

## Perception of Organizational Politics and its Impact on Job Performance

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### Abstract

*This paper aims to examine the understanding of organizational politics and its impact on the job performance of Nepal's civil service employees. The research design adopted in this study consists of a descriptive and causal-comparative research design. Based on a multi-stage random sampling, 250 civil servants in five ministries of the Nepal Government were selected as sample. The response rate was 76.40 percent. The findings of this research indicate that strong organizational politics exist at government offices. Mainly, over politics exist in the case of pay and promotion policies. Likewise, going along to get ahead and general political behavior are also common at these offices. The job performance level, however, was found at an average level. The inferential results indicate that there is a significant negative impact of organizational politics (in terms of going along to get ahead, pay and promotion policies, and general political behavior) on the job performance of employees. Therefore, leaders and administrators of ministries and other government offices need to keep an eye open in such realities and try to reduce unnecessary politics at workplaces so that the civil servants can focus on delivering effective services to the general public.*

**Keywords:** organizational politics, perception, job performance, civil servant, impact

### Introduction

For centuries, politics has been around the world. Informal, unofficial, and often behind-the-scenes attempts to sell ideas, control an entity, maximize power, or accomplish other desired goals are organizational politics. Some previous studies (e.g., Vigoda, 2000; Vigoda, Vinarski, & Ben, 2003) indicate that the problem is of primary importance to every sort of organization, in any region, market, sector, and culture, reiterating that organizational politics can be used to aim, protect, or optimize collective interests in cases where many decisions that affect different interests are possible. Politics is essential and forms part of any organization. Kacmar and Andrews (2001) claimed that it is considered by organizational politics to be an enigmatic form of workplace power relationship representing a distinct realm of interpersonal relationships, defined by people's direct or indirect, active or passive participation in influence strategies and

power struggles. These operations are often aimed at securing or optimizing personal interests or preventing negative results within the company (Ng'enhoh, 2014).

Organizational politics are an important and inevitable part of the social structure of an entity (Dappa et al., 2019; Pfeffer, 2013). They refer to the actions and activities that take place in an organization to obtain control and resources to achieve preferred outcomes (Ferris et al., 2019; Pfeffer, 1981). Such politics describe how people think about the self-centered actions of other people working around them and how much they find them manipulating organizational strategies by hook or crook when influencing others, according to Abbas et al. (2014). Organizational politics are highly subversive behaviors. Highly subversive practices are organizational policies. They are never in line with the needs of both the organization and other people (Vigoda, 2000).

Based on the agency theory perspective as principal and agent, people are self-interest maximizers in an organization (Khan et al., 2020). Organizational environment and results affect such self-interest maximizing behavior that is known as perceived organizational politics. Such politics serve as the potential stressor at workplaces. These politics affect the job performance of employees at workplaces. Therefore, this study tries to explore the reality of Nepalese workplaces whether perceived organizational politics have a significant impact or not on employees' job performance considering employees of civil service.

## **Literature Review**

### ***Organizational Politics***

Khan et al. (2020) argued that no workplace can be separated from organizational politics. The impact of such politics on employee performance is therefore worthwhile to be studied. Many previous studies (e.g., Bozeman et al., 2001; Ferris et al., 2002; Indartono & Chen, 2011; Chang et al., 2012) reported that differences in individual perception and behavior have a major contribution in affecting the nature of the relationship of perception of politics with job performance.

Gandz and Murray (1980) reported that they consider perceived organizational politics to be more biased than objective. Besides, Johnson et al. (2017) and Ullah et al. (2019) argued that voluntary activities were generated to achieve personal rather than organizational purposes in organizational policy. Cropanzano et al. (1997) describe organizational politics as a social effect for those who can provide incentives that help encourage or protect the actor's self-interests. Some previous researchers have also expressed the same opinions (e.g., Kacmar & Carlson, 1997; Harris et al., 2005; Daft, 2010).

### ***Job Performance***

Campbell (1990) describes the performance of work as being linked to the act of doing a job. Job performance is a means of achieving an aim or collection of objectives within a job, place, or organization (Jacobs et al., 2013; Shrestha, 2016; Shrestha; 2020). Literature has linked the organizational performance of employees based on two viewpoints, namely task performance and contextual performance (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997). Cascio and Aguinis (2011) mentions that task performance consists of two tasks such as activities that turn raw materials into organizational products and services; and the activities that assist with the process of transformation by, for example, providing planning, preparation, and oversight to ensure organizational effectiveness and efficiency. Mainly, skills and abilities are the two main factors that contribute to task performance (Samad & Amri, 2011).

