



ORGANIZATIONAL POLITICS AS MEDIATOR IN LINKING PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT AND EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE IN EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT

Shaukat Ullah Khan, PhD Scholar, Department of Public Administration, Gomal University, Dera Ismail Khan, Pakistan
Ahmad Ali, Lecturer, Department of Business Administration, Gomal University, Dera Ismail Khan, Pakistan
Dr. Adnan Khan, Lecturer, Department of Business Administration, Gomal University, Dera Ismail Khan, Pakistan
Mati Ullah Khan, PhD Scholar, Institute of Education & Research, Gomal University, Dera Ismail Khan, KP, Pakistan
Abdul Khaliq Alvi, Assistant Professor, Department of Management Sciences, Lahore Garison University, Pakistan
Dr. Asghar Ullah Khan, PhD in Mass Communication from Department of Communication & Media Studies, Dera Ismail Khan

ABSTRACT- The psychological empowerment is an important phenomenon that is responsible to inspiring and empowering the employees to take their own decision concerning the different issues in different situations. In this connection, the psychological empowerment is vital for shaping the employees' behavior towards the tasks and objectives. Similarly, race for authority and control thereby using different resources to influence the decision making is also the phenomenon of greater values for employees and institutions. To what extent, the connection between psychological empowerment and employees' performance is mediated by organizational politics is the main theme of current study. To examine the relationships among the research variables under considerations, the data was collected from the faculty members from southern region, KP, Pakistan. To find the answers of research questions, data was analyzed through different statistical tools to reach the conclusion more systematically. The results are significant which helps in reaching the conclusion which further helps in extracting certain recommendations for the policy makers and institutional management regarding the issues under considerations.

Keywords: Organizational Politics, Psychological Empowerment, Employees' Performance & HEIs

I. INTRODUCTION

The foundation is basic element in establishing the strong buildings and same is situation in building the countries. In this connection, when base is strong, the countries can stand firm in the world, while when foundation are weak, then even the bantam disaster can pull them down to the earth. In this regard, the question arises that who is liable for building foundations of the countries. Undoubtedly, it is the teacher, who is considered as important enough to take this responsibility to build the future of nations. The foremost responsibility of teacher is to impart quality knowledge to nurture behavior and competencies of the students and to make them effective professional in the practical lives. In this connection, universities are considered as dynamic units in contributing the various sectors of economies by providing the intellectuals with diverse capabilities and this role is solemnly performed by teaching faculties in the higher educational institutions. The higher education institutions, due to their indispensable role in offering efficient, effective, updated and valid knowledge, are considered as dynamic gears for social change and sustainable socio-economic development (Cullen, Hassall, Joyce & Broadbent, 2003).

In developing countries like Pakistan, this role of the universities' desires further efforts on the part of institutional management and government functionaries as the institutions are currently facing various financial and administrative constraints which brings credibility of institutions at stake (Mace & Niazi, 2006). In this perspective, success and desired ranking of the higher education institutions (universities) are dependent on performance level of institutions. In this regard, best performances on the part of the universities are the only success factor for groomed as well as developed societies in context of the developing countries like Pakistan (Haider & Sultan, 2008). In institutional setting, the psychological empowerment of workforces is also considered as vital predictor for desired performances. The psychological empowerment mainly denotes to the psychological determinants which comprises the meaning, competence, impact and self-determination which further leads to the task motivation (intrinsic) and replicates the sense of obligations about the active involvement of the workforces in institutional activities (Abdissa & Teklemariam, 2016). In this link, empowerment within psychology, comprises the group processes, leadership, task performance, decision-making and motivation since the empowerment can boost employee positive attitudes and performance at the workplaces (Lorinkova & Perry, 2017).

