

INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS THAT AFFECT POLITICAL BEHAVIOR

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Abstract

Political behavior is defined as organizationally non-sanctioned behavior which may be detrimental to organizational goals or to the interests of others in the organization. Recent research has identified a number of factors that encourage political behavior. Some of these factors are individual and some are organizational factors. This study aims to find out which of the organizational and individual factors affect political behavior. The study is conducted by distributing questionnaires to employees in different organizations and sectors. The sampling is convenience sampling. The sample includes 350 individuals. The response rate is 94%. The results of the regression analyses revealed that both individual and organizational factors affect political behavior.

Keywords: Political behavior, antecedents of political behavior, individual factors, organizational factors

Öz

Politik Davranışı Etkileyen Bireysel ve Kurumsal Faktörler

Politik davranış kurumsal olarak onaylanmayan ve kurumsal amaçlara ya da kurumda çalışanların çıkarlarına zarar verebilecek davranışlar olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Son dönemde yapılan araştırmalar politik davranışa neden olan çok sayıda faktörün olduğunu belirlemiştir. Bunlardan bazıları bireysel, bazıları da kurumsal niteliktedir. Bu çalışmada, politik davranışı etkileyen kurumsal ve bireysel faktörlerin ortaya çıkarılması amaçlanmaktadır. Çalışmada anket yöntemi kullanılmış ve farklı sektör ve kurumda çalışanlara anket dağıtılmıştır. Örneklem kolay ulaşılabilir örneklemedir. Toplam 350 anket dağıtılmıştır. Geri dönüşüm oranı %94'tür. Yapılan regresyon analizi

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sonucunda hem bireysel hem de kurumsal faktörlerin politik davranışı etkilediği ortaya çıkmıştır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Politik davranış, politik davranışın öncülleri, bireysel faktörler, kurumsal faktörler.

INTRODUCTION

Cropanzano, Kacmar and Bozeman (1995) claim that with the help of work, people can gain such things as economic advantage, fellowship, and social status. But, in order to obtain these gains they must spend some energy, time and effort for the sake of their employers. Referring to this reasoning, Cropanzano, Howes, Grandey and Toth (1997) state that keeping a job is similar to making an investment. Workers offer their talents and motivation in the hope of getting something in return. As a result, the workplace can be viewed as a marketplace in which individuals are involved in numerous transactions with the aim of getting a favorable return for their investment (Rusbult and Farrell, 1983; Rusbult, Farrell, Rogers and Mainous, 1988). This return might be pay or intangible rewards, such as esteem, dignity, and personal power. The return or the rewards the individual gains is obtained with the help of other people. While a high pay might be obtained from the organization, the peers might grant their respect or hold it back. Therefore, the individuals should be very careful in understanding what is acceptable or not in the organization. There might be an organization where self-interest of the employees are more important than the welfare of the others or to the contrary where the employees consider the needs of others too much. Political behavior is one of the alternatives for influencing decisions and getting the desired results (Prasad, 1993). It is also very common in the workplace to observe members or units engaging in influence attempts (e.g. ingratiation, impression management and developing power coalitions, exchange of favors and upward appeals) to protect or promote their own interests, especially when there is uncertainty, scarcity of resources, lack of trust and unclear performance appraisal. Kacmar, Bozeman, Carlson and Anthony (1999) state that although political behavior can be either beneficial or detrimental for an organization, it is often considered dysfunctional because it has the potential to disrupt organizational efficiency and effectiveness. Political behavior consumes time, restricts information sharing, and creates communication barriers (Eisenhardt and Bourgeois, 1988). Additionally, an organization where political behavior is common is stressful to work in, not favorable for promoting positive job attitudes.

Today, it is a well known fact that political behavior is a reality of organizational life. Since political behavior has been so common recently, this

study aims to investigate the factors that might be leading to political behavior in the organization. The factors have been classified as individual and organizational factors.

1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF POLITICAL BEHAVIOR

Organizational politics (OP) has been analyzed from various perspectives and at various levels of analysis. While some has investigated actual political behavior, some other has concentrated on perceptions of organizational politics. Until recently, the attributes and difficulty of the relationship between these two constructs has been ignored (Harrell-Cook, Ferris, Dulebohn, 1999).

Political behavior is defined as organizationally non-sanctioned behavior which may be detrimental to organizational goals or to the interests of others in the organization (Ferris, Russ & Fandt, 1989; Gandz & Murray, 1980; Porter, Allen & Angle, 1981). Further, the underlying, but concealed, intent of political behavior is assumed to be self-serving in nature.

Political behavior or organizational politics has different definitions made by different scholars. Some scholars defined it as ways to get ahead in an organization, as dynamic processes of influence that produce organizationally relevant outcomes beyond the simple performance of job tasks, or as the management of influence to obtain ends not sanctioned by the organization or to obtain sanctioned ends through non-sanctioned influence means (Mayes & Allen, 1977; Wallace & Szilagyi, 1982).

