

Accounting the Psychological and Motivational Sequential Mediators in Perceived Organizational Politics - Job Performance Relationship

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Extended abstract

Self-determination theory (SDT) suggests that social factors have an influence on an individual's intrinsic or extrinsic motivation (Vallerand & Ratelle, 2002). Yen (2015) empirical research suggests that perceptions of organizational politics is positively related to an employee's motivation at work, and that such motivation leads to improved salesperson performance. Although, his study is one of a kind that investigates the direct effects of POP on employee's motivation, the framework lacks specificity. Such as, work motivation is based on expectancy theory that suggests motivation as a driving force without distinguishing between extrinsic and/or intrinsic motivation. SDT, on the other hand, suggests that external factors effect each motivation representations uniquely (Deci & Ryan, 1985b). Earlier studies found that certain social factors such as positive feedback enhances intrinsic motivation, whereas, tangible rewards undermined it (Deci et al., 1999). Nie et al. (2015) found perceived autonomy support to be positively related with intrinsic, identified, and introjected motivation, whereas, negatively related with extrinsic motivation. In this context, we suggest that POP will have a distinctive effect on both controlled and autonomous motivation, such that POP will negatively affect an individual's autonomous motivation (identified and intrinsic), whereas, it will positively affect his or her controlled motivation (introjected and extrinsic). The following theoretical explanation further strengthens these postulated effects.

SDT argues that the satisfaction of the basic psychological needs provides the basic mechanism that underlies which social factors support intrinsic motivation and facilitates the internalization of extrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan 1985b; Vallerand, Fortier, & Guay., 1997; Vallerand & Ratelle, 2002; Gagne & Deci, 2005). These psychological needs are the nutrients of an individual's motivation, psychological growth, and well-being. Aryee et al. (2015) found that overall justice perceptions satisfied psychological needs which in turn fostered intrinsic motivation and resulted in increased job performance. Based on the argumentation already established in the previous section that POP thwarts individual's basic psychological needs, we postulate that such frustration will not only weakens the intrinsic motivation but also hampers the internalization of extrinsic motivation. Gagne and Deci (2005) suggested that the satisfaction of

needs of competence and relatedness incline individuals to internalize the value and regulation of a particular behavior. Whereas, the satisfaction of the need of autonomy actually distinguishes whether identification or introjection will occur. Studies in various life domains exemplifies such support (such as, Blanchard & Vallerand 1996; Vallerand, Fortier, & Guay, 1997). Deci and Ryan (1985a) found that negative feedback decreased an individual's sense of competence and resultantly undermined his/her intrinsic or extrinsic motivation, and left him/her amotivated. We suggest that frustration of needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in the context of POP will undermine intrinsic, identified, introjected, and extrinsic motivation.

Moreover, SDT postulates that the degree to which psychological needs are satisfied either fosters intrinsic motivation or facilitates internalization of extrinsic motivation. The ultimate consequences depends on the type of motivation being enforced (Vallerand & Ratelle, 2002; Gagne & Deci, 2005; Aryee et al., 2015). Autonomous motivation (intrinsic and identification) results in more positive outcomes, whereas, controlled motivation (introjected and extrinsic) yield most negative outcomes. Number of studies support this corollary in various domains (e.g., Blais et al., 2002). However, a few studies empirically investigated Vallerand and his colleague's (Vallerand & Ratelle, 2002) theorization of the causal sequence according to which the environment affects outcomes through the role of need satisfaction and motivation in the process. Aryee et al. (2015) recently found that overall justice influenced an employee's intrinsic motivation via psychological need satisfaction, which, in turn, increased job performance.

In this context, and further integrating our previous theorizing, we argue that perceptions of organizational politics decrease employees' job performance, as POP directly frustrates their psychological needs and indirectly diminishes their intrinsic motivation or hinders the internalization of extrinsic motivation in a sequential process. Figure 1 depicts the theoretical framework.

