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Exploring the Influence of Organizational Politics on Employee Motivation and Management

Nandhini. P

I MBA, School of Management

Dwaraka Doss Govardhan Doss Vaishnav College, Chennai, Tamil Nadu

Praseetha. K

I MBA, School of Management

Dwaraka Doss Govardhan Doss Vaishnav College, Chennai, Tamil Nadu

Abstract

In today's dynamic organizational landscape, understanding the intricate interplay between organizational politics, employee motivation, and management is essential for fostering a thriving workforce. This research paper delves into the often-overlooked realm of organizational politics and its profound influence on employee well-being. By exploring the multifaceted relationship between organizational politics and employee motivation, we aim to uncover the underlying mechanisms through which political dynamics shape employee engagement and commitment. The study navigates through conceptual, methodological, and ethical challenges encountered in researching this complex phenomenon, shedding light on the nuances of organizational politics within different cultural contexts. Through a comprehensive review of literature, the paper examines empirical evidence and theoretical frameworks to elucidate the impact of organizational politics on employee motivation and management practices. Furthermore, it offers practical insights for leaders and managers to navigate organizational politics in a manner that fosters a culture of trust, transparency, and empowerment. The research methodology employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data to provide a holistic understanding of the research topic. Challenges such as limited access to relevant academic databases and ethical considerations are addressed, ensuring the integrity and rigor of the study. This research contributes to the existing body of knowledge by providing valuable insights into the dynamic relationship between organizational politics, employee motivation, and management, ultimately guiding organizations towards cultivating a positive work environment

Keywords: Employee Motivation, Ethical Considerations, Management, Organizational Politics, Workforce Dynamics

Introduction

Organizational dynamics are like a complex tapestry, where one often underestimated thread holds significant sway: organizational politics. While the term may conjure images of clandestine dealings and power struggles, its impact on employee morale and commitment is profound and warrants deeper examination. In today's fast-paced and competitive workplaces, understanding how organizational politics intersect with employee well-being isn't just insightful but essential for fostering a productive workforce.

At its essence, organizational politics encompasses the informal networks, power structures, and strategic maneuvers that shape decision-making within an organization. While some perceive it as a necessary evil, others acknowledge its potential to either drive or impede employee motivation and engagement. This dichotomy underscores the importance of investigating how organizational politics manifest and, more crucially, how they influence the unwritten agreement between employees and their workplace.

Exploring this subject allows us to uncover the nuanced ways in which organizational politics can either ignite a sense of purpose and commitment among employees or dampen their enthusiasm and dedication. Through empirical research and practical insights, we aim to illuminate the mechanisms by which organizational politics permeate employee motivation and engagement. Furthermore, we strive to provide actionable guidance for leaders and managers to navigate these dynamics in a manner that fosters a culture of trust, transparency, and empowerment.

In this article, we embark on a journey to delve into the intricate interplay between organizational politics, employee motivation, and engagement. By unraveling this nexus, our goal is to arm organizations with the understanding and tools necessary to leverage the potential of organizational politics as a force for positive organizational outcomes.

Review of Literature

Organizational politics plays a pivotal role in shaping employee motivation and engagement, with a growing body of research shedding light on this intricate relationship. In a study by Karatepe (2013), it was found that “work engagement acts as a full mediator of the impacts of perceptions of organizational politics on affective organizational commitment, extra-role performance, and turnover intentions.” This indicates that the intricate interplay between organizational politics and employee outcomes is mediated through the lens of work engagement, emphasizing its central role in determining affective commitment and performance beyond formal job roles. Similarly, Ugwu and Onyishi (2013) point out a critical gap, noting that “studies on perceptions of organizational politics and employee work engagement have been very scarce and needed to be given more attention.” This highlights the urgency in understanding the relationship between organizational politics and work engagement, especially in contexts such as the Nigerian university system, where the implications of politics on job behaviours and attitudes may differ from other sectors.

Furthermore, the impact of organizational politics on employee engagement is evident in the study by Mersha and Kuhil (2022), who conducted research in the Ethiopian Ministry of Revenues. Their findings reveal a “negative and moderate association of organizational politics and employee engagement,” emphasizing the substantial influence that political behaviours can have on the overall engagement levels of employees. A comprehensive exploration by Landells and Albrecht (2019) delves into the intricate dynamics, noting that “politics had significant indirect effects on engagement and stress through meaningful work,” emphasizing the mediating role of meaningful work in the relationship between organizational politics, engagement, and stress. Moreover, Mishra and Kodwani’s (2019) study introduces an intriguing dimension, suggesting that “employee engagement will act as a moderator between relationship conflict and POP (perceived organizational politics).” This insight underscores the nuanced impact of conflict and the moderating role of engagement in the complex interplay between organizational politics and job-related outcomes.

In exploring the relationship between perceived organizational politics and employee work engagement, Tufail (2022) integrates individual factors like Islamic Work Ethics, revealing a “negative relation between POP and EWE (employee work engagement).” The study emphasizes the significance of incorporating individual values and ethics in understanding the impact of politics

on engagement levels. This sentiment is echoed by Byrne et al. (2017), who propose a balanced treatment of organizational politics perceptions, emphasizing both positive and negative aspects. Their research suggests that “employees appraise positive and negative organizational politics perceptions as either challenge or hindrance stressors,” showcasing the nuanced ways employees cope with the stressors imposed by politics, affecting their engagement and well-being.

Challenges Faced due to Organizational Politics

Exploring how organizational politics influences employee motivation and management presents a series of hurdles that researchers must navigate adeptly to effectively probe this intricate and multi-layered subject. Chief among these challenges is the task of defining and conceptualizing organizational politics, given its diverse manifestations across different organizational contexts. Additionally, grasping the specific mechanisms through which organizational politics shapes employee motivation and management necessitates a nuanced comprehension of the underlying dynamics and interactions.