Ferris, Fedor, Chachere & Pondy (1989) indicate that OP is a social influence process in which behavior is strategically designed to maximize short-term or long-term self-interests, which is either consistent with or at the expense of others' interests.

Pfeffer (1992) defined OP as those activities carried out by people to acquire, enhance, and use power and other resources to obtain their preferred outcomes in a situation where there is uncertainty or disagreement.

Mintzberg (1983) suggests that politics refer to "individual or group behavior that is informal, ostensibly parochial, typically divisive, and above all, technically illegitimate-sanctioned neither by formal authority, accepted ideology, nor certified expertise.

Farrell & Peterson (1982) define political behavior as those activities that are not required as part of one's formal role in the organization, but that

influence or attempt to influence, the distribution of advantages or disadvantages within the organization.

The use of power to affect decision-making in the organization or on behaviors by members that are self-serving or organizationally nonsanctioned is also defined as political behavior (Vredenburg & Maurer, 1984).

Madison et al. (1980), Gray & Ariss (1985) and Ferris et al. (1989) define politics as “an intentional social influence process in which behavior is strategically designed to maximize short-term or long-term self interests”. While other definitions have been restricted to the conceptualizations of self-serving and organizationally nonsanctioned behavior (Gandz & Murray, 1980; Schein, 1977), the above definition emphasizes that political behavior may lead to functional as well as dysfunctional outcomes for individuals, groups, or organizations. For example, if political behavior is used by an executive to build consensus for a strategy that would lead the organization to be more effective in the future, it would be functional. On the other hand, if political behavior is used to maintain the status quo when change is required, it would be dysfunctional.

Barnard (1938) states that when problem solving processes are not predictable and well-defined, individuals start using personal relationships to meet their interests and organizations become political entities. Therefore, different definitions of political behavior emphasize the fact that political behavior is non-sanctioned and includes active management of influence (Hickson, 1987; Mayes & Allen, 1977) to be able to get one's most desired outcomes (Pfeffer, 1981).

Political behavior is more prevailing at the upper levels of organizations (Ferris, Russ, and Fandt, 1989; Madison, Allen, Porter, Renwick, and Mayes, 1980) due to the uncertainty and ambiguity in the decisions that upper management takes (Feldman, 1988; Ferris, Harrell-Cook & Dulebohn, 2000). Since decisions must be made collectively by bargaining and exercising influence and due to radical innovations, new technology, and/or uncertainty about goals, the likelihood of individuals utilizing political behavior to reach their objectives is increasing (Ferris et al., 1996; Prasad, 1993). These actions might include the formation of internal or external alliances and coalitions, withholding key information from decision-makers, agenda control, and cooptation, or lobbying key executives in an attempt to gain their support (Eisenhardt & Bourgeois, 1988; Pettigrew, 1973; Pfeffer, 1981), whistle blowing, spreading rumors, leaking confidential information related with the organization to the media, exchanging favors with others in the organization for mutual benefits (Robbins, 1998). Some view political behavior as a

dysfunctional, power-driven behavior that leads to poor organizational decision making and performance, because political activities take time and restrain the flow of information (Eisenhardt & Bourgeois, 1988; Pettigrew, 1973). On the other hand, some think that political behavior is needed for effective change and organizational adaptation since it is a positive, conflict-driven phenomenon (Pfeffer, 1981).

In fact, a distinction is made between legitimate and illegitimate political behavior stating that legitimate political behavior is normal everyday politics such as complaining to the boss, coalition formation, avoiding the chain of command, interfering organization policies or decisions by inacting or adhering to the rules, developing contacts outside the organization through one's professional activities. Illegitimate political behavior, on the other hand violates the rules and includes activities such as sabotage, whistle-blowing, symbolic protests, calling in sick collectively as a group of employees (Robbins, 1998). Since the illegitimate political behavior includes a risk of losing organizational membership and a penalty against those utilizing it, it is not common in organizations. Therefore, the vast majority of organizational political behavior is legitimate.

Even though it is not official and not authorized, organizational politics is viewed as a widely recognized reality by the organizational members. In fact, the rules developed within the organization restrain certain types of actions as too dangerous or threatening to the organization. Political behaviors that are widely accepted as legitimate include exchange of favors, forming coalitions and seeking sponsors at upper levels. Legitimate political behavior is mostly carried out by upper management and by those committed to the organization. On the other hand, alienated employees and those who have little to lose are more likely to engage in illegitimate political behavior (Farrell & Peterson, 1982). In this study, the political behavior analyzed is legitimate political behavior since it is more commonly exercised in the organizations.

1.1. Legitimate Political Behaviors

Exchange of favors: the person makes an explicit or implicit promise that the other party will receive rewards or tangible benefits if the other party complies with a request or support a proposal or reminds the other of a prior favor to be reciprocated (Yukl & Fable, 1990; Kipnis, Schmidt & Wilkinson, 1980).