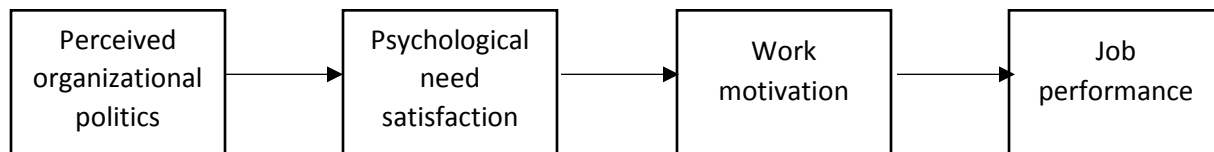


Fig 1. Theoretical framework

A pilot study, with 85 respondents, was conducted to examine the hypotheses. We sought responses from variety of organizations to have a maximum variation in the range of variables of interest. The sample comprised of the following sector representations: Educational organizations 69% , 18% telecommunication, 8% bank, and 4% Army. We administered the questionnaire onsite. To test the serial mediation model, we employed the bootstrapping approach using the SPSS PROCESS macro developed by Preacher et al. (2007). In order to measure the simple and serial indirect effects, we evaluated the model using PROCESS macro (Model 4 and 6) with 10000 bootstrapped re-samples and at the level of 95% confidence interval.

Out of SDT's four different motivation types (extrinsic, introjected, identified, and intrinsic), our results suggested significant indirect effects of POP on only two types of work motivation, i.e., identified and introjected. Identified and introjected motivation types suggest the internalization process of the controlled motivation at work, that is, when employees perform a certain task because they either partially or fully integrate the value associated with that task. Perceived organizational politics suggest a work environment that is alluded with uncertainty, ambiguity, manipulation, and unfairness (e.g., Bedi and Schat, 2013). It appears that these shady characteristics of POP blur and obscure both organizational and task related values and goals in such a way that employees find it difficult to identify and opt them. Moreover, employees' psychological vulnerability (in terms of need frustration) hampers the internalization of the external regulations of their performance behavior at work.

For intrinsic and extrinsic motivation at work, our results revealed insignificant effects. The findings suggested that the frustration of employees' psychological needs was not sufficed to affect their either intrinsic or extrinsic motivation. In the case of reduction or reinforcement of extrinsic motivation, we couldn't find significant mediation mainly because our data did not suggest the correlation between need satisfaction and extrinsic motivation. However, we found POP positively related with extrinsic motivation. These findings suggest that perceived politics encourage instrumentality at work, in a way that employees may focus on power and influence at work, and engage in impression management. They perform job tasks by being oblivious to their self-determination, and do so to attain an end result that is separate from their performance behavior. In the case of intrinsic motivation, the insignificant mediating affect suggested that POP did not thwart the psychological needs of employees to the extent that it undermined their intrinsic motivation to perform their job duties. In this way, this study contributes to the constructive side of POP, and confirms to the assertion that POP is not an inherently bad concept (Hochwarter, 2012).

Organizational politics is a social factor that organization observes with varying degrees. Politics doesn't entirely yields destruction, as research illustrates that in the wake of limited resources politics is a tool that can ensures optimal and effective functioning. In this regard, managers must ensure that in the political game, the organizational goals and the structures remain clear. Such that the work place stays autonomy supportive and employees find maximum opportunities to take initiative. They could get informational feedback and satisfying recognition and empathetic and trustworthy associates. The objective is also to provide employees psychological gratification, so that they integrate and internalize with organizational goals and values, and take them as their own, and perform effectively. Research confirms that such strategies ensure long-term optimal benefits and outcomes.

The present research notices the following study limitations. The study is based on a small sample size that could reduce the statistical power and the reliability of the findings. Moreover, the study captures the self-assessment of employees' job performance that suspects the common method bias. This study is a pilot framework that gives us the ground to carry out a rather sophisticated research investigation on the effects of POP, utilizing both need based and motivational paradigm. We seek to address these issues in our future investigation of this framework.

In summary, we note that as organizations come to rely on employees as their competitive advantage, understanding the motivational basis of performance has taken a spotlight. The main objective of our study was to contribute to this endeavor by integrating need satisfaction and motivation, two sequential pathways to explain the influence perceptions of organizational politics (POP) on job performance. Our findings revealed that POP negatively affected only identified and introjected motivations (the two motivation types that represents the internalization of extrinsic motivation), via psychological need frustration. Furthermore, such need frustration indirectly decreased job performance through identified or introjected motivation. Moreover, our findings suggest insignificant indirect effects of POP on either intrinsic or extrinsic motivation at work, what so ever. This pattern of findings suggests to why POP reveals dual outcomes in a work environment, as it doesn't either encourage extreme control or discourage extreme autonomy at work. However, we encourage future research to test this model with more parsimonious factors.

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