High levels of political activity in organizations have been shown as being predictive of employees' intention to leave their job (Ferris *et al.*, 1989a). Previous studies also give evidence that perceived

organizational politics is significantly related to turnover intention (Randall *et al.*, 1999). The perceptions employees hold about the political nature of their work environment impact their productivity, satisfaction, and intent to quit (Ferris and Kacmar, 1992).

Employees in organizations due to politics often come under stress and retaliate towards the organization in the form of stealing office supplies, breaking or sabotaging office equipments and delaying work activities. However, the literature on the link between perceived politics and deviant behavior (theft) is not available much. Therefore, this research is conducted to fill the gap existing in the two important areas of organizational research-organizational politics and workplace deviance (theft and intent to quit job in Pakistan).

Perception of organizational politics-job stress link:

Job stress also known as work stress or Occupational stress or Psychological stress has been defined as the experience of negative emotional states such as frustration, worry, strain, anxiety and depression growing out of job related factors (Kyriacou, 2001). Job stress can lead to psychological, physical and behavioral consequences for workers. These outcomes, in their various forms, can prove quite costly to employees and organizations. Beehr (1998) defined stress as, any part of work due to which individuals feel uncomfortable in a workplace. Psychological stress arises when people face situations that they assess are exceeding their abilities and endangering their health (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). Vigoda (2002a,b) defined stress as, an individual's response to job-related environmental stressors, one of which can be politics. Earlier studies proved that the politics lead to negative psychological states like stress (Gilmore *et al.*, 1996). Previous literature advocates perception of organizational politics as a predictor of stress related outcomes (Ferris *et al.*, 1996). Organizational behavior scholars have found positive relationship between perceptions of organizational politics and job stress (Poon, 2004).

Job stress-low job satisfaction link: Job satisfaction and job stress are the two hot constructs for researchers in human resource management. The previous studies advocate that higher level of job stress causes low job satisfaction (Chandraiah *et al.*, 2003). A study conducted on naval personnel of Malaysia, examined the link between job stress and job satisfaction. Results of the study concluded that job stress was negatively related with job satisfaction (Mohd and Talib, 2009). According to another study on air force pilots of Iran, it was revealed that job stress reduces job satisfaction (Ahmadi and Kolivand, 2007).

Psychological strains are the outcomes of stress, which can be defined as divergence from normal functioning (Edwards *et al.*, 1998). Low job satisfaction

is one such psychological strain. Individuals under extreme stress tend to find their jobs less satisfying. Some of their intrinsic or extrinsic needs may be thwarted or not met satisfactorily (Mansoor *et al.*, 2011). Due to job stress productivity can be reduced, mistakes and accidents at work increases, lower morale and absenteeism is encouraged, conflicts with others boost up and physical and emotional problems arise, (Pflanz and Ogle, 2006) finally resulting to poor satisfaction (Pawar and Rathod, 2007). High levels of occupational stress are associated with low levels of job satisfaction.

Low job satisfaction-workplace deviant behavior link:

Research indicates that for an organization to be successful, satisfaction of its employees is very important. Job satisfaction is defined as a response towards various facets of one's job, that is an individual can be relatively satisfied with one aspect of his/her job and less satisfied with other aspects (George and Jones, 2002). Low job satisfaction is a kind of emotional response. The research has established that low job satisfaction is related to deviance in organizations (Bennett and Robinson, 2003).

Theft is a form of deviance which has been revealed to correlate with low job satisfaction Hollinger and Clark (1983a) defined theft as "the unauthorized taking, control, or transfer of money and/or property of the formal work organization that is perpetrated by an employee during the course of occupational activity" (p.2). Hollinger and Clark (1982) conducted a research that focused on the relationship between employee deviance and theft in the organizations. An examination of the relationship between these variables supported the idea that dissatisfied employees are more likely to steal from their organizations. Another research conducted by Kulas *et al.* (2007) on job satisfaction, climate perceptions and the occurrence of theft among supermarket employees concluded that less satisfied employees reported significantly more acts of deviance than their satisfied employees. According to (Henle *et al.*, 2005) three out of every four employees reported having stolen at least once from their employers. It has been estimated that employee theft results in an annual loss of \$50 billion for US economy (Henle *et al.*, 2005). According to the survey, up to 75% of employees have engaged in one form or another of the following deviant behaviors: thefts, computer fraud, embezzlement, damage, sabotage (Robinson and Bennett, 1995).

