

**Examining The Mediating Effect Of
Organizational Politics On Personal Traits And
Job Performance Relationship
Applied Study On Public Hospitals In Zagazig
City**

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Abstract

The purpose of current research is to investigate the mediating role of organizational politics in the relationship between personal traits (political skills – locus of control – Machiavellianism) and job performance, and also investigating the direct impact of personal traits and organizational politics. Questionnaire was developed, and data collected from stratified simple random sample of nurses and physicians (n=300) from four public hospitals in Zagazig city. Data was analyzed using AMOS V.20 and results indicated that individuals with high political skills , high Machiavellianism and internal locus of control have more tendency to practice organizational politics ,also it was found that organizational politics partially mediate the relationship between personal traits and job performance.

ملخص البحث

إستهدف البحث الحالي اختبار الدور الوسيط للتسييس التنظيمي في العلاقة بين السمات الشخصية (الميكافيلية – المهارات السياسية – موضع التحكم في الذات) من ناحية وبين الأداء الوظيفي من ناحية أخرى. كذلك استهدف البحث الحالي اختبار التأثير المباشر للسمات الشخصية على درجة ممارسة التسييس التنظيمي .

لتحقيق هدف البحث تم تجميع البيانات الأولية للدراسة الميدانية من خلال تصميم قائمة استقصاء وتم توزيعها على عينة عشوائية طبقية من الأطباء و هيئة التمريض العاملين في المستشفيات الحكومية وبمدينة الزقازيق (مستشفى الرمد - مستشفى الصدر - مستشفى الحميات - المستشفى العام). وقد تم إجراء التحليل الإحصائي للبيانات الأولية بواسطة برنامج AMOS و هو أحد تطبيقات نمذجة المعادلة البنائية. وقد أظهرت نتائج التحليل الإحصائي أن الأفراد الأعلى في الميكافيلية والأعلى في المهارات السياسية و كذلك الأشخاص ذوي موضع التحكم في الذات الداخلي يكون لديهم ميل أعلى لممارسة سلوكيات التسييس التنظيمي ،أيضاً تم التوصل إلى أن التسييس التنظيمي يتوسط جزئياً العلاقة بين السمات الشخصية والأداء الوظيفي للعاملين في المستشفيات الحكومية بمدينة الزقازيق.

Introduction

Political approach is one of the modern approaches to study organizations and interpreting its administrative processes and organizational behavior. According to this approach, organizations is defined as a political systems and a network of interdependent members who use power, influence and political maneuvering to control organizational resources (Bodla and Danish, 2013, Fairholm , 2009).

Despite the widespread acceptance of organizational politics presence as a real fact in any organization along four decades ago (Vigoda –Godat et al.,2003), a lot of researchers still investigate its meaning ,causes and consequence on the employees and the organizations as well (Raiz, 2013).

In this context, current study aims at identifying the personal traits that enhance practicing organizational politics behaviors in the Egyptian organizations in general and in an important service sectors which is public hospitals in particular.

Research problem

The health sector development is apriority in the Egyptian government's vision 2030 for achieving sustainable development (center of political and strategic studies, 2016). Although the increasing number of public and private hospitals in Egypt but the quality of services presented to patient –especially in public hospitals is unsuitable (Rashad & Ashraf , 2015).

One of the challenges to organizational development is employees' self- serving behavior, which may contradict interests of others and also the interests of their institutions.

These behaviors have many harmful organizational consequences including high job stress (Azeem et al.,2010;Gbodamosi and Chinaka, 2011), high turnover intention (Sowmya and Panchanatham, 2012,zhang and lee, 2012), low job satisfaction (Gull and zaidi,2012;Malik et al .2009) and low organizational citizenship (Aam and probhakar,2010,Randall et al.1999).

Organizational politics behaviors reduce productivity by disrupting interpersonal relation among employees information sharing and organizational functions (Enyinna and Ndughu, 2014). It also interrupt organizational changes, because each individual try to protect his personal interests during change and gaining more privileges (Agboola and Salawu,2001).Organizational politics negatively affect achievement of organizational goals and harmony among organizational functional department (Olorunleke,2015).So that organizational performance can be enhanced by minimizing organizational politics behaviors.

Research importance

1-Academic importance

There is no agreement among scholars on the determinants of organizational politics in the related literatures, especially in the Arab countries Where cultural differences is expected to has important impact on employees' attitudes, practices and behaviors within the Organizations.

2-Empirical importance

Examining organizational politics behaviors in Egyptian organizations generally and specifically in hospitals which has especial

concern form Egyptian government in its strategy (2030) to achieve sustainable development (center of political and strategic studies, 2016).

Current research will evaluate job performance of hospital staff (nurses-physicians) which is of central importance, because they are the direct medial service providers, and any negative practices conducted by them (self -serving behaviors) may affect patients' life directly or indirectly.