The psychological empowerment is the employees' emotional touch over which the employee feels empowered in the institutional procedures, processes and decisions leading to augmented culture in institutions. The organizational politics has been considered as the crucial element in affecting the institutional credibility since it has been widely recognized to have undesirable impact upon the success of the higher institutions. The organizational politics denotes to individuals' activities which procures usages of influence and authority to achieve predictable outcome (favorable) (Labrague, Petitte, Gloe, Arteche & Mardia, 2017). The organizational politics results in creation of the interests' conflict, builds injustice and discrimination, influencing the actions and behaviors of the workforces in caustic manners and creates culture of nepotism and favoritism in institutions (Sun & Xia, 2018). Therefore, when the employees experience favoritism, nepotism and injustices in institutions then it will ultimately influence commitment, performance, satisfaction and output of concerned employees in institutions overwhelmed at degradation of the institutional credibility in diverse situation within the institutional constraints.

Problem Statement

The problem addressed in this study is to examine influential role of psychological empowerment towards employees' performance. The study also addressed the facilitating role of organizational politics in connecting the psychological empowerment and employees' performance. The study was conducted in the context of higher educational institutions wherein these issues have been widely researched with diverse outcomes. Keeping in view this trend, this study also addressed these issues in KP, Pakistan context to extract new knowledge about the issues under study in this research work.

Objectives & Hypotheses

1. To examine the association between independent and mediating variables (psychological empowerment & organizational politics) and dependent variable employees' performance (hypothesis # 1).
2. To examine mediating role of organizational politics in relationship between psychological empowerment and employees' performance in context of higher education in KP, Pakistan (hypothesis # 2).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The higher education has been considered as hallmark for groomed cultures and developed societies as it always focusses on advanced research through supporting theories concerning the leading and burning issues (Akhter & Sharif, 2012). The higher education is responsible for imparting the quality education which thus ultimately helps in producing the competent and skilled workforces to different sectors of economies (Marta, Susana & Miranda, 2016). The education has been considered as the matter of greater importance since the inception as it has been recommended as vital tool for the sustainable development in the contemporary competitive environment (Graham & Antony, 2017). It is education that makes individuals social, responsible and accountable toward their social and cultural cues that further helps in managing the diverse situation through the knowledge, skills and competencies which are critical in determination of individuals behavior. Employees' performance has been considered as critical success for higher institutions to maintain their viable edge in the competitive environment. Without the best performance, these institutions might not be able to maintain their standards and to sustain their ranking (Asif & Searcy, 2014).

The institutional performances are the outcome of the workforces' performances since without the support and enactments, the higher institutions might not be able to impart the quality education to the students and in turn the expectations of different stakeholders might be at stake (Amjad, Sabri, Ilyas & Hameed, 2015). Thus, the employees' performance has been considered as best predictor for institutional performance however, there exists certain phenomena which directly or indirectly affect employees' performances (Menges, Tussing, Wihler & Grant, 2017) in institutions and which needs additional concentration on the part of institutional management. The psychological empowerment in higher education remained the significant phenomenon concerning the various institutional outcomes. These outcomes are mainly related with the confidence, trust, loyalty and effectiveness which are critical parameters for employees and institutions in diverse situations (Tuuli, & Rowlinson, 2009). The empowerment in the universities may have certain undesirable consequences as it has been experienced that employees in institutions have use power and authority over empowerment for the personal interests instead of interests of institutions (Karimiha, 2020) in the diverse leading and contemporary situations.

The empowerment is also helpful for organizational commitment, job satisfaction, job performance, service equity, innovative behavior and effectiveness which are influenced through empowerment (Boudrias, Gaudreau, Savoie, & Morin, 2009). The empowerment is thus critical for the universities in attaining the competitive advantages. The higher education is more focused on elimination of politics from the institutions as political influence and the authoritative behavior is the main reason that results in politics in the institutions (Kaya, Aydin, & Ongun, 2016). The politics in public sector universities are more effective than private sector as the public sector is more under the influence of political parties' influence which ultimately give birth to the various expectations (Lee, & Peccei, 2011). Political participation and execution of actions and practices that overwhelmed at the political involvement in different activities are the main reason for political affiliation in particular context (Li, Wu, Liu, Kwan, & Liu, 2014). The politics thus remained the focus under diverse considerations which provide critical guidelines and dimensions for promotions of politics within the institutions thereby considering the things at par to the required standards.