Turnover intention is another form of deviant behavior which has been found to relate with low job satisfaction. Low job satisfaction has a direct effect on the turnover. When employees are not fully satisfied with their job their intention to leave the job increases. Hellman (1997) proved that increasing dissatisfaction in employees results in a higher chance of considering leaving the job. Low job satisfaction in employees causes thoughts of quitting and leads to search for alternative jobs (Mobley *et al.*, 1978). Wong (1989) explored the

impact of job satisfaction on intention to change jobs among secondary school teachers in Hong Kong. It was concluded that teachers' lower job satisfaction was a significant predictor of teachers' intention to leave the teaching profession. Griffeth *et al.* (2000) also found precisely a direct negative relation between job satisfaction and employee turnover. Amah (2009) also stressed that job satisfaction was found to have a precisely negative relationship with turnover intention.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Background: Theorists have provided explanations that connect perceptions of organizational politics to negative work outcomes. Ferris *et al.* (1989a) made a major breakthrough in the area of organizational politics by developing a first ever comprehensive model examining antecedent conditions and attitudinal and behavioral outcomes related with perception of organizational politics. Ferris *et al.* (1989a) proposed four outcomes of organizational politics i.e job stress, job satisfaction, job involvement and withdrawal from the organization i.e intent to leave. Ferris *et al.* (1989a) suggested that these outcomes are the result of at least three potential responses to politics perceptions:

- Withdrawal from the organization e.g., absenteeism or turnover
- Continue to be a member of the organization but do not involve in politics
- Continue to be a member and become involved in the politics

The employees, who perceive the organization to be politically charged and do not want to involve in politics and have alternative opportunities, may decide to leave the organization. Those who are not in a position to leave the organization due to some constrictions or other alluring features of the organization may stay in the organization. However, it may result in their increased absenteeism. Secondly, when the organizational political environment is perceived highly negative, the employees may so much involve in their work that either they do not feel the politics effects or just pay no attention to its existence. The third response could be to involve in politics while staying in the organization which can cause both job stress and reduced job satisfaction. Our theoretical conception relies on this model and tries to extend it in several ways.

Hypothesis: Past researchers have found mixed results for intent to turnover. For example, some studies of Cropanzano *et al.* (1997), Hochwarter *et al.* (1999), Kacmar *et al.* (1999), Maslyn and Fedor (1998) and Valle and Perrew (2000) found positive relationship between POP and intent to turnover; whereas some other studies of

Cropanzano *et al.* (1997), Harrell-Cook *et al.* (1999), Hochwarter *et al.* (1999) and Randall *et al.* (1999) did not find a significant relationship between POP and intent to turnover. More recent researchers recommended that politics enhances withdrawal behaviors and turnover intentions (Cropanzano *et al.*, 1997), but others found no such relationship (Parker *et al.*, 1995). Hence, we expect that POP would be positively related to negative work outcomes, such as intent to leave. No precise literature is available on the link between POP and theft. Therefore our first hypothesis is;

Hypothesis 1a: There is a positive relationship between perception of organizational politics and workplace deviant behavior i.e theft.

Hypothesis 1b: There is a positive relationship between perception of organizational politics and workplace deviant behavior i.e intent to quit.

An individual who is working in a political environment may believe that hard work and efforts will not always be rewarded (Cropanzano *et al.*, 1997). When a workplace is politically charged, employees cannot be certain that their efforts will be rewarded fairly or confident that they will not be put at risk of losing valued rewards by the action of others. Such unpredictable, risky, and threatening workplace environment increases the level of job stress in employees (Cropanzano *et al.*, 1997) who are unable to avoid such contexts as well as those who choose to join in the politicking. Therefore, the following hypothesis has been developed.

Hypothesis 2: There is a positive relationship between the perception of organizational politics and job stress.

Many studies have tried to determine the relationship between job stress and low job satisfaction. Yahaya *et al.* (2010) concluded that work stress has a direct negative effect on job satisfaction. The lack of satisfaction in individuals can be a source of stress, whereas, high satisfaction can lighten the adverse effects of stress. It shows that both job stress and job satisfaction are interrelated (Fletcher and Payne, 1980). In simple words, job stress is viewed as an antecedent of low job satisfaction, and these two construct are considered as related yet distinct (Stanton *et al.*, 2002). After studying the literature on job stress and job satisfaction the following hypothesis has been developed.