However, contextual performance refers to activities that affect organizational productivity and effectiveness. Aguinis (2009) proposed that some of the main characteristics of contextual success, such as (a) persisting with enthusiasm and making extra efforts to complete task activities, (b) volunteering to carry out task activities that are not formally part of the job, (c) assisting and cooperating with others, (d) adhering to organizational rules and procedures, and (e) supporting, encouraging and defending task activities (Samad & Amri, 2011). Thus, it can be inferred that both task performance and contextual performance are critical in controlling employee performance in the organization in particular.

### ***Organizational Politics and Job Performance***

Perceived organizational politics are regarded as unhealthy for individuals as they can start facing challenges in their organizational citizenship behaviors, job satisfaction, job stress, job performance, and turnover intentions. Ferris et al. (1989) used their model to predict the prominent effect of perceived organizational politics on various job outcomes. The perceptions of politics affect employees' feelings about their organization, colleagues, and mentors, hence altering job satisfaction (Robb, 2012) and job performance.

Perceived organizational politics are considered unhealthy for individuals as they may begin to face difficulties in their behaviors (Khan et al., 2020). To predict the important impact of such politics on different job performance, Ferris et al. (1989) used their model. Organizational politics perceptions influence the feelings of workers regarding their company, superiors, and mentors, thus altering work satisfaction (Robb, 2012). They ultimately affect the job performance of employees. Likewise, much previous research

(e.g., Kacmar et al., 1999; Rosen et al., 2006; Ferris et al., 2002; Samad & Amri, 2011; Zhonghua & Chen, 2014) reported that organizational politics have a negatively affects job performance. These all reported that the perception of employees of organizational politics leads to different negative and adverse outcomes, including decreased job performance.

**Research Methodology**

**Research Design**

This paper aims to look for adequate knowledge in the sense of perceived organizational politics and its effect on the job performance of Nepalese civil service employees. Therefore, the research design adopted in this study consists of a descriptive and causal-comparative research design.

**Research Framework**

In their study, Samad and Amri (2011) reported that going along to get ahead, pay and promotion policies, and general political behavior are the common factors of perceived organizational politics that have a negative impact on job performance. Based on the study of various literature, the research framework is presented in Figure 1.

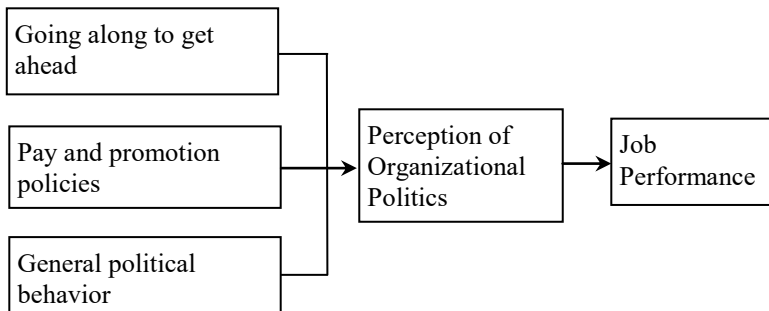


Figure 1. Perception of Organizational Politics and Job Performance

**Research Hypothesis**

The broad objectives of this study are to explore the perception of politics in an organization and its impact on the job performance of civil service employees of Nepal. Based on the above objectives and research framework, the following hypotheses are explored:

- **Hypothesis 1:** There is a negative and significant impact of going along to get ahead on job performance.
- **Hypothesis 2:** There is a negative and significant impact of pay and promotion policies on job performance.
- **Hypothesis 3:** There is a negative and significant impact of general political behavior on job performance.

### ***Sources and Nature of Data***

For fulfillment of the objectives of the research, necessary data and information was collected through primary sources i.e. questionnaire. Data used in this study were collected from five ministries of the Nepal Government.

### ***Population and Sample Size***

All civil servants are considered as the population, including first-class (gazetted), second class (gazetted), and third class (gazetted). Based on a multi-stage random sampling of 250 civil servants in five ministries of the Nepal Government was selected sample size. Of these surveys, the response rate was 76.40 percent (191 civil servants).

### ***Tools for Data Analysis***

In order to evaluate and address the study's hypotheses and goals, various descriptive and inferential statistics were used.

### ***Study Variables***

Organizational politics and its dimensions such as going along to get ahead, pay and promotion policies, and general political behavior that was developed by Kacmar and Carlson (1997) are key dependent variables in this study. On the other hand, job performance including task performance (Williams & Anderson, 1991) and task performance or counterproductive work behaviors (Bennett & Robinson, 2000) was considered as the dependent variable of the study. All the items of this scale were measured using a five-point Likert scale (with 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree).