Coalition: the person looks for the help of others to convince someone to do something or utilizes the support of others as an argument to make someone agree with him/her (Yukl & Fable, 1990; Kipnis, Schmidt & Wilkinson, 1980).

Ingratiating: The person tries to get the other in good mood or to think favorably of him/her before asking to do something (Yukl & Fable, 1990; Kipnis, Schmidt & Wilkinson, 1980).

Pressure: the person uses demands, threats or intimidation to persuade the other to comply with a request or support a proposal (Yukl & Fable, 1990; Kipnis, Schmidt & Wilkinson, 1980).

Upward appeals: the person attempts to convince the other that the request is approved by higher management or attracts higher management for help in order to get the other's compliance with the request (Yukl & Fable, 1990; Kipnis, Schmidt & Wilkinson, 1980).

Rational persuasion: the person uses logical arguments and factual evidence to convince the other of the viability of the request (Yukl & Fable, 1990; Kipnis, Schmidt & Wilkinson, 1980).

Inspirational appeals: the person makes an emotional request or proposal that stimulates excitement by appealing to values, norms, ideas or by increasing confidence that the other can do it (Yukl & Fable, 1990; Kipnis, Schmidt and Wilkinson, 1980)

Consultation tactics: the person inquires the other's participation in making a decision or planning how to carry out a proposed policy, strategy or change (Yukl & Fable, 1990; Kipnis et.al.,1980).

For the clear understanding of political behavior and the factors that lead to this type of behavior, this study analyzes the antecedents of political behavior in terms of organization and the individual and aims to find out which of these antecedents are more likely to lead to political behavior.

The political behavior becomes more applicable as organizations become more complex, as the rate of technological change increases, and when key decisions are nonprogrammed and unstructured (Tushman, 1977).

Recent research has identified a number of factors that encourage political behavior. Some of these factors are individual and some are organizational factors. At the individual level, researchers claim that certain personality traits, needs and other factors are more likely to be related with political behavior. Biberman (1985) and Ferris, Russ and Fandt (1989) have found that employees who are self-monitors, who possess an internal locus of control and have a high need for power are more likely to exercise political behavior. They state that since self-monitors are more sensitive to social cues and show more social

conformity, they are more likely to be skillful in political behavior than the low self-monitor. Self-monitors have the ability to adjust their behaviors to external, situational factors and can behave differently in different situations (Snyder, 1987). Individuals with internal locus of control believe they can control their own environment, are more inclined to take proactive attitude and strive to manipulate situations in their favor. They think they are masters of their own fate. Furthermore, Machiavellian personality who has a strong desire for power and the desire to manipulate is more prone to use politics as a means of accomplishing his/her self-interests. Since an individual high in Machiavellianism believes that ends can justify means, using political behavior to achieve his/her goals is acceptable for him/her.

Moreover, Farrell and Peterson (1988) claim that individual's investment in the organization, perceived job alternatives and expectation of success when political behavior is used influences the degree to which the individual attempts to illegitimate means of political behavior. A person will be less likely to use illegitimate political behavior, if he/she has invested too much in the organization in terms of expectations of increased future benefits because he/she has more to lose if forced out. Those with low investments are more likely to pursue illegitimate political behavior since they have little to lose. On the other hand, the more likely he/she is to pursue illegitimate political behavior the more job alternatives an individual has because of favorable job market or possession of scarce skills or knowledge, well-known reputation or powerful contacts outside the organization. Furthermore, the individual is less likely to use illegitimate means of political behavior if he/she has a low expectation of success in using it.

Apart from individual factors, there are organizational factors that lead to the use of political behavior. It is a well-known fact that certain cultures and situations encourage politics. When the resources of the organization are decreasing, when there is a change in the existing pattern of resources, when an opportunity for promotion exists, politics is more likely to appear (Goh & Doucet, 1986; Hardy, 1987). Low trust, role ambiguity, unclear performance evaluation systems, zero-sum reward allocation practices, democratic decision-making, high pressures for performance and self-serving senior managers might create a context that promotes political behavior (Fandt & Ferris, 1990).

When organizations downsize for improving efficiency, resources must be reduced. Individuals might engage in political behavior to protect what they possess when they are threatened with the loss of resources. Any change that signals significant reallocation of resources is likely to encourage political behavior.

Promotion decisions implying an opportunity for advancements might stimulate individuals to compete for limited resources and try to impress the decision-maker. Therefore, they might be engaged in political behavior to influence the decision.

Trust is closely related to organizational dependability (Alutto & Belasco, 1972; Buchanan, 1974; Spencer & Steers, 1980). The prominence of political behavior is closely associated with trust. "If there is an extraordinarily high degree of trust, such as participants assuming that each is acting in each other's interests, then there need be little concern with issues of control and governance" (Pfeffer, 1978). Gamson (1968) states that when low level employees have high level of trust, they believe that authorities will produce the desired outcomes without the need for employees taking any action. On the other hand, low trust within the organization will promote illegitimate political behavior.