Hypothesis 3: There is a positive relationship between job stress and low job satisfaction.

Employee satisfaction is the most investigated topic in organizational behavior due to its influence on other

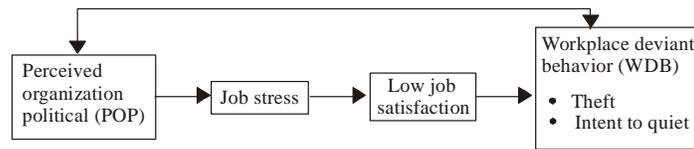


Fig.: 1 Provide self-explonentry caption of fig 1

organizational variables such as productivity, intent to leave and theft. When employees are not happy (satisfied) about their job, they would display specific workplace deviant behaviors. Spector (1997) found that Counterproductive behaviors such as theft and sabotage of equipment are associated with frustration and poor satisfaction at work. If employees who are not fully satisfied with their jobs continue to remain in the organization, they may engage in such behaviors as providing poor services, destructive rumors, vandalism and theft (Spector, 1997) Many studies have also revealed that less satisfied employees are more likely to leave their jobs as compared with satisfied employees (Kohler and Mathieu, 1993). Therefore the following hypothesis has been suggested:

Hypothesis 4a: There is a positive relationship between low job satisfaction and workplace deviant behavior i.e theft.

Hypothesis 4b: There is a positive relationship between low job satisfaction and workplace deviant behavior i.e intent to quit.

Ferris *et al.* (1989a) mentioned three potential responses to political situation, increased job stress, low job satisfaction and withdrawal i.e intent to leave from the organization. A possible explanation for this relationship is that decisions, such as resource allocation decisions, that are governed by political considerations are usually viewed as unfair by employees, which make them unhappy. Furthermore, the stress that follows from working in a politically charged environment will cause dissatisfaction in employees regarding their jobs. Ferris *et al.* (1996a, 1996b) supported a strong relationship between organizational politics and job stress ($\beta = 0.56$; $p < 0.01$). In turn, job stress has been found to be most imperative predictor of low job satisfaction (Sanchez *et al.*, 2004). Stressful situations in organizations make employees frustrated, irritated and less satisfied, as a result they engage in a variety of deviant behaviors (Vardi and Weitz, 2004). Employees who are less satisfied with their jobs may become less productive because their needs are not met and as a result behave defiantly towards the organization (Omar *et al.*, 2011). Therefore the following hypothesis has been developed:

Hypothesis 5a: Job stress and low job satisfaction mediates the relationship between perceived politics and workplace deviance i.e theft.

Hypothesis 5a: Job stress and low job satisfaction mediates the relationship between perceived politics and workplace deviance i.e intent to quit (Fig. 1).

Schematic diagram: The model suggested here includes a number of variables that have never been tested together before in one model. In this article, we test a direct effect of POP on WDB variables and also test a two-stage mediation model of POP, which suggests that POP exercises indirect effects on WDB namely theft and intent to leave, through its direct effects on job stress and low job satisfaction. Perception of politics is taken as an independent variable whereas; workplace deviance as a dependent variable.

METHODOLOGY

Sources of data and sample: The methodology of the study is based on primary as well as secondary data. The study depends mainly on the primary data, obtained through well-framed and structured questionnaires. Secondary data is collected from recent available articles, publications, cites and books.

Full-time employees belonging to different organizations of Peshawar, Islamabad and Hazara contributed in providing data for this cross-sectional study. Some questionnaires were self-administered while others were send to the respondents through electronic mail. A total of 145 employees responded to this field survey. Convenient sampling technique was used to collect the required information.

Measures: Five point likert-scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) is used to assess all the variables.

Perception of organizational politics: The ‘Perception of Organizational Politics Scale’ (POPS) developed by Kacmar and Ferris (1991) was used to measure the perception of organizational politics. It contained 12

items to measure 'general political behavior', 'go along to get ahead' and 'pay and promotion policies'.

Stress: The scale developed by House and Rizzo in 1972, was used to evaluate stress. It contains 7 items.

