RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED ORGANISATIONAL POLITICS AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE AMONG STAFF OF LAGOS STATE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

IBIRONKE, ADEKUNLE EMMANUEL[1], KOLAWOLE, IBUKUN OLORUNISOLA (Ph.D)[2], PROF. FAPOHUNDA TINUKE MORADEKE[3]

DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT,

FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCE, LAGSO STATE UNIVERSITY, OJO, LAGOS, NIGERIA

Abstract: **The study investigated the influence of organisational politics on employee performance in public sector with particular reference to Lagos State Civil Service Commission. The study adopted the cross sectional survey method and uses the primary source of data collection.. Data were collected from 90 employees of Lagos State Civil Service Commission. Data was analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis at 0.05 level of significance. The results of the two hypotheses tested in the study confirmed that organisational politics significantly influence employees' performance. The study therefore conclude that organisational politics is prevalent in public organisations and is caused by both individual and organisational factors which in turn exert significant effect on performance. Therefore, the study recommends that management in the public sector should actively focus on managing political behaviour that will affect employees' performance and that they should pursue equal promotional opportunities for building loyalty and increase employees' morale competency, to reward commitment, hard working and loyal employees among others,**

Keywords: **Organisational politics, public sector, employee performance, behaviour. Lagos State.**

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of organisational politics has been a subject of study by many scholars and practitioners within the field of management and organisational behaviour, the concept has been identified with different kinds of controversies across organisations (Ugwu, Ndugbu, Okoroji & Kalu, 2014). Organisations are characterised with relationships that have both individual and collective interests therefore the interplay of politics is inevitable because it takes a lot of political manoeuvring to achieve and protect one's interest (Ugwu, Ndugbu, Okoroji & Kalu, 2014).

Krietner and Kinicki (2004) mentioned that relationship in the place work involves human elements which are characterised by a lot of political games which should be managed and handled with care, sincerity and maturity to avoid being escalated out of control. One of the major problems that human resource managers are facing today is the 'bad political behaviour' or manoeuvring of interests that now come to affect employees performance negatively due to conflict, hatred and rancour that emanates from unfriendly work environment. The implication is that it results to lower productivity and uncivil (negative work behaviour) behaviour at work if not managed well (Ugwu, et al. 2014).

Drory and Vigoda-Gadot (2010) stated that the politics of management and the management of politics in the workplace have received a great deal of attention due to the image of pervasiveness, mystery, and the potential benefits for those who know how to use them in the struggle for resources. Politics in organisations is thus used to promote interests and

gain advantages over perceived rivals but also in non-market areas such as the non-profit sector and governmental agencies. Sule, Amuni, Ashiru and Ariyo (2015) also affirmed that organisational politics (OP) enjoys current popularity in academic research as well as in the discourse on practical management. Though they reported that its significance for human resource management (HRM) is yet to get deeper study and awaits further theoretical exploration and understanding in relations to organisational behaviours.

According to Araba (2010), in the performance of one's duty and official relationships it is impossible to ignore the role of organisational politics and the tremendous impact that the phenomenon called politics exerts on whether one progresses or not in the career path especially in the public sector in Nigeria. The Public Sector Organisations (PSOs) are entrusted with the task of providing goods and services that are deemed essential to both people and organisations to achieve their goals and objectives at a domestic and international level (Bhuiyan & Francis, 2011). The main functions of the public sector are to participate in key areas to serve and facilitate improved infrastructure development, reform the comprehensive policies and regulatory framework for people, businesses, economic and social development (Abbas & Awan, 2017). A more dynamic role of the public sector is to create and develop a growth strategy for competitive culture of inspiration that is overstretching the management capacity, employees' performance and resources that is in the organisation (Abbas & Awan, 2017).