When the prescribed behaviors of the employees are not clear, that is, when there is role ambiguity, the more one can engage in political behavior with little chance of being obvious. Since political behavior is not defined in one's role requirements, the role ambiguity might create more room for politicking (Farrell & Petersen, 1982; Fandt & Ferris, 1990).

When the organizations use subjective criteria for performance appraisal or stress a single outcome measure or allow significant time lag between the time of performance and its evaluation, the greater the probability that an individual will involve in politicking. When the performance evaluation is not based on objective criteria, it creates ambiguity. When the appraisal is based on single outcome measure, the individual will do anything to excel on that measure at the expense of performing well on the other parts of the job that is not being evaluated. As the time between the time of performance and its evaluation gets longer, the more likely the individual will be held accountable for his/her political behavior (Farrell&Petersen, 1982; Fandt&Ferris, 1990).

Zero-sum reward allocation also encourages political behavior because any gain one gets will be at the expense of another person or group. In order to get a greater share of the pie, individuals might be engaged in politicking to make others look bad and oneself good (Farrell&Petersen, 1982; Fandt&Ferris, 1990).

High pressure for performance might lead individuals to political behavior. If an individual feels that the future of his/her career depends on certain outcomes, the probability of doing anything to achieve those results

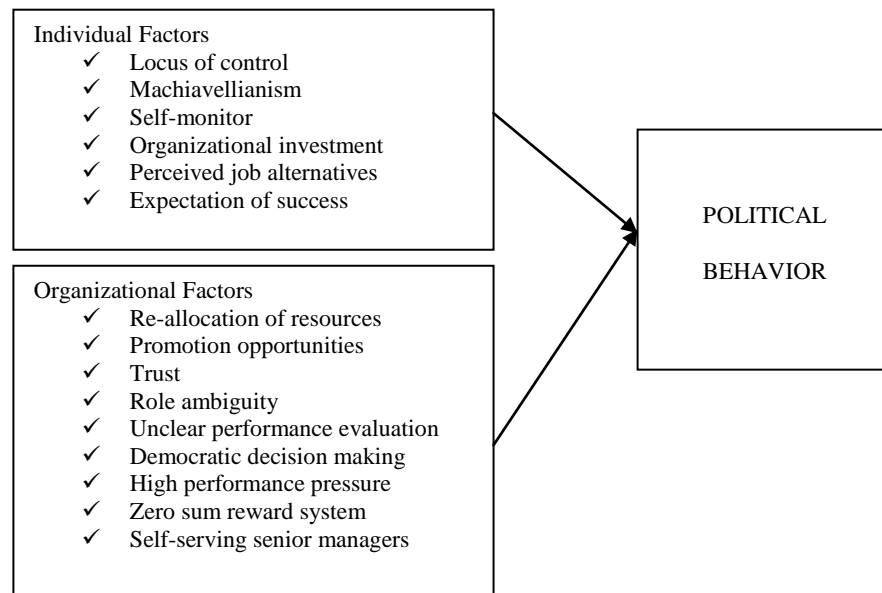
increases because there is great pressure to look good (Farrell&Petersen, 1982; Fandt&Ferris, 1990).

When employees see that top management engages in political behavior and is successful in doing so and rewarded for it, it becomes a role model. Political behavior by the top management inspires lower level employees to engage in politicking by indicating that such behavior is acceptable (Farrell&Petersen, 1982; Fandt&Ferris, 1990).

The move towards democratic organizational structure lets all level of employees participate in decision making. In fact, this is not welcomed by many old style top managers who are used to directing and ordering. They are not willing to share their power with others. As a result, they start using the committees, conferences and group meetings in a superficial way for maneuvering and manipulating (Farrell&Petersen, 1982; Fandt&Ferris, 1990).

Based on previous research findings, this study aims to find out which of the individual and organizational factors are more effective leading to political behavior. Antecedents of political behavior that are analyzed in this study are demonstrated in Figure 1.

Figure-1: Antecedents of Political Behavior



Source: Stephen (1998: 406).

Related with the model above the research question of the study is “Which of the individual and organizational factors are more effective leading to political behavior?”

2. METHOD

2.1. Instruments

Based on literature review, the antecedents of political behavior are categorized as individual and organizational factors. The individual factors analyzed in this study are *locus of control*, *self-monitor*, *expectation of success*, *organizational investment*, *perceived job alternatives* and *Machiavellianism*. The organizational factors analyzed are *role ambiguity*, *reallocation of resources*, *self-serving senior managers*, *zero-sum reward practices*, *high performance pressures*, *democratic decision-making*, *unclear performance evaluation*, *trust and promotion opportunities*. Of these factors, the inventory for the organizational factors has been developed by the researchers based on literature review. Among the individual factors, items for measuring the expectation of success, organizational investment and perceived job alternatives have also been developed by the researchers based on literature review. The items of locus of control have been adopted from Rotter (1971), items of Machiavellianism have been adopted from Christie & Geis (1970) and the items of self-monitor have been adopted from Lennox & Wolfe (1984). The scales ranged from “strongly agree (5)” to “strongly disagree (1)”.