Research objectives

Current research aimed at achieving the following objectives:

- 1- Determining personal traits that contribute to practicing organizational political behavior in hospitals.
- 2- Determining the degree of practicing different patterns of organizational politics in hospitals.
- 3- Determining the impact of practicing organizational politics in hospitals on job performance in hospitals.
- 4- Measuring the mediating role of organizational politics in the relationship between individual determinants and job performance

Theoretical framework

The concept of organizational politics gained the attention of scholars along four decades as it has a lot of harmful consequences on the individual level and on the organizational level (Gbadamosi and Chinaka, 2011; Azeem et al.,2010). Organizational politics is asocial influence process and real fact in organizational life (Hochwater ,2012;Latif et al. 2011;Fairholm, 2009), according to (Allen et al , 1981), everyone in the organization subordinates as well as their managers practice organizational politics to influence decision making, resource allocation, setting goals, policies, and every day routines, (ferris et al.,2003; Bell et

al.,2000; Appelbaum and Hughes, 1998).in this context organizational politics was defined as defined as intentional act of influence, not sanction by organization , that intended to promote or protect self-interests which is either consistent with or at the expense of others interests (Vigoda and Drory,2016).

Organizational politics contradict the concept of organizational rationality (Boateng et al., 2013) which means that individuals decide their goals by keeping in view the organizational goals and interests, but a realistic picture of workplace life showed that the existence of conflicting goals between organizational members. Organizational politics is a tool to restore or maintain their sense of personal control over their organizational environment (Ene 2014).

Recent researched show that personal traits of individuals play important role in politics engagement and can reduce or enhance the effect of organizational politics on work outcomes (Hochwater and Treadway, 2003). Nevertheless there is scarcity in researches that identify individual personality traits difference and its effect on organizational politics engagement (Van and Hassan,2017),through this part we will display the personal traits under concern of current research as follows:

Political skill, is important personality trait, it is a personal ability to understand others and to use this knowledge to influence others in ways that enhance achieving one's goals (Ferris, Treadway et al.,2007) ,so that politically skilled person has the ability to choose the behavioral patterns in the appropriate situations to influence others (Blickle ,Oerder, and Summers,2010).According to Mintzberg (1983)the willingness is not enough but it's important to possess the ability to enact these behavior which is called political skill (treadway et al.,2005). Politically skilled individuals are more likely to enact influence behaviors by being able to

effectively interpret social cues and have the ability to adopt their behavior to different contextual settings in order to achieve their goals (Ferris , Hochwater et al.,2002;Ferris et al.,2005).

Second personal trait of concern in current research is Machiavellianism .It is a negative personality traits that characterized by manipulation, opportunism and exploitation for achieving personal gain which is often against others' interests (Ali et al.,2009; O'connor.2001). Highly Machiavellianism employees have more tendency to practice organizational politics than others (Vall and Perrewe,2000).and they tend to interpret actions and events in political terms (Mudrack,1993). In this context many scholars found positive relation between Machiavellianism and organizational politics (Raiz, 2013;O'connor and Morison, 2001, Hochwater, Kacmar and witt, 2000) others confirmed that Machiavellianism is a predictor of perception of organizational politics (O'connor and Morrison, 2001;Stepanski et al.,2000;Ferris et al ,1989).

Third personal trait of concern in current research is locus of control is a type of personality that perceive themselves as being able to control their life's events and outcomes (El Badawy and Magdy , 2017), they have better social skills, more clever in setting goals and achieving them, and they have more successful career than others (Agarwal ,2016)they can easily adapt their behavior to reach their goals ,so they engage in organizational politics tactics more than others(Martin et al.,2005;Angeloua,2016).

Job performance is one of the most important dependent variables of interest to scholars (Rontundo and Rotman , 2002). Because employees performance is a significant indicator of overall organizational performance (Hafidz, Hoesni and Fatimah, 2012; Johar and Yahya,2012). Also ,job performance is part of human resources management it has

important implications in formulating decisions related to rewards ,promotions, hiring, placement decisions and designing training programs needed (Befort and Hatstrup,2003).

The relationship between job performance and organizational politics is controversial .Most studies confirmed the negative relation between organizational politics and job performance (Abbas,2017; Imran,2017; Haroon, Hussain and Nawaz , 2017;, Vigoda, 2000; Zinta, 2005 and Brian, 2008),while more recent studies indicated the positive relation between organizational politics and job performance (Bodla, Afza, an Danish, 2014; yang,2017) specifically in a mechanistic structure operated units (Zhang and Yang, 2012; Eldor, 2017).

Research methodology

Current research follow the deductive approach which depends on reviewing related literature and developing a set of hypotheses relate to the nature of the relationship between the research variables, and then testing the validity of hypotheses.

Research hypotheses

According to the previously displayed research problem, goals and theoretical back ground the research hypotheses are as follows:

H1: Personal traits (political skills-Machiavellianism –locus of control), have statistically significant direct impact on job performance in public hospitals.