The higher education institutions are more focused upon the phenomenon of performance due the introduction and implementations of the various strategic approaches concerning the performance management system in institutions (Burton, Sablinski & Sekiguchi, 2008). Performance management system through various approaches and practices helps in ensuring the strategic values as well as strategic standards and values to endure effectiveness in the efforts and performance (Devonish, & Greenidge, 2010). The performance is therefore remained significant phenomenon in organizational context that leads the institutions to prioritize their tasks and objective to lead employees towards higher achievement (Ahmed, & Mostafa, 2017). The commitment of employees is also critical in sustaining desired capabilities that leads the employees and organizations towards desired standards in competitive environment.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The positivism approach is the research philosophy which has been adopted in this research study through knowledge existence, knowledge communication and knowledge acquisition to achieve well-defined objectives (hypotheses) extracted from theoretical model about possible relations among research issues over systematic procedure (Glymour & Clark, 2015). The research design denotes to the research strategy of particular research study by highlighting research methods, tools and techniques by mentioning the tools of data collection (secondary & primary) and data analysis (descriptive & inferential), population and sample in order to comprehensively manage the research study (Creswell & Williams, 2012). Consequently, based on positivism philosophy, survey approach is used by managing the structured questionnaire which had been extracted from existing research studies for primary data collection (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). Total population of the study comprises 1418 faculty members who were the target population of present study. A sample of 312 was selected consequently 312 questionnaires were distributed among which 300 were recollected with 96 percent response rate. Both secondary and primary data collection and analysis are vital for research studies in meeting the desired objectives as without the applications of these type of sources, no research study can be undertaken successfully to achieve the desired tasks. The instruments were adopted from the previous research studies like psychological empowerment (Menon, 1999), organizational politics (Ferris, 2002) and employees' performance (Uphoff & Muharir, 1994).

IV. RESULTS OF STUDY

In this section, the results obtained through the statistical procedures have been presented in order to chase the answers of the research hypotheses. These results are helpful for readers to understand the outcomes regarding the different assumptions as extracted from theoretical framework about the description of the research variables as well as relationships among research variables. However, the discussion section has been presented at the end of results section to make clear the position of current study.

Tables 1 Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Psychological Empowerment	300	1.40	6.38	4.1728	.98172
Organizational Politics	300	1.61	6.10	3.5896	.91268
Employees Performance	300	1.77	7.00	4.3217	1.28007

H₁: Association amid psychological empowerment, Organizational politics & employees' performance.

Tables 2 Correlation Analysis

		Psychological Empowerment	Organizational Politics
Organizational Politics	Pearson Correlation	.294**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	300	
Employees Performance	Pearson Correlation	.566**	-.321**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
	N	300	300

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

The results of this study provide significant information about the association among the research variables which have been supported through the results of the existing research studies. Likewise, the employees' performance has significant associated with the psychological empowerment (.566 & .000), employees' performance and organizational politics (-.321 & .000) and psychological empowerment and organizational politics (.294 & .000). Therefore, the results offered significant information in reaching the conclusion. The association between psychological empowerment and employees' performance has been validated through the results of previous research studies in different contexts (Liden, Wayne & Sparrowe, 2000; Chow, Lo, Sha & Hong, 2006; Sutherland, Bruin & Crous, 2007; Chiang & Hsieh, 2012; Hameed & Waheed, 2015; Dina, Dania, Ghalia & Madadha, 2018).

H₂: Organizational politics mediates the relationship between psychological empowerment and employees' performance.