The inventory for political behavior has been developed by the researchers in two steps.

Step 1: An open-ended question has been distributed to master students in Business Administration Department who are working in different sectors and organizations. They have been given a definition of political behavior and based on this definition, they have been asked to list five behaviors that they think are political in nature. After collecting responses from 131 respondents, the similar behaviors have been deleted and a total of 40 behaviors have been enlisted. To these behaviors, 13 behaviors that have not been given by the respondents, but included in the Inventory adopted from Kipnis et.al (1980) are also added. The total of the items is 53.

Step 2: As a result, a total of 53 behaviors have been distributed to 352 employees in different organizations and sectors. They have been asked to evaluate the given behaviors in terms of their relation to political behavior. The scale ranged from “too much political (5)” to “not political at all (1)”. After

analyzing the responses in terms of their relation, a total of 36 political behavior items have been developed to be included in this study.

In the political behavior inventory, these 36 behaviors are given to the final sample asking them how often they realize these behaviors on a scale ranging from “always (5)” to “never (1)”.

2.2. Sampling

The participants of the study were selected on the basis of convenience of access. Participants were professional employees (N = 329) who were working regularly in an office environment of different corporations in Turkey. According to self-reported demographics, the mean age of the sample was 32. They had a mean of 9,5 years of tenure in work life and a mean of 4,5 years of tenure in the current organization. Of all participants, 54 % were men, and 46 % were women. Of all participants, 49 % were married whereas 51 % were single. 40 % had children while 60 % had no children. 58 % of the participants were university graduates and 13% had master degree. Only 29% were high school graduates. Of all participants, 23% worked in public sector, while 77 % worked in private sector. 19% was top manager, 61% was middle-level manager and the rest was first-line managers.

Questionnaires were distributed by the researchers to each employee in different organizations. Totally 350 subjects participated in the study by answering the complete questionnaire. However, due to invalid answers, total number of the participants is 329.

2.3. Procedure

Questionnaires are distributed to participants by asking them whether they would be willing to participate in the study. 300 questionnaires were distributed to participants by visiting them in their offices and the completed surveys were recollected in two weeks time by the researchers themselves. 50 questionnaires were sent by e-mail to the participants' mail addresses. However, only 25 questionnaires have been filed in and sent back. Out of these 25, only 21 was valid and the four was not included in the analysis due to the missings.

The questionnaire included a cover letter where the researchers stressed the confidentiality of the participants. 329 questionnaires have been properly answered. The response rate is 94 %.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Reliability and Factor Analyses

SPSS program has been used to make analyses at the 0.05 significance level. Reliability analysis was conducted for the three inventory utilized in this study. All instruments were found to be as satisfactorily reliable. The results of the reliability analysis are shown in Table 1.

Table-1: Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients of Instruments

	Mean	Cronbach Alfa Coeff.
Individual factors	3,1504	,8142
Organizational factors	2,9320	,8233
Political Behavior	2,4344	,9561

Factor Analysis was conducted to find out the subcomponents of the three instruments by using the method of principle component.

Six different inventories have been used to identify the individual factors (locus of control, self-monitor, expectation of success, organizational investment, perceived job alternatives and Machiavellianism). Factor analysis has been conducted to check whether the items are collected under the same factors intended to measure the given dimensions. Although the items are collected under the six factors intended, the reliabilities of some of the inventory were very low. Therefore, only those factors whose reliabilities were acceptable included in the study (Table 2).

For the instrument identifying the individual antecedents, KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy was found as .797. This value indicates that the items of instrument are homogenous and that estimating the variance of each variable in correlation matrix by all of the other variables in the matrix is significantly high, so these items are appropriate for factor analysis. The value of Bartlett's test of sphericity was found as 1304,465 with the significant value of .000 which indicates that computed factor analysis is significant. 45 items were collected under three factors which have explaining power of 59,017% of total variation. The factors with their loadings and reliabilities are given in Table 2.

Table-2: Factors of Individual Antecedents

Factor No	Factor Labels	% of var.	Mean	α
1	Expectation of success	24,091	2,5909	,8463
2	Self-monitor	20,963	3,5684	,7830
3	Organizational investment	13,963	3,2918	,6462

Nine different inventories have been used to identify the organizational factors (role ambiguity, reallocation of resources, self-serving senior managers, zero-sum reward practices, high performance pressures, democratic decision-making, unclear performance evaluation, trust and promotion). Factor analysis has been conducted again to check whether the items are collected under the same factors intended to measure the given dimensions. The items are collected under eight factors. The items of the ninth factor were not included in the study due to low factor loading.