Another significant obstacle lies in the subjective nature of employee motivation, which can be impacted by numerous factors beyond just organizational politics. Researchers face the daunting task of disentangling the effects of politics from other determinants of motivation, such as job satisfaction, leadership styles, and individual traits. Moreover, capturing the fluidity of employee motivation over time poses methodological complexities, as motivation levels can oscillate in response to evolving organizational circumstances and personal experiences.

Moreover, quantifying and measuring organizational politics poses methodological challenges due to its often subtle and informal nature, which may evade traditional research methods. Researchers may need to adopt innovative approaches, such as qualitative interviews or observational studies, to gain deeper insights into the intricacies of organizational politics and its impact on employee motivation and management.

Additionally, researchers must navigate ethical considerations and potential biases inherent in studying organizational politics, as it may involve delving into sensitive topics and power dynamics within organizations. Ensuring participant confidentiality and anonymity becomes paramount to safeguarding their privacy and mitigating risks associated with disclosing sensitive information about organizational politics.

Furthermore, conducting cross-cultural research introduces another layer of complexity, as the manifestations and implications of organizational politics can vary significantly across different cultural contexts. Researchers must account for cultural disparities in attitudes toward power, hierarchy, and conflict resolution, and adapt their methodologies accordingly to uphold the validity and generalizability of their findings. Lastly, the dynamic nature of organizational politics and its interaction with external factors further complicates establishing causal relationships and predicting future outcomes, necessitating longitudinal studies to track changes in organizational politics and its effects on employee motivation and management over time.

Theoretical Framework

There are several theories that are relevant to exploring the influence of organizational politics on employee motivation and management:

1. **Social Exchange Theory:** This theory suggests that individuals engage in a reciprocal relationship with their organization, where they exchange resources, such as effort and loyalty, for rewards, such as salary and recognition. Organizational politics can influence this exchange by affecting perceptions of fairness and trust, which in turn can impact employee motivation.

2. Expectancy Theory: According to this theory, individuals are motivated to act in certain ways based on their expectations of the outcomes of those actions. Organizational politics can influence these expectations by shaping perceptions of the link between effort, performance, and rewards. For example, if employees perceive that promotions are based more on political maneuvering than on merit, they may become demotivated.
3. Goal-setting Theory: This theory suggests that specific and challenging goals can motivate individuals to perform better. However, organizational politics can interfere with goal-setting processes by creating conflicting priorities, unclear expectations, or favoritism in goal allocation.
4. Attribution Theory: This theory focuses on how individuals interpret and explain the causes of events. Organizational politics can influence employee motivation by shaping attributions about the fairness of decisions, the motives of others, and the likelihood of success. For example, if employees perceive that promotions are based on factors unrelated to performance, they may attribute their lack of advancement to political factors rather than their own abilities.
5. Social Identity Theory: This theory posits that individuals derive part of their self-concept from their membership in social groups, such as their organization. Organizational politics can influence employee motivation by shaping perceptions of ingroup and outgroup dynamics, leading to feelings of inclusion or exclusion, and affecting morale and commitment.

These theories provide a framework for understanding how organizational politics can impact employee motivation and management practices. By considering these theoretical perspectives, researchers and practitioners can develop strategies to mitigate the negative effects of organizational politics and promote a more positive work environment.

Research Methodology

In order to investigate the influence of organizational politics on employee motivation and engagement, a comprehensive research methodology was employed. Utilized academic databases such as Google Scholar, PubMed, and JSTOR to identify relevant scholarly articles, books, and research papers. Selected articles based on their relevance to the topic of organizational politics, employee motivation, and engagement, focusing on studies published within the last decades. Accessed full-text articles through platforms like Sci-Hub to ensure access to a comprehensive range of research literature. Adopted a mixed-methods research design to triangulate findings from multiple sources and perspectives, combining qualitative and quantitative data to provide a holistic understanding of the research topic. Ensured that all data used in the research was obtained ethically and with appropriate permissions, adhering to ethical guidelines for academic research. Maintained the confidentiality of research participants and data sources, anonymizing information as necessary to protect privacy and confidentiality.

Challenges

1. Limited access to relevant academic databases.
2. Difficulty in verifying credibility of online sources.
3. Inadequate data coverage or outdated information.

Conclusion

In the intricate web of organizational dynamics, the influence of organizational politics on employee motivation and management emerges as a critical yet often overlooked aspect. As illuminated by the literature review, organizational politics permeates the fabric of workplaces, exerting both direct and indirect effects on employee engagement, commitment, and performance. The interplay between organizational politics and employee motivation is complex, shaped

by a myriad of factors including perceptions of fairness, trust, and power dynamics within the organization. Despite the challenges inherent in studying this phenomenon, it is evident that organizational politics cannot be ignored in the pursuit of fostering a positive work environment and maximizing employee potential.

Moving forward, it is imperative for organizations to acknowledge and address the challenges posed by organizational politics. By fostering a culture of transparency, fairness, and open communication, organizations can mitigate the negative effects of politics on employee motivation and management. Additionally, promoting ethical leadership practices and providing avenues for employee voice and participation can help empower individuals to navigate political dynamics in a constructive manner. Ultimately, by recognizing the intricate interplay between organizational politics and employee motivation, organizations can strive towards creating a workplace environment where individuals feel valued, engaged, and motivated to contribute their best. Through continued research, collaboration, and commitment to fostering inclusive and supportive work cultures, organizations can unlock the full potential of their workforce and drive sustainable success in the ever-evolving landscape of today's workplaces.

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