Mediation First Step (a)

Table 3 Model Summary

R	R Square	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.5935	.3523	.3877	162.0603	1.0000	298.0000	.0000

Table 4 Coefficients of Regression

Model	Coefficient	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	.8424	.2305	3.6542	.0003	.3887	1.2960
Psychological Empowerment	.7056	.0554	12.7303	.0000	.5966	.8147

Predicting Variable: Psychological Empowerment

Criterion Variable: Organizational Politics

Mediation Second & Third Steps (b & c)

Table 5 Model Summary

R	R Square	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.7930	.6288	.4281	251.5552	2.0000	297.0000	.0000

Table 6 Coefficients of Regression

Model	Coefficient	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	-.5914	.2476	-2.3881	.0176	-1.0787	-.1040
Psychological Empowerment	.4225	.0724	5.8369	.0000	.7304	.5649
Organizational Politics	.8502	.0609	13.9660	.0000	.7304	.9700

Predicting Variable: Psychological Empowerment, Organizational Politics

Criterion Variable: Employees' Performance

Mediation Fourth Step (c)

Table 7 Model Summary

R	R Square	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.6205	.3850	.7069	186.5701	1.0000	298.0000	.0000

Table 8 Coefficients of Regression

Model	Coefficient	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	.1248	.3113	.4010	.6887	-.4878	.7374
Psychological Empowerment	1.0224	.0749	13.6591	.0000	.8751	1.1697

Predicting Variable: Psychological Empowerment

Criterion Variable: Employees' Performance

Table 9 Normal Theory Test (Sobel Test)

Effect	se	Z	p
.5124	.0366	4.5524	.0000

The hypothesis # 2 was about the mediating role of organizational politics in relationship between psychological empowerment and employees' performance that was assumed from theoretical framework of present study. The results of mediation provide information about all the four paths of mediation (a, b, c & \hat{c}). The first path of mediation shows 35% variance in organizational politics is due to psychological empowerment with the significant coefficient and p-values ($\beta=.7056$ & P-value=.0000). The second and third mediation paths provided the information about the indirect relationship wherein 63% variance is evident in employees' performance is due to psychological empowerment and organizational politics ($\beta=.4225$ & P-value =.0000) and ($\beta= .8502$ & P-value =.0000) respectively in mediation results. The fourth paths of mediation also provide significant information in deciding the mediation.

The results from the path (c), shows 39% variance in the employees' performance is due to the psychological empowerment with significant coefficient and p-values ($\beta=1.0224$ & P-value=.0000). Now, the decision about the mediation is required that whether it is a full mediation or partial mediation. It can be seen from the mediation procedure that all the paths of mediation remained significant and the decision need to take on the coefficient values. The coefficient values (1.0224), in direct relationship has been decreased to (.4225) when organizational politics arrived as mediator therefore, it is concluded that the organizational politics partially mediated relationship between psychological empowerment and employee performance. Therefore, from the results, the hypothesis about the mediation is thus accepted. The results have been confirmed through the results of the existing research studies which are similar to the convinced extent (Dina, Dania, Ghalia & Madadha, 2018; Chiang & Hsieh, 2012; Saima & Khalid, 2019; Randall, Cropanzano, Bormann & Birjulin, 1999).

V. CONCLUSION

The results of study show that that there exists positive and significant association between predictor (psychological empowerment), mediator (organizational politics) and criterion variable (employee performance). Likewise, study also confirmed mediating role of organizational politics in connecting predictor (psychological empowerment) and criterion variable (employees' performance) through partial mediation. Therefore, study provides significant information from each possible dimension to reach the conclusions more systematically and comprehensively. The H₁ was about the association among research variables (predictors, mediator & criterion) by applying the correlation procedure. The results of the study confirmed the positive and significant association between psychological empowerment, organizational politics and employee performance. The decisions about H₁, from the results, is accepted based upon the outcomes from the correlation about the association. The H₂ was about mediating role of organizational politics in relationship between psychological empowerment and employees' performance. The results from Hayes process model revealed that psychological empowerment mediated partially relationship between psychological empowerment and employee performance. Thus, from mediation results, the decision about H₂ is accepted based upon mediation results.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ The psychological empowerment is vital for the institutions as well as for employees in shaping the employees' attitude as per desired standards. The empowerment inspires the employees to take their own decisions as per situations. Thus, institutions are required to empower the employees to take their own suitable decisions in their own domains and leading tasks.
- ✓ The organizational politics has been considered as the critical determinant in influencing the procedures and practices and thus critically effects the credibility of the institutions. So, management of institutions is required to eliminate the unfair means in activities and practices to ensure the transparency in institutional actions towards the processes and procedures.
- ✓ The performance is the leading phenomenon that is widely recognized as leading practice for the institutional development and success. Therefore, the institutions are required to put their emphasis upon the successful implementation of the practices which are vital for the improvements in institutional prolonged efforts towards the desired sand conducive situations.
- ✓ The future researchers are suggested to used certain moderators instead of mediators to compare the results and highlight the differences in mediation and moderation to extract new knowledge about the relationships among the research variables. This will help them to produce the new information and to contribute to existing database of knowledge in research.