Low job satisfaction: Low job satisfaction is measured using 5-items scale developed by the researcher.

Theft: Theft is measured using two scales. Out of 7 items, 4 theft items are adopted from the 'Antisocial Behaviors' measure developed by Robinson and O'Leary-Kelly (1998). 3 theft items are from the 'Deviant Behaviors' scale developed by Aquino *et al.* (1999).

Intent to quit: 7-items of psychological withdrawal behavior are used to measure the intent to quit. It is one of the categories of the measure developed by Lehman and Simpson (1992).

Statistical techniques used: Data is analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 15.0.

Suitable tools are selected to test the hypothesis. Descriptive statistics is used to provide frequency tables analyzing demographics data. Reliability of the scale is checked using Cronbach alpha. Pearson Correlation is used to explore the strength and direction of relationship between variables. Simple Regression is used to find the amount of variation in dependent variable due to independent variable. Hierarchical Regression is used to test the effect of mediation on dependent and independent variable. Arithmetic mean is also used to make the analysis effective.

RESULTS

Demographic characteristics: Among 145 respondents 65.5% are male while 34.5% are female. 59.3% of respondents are between the ages of 20-30 years. 27.6% fall in the range of 31-40 years. 8.3% in the range of 41-50 years. While 4.8% are in the range of 51-60 years. 33.1% respondents belong to private sector while 66.9% are from government sector. Of the given sample majority of the respondents (63.4%) are in the 18th grade, followed by 17.9% who are in 17th grade. Out of 145 recipients 22.1% have a job experience of less than 1 year, majority (57.9%) has job experience between 1-10 years, 12.4% have experience between 11-20 years while 6.9% have experience between 21-30 years. Highest percentage of recipients (73.1%) is postgraduate, while 25.5% are graduate.

Scale reliability: Cronbach alpha is used to assess the reliability of scale. Indicated that "Cronbach's alpha is used to measure reliability that ranges from 0 to 1, with values of 0.60 to 0.70 deemed as the lower limit of acceptability." Alpha reliability for this study is 0.863, which is considered highly acceptable. It shows a strong item-homogeneity in the questionnaire.

Hypothesis testing:

Hypothesis 1a:

Correlation: The value of Pearson correlation between PoP and theft is found to be $r = 0.165$ ($p < 0.05$), which shows a small positive correlation between the variables Table 7.

Regression: A simple regression analysis is conducted to see the amount of variation in theft caused by PoP. The Linear regression model with two variables PoP and theft have $R^2 = 0.027$, which indicates that hypothesized model explains 2.7% variation in dependent variable i.e theft. The value of F-statistics is 3.997 ($p < 0.05$) which shows that our model is significant and there is a linear relationship between our variables.

Beta and t-values: The beta value shows that 1 unit increase in factor perception of organizational politics would increase 0.165 (16.5%, $p < 0.05$) units in theft, other variables being held constant. This shows that PoP make significant unique contribution in explaining theft in organizations. While t-statistics (1.99, $p < 0.05$) of PoP also account for significant positive variation in theft. Hence our research hypothesis is accepted, which means that there is a direct positive relationship between perception of organizational politics and workplace deviance i.e theft Table 1.

Hypothesis 1b:

Correlation: However, the correlation between PoP and intent to quit is $r = 0.151$, $p < 0.05$ Table 7.

Regression: The value of $R^2 = 0.023$, which means that the model explains 2.3% variation in dependent variable i.e intent to quit. F-statistics = 3.343, $p > 0.05$, which explains that our model is not significant. There is insignificant relationship between PoP and intent to quit.

Beta and t-values: The value of beta is 0.151 ($p > 0.05$), which shows that PoP shows statistically insignificant contribution in explaining the dependent variable i.e intent to quit. While t-statistics of PoP also account for insignificant positive variation in intent to quit (1.828, $p > 0.05$). Resultantly the research hypothesis is rejected. There is no direct relation between PoP and workplace deviance i.e. intent to quit Table 2.