Ferris, Fedor, Chachere, and Pondy (2000) submitted that organisational politics is a social influence process that involves behaviours that are strategically designed to maximize short-term or long-term self-interest that may be consistent with or at the expense of other's interests. Therefore, organisational politics may be beneficial or detrimental to the organisation as well as other organisation members (Vigoda, 2002). Vigoda (2002) itemized some positive outcomes of organisational politics to include career advancement, recognition and status, and enhanced sense of control. The negative consequences of organisational politics are 'loss of strategic power, negative feelings [and actions] toward other (Vigoda, 2002). In the present study, the researcher examine the perception of organisational politics rather than the actual political behaviour because Poon (2003) submitted that individuals' attitudes and behaviours are determined by their perceptions of reality and not reality itself.

According to Ferris, Zinko, Brouer, Buckley and Harvey (2007), uncertainty is a major predictor of perception of organisational politics. Furthermore, Ferris, Adams, Kolodinsky, Hochwarter, and Ammeter (2002) submitted that when employees remain in a workplace, they perceive as uncertain and political certain decision that may influence them to participate in political behaviour in order to survive the turbulent period, keep their jobs, and regain some control in the workplace. However, some employees who perceive organisational politics may choose to remain within the organisation structure but refuse to participate in political behaviour. To such employees, organisational politics has become a workplace stressor, which may culminate in increased physical and psychological stress and strain reactions (Vigoda, 2002; VigodaGadot & Kapun, 2005). Employees who are non beneficiaries of political manipulations in the organisation, but choose to remain in the employment of the organisation may react with negative work attitudes and behaviours toward the organisation (Ferris et al., 2002; Hochwarter, Perrewe, & Ferris, 2003; Shenge, 2007; Valle & Perrewe, 2000).

The reaction of employees to perception of organisational politics may not be limited to the organisation. Perception of organisational politics has been associated with uncivil behaviour at work (Pearson & Porath, 2005) and violent behaviours toward other organisational members (Poon, 2003; Vigoda, 2002), especially those perceived as perpetrators or beneficiaries of such political behaviours. Therefore, employees who perceived organisational politics may engage in workplace incivility against perpetrators or beneficiaries of such political interests as a pay-back approach (Ferguson & Beaver, 2009).

Perceived organisational politics is seen as an individual's (employee) observation or interpretation of other's self-interested behaviours. Politics is considered a phenomenon that is part of the regular social makeup of any human organisation (Abbas & Raja, 2014). It is argued to be a functional tool, as political environments and competitions bring about increase productivity (Vigoda & Cohen, 2002; Yilmaz, 2014). From another angle, it is considered as dysfunctional (Yilmaz, 2014), because, it is the pursuit of both individual and organisational agendas in an organisation without regard to the resulting effect on the organisation's efforts to achieve its goals.. Based on these studies, the researcher is interested in identifying if on the one hand there is relationship between organisational politics and employee performance in Lagos State Civil Service Commission.

Statement of the Problem

Some of the major problems of the public sector in Nigeria include low and ineffective level of performance. This according to several studies (Abbas & Raja, 2014; Hochwarter, Perrewe, & Ferris 2003; Shenge, 2007) is as a result of the unhealthy political relationship that exist and is common in the public sector. Public service workers in many instances have demonstrated in so many ways low level of job performance which is as a result of the high rate of political activities in the sector. The causes of the unhealthy political relationship in organisation most especially the public sectors according to McAdam & McClelland, (2002) are group under the individual and organisational factors that are demonstrated as a result of inadequate resources across the sector which has inevitably give room for political game in sharing the scarce resources, which by all given standard, would not meet every persons' expectation and interest.

Also, Nawaraj and Khadka (2012) noted that limited number of positions for the wider number of personnel that are in the public sector is another reason why politics is always perceived to be ongoing in the sector. Based on these facts, the researcher seeks to address the above mentioned problems by investigating the relationship between organisational politics and employee's performance in the public sector of Lagos State.

Objective of the Study

The broad objective of this study is:

To determine the type of relationship that exists between organisational politics and employees' performance in Lagos State Civil service Commission in Lagos State.