REFERENCES

1. Abdissa, G., & Teklemariam, F. (2016). The Impact of Psychological Empowerment on Employees' Job Satisfaction. *Journal of Business and Finance Management Research*, 2(7), 65-80.
2. Ahmed, M., & Mostafa, S. (2017). High-performance HR practices, positive affect and employee outcomes. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 32 (2), 163-176.
3. Akhter, I., & Sharif, M. H. (2012). In search of academic excellence by becoming an effective leader: A study of academic leadership in higher education. *Global Journal of Management and Business Research*, 12 (10).
4. Amjad, Z., Sabri, P. U., Ilyas, M., & Hameed, A. (2015). Informal relationships at workplace and employee performance: A study of employees' private higher education sector. *Pakistan Journal of Commerce and Social Sciences*, 9 (1), 303- 321.
5. Asif, M., & Searcy, C. (2014). A composite index for measuring performance in higher education institutions. *International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management*, 31 (9), 983-1001.
6. Boudrias, J., Gaudreau, P., Savoie, A., & Morin, A. J. S. (2009). Employee empowerment: From managerial practices to employees' behavioural empowerment. *Leadership & Organisational Development Journal*, 30(7), 625-638.
7. Burton, J. P., Sablynski, C. J., & Sekiguchi, T. (2008). Linking justice, performance and citizenship via leader-member exchange. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 23 (1/2), 51-61.
8. Chiang, C-F., & Hsieh, T-S. (2012). The impacts of perceived organizational support and psychological empowerment on job performance: the mediating effects of organizational citizenship behavior. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 31, 180-190.
9. Chow, I. H-S., Lo, T. W-C., Sha, Z., & Hong, J. (2006). The impact of developmental experience, empowerment, and organizational support on catering service staff performance. *Hospitality Management*, 25, 478-495.
10. Creswell, J. W., & Williams, P. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
11. Cullen, J., Joyce, J., Hassall, T., & Broadbent, M. (2003). Quality in higher education: from monitoring to management. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 11 (1), 5-14.
12. Devonish, D., & Greenidge, D. (2010). The effect of organizational justice on contextual performance, counterproductive work behaviors and task performance: Investigating the moderating role of ability based emotional intelligence. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, 18, 1, 76-86.
13. Dina, A., Dania, A., Ghalia, N., & Madadha, A. (2018). The Relationship between Psychological Empowerment and Creative Performance of Employees: Mediating Effect of Job Satisfaction in International Non-Governmental Organizations. *European Scientific Journal*, 14 (20), 217-239.
14. Ferris, R., Adams, G., Robert, W., Wayne, A., & Anthony, P. (2002). Perceptions of organizational politics: Theory and research directions, in Francis J. Yammarino, Fred Dansereau (ed.), *Emerald Group Publishing Limited*, pp.179 - 254.