Table1: Regression analysis for the main effects of perception of organizational politics with theft

Predictor	R ²	F-statistics	t-statistics	β	Sig
Perception of organizational politics	0.027	3.997	1.999	0.165	0.047

Dependent variable: Theft; N = 145; *: p<0.05

Table2: Regression analysis for the main effects of perception of organizational politics with intent to quit

Predictor	R ²	F-statistics	t-statistics	β	Sig
Perception of organizational politics	0.023	3.343	1.828	0.151	0.070

Dependent variable: Intent to quit; N = 145; *: p<0.05

Table 3: Regression analysis for the main effects of perception of organizational politics with job stress

Predictor	R ²	F-statistics	t-statistics	β	Sig
Perception of organizational politics	0.096	15.11	3.887	0.309	0.000

Dependent variable: Job stress; N = 145; *: p<0.05

Table4: Regression analysis for the main effects of job stress with low job satisfaction

Predictor	R ²	F-statistics	t-statistics	β	Sig
Job stress	0.452	117.919	10.859	0.672	0.000

Dependent variable: Low job satisfaction; N = 145; *: p<0.05

Table5: Regression analysis for the main effects of low job satisfaction with theft

Predictor	R ²	F-statistics	t-statistics	β	Sig
Low job satisfaction	0.037	5.555	2.357	0.193	0.020

Dependent variable: Theft; N = 145; *: p<0.05

Table6: Regression analysis showing the mediating effect of job stress and low job satisfaction on theft

Predictors	R ²	F-statistics	t-statistics	β	Sig
Model: 3 Politics (IV) Job stress Low job satisfaction	0.071	0.416	0.645	0.071	0.520

Dependent variable: Theft; N = 145; *: p<0.05

Hypothesis 2:

Correlation: The correlation is $r = 0.309$ with $p < 0.05$, which shows a positive medium association between PoP and stress Table7.

Regression: $R^2 = 0.096$, which means that our hypothesized model i.e., PoP explains 9.6% variation in dependent variable stress. The value of $F = 15.11$ with $p < 0.05$. Therefore, it is concluded that our model is highly significant and there is a linear relationship between PoP and job stress.

Beta and t-values: The value of beta shows that 1 unit increase in value factor perception of organizational politics will increase 0.309 units (30.9%) in job stress. PoP makes a significant strong unique contribution to

explaining job stress at workplace, while keeping all other variables constant. T-statistics also show a significant positive result amid PoP and stress, with $t = 3.887$, $p < 0.05$. This means that our research hypothesis is accepted. PoP is positively related to job stress Table 3.

Hypothesis 3:

Correlation: There is a significant high positive correlation amid stress and low job satisfaction ($r = 0.672$, $p < 0.05$) Table 7.

Regression: The value of $R^2 = 0.452$. The model i.e. job stress explains 45.2% variation in dependent variable low job satisfaction. The F-statistics is 117.9 ($p < 0.05$). It is highly significant model showing a linear relation between stress and low job satisfaction.

Beta and t-values: $B = 0.672$ with $p < 0.05$, this means that stress makes the strongest unique contribution to explaining the dependent variable low job satisfaction, when other variables are held constant. T-statistics also show a significant positive variation in low job satisfaction due to job stress ($t = 10.859$, $p < 0.05$). Hence our research hypothesis is accepted. There is a positive relation amid stress and low job satisfaction Table 6.

Hypothesis 4a:

Correlation: There is a small positive correlation amid low job satisfaction and theft with $r = 0.193$ ($p < 0.05$) Table 7.

Regression: The value of R^2 shows that low job satisfaction explains 37% variation in dependent variable theft. The model is significant revealing a linear relation between low job satisfaction and theft ($F = 5.55$, $p < 0.05$).

Beta and t-values: The value of beta shows that low job satisfaction make a significant unique contribution in explaining dependent variable theft with $\beta = 0.193$ ($p < 0.05$). While t-statistics also show that low job satisfaction account for a significant positive variation in theft ($t = 2.357$, $p < 0.05$). Therefore our research hypothesis is accepted that there is a positive relation amid low job satisfaction and theft Table 5.

Hypothesis 4b: The hypothesis cannot be tested because of the reason that no direct relation between independent variable perception of organizational politics and dependent variable intent to quit exists.