The specific objective of this study is:

(i) To examine the relationship between organisational factors and employees' performance in Lagos State Civil service Commission

(ii) To ascertain the relationship that exists between individual factors and employees' performance in Lagos State Civil service Commission.

Research questions

In relation to the objectives of this study, this paper will provide answers to the following questions:

i. Does organisational factor has any relationship with employee performance in the Lagos State civil service commission?

ii. Is there any relationship between individual factors and employee performance in the Lagos State civil service commission?

Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between organisational factors and employee performance in the Lagos State civil service commission

Hypothesis Two

Ho_2: There is no significant relationship between individual factors and employee performance in the Lagos State civil service commission

Conceptual Clarifications

Organisational Politics

According to (Vigoda & Drory, 2006) numerous researches have been conducted on organisational politics in the last three decades with the focus on the power and capabilities of leadership in an organisation and essentially paying attention on management and leadership (Bodla & Danish, 2010). Organisational politics refers to the complex mixture of power, influence, behaviour and understanding leadership processes, self-interest behaviour in the organisation (Vigoda, 2002) and is generally related to the situations such as power struggles, conflicts over the sources of power and responsibilities to influence (Vigoda, 2006). According to (Sowmya & Panchanatham, 2009) organisational politics is behaviour to influence individuals or groups in an organisation. Vigoda-Gadot, Vinarski-Peretz, & Ben-Zion (2003) are of

the view that when individuals work for their own interests and do not care for the goals of the organisation and well being of others these actions indicate organisational politics. Zivnuska et al., (2004) stated that there are two elements of organisational politics, which should be considered while investigating the attitude of employees and organisational politics. Firstly the view and perception of organisational politics has more importance than reality. Secondly, organisational politics might be beneficial for the individual or, it can be disadvantageous for the employee. So it can be concluded that organisational politics can be beneficial for the employees and can be a threat to the carrier as well Zivnuska et al., (2004).

Futhermore, Bodla and Danish (2010) define organisational politics in terms of behaviour and action of individuals in an organisation to enhance their performance professional career. According to the researchers, organisational politics work as an antecedent to outcomes of employees. As people act according to the perception of reality, perception of politics is important for the employees in an organisation (Boerner et al., 2007). Bodla and Danish (2010) have stated that people can respond to the Abbas & Awan (2017). Organisational Politics and Employee Performance situation according to their perception and real situation could be different from that. Pfeffer and Vega (1999) has termed politics as a dominant and wider social mean that determines the basic functioning of the organisation, and commonly indicate power and influence tactics. Also the likes of Vigoda-Gadot et al., (2003) have highlighted that the self-serving behaviour of individuals is not accepted in the organisation is a common theme. In a common perception original meaning of politics is that when individual strives for its right in the society with the help of negotiation and consultation (Watson, 2006). When employees perceive organisational politics at a high level, it indicates their dissatisfaction with the job (Robbins, 2003). Bodla and Danish (2010) highlight several factors which have an influence on perception of organisational politics.

Employee Performance

In today's competitive environment and highly unstable economic conditions, it has become vital for the employers to look for new ways to increase the productivity of their employees (Zivnuska et al., 2004). These circumstances have an effect on the attitudes of employees and their behaviours towards their work and in return also affect their performance. Many organisations have understood this and have adopted policies for the benefit of the employees which has given them a lot of benefit in return (Marchington & Wilkinson, 2005).

Performance can be improved by employing abilities to generate new ideas and use this ability to build relations and processes of work (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007; McAdam & McClelland, 2002). The performance of the organisation can be enhanced by employing the right employees in the organisation (Davidson, 2003; Karatepe, Yorganci, & Haktanir, 2009). Empowered employees are not only efficient and high performing (Davidson, 2003) but are also responsible and are able to share it equally to the success of the organisation (McAdam & McClelland, 2002). It has been suggested by Sonnentag and Frese (2004) that employee capacities can only be increased if leadership plays its role in employee development.