For the instrument identifying the organizational antecedents, KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy was found as .843. This value indicates that the items of instrument are homogenous and that estimating the variance of each variable in correlation matrix by all of the other variables in the matrix is significantly high, so these items are appropriate for factor analysis. The value of Bartlett's test of sphericity was found as 4240,257 with the significant value of .000 which indicates that computed factor analysis is significant. 39 items were collected under eight factors which have explaining power of 66,476 % of total variation. The factors with their loadings and reliabilities are given in Table 3.

Table-3: Factors of Organizational Antecedents

Factor No	Factor Labels	% of var.	Mean	α
1	Trust	20,492	3,2801	,8238
2	Reallocation of resources	17,093	2,8052	,8686
3	Zero-sum reward system	6,822	2,8290	,8314
4	Unclear performance evaluation	5,389	3,4400	,8163
5	Promotion opportunities	4,843	2,8166	,7661
6	Self-serving senior managers	4,554	2,8450	,7898
7	Role ambiguity	2,1814	2,1814	,6638
8	Democratic decision-making	3,467	3,2604	,7040

Factor analysis has been conducted to investigate the factors of political behavior inventory. The items have been collected under three factors. For the instrument identifying the political behavior, KMO Measure of Sampling

Adequacy was found as .960. This value indicates that the items of instrument are homogenous and that estimating the variance of each variable in correlation matrix by all of the other variables in the matrix is significantly high, so these items are appropriate for factor analysis. The value of Bartlett's test of sphericity was found as 4914,671 with the significant value of .000 which indicates that computed factor analysis is significant. 36 items were collected under three factors which have explaining power of 67,873 % of total variation. The factors with their loadings and reliabilities are given in Table 4.

Table-4: Factors of Political Behavior

Factor No	Factor Labels	% of var.	Mean	α
1	Exaggeration and insincerity	38,222	1,9325	,9330
2	Coalition	16,432	2,7082	,8571
3	Exchange of favors	13,219	2,6626	,6970

3.2. Regression Analyses

Several regression analyses have been conducted to find out the effect of individual antecedents and organizational antecedents on political behavior. First of all, the effect of total individual and organizational antecedents has been measured by regression analysis. As a result, it has been found out that total individual antecedents have approximately 30% contribution and total organizational antecedents have 40% contribution on total political behavior. However, the explaining power of the model in both cases is very low as seen in Table 5.

When both total individual and organizational antecedents have been regressed on political behavior, the explaining power of the model increases ($\text{Adj } R^2$,164). The contribution of total individual antecedents is approximately ,120 and the contribution of total organizational antecedents is approximately ,330 (Table 5).

Table-5: Result of the Regression Analysis Between Total Individual Antecedents, Total Organizational Antecedents and Total Political Behavior

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Multiple R	Adjusted R square	F	F sig.	Variables in the equation		
						Beta	t	Sig. t
Total Individual Antecedents	Total Political Behavior	,297	,086	31,681	,000	,297	5,629	,000
Total Organizational Antecedents	Total Political Behavior	,397	,155	27,713	,000	,397	7,816	,000
Total Individual Antecedents	Total Political Behavior	,411	,164	33,175	,000	,126	2,141	,033
Total Organizational Antecedents						,332	5,630	,000

As a second step in the regression analyses, the effect of both the total individual antecedents and the total organizational antecedents on the factors of political behaviors individually have been analyzed. It has been found out that only the organizational antecedents have contribution on “exaggeration and insincerity” and “coalition” factors of political behavior. However, the explaining power of the model is still very low (Table 6). On the “exchange of favor” factor of political behavior, both the total individual antecedents and the total organizational antecedents have been found to have an effect as seen in Table 6.

Table-6: Result of the Regression Analysis Between Total Individual Antecedents, Total Organizational Antecedents and Political Behavior Factors

Independent variable	Dependent variable: Political Behavior Factors	Multiple R	Adjusted R square	F	F sig.	Variables in the equation		
						Beta	t	Sig. t
Total Organizational Antecedents	Exaggeration and insincerity	,479	,227	97,421	,000	,479	9,870	,000
Total Organizational Antecedents	Coalition	,266	,068	24,846	,000	,266	4,985	,000
Total Individual Antecedents	Exchange of favors	,282	,074	14,089	,000	,161	2,601	,010
Total Organizational Antecedents						,163	2,624	,009

As a third analysis, the effect of the factors of individual antecedents on the factors of political behavior has been tested. Among the factors of individual antecedents, “expectation of success” and “self-monitor” factors have been found to affect “exaggeration and insincerity” and “coalition” factors of political behavior. “Expectation of success” factor has approximately ,570 contribution and “self-monitor” factor has ,130 negative contribution on “exaggeration and insincerity” factor of political behavior. “Expectation of success” factor has approximately ,430 contribution and “self-monitor” factor has ,210 negative contribution on “coalition” factor of political behavior. On the other hand, on the “exchange of favors” factor of political behavior, only the “expectation of success” factor has been found to have an effect (approx. 39%) as seen in Table 7.