Hypothesis 5a:

Regression and correlation: The hierarchical regression analysis is performed to see if stress and low job satisfaction mediate the relation between perception of

Table7: Correlations

		Perception of organizational politics	Job stress	Low job satisfaction	Theft
Stress	Pearson correlation	0.309*			
	Sig. (1-tailed)	0.000			
Low job satisfaction	Pearson correlation	0.113	0.672*		
	Sig. (1-tailed)	0.088	0.00		
Theft	Pearson correlation	0.165*	0.244*	0.193*	
	Sig. (1-tailed)	0.024	0.002	0.010	
Intent to quit	Pearson correlation	0.151*	0.096	0.054	0.532*
	Sig. (1-tailed)	0.035	0.126	0.259	0.000

*: Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed)

organizational politics and theft. The results show that in model 3 $R^2 = 0.071$, which shows that the hypothesized model explains 7.1% variation in dependent variable theft. The value of F-statistics = 0.416, $p > 0.05$. These results shows that our mediation is proved.

Beta and t-values: In model 3 the value of beta = 0.071 with t-statistics = 0.645 ($p > 0.05$), this shows that a full mediation has occurred between independent variable perception of organizational politics and dependent variable theft. Stress and low job satisfaction weakens the direct relationship amid perception of organizational politics and theft. Hence our research hypothesis is accepted Table 4.

Hypothesis 5b: Mediation cannot be run between independent variable perception of organizational politics and dependent variable intent to quit because they do not comply with the rules of mediation.

CONCLUSION

The critical issue discussed in this study is to what extent does employees' perception of organizational politics leads to deviant behaviors such as theft and intention to quit the current job. Politically charged environment often compels employees to retaliate towards the employer and indulge in workplace deviant behaviors. The relationship between perception of organizational politics and workplace deviant behavior i.e. theft and intent to quit is hypothesized and empirically tested. Stress on job due to on going politics and resulting low job satisfaction are taken as an intermediate between organizational politics and theft and intention to quit. The Hypothesis 1a regarding the main effect of employee's politics perception on the theft during job was significantly supported by the results of the study. The hypothesis 2 and hypothesis 3 regarding positive relationship between PoP and stress and low job satisfaction is also significantly supported by the results. The hypothesis 4a concerning the positive relation between low job satisfaction and theft is also confirmed. The last hypothesis 5a of the study was about theoretical notion that job stress and low job satisfaction are the

mechanism through which employee's perception of organizational politics is linked with the negative outcome that is theft. The results of the study statistically prove that job stress and low job satisfaction fully mediate the relationship between perception of organizational politics and theft in organization.

However, no significant result was found with respect to the main effects of perception of organizational politics on the employees' intention to quit. Therefore, hypothesis 1b is rejected. The reason could be that due to high unemployment rate employees are unable to find attractive job opportunities. On the other hand poor financial conditions in Pakistan make it difficult for the employees to switch jobs. Hence, even due to high political environment in organizations employees are unable to quit their current job. Hypothesis 4a and hypothesis 5b could not be subjected to statistical tests because they do not comply with the rules of mediation.

By doing this study the researcher feels that an addition had been made to the empirical base of research findings on the perception of organizational politics.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Managers in organizations often use political manipulations of performance appraisal systems to reward favored employees and deprive unfavored employees from rewards and block opportunities for new comers. However, our study suggests that managers should try to overcome the negative effects of POP by ensuring justice in performance appraisal system, employment decisions and pay and promotion policies. Managers should also try to manage or reduce politics in the work settings, as employees' perceptions of such activities lead to increased level of stress, decreased job satisfaction and ultimately to increased level of deviant behaviors.

Our findings also suggest that employees may experience negative moods and emotions in response to POP and, in return, retaliate and may show less favorable attitudes and deviant behaviors towards the employer. Therefore, managers should incorporate social support programmes, behavioral training programmes, motivational programmes and provide counseling to the employees enabling them to tackle such kind of organizational stressors.

Our study proves that politics serve as an antecedent to job stress and low job satisfaction, enabling managers to search out and counsel or terminate those individuals or groups that consistently engage in self-serving and manipulative behaviors harming the performance, position and retention of other employees in the organization

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE AVENUE

There are few limitations of this study. Firstly, due to short time span and financial constraints convenience sampling technique is used that might limit the external validity of our results. Second, this study has been done only with respect to two variables of workplace deviant behavior, however many other variables do exist that are not covered in this research. Thirdly, the research is conducted in a Pakistani context, a difference between this sample and other organizational cultures may exist, resulting in decreased confidence when it comes to making generalizations. Therefore, future research might want to replicate and extend the current study in a wider work environment.

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