Another element which plays a vital role in improving performance is adaptability. An element of adaptability is the result of learning of individuals and brings out a change in the society (Argote, Gruenfeld & Naquin, 2000). Coordination helps the individuals to work with flexibility, to accept change and due to all these positive aspects several goals can be achieved (Day, Gronn & Salas, 2004). With an open communication environment, business decisions and matters are discussed openly in an organisation, it ensures the trust of the employees and delivers a message to them that they are trusted by the organisation (Marchington and Wilkinson, 2005).

Causes of organisational politics

The factors that lead to political behaviour in organisations according to (De Jong & Den Hartog, (2007); McAdam & McClelland, (2002)) are basically two measures. They emphasized that political behaviour is influenced by factors such as:-

A. Individual Factors

i. High Self-Monitors

ii. Internal Locus of Control

iii. Organisational Investment

iv. Perceived Job Alternatives

v. Expectations of Success

B. Organisational Factors

i. Promotion Opportunities

ii. Low Trust

iii. Reallocation of Resources

iv. Role Ambiguity

v. Unclear Performance Evaluation System

vi. Democratic Decision Making

vii. Self-Serving Senior Managers

Perceptions of Organisational Politics

Jeroen and Deaman (2007) have defined organisational politics as the amount to which employees observe their work setting as political in nature which result to make them feel their environment unfair and unjust. There are many other definitions which focus on use of power (Pfeffer, 1992), illegitimate and non sanctioned behaviour (Mintzberg, 1983) and influential activities (Vigoda, 2000). Studies on organisational politics have largely discussed the politicized work environment as carrier of dysfunctional outcomes (Gillmore, Ferris, Dulebohn and Harrell-Cook, 1996; Bodla and Danish, 2009, 2012). The nature of behaviour of employees in organisations is often political and nobody can escape from political environment. Perceptions of organisational politics have been construed to be strongly negatively associated with job performance and satisfaction (Kacrnar, Bozeman, Carlson and Anthony, 1999), organisational commitment and job performance and positively associated with job anxiety and turnover intentions (Araba, 2010). Vigoda (2002) contended that due to negative perceptions of organisational politics, unfair and unjust environment is predominant which compel people to quit from the organisation. Non reciprocating and unfair environment is one outcome of organisational politics (Vigoda, 2002) and employees don't view that their efforts and investments will bring them the equitable and fair returns in future and as a result exchange relationship is not in harmony or balance.

Organisational Politics and Employee Performance

According to Gotsis and Kortezi (2011) organisational politics is a search of self-interest of individuals in the organisation in line to their effect in the efforts to the organisation to achieve its objectives. Politics is crucial and forms part of every organisation, Vigoda-Gadot and Drory (2006) suggest that the issue is of prime importance to any type of organisation, in any field, market, sector, and culture reiterating that organisational politics may be used to target, secure or maximize collective interests in cases where several decisions are possible that affect different interests.

On the other hand as was suggested by Kacmar and Ferris (1991) and Kacmar and Carlson(1994), perceptions of organisational politics represent the degree to which employees view their work environment as political in nature promoting the self-interests of others and thereby unjust and unfair from the individual's point of view. Bounded self-interest assumption is more representative of actual human behaviour. Some of the selfish organisational members primarily promote self-interest even at the expense of organisational objectives and revealed their activities in the direction of greater organisational good. Gadot (2007) shows the intervening effect of the organisational politics on performance. Performance includes the mode by which the employees perform their work and the flexible behaviour of individual to go ahead of the basic requirements of job for the benefit of organisation. He says that there is a direct and positive relationship between organisational politics and performance. The individuals who show high involvement in their jobs consider their work to be a very important part of their lives.