Table-7: Result of the Regression Analysis Between Individual Factors and Political Behavior Factors

Independent variable: Individual Factors	Dependent variable: Political Behavior Factors	Multiple R	Adjusted R square	F	F sig.	Variables in the equation		
						Beta	t	Sig. t
Expectation of success	Exaggeration and insincerity	,597	,352	90,214	,000	,569	12,743	,000
Self-monitor						-,132	-2,953	,003
Expectation of success	Coalition	,495	,240	52,794	,000	,428	8,846	,000
Self-monitor						-,209	-4,318	,000
Expectation of success	Exchange of favors	,386	,146	57,203	,000	,386	7,563	,000

All the factors of the organizational antecedents have been regressed on the factors of political behavior to find out the contribution of each factor. It has been found out that on the “exaggeration and insincerity” factor of political behavior, “reallocation of resources” (approx. ,170), “zero-sum reward system” (approx. ,250), “unclear performance evaluation system” (approx. ,220), “self-serving senior managers” (approx. ,130), “role ambiguity” (approx. ,290) have contributions (Table 8).

“Zero-sum reward system” and “role ambiguity” factors of organizational antecedents have been found to have contribution on “coalition” factor of political behavior. The explaining power of the model is very low (approx. ,110). “Zero-sum reward system” factor has been found to have contribution (approx. ,250) on the “exchange of favors” factor of political behavior.

Table-8: Result of the Regression Analysis Between Organizational Factors and Political Behavior Factors

Independent variable: Organizational Factors	Dependent variable: Political Behavior Factors	Multiple R	Adjusted R square	F	F sig.	Variables in the equation		
						Beta	t	Sig. t
Reallocation of resources	Exaggeration and insincerity	,548	,290	27,774	,000	,166	3,149	,002
Zero-sum reward system						,252	4,821	,000
Unclear performance evaluation						,217	4,061	,000
Self-serving senior managers						,133	2,359	,019
Role ambiguity						,292	5,739	,000
Zero-sum reward system	Coalition	,336	,108	20,777	,000	,281	5,374	,000
Role ambiguity						,173	3,304	,001
Zero-sum reward system	Exchange of favors	,249	,059	21,606	,000	,249	4,648	,000

Finally, all the factors of individual antecedents and organizational antecedents have been put together into regression analysis with political behavior. It has been found out that “expectation of success”, “self-monitor”, “zero-sum reward system”, “unclear performance evaluation”, “role ambiguity” and “democratic decision-making” factors affect “exaggeration and insincerity” factor of political behavior as seen in Table 9. “Trust”, “reallocation of resources” and “zero-sum reward system” factors of organizational antecedents have been found to affect “coalition” factor of political behavior and “expectation of success” factor of individual antecedents and “zero-sum reward system” factor of organizational antecedents have been found to affect “exchange of favors” factor of political behavior (Table 9).

Table-9: Result of the Regression Analysis Between Individual Factors, Organizational Factors and Political Behavior Factors

Independent variable: Individual Factors & Organizational Factors	Dependent variable: Political Behavior Factors	Multiple R	Adjusted R square	F	F sig.	Variables in the equation		
						Beta	t	Sig. t
Expectation of success	Exaggeration and insincerity	,663	,429	42,096	,000	,461	9,948	,000
Self-monitor						-,108	-2,415	,016
Zero-sum reward system						,189	4,153	,000
Unclear performance evaluation						,111	2,228	,027
Role ambiguity						,208	4,322	,000
Democratic decision-making						,096	2,027	,043
Trust	Coalition	,515	,258	39,105	,000	,368	7,103	,000
Reallocation of resources						-,220	-4,582	,000
Zero-sum reward system						,156	3,017	,003
Expectation of success	Exchange of favors	,401	,156	31,308	,000	,340	6,207	,000
Zero-sum reward system						,120	2,181	,030

CONCLUSION

Political behavior is very important for the organizations because previous research implies that paying attention to organization politics has utility for the members of the organization. Morrison (1992), report that it is useful for organizational newcomers to look for information related with how the political behavior functions in their new organization. Madison et al. (1980) reported that 46% of the managers in their sample viewed politics as equally or more helpful than job performance in attaining faster promotions. Krackhardt (1990) reported that employees with more accurate perceptions of the informal networks within their organizations were seen as more powerful by other members. These results imply that employees may pay attention to political

behavior in order to better comprehend what is happening in the organization and to exercise greater control over events in their work environment.

The main objective of the study was to find out which of the individual and organizational factors are more effective in leading to political behavior. It has been found out that both individual and organizational antecedents contribute to political behavior. When the political behaviors are analyzed individually, it has been found out that while both the characteristics of the individual and organization contribute to exaggerated and insincere behaviors, only the characteristics of the individual are effective in building up coalition and exchanging favors with others to achieve desired results.

When the characteristics of the individual are taken alone to find out which of the characteristics are more effective, it has been found out that expectation of success is very important in leading to political behavior. That is, if individuals expect that they will get what they want when they act politically, they will be engaged in different types of political behaviors such as exaggerating their performance, acting insincerely toward others such that they may act as if they support them or approve what they do when in fact they do not, building coalitions and doing favors for others to get favors in turn for themselves.