## **Data Analysis, Results, and Findings**

### ***Descriptive Statistics and Scale Reliabilities***

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, alpha reliabilities of the variables used in this paper.

Table 1  
*Descriptive Statistics and Scale Reliabilities*

Study Variables	Mean	S.D.	Alpha Reliability
Perception of organizational politics	4.02	1.12	0.89
Going along to get ahead	3.94	1.49	0.83
Pay and promotion policies	4.01	0.94	0.81
General political behavior	3.89	1.01	0.85
Job performance	3.21	1.09	0.84

*Note: The reliability results indicate that all scales are greater than 0.70 at the appropriate magnitude value (Nunnally, 1978).*

The mean values are ranged from 3.21 to 4.02 and the standard deviation from 0.94 to 1.12. The results from table 1 show that there is a high perception of organizational politics at government offices. Mainly, over politics are found in terms of pay and promotion policies that are followed by going along to get ahead and general political behavior. Nevertheless, the work output rate is at an average level.

***The Impact of Organizational Politics on Job Performance***

Multiple regression analysis is used to assess the impact of organizational politics on job performance. The following table presents the results of multiple regression:

Table 2  
*The Impact of Organizational Politics on Job Performance*

Model	Unstandardized		Standardized	t	Sig.
	Coefficients		Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3.1	7.422		16.6	0.000
Going along to get ahead	-0.434	0.303	-0.295	-4.74	0.001
Pay and promotion policies	-0.651	0.195	-0.186	-3.34	0.003
General political behavior	-0.447	0.168	-0.567	-8.6	0.000

Note: R= 0.75; R<sup>2</sup> = 0.562; Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = 0.555; F- Value= 79.923; p = 0.000

*Dependent Variable: Job performance*

The results indicate that the R<sup>2</sup> is 0.562. It means that only 56.2 percent of the total variation is explained by this model and another part of the explanation is made by other variables that are not included in this study. The F- value is 79.923 and the overall p-value is 0.000. Thus, the multiple regression model used in this study is fit and appropriate because F- value is significant at a 1 percent level of significance.

All the p-values of going along to get ahead pay and promotion policies and general political behavior are significant at a 1 percent level of significance. Therefore, all three variables are the predictors of job performance. While analyzing the beta coefficient, it tells the change brought in a direct variable when one unit of the indirect variable is changed. As per the table above, the beta coefficient of going along to get ahead is -0.434 that indicates that if organizational politics are increased by one unit, it will bring 43.44 units to change into job performance. The beta coefficient of pay and promotion policies is -0.651 that indicates that if organizational politics are increased by one unit, it will bring 65.10 units to change into job performance. Finally, the beta coefficient of general political behavior is -0.447 that indicates that if organizational politics are increased by one unit, it will bring 44.70 units to change into job performance. Hence, these results confirm that there is a significant negative impact of going along to get ahead, pay and promotion policies, and general political behavior on the job performance of employees. These results support all three hypotheses of this study.

### **Discussions and Conclusion**

This paper aims to examine the understanding of organizational politics and its impact on the job performance of Nepal's civil service employees. An enigmatic sort of power arrangement in the workplace is organizational politics. It is a specific area of interpersonal relationships characterized by the direct or indirect (active or passive) participation of people in strategies of dominance and power struggles (Vigoda-Gadot & Talmud, 2010). These practices are often aimed at securing or optimizing personal interests or preventing negative results within the business (Ferris et al., 2002; Kacmar & Ferris, 1991). The findings of this research indicate that strong organizational politics exist at government offices. Mainly, over politics exist in the case of pay and promotion policies at these offices. Likewise, going along to get ahead and general political behavior are also common at these offices. The job performance level, however, was found at an average level. The inferential results indicate that there is a significant negative impact of organizational politics (in terms of going along to get ahead, pay and promotion policies, and general political behavior) on the job performance of employees. The results are consistent with the results of previous empirical research that were largely performed in the Western cultural context. These results indicate that employees respond in the same manner regardless of cultural and organizational contexts when they feel that their work environment is politically charged. The results are consistent with the study of Shrestha (2012).

## Practical Implications

Bad political activity hinders the individual and collective efforts of workers due to an unfriendly or un-conducive working atmosphere full of employee tension, hate, and rancor (Enyinna et al., 2014). However, good political conduct in a democratic work environment facilitates good results through collective teamwork and employee brainstorming, leading to high competitiveness. Therefore, leaders and administrators of ministries and other government offices need to keep an eye open in such realities and try to reduce unnecessary politics at workplaces so that our civil servants can focus on delivering effective services to the general public on behalf of the government. This will make people happy at government offices.

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