According to Poon (2006), trust in supervisor and employee willingness to assist the co-worker observes less politics. According to Field (2011) interest of members of organisation are intimidated by the pay renegotiation and performance management which are also helpful for organisational change and learning. According to the Sheard, Kakabadse and Kakabadse (2011) the political nature of manager and style of leadership are the main tenets that affect employee performance. This shows how leadership and politics is effective in influencing performance of employees

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on Social Exchange Theory which evolved from Thorndike's work of (1935) on the development of Reinforcement Theory. The model comprise of five central elements:

Behaviour is predicated upon the notion of rationality: That is, the more behaviour results in a reward, the more individuals will behave that way and expect to enjoy many of such rewards.

Relationship is based on reciprocation: That is, each individual in the relationship will provide benefits to the other so long as the exchange is equitable and the units of exchange are important to the respective parties. An exchange between two individuals must be seen as fair by both parties for the relationship to continue.

Social exchange is based on a justice principle: In each exchange, there should be a norm of fairness governing behaviour. The exchange must be viewed as fair when compared in the context of a wider network to third and fourth parties. This notion of distributive justice goes beyond the equity between the two principals' contribution. It involves each person comparing his or her reward to that of others who have dealt with this individual (the employee's superior) and what they received for the same or a similar contribution.

Individual gains, individuals will seek to maximize their gains and minimize their costs in the exchange relation: It is important to understand that the notion of costs does not relate exclusively to financial issues; rather, costs can be incurred through the time and energy invested in a relationship.

Individuals participate in a relationship out of a sense of mutual benefit rather than coercion. Thus, coercion should be minimized as employees tend to view the work sphere as fair and just in cases where social ties can support their interests and ambitions**.**

This theory is relevant to this study because the five central elements of the theory reflect the political behaviours and relationship that are displayed among members of organisation.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed the cross sectional survey method. It made use of questionnaire as a means of gathering useful and accurate data relating to the topic under study. The population of the study comprised of staff of Lagos State Civil Service Commission, Lagos State, Nigeria. Available reports shows that the staff population of the Lagos State Civil Service Commission is 127 staff

Table 1: Staff Spread in Lagos State Civil Service Office (2018)

Categories	Numbers of Staff	Numbers Sampled
Management staff	38	27
Senior Staff	53	38
Junior Staff	36	25
Total	127	90

The purposive sampling technique was employed because the technique enables the investigator to judgmentally select participants based on researcher knowledge about the population. A sample size of 90 was estimated with Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination table.

The primary data was obtained through the administration of questionnaire to the respondents. The hypotheses were tested using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation with the aid of (SPSS) computer software for the analysis. The face validity which is a type of content validity test was adopted, which depends on researcher's subjective evaluation as the validity of a measuring instrument.

Self administered questionnaire was used as an instrument to capture the perceptions of respondents regarding organisational politics and employee performance. Items related to organisational politics (10 items) were adapted from the study of Vigoda (2007) the first five measure individual factors of organisational politics and the last five items measures organisational factors; while employee performance items (5 items) were taken from the studies of Johnson (2003). To check the accuracy and consistency of the instrument Cronbach alpha was used for test calculation. The

Cronbach alpha values ranging between 0.75 - 0.87 was arrived at, indicating the suitability of the questionnaire. Further data analysis was carried out using Pearson Product Correlation.

4. RESULT OF DATA ANALYSIS

From the ninety (90) questionnaires administered to the participants from the selected organisation of study, the researcher was able to retrieved eighty-six (86) of the instruments which was then used for the analysis as shown below:

Test of Hypotheses

The hypotheses stated earlier are empirically tested using the responses from the research instrument administered.

Hypothesis Ono:

H_o: There is no significant relationship between organisational factors and employee performance in the Lagos State civil service commission.