Among the individual characteristics, those who are self-monitors are found to behave less politically, that is they do not behave insincerely or exaggerate their behaviors to get others' approval, they are also found not to build up coalitions. This finding is contrary to the previous research which claims that since self-monitors are more sensitive to social cues and show more social conformity, they are more likely to be skillful in political behavior than the low self-monitor. Self-monitors have the ability to adjust their behaviors to external, situational factors and can behave differently in different situations (Snyder, 1987). On the other hand, research conducted among a sample of 101 supervisor-subordinate pairs in a healthcare setting, revealed that there is a significant interaction between self-monitoring and past evaluation of an individual's job performance. That is, high self-monitors are more inclined to engage in political behavior when they had received positive performance ratings, but avoid engaging in political behavior when they had received less favorable appraisals. On the contrary, the political behavior of low self-monitors was not affected by their past performance ratings (Fuller, Barnett, Hester, Relyea and Frey, 2007). As a result we might assume that the finding of this study in which the self-monitors are found not to engage in political behavior might be due to their past performance appraisal and their not being successful when engaged in political behavior in the past due to the culture of the organization not being appropriate for such behavior. Therefore, the

characteristics of the culture and the characteristics of the sample might be leading to different results in different research.

When the characteristics of the organization are analyzed, it has been found out that when the resources are to be reallocated among employees, employees exaggerate their performance and work to get more of the resources. On the other hand, when there is reallocation of resources, employees are not involved coalition building type of political behavior. When the organization's reward system is established such that what one gains changes according to what others lose, that is it is zero-sum reward system, then individuals exaggerate their performance, behave insincerely to get others' approval and build up coalitions to get more out of the pie.

Moreover, when the performance evaluation criterion is not clear and when the roles of the employees are ambiguous they would be more involved in exaggerating performance and behaving insincerely to achieve their own goals.

The behaviors of the managers are also important in being a model. If employees observe their managers engaging in political behavior and witness that they become successful when they do so, they will also be engaged in political behavior.

To sum up, political behavior is a reality of organizational life. Of course, legitimate political behavior is more common in organization while the illegitimate politics is dangerous for the implementer. However, organizations can take some measures to reduce the political behavior. As the findings of the study suggest that expectation of success, role ambiguity, unclear performance evaluation system, self-serving managers, reallocation of resources, zero-sum reward system lead to some type of political behavior. If the organizations want to have more real behavior that is, behavior not exaggerated and sincere, they have to make their performance evaluation criteria more clear, objective and help everyone understand it. On the other hand, managers themselves should be role models to the subordinates if they do not want to have political behavior in the organization. If they act objectively, sincerely and become more open and show the positive consequences of this type of behavior to the others, then their behavior will become a role model to others. The roles and duties of the employees should be made very clear and employees should know what is expected of them. If employees can observe what type of behaviors is rewarded and see that political behavior is not accepted within the organization, then their probability of engaging in such behavior would be reduced. Zero-sum reward system is not very healthy for the organizations because it leads to win-lose approach. Therefore, reward system should be developed in such a way that employees understand cooperation, information sharing and openness are

rewarded. If the individuals expect that the political behavior would help them achieve their goals more easily, they would be more readily involved in such behavior. This type of expectation would not be developed by the individuals if they see the consequences are not positive.

One important finding of this study is the positive contribution of "democratic decision-making" on the insincerity and exaggeration factor of political behavior. It was found out that as people are more involved in decisions, they behave more politically by exaggerating their performance and showing themselves differently to get others' approval. This finding is consistent with previous research stating that political behavior is more dominant at the upper levels of organizations (Ferris, Russ, & Fandt, 1989; Madison, Allen, Porter, Renwick & Mayes, 1980) due to the uncertainty and ambiguity in the decisions that upper management takes (Feldman, 1988; Ferris, Harrell-Cook & Dulebohn, 2000). Since decisions must be made collectively by bargaining and exercising influence and due to radical innovations, new technology, and/or uncertainty about goals, the likelihood of individuals utilizing political behavior to reach their objectives is increasing (Ferris et al., 1996; Prasad, 1993). These actions might include the formation of internal or external alliances and coalitions, withholding key information from decision-makers, agenda control, and cooptation, or lobbying key executives in an attempt to gain their support (Eisenhardt & Bourgeois, 1988; Pettigrew, 1973; Pfeffer, 1981). The organizations should be very careful when involving employees in decision-making. When democratic decision-making is applied within the organization, the performance criteria should be very clear. Individuals should be encouraged to be open, transparent and every idea proposed should be valued objectively. Then the employees might not feel the need to engage in political behavior to impress others.

This study has many limitations. The results of the study cannot be generalized to the whole population due to the sample size. Different results might be obtained with different and a larger sample.

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