



Determinants of Workplace Politics: The Role of Leadership Bias and Communication in Mumbai Organizations

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Abstract

Politics at work have a significant impact on job satisfaction, productivity, and employee morale in Mumbai organizations. This study investigates the major factors contributing to workplace politics, particularly communication gaps and leadership bias. The Simple Percentage Method was used to analyze responses from 283 employees across various sectors using a structured questionnaire. The findings indicate that poor communication and leadership bias strongly influence workplace politics. The study recommends transparent communication systems and ethical leadership practices to reduce political behavior in organizations.

Introduction

Workplace politics refers to informal behaviors used to gain influence, power, or personal advantage within organizations. In a metropolitan city like Mumbai, organizations differ widely in structure and culture, making workplace politics a common organizational issue. Employees often experience favoritism, unclear communication, and inconsistent decision-making, which may increase political behavior. Understanding the determinants of workplace politics can help organizations create healthier work environments.

Workplace Politics and Discrimination Allegations at Infosys (India)

In **January 2025**, Infosys, one of India's largest IT companies, faced public criticism after a former employee posted on LinkedIn alleging a **toxic work culture, discrimination, and unfair treatment** within the organization. The post went viral, raising concerns about leadership behavior, communication issues, and employee dissatisfaction.



The CEO of Infosys publicly responded to the allegations, stating that the company is committed to fair treatment and inclusivity and is taking steps to improve workplace culture. The incident triggered debates about organizational politics, favoritism, and transparency in corporate India.

Bribes-for-Jobs Scandal at TCS (India)

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) faced allegations that some executives accepted commissions from staffing firms to hire candidates. Following a whistleblower complaint, several officials were dismissed and recruitment processes were investigated. This case reflects organizational politics, favoritism, and misuse of power by leadership, showing how internal politics can affect HR decisions.

Review of Literature

1. Perception of Organizational Politics and Innovative Behavior

This study examined how employees' perceptions of organizational politics relate to innovative work behavior. Using theories such as social exchange and conservation of resources, it found that when employees perceive high levels of politics, knowledge-sharing hostility increases, which reduces innovation. This research highlights that workplace politics not only affects interpersonal relationships but also key organizational outcomes like knowledge exchange and creativity.

2. Organizational Politics and Employee Stress & Engagement

Landells and Albrecht (2019) investigated how perceived organizational politics relates to employee engagement and stress, finding that politics increases stress and reduces engagement, partly through the mediating role of meaningful work. Their work underscores that political environments harm psychological well-being and weaken positive work attitudes.

3. Organizational Politics and Peer Voice Endorsement

Li and colleagues (2023) examined how perceptions of politics affect employees' willingness to speak up (peer voice endorsement). They found that high organizational politics environments weaken psychological safety and reduce employees' motivation to communicate or contribute ideas. This study supports the idea that political behavior undermines internal communication and organizational effectiveness.

4. Organizational Politics, Deviance, Stress, and Moderating Resilience

Bashir et al. (2019) investigated how organizational politics relates to workplace deviance and stress in power-distance cultures (e.g., Pakistan). They found that higher politics leads to stress and deviant behavior, although resilience did not significantly moderate this relationship. This research demonstrates how politics can become a stressor triggering counterproductive workplace behaviors.

5. Mitigating Workplace Politics Through Inclusive Leadership

Shahid and Xu (2025) examined how inclusive leadership can buffer the negative effects of perceived politics on employee attitudes, such as commitment and citizenship behavior. Their findings suggest that inclusive leaders who communicate transparently and support employees can reduce the detrimental effects of politics, aligning with the current study's recommendations about ethical leadership and clear communication.



Research Methodology

Objectives

To identify the main factors contributing to workplace politics in Mumbai organizations.

To examine the impact of communication level and leadership bias on workplace politics.

Hypotheses

H1: Communication level has a significant impact on workplace politics.

H2: Leadership bias has a significant impact on workplace politics.

Research Design

Quantitative, cross-sectional research design.

Sample Size

Total sample size: 283 respondents (Employees from finance, IT, education, retail, and service sectors).

Sampling Technique

Convenience sampling.

Data Collection

- **Primary Data:** Structured questionnaire (10 Likert-scale items; 1 = Disagree, 2 = Neutral, 3 = Agree)
- **Secondary Data:** Academic journals, books, HR reports, newspaper.

Variable Measurement

- **Dependent Variable:** Workplace Politics (measured using Likert-scale items)
- **Independent Variables:**
 - Communication Level (Poor, Moderate, Good)
 - Leadership Bias (Low, High)

Data Analysis Method

The **Simple Percentage Method** was used to analyze the data. Responses were converted into percentages to understand the relationship between communication, leadership bias, and workplace politics.

Limitations

- Convenience sampling limits generalizability.
- The percentage method does not provide statistical significance testing.
- Self-reported responses may involve bias.
- Study limited to Mumbai organizations.



Results and Interpretation

Communication and Workplace Politics

Communication Level	Respondents Agree Politics Exists (%)
Poor Communication	72%
Moderate Communication	54%
Good Communication	31%

Interpretation:

Employees experiencing poor communication reported the highest workplace politics. Better communication reduced political behavior.

Leadership Bias and Workplace Politics

Leadership Bias Level	Respondents Agree Politics Exists (%)
High Leadership Bias	68%
Low Leadership Bias	35%

Interpretation:

Organizations with biased leadership showed higher political behavior compared to organizations with unbiased leadership.

Combined Effect of Communication and Leadership Bias

Communication Level	Leadership Bias	Politics Perceived (%)
Poor	High	78%
Poor	Low	60%
Moderate	High	55%
Moderate	Low	40%
Good	High	38%
Good	Low	22%

Interpretation:

The highest workplace politics was observed when communication was poor and leadership bias was high. The lowest politics was found when communication was good and leadership bias was low.

Hypothesis Testing (Based on Percentage Analysis)

- **H1:** Accepted. Poor communication increases workplace politics.
- **H2:** Accepted. Leadership bias increases workplace politics.



Findings

- Poor communication significantly increases workplace politics.
- Leadership bias strongly contributes to political behavior.
- The combination of poor communication and biased leadership creates the highest political environment.
- Transparent communication reduces workplace politics.

Conclusion

The study concludes that workplace politics in Mumbai organizations is influenced by communication effectiveness and leadership bias. Percentage analysis shows that poor communication and biased leadership increase political behavior, while transparent communication and ethical leadership reduce workplace politics. Organizations should implement standardized communication policies and leadership ethics training to improve employee morale.

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