Table 2: Correlation analysis of Hypothesis One

		Organisational Factors	Employee Performance
Organisational factors	Pearson Correlation	1	.758[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	86	86
Employee Performance	Pearson Correlation	.758[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	86	86

The analysis from the correlation table above shows that the p-value < 0.01 (at a 2-tailed test). This means that the result is statistically significant at 1% confidence level. The r value 0.758 (76%) shows that there is a strong positive relationship between organisational factors and employee performance in Lagos State Civil Service Commission.

Hypothesis Two:

H_o: There is no significant relationship between individual factors and employee performance in the Lagos State civil service commission

Table 3: Correlation analysis of Hypothesis Two

		Individual factors	Employee Performance
Individual factors	Pearson Correlation	1	. 969[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	86	86
Employee Performance	Pearson Correlation	. 969[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	86	86

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

The table above shows that p-value < 0.01 (at a 2-tailed test). This means that the result is statistically significant at 1% confidence level. The r value 0.969 (97%) shows that there is a strong positive relationship between individual factors of and employee performance in Lagos State Civil Service Commission.

5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Relationship between Individual Factors and Employee Performance

The impact of individual dimensions of organisational politics on employee performance has been examined with the help of multiple regression analysis. The results of findings corroborates with the studies of Burke and Ng (2006) that stated that employees view organisational politics differently in many ways like occupational service, placement decisions and promotions. Researchers like Mosadegh et al., (2006); Ram and Prabhakar (2010) are also of the view that public sector

Page | 1414

employees are more prone to use political methods like personal relationships, etc., for their own advantage and to have a strong control in their working environment. Organisational Politics is about the actions of employees to protects and promotes their own interests, availing opportunities to fulfil their interests without the consideration of organisational interests (Kacmar & Bozeman, 1999).

Relationship between Organisational Factors and Employee Commitment

The second hypothesis which tested the relationship between organisational factors and employee performance shows a significant relationship. This finding suggests that the perception of politics in any organisation has a dire consequence on the organisation as a whole. The results are in consonance with the findings of earlier studies (e.g. Pearson & Porath, 2005; Poon, 2003; Vigoda, 2002; Vigoda-Gadot & Kapun, 2005) on consequences of perception of organisational politics. Pearson and Porath (2005) posited that employees will react with workplace incivility toward other organisational members who they believe are connected with unfavorable political manipulations in the workplace. This implied that an employee who perceived organisational politics but choose not to participate in political behaviour might have reacted with workplace incivility against the perpetrators or beneficiaries of the political manipulations in the workplace because he/ she does not have the power and hierarchical status to react overtly.

6. CONCLUSION

The study investigated the relationship between organisational politics and employee performance in Lagos State civil service commission. The study indicates that organisational politics is prevalent in public organisations. Furthermore, organisational politics are caused by both individual and organisational factors which in turn exert significant effect on performance. The common perception is that public sector employees use their personal political influences and show of power to achieve their interests especially in related areas that affect job performance. The study is not without its limitations. Firstly, the use of purposive sampling technique itself renders the results of the study not be generalized. Therefore, future studies should focus on applying other methods of sampling. Secondly, the study focused on public sector in Lagos State. The results may vary if larger sample size and private organisations are considered. A comparative analysis between public and private sectors across the country or between countries may also enhance our understanding of organisational politics and performance in developing countries.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusion, it is recommended that:

1. Management in the public sector of Lagos State should actively focus on managing political behaviour that will lead to employees' high job performance.

2. The commission should pursue equal promotional opportunities for building loyalty and increase employees' morale competency, to reward committed, hard working and loyal employees, to increase employees' self-development that it limits high labour turnover and to promote competitive spirit and encourage employees to acquire the skills required by the organisation.

3. The commission should ensure proper pay structure including pay for performance and other bonuses that will reduce negative effects of political behaviour.

4. Management should look out for motivational factors that will encourage positive behaviour among employees at all levels to encourage equal and fair treatment irrespective of any affiliations.

5. Management should ensure that the organisational structure networks the employees' roles and positions within the organisation in order to moderate employees' activities and perceptions about the nature of workplace.

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