15. Glymour, H., & Clark, P. (2015). *Thinking Things Through: An Introduction to Philosophical Issues and Achievements* (2nd Ed.). A Bradford Book.
16. Graham, S. A., & Antony, J. (2017). Academic leadership: Special or Simple. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*, 66 (5).
17. Haider, Z., & Sultan, S. (2008). Challenges in higher education: Special reference to Pakistan and South Asian developing countries. *Nonpartisan Educational Review*, 4, 1-12.
18. Hameed, A., & Waheed, A. (2015). Impact of Psychological Empowerment on Employee's Performance. *Pakistan Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 3 (1), 1 - 15.
19. Karimiha, S. L. (2020). "Understanding the Impact of Psychological Empowerment, Workplace Motivation, and Social Capital on the Job Performance of Farmers in Honduras: A Mixed Methods Study" (2020). LSU Doctoral Dissertations. 5227.
20. Kaya, N., Aydin, S., & Ongun, G. (2016). The impacts of servant leadership and organizational politics on burnout: A research among mid-level managers. *International Journal of Business Administration*, 7(2), 26-32.
21. Labrague, L., Petite, M., Gloe, D., Arteché, D., & Maldia, F. (2017). Organizational politics, stress, burnout levels, turnover intention and job satisfaction. *International Nursing Review*, 64(1), 109-116.
22. Lee, J., & Peccei, R. (2011). Discriminant validity and interaction between perceived organizational support and perceptions of organizational politics: A temporal analysis. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 84: 686-702.
23. Li, J., Wu, L., Liu, D., Kwan, H., & Liu, J. 2014. Insiders maintain voice: A psychological safety model of organizational politics. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, 31: 853-874.
24. Liden, R. C., Wayne, S. J., & Sparrowe, R. T. (2000). An examination of the mediating role of psychological empowerment on the relations between the job, interpersonal relationships, and work outcomes. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 85(3), 407-416.
25. Lorinkova, N. M., & Perry, S. J. (2017). When Is Empowerment Effective? The Role of Leader-Leader Exchange in Empowering Leadership, Cynicism, and Time Theft. *Journal of Management*, 43(5), 1631-1654.
26. Mace, J., & Niazi, H. (2006). The contribution of the private sector to higher education in Pakistan with particular reference to efficiency and equity. *Bulletin of Education & Research*, 28 (2), 17-42.
27. Marta, A. A., Susana, L., & Miranda, U. A. (2016). Conceptualization of sustainable higher education institutions, roles, barriers, and challenges for sustainability. *Journal of Cleaner Production*.
28. Menges, J. I., Tussing, D. V., Wihler, A., & Grant, A. (2017). When job performance is all relative: How family motivation energizes effort and compensates for intrinsic motivation. *Academy of Management Journal*, 60 (2), 695-719.
29. Menon, S. T. (1999). Psychological empowerment: Definition, measurement, and validation. *Canadian Journal of Behavioral Science*, 31(3), 161-164.
30. Randall, M. L., Cropanzano, R., Bormann, C. A., & Birjulin, A. (1999). Organizational politics and organizational support as predictors of work attitudes, job performance, and organizational citizenship behavior. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 20, 159-174.
31. Saima, A., & Khalid, K. (2019). 4C's of work environment and organizational performance: Mediating role of individual performance. *International Transaction Journal of Engineering, Management, & Applied Sciences & Technologies*, 11 (02), 1-16.
32. Sekaran, U., & Bougie, R. (2013). *Research Methods for Business: A Skill-Building Approach* (6th Ed.). John Wiley and Sons, Inc.
33. Sutherland, R., De Bruin, G. P., & Crous, F. (2007). The relation between conscientiousness, empowerment and performance. *Journal of Human Resource Management*, 5(2), 60-67.
34. Tuuli, M. M., & Rowlinson, S. (2009). Performance consequences of psychological empowerment. *Journal of Construction Engineering and Management*, 135 (12), 1334-1347.
35. Uphoff, N., & Moharir, V. (1994). An analytical model of performance for developing indicators of employee capability. *Journal of Public Administration*, 17 (3).
36. Wang, X., Liao, J., Xia, D., and Chang, T. (2010). The impact of organizational justice on work performance: mediating effects of organizational commitment and leader-member exchange. *Int. J. Manpow.* 31, 660-677.