This main hypothesis is subdivided into the following sub-hypotheses:

H11Political skills have statistically significant direct impact on job performance in public hospitals.

H12 Machiavellianism has statistically significant direct impact on job performance in public hospitals.

H13 Locus of control has statistically significant direct impact on job performance in public hospitals.

H2: Personal traits (political skills-Machiavellianism –internal locus of control) have statistically significant direct impact on organizational politics in public hospitals.

H3: Organizational politics have statistically significant direct impact on job performance in public hospitals.

H4: personal traits have statistically significant indirect impact on job performance through Organizational politics in public hospitals.

Measuring research variables:

Three types of variables used in current research; The independent variables are the personal traits, while the dependent variable is job performance, and finally the Mediator is organizational politics.

Table (1)

Personal traits Affecting Organizational Politics in Organizations

Studies connected between the variable and organizational politics	Variable
(Riaz, 2013) (Atinc et.al., 2010) (Boru, Islamoglu, 2007) (O'Connor, Morrison, 2001) (Kacmar Et. Al., 1999) (Valle, 1995)	(Machiavellianism)
(Ross, 2014) (Kapoutsis et. al., 2011) (Jam et. al. 2011) (Treadway et. al., 2005) (Brouer, Harris And Kacmar, 2011) (Cheema, 2010)	(Political Skill)
(Atinc et.al., 2010) (Boru, Islamoglu, 2007) (O'Connor, Morrison, 2001) (Valle, 1995)	Locus of control
(Valle, 1995) (Kacmar et al, 1999) (Ohshima et al., 2016)	Self- monitoring
(Valle, 1995) (Valle and perrewe, 2000)	Need for power

Source: prepared by researcher according to previous literature review

The previous table summarized the personal traits previously examined in organizational politics literature. It indicated that Machiavellianism and political skills, locus of control were among the most influential determinants of organizational politics .So they will be of concern in current research as independent variables.

Questionnaire is the main tool for collecting primary data this questionnaire prepared specifically for current study, where questionnaire to measure determinants is a modified scale of Machiavellianism (MachIV) , scale of political skills (Ferris et al., 2005) , scale of locus of control (Byrne, 2011).

Questionnaire for measuring job performance is the modified scale of (Griffin et al.,2007), according to which job performance is subdivided into three dimensions ;task proficiency ,adaptability and initiatives.

Questionnaire for measuring actual organizational politics behaviors. organizational politics used to measure depending on Kamar and ferris (1991) scale which revised later on by Kacmar and Carlson (1997) his scale was generally accepted measure of organizational politics. Current research depends on measuring research organizational politics by scale designed by researcher ,which is a modified the scale of (Zanzi and O'Neil, 2001) and (Appelbaum and Hughes, 1998) and Kacmar and Carlson (1997).

The initial copy of the questionnaire was evaluated by a group of academic experts in management science and the suggested adjustments have been made based on their feedback. Then questionnaire distributed on research sample and its statistical total reliability was (0.880) which is statistically acceptable.

Research community and sample

This research will be applied on public hospitals in Zagazig city, there are four public hospitals only in zagazig city (General hospital – Fever hospital- Ophthalmic hospital - Chest hospital).

As there are two sampling groups, stratified simple random sample of (nurses and physicians) in those four public hospitals in zagazig city – will be selected to measure the degree of practicing organizational politics behavior in their workplace and its implications on employees' job performance.

Table(2)
Population and sample size

Category	General hospital	Fever hospital	Ophthalmic hospital	Chest hospital	Total	
physicians	428	47	36	87	598	1387
Percentage	71.5 %	8%	6%	14.5%	43%	
Nurses	504	135	91	59	789	
Percentage	64 %	17%	12%	7%	57%	
Sample of physicians	92	10	8	19	129	300
Sample of nurses	109	29	21	12	171	

Source: prepared by the researcher depending on Records of the Directorate of Health Affairs in Sharkia, and based on statistical table of determining sample size.

Research limitations

1-Empirical limitations

This research will be applied on public hospitals in Zagazig city rather than private hospitals ,where previous studies approved that

organizational politics is higher in public organizations rather than in private organizations (Arogundade et al.,2016;Bodla and Dainish,2008).

2-Objective limitations

Current research concentrates on actual organizational politics behaviors rather than perception of organizational politics where actual organizational politics behaviors are results of perception and many other individual and situational factors. in this context (Singh, 2016) and (Mathur And Gupta, 2012) argued that our behavior is not only a function of our perceptions , personality, values, and preferences, but also of the situation.

Personal traits will be the concern of current research rather than organizational factors and demographic variables .where there is scarcity in researches that identify personal traits and it has important impact on on organizational politics engagement (Van and Hassan2017),while organizational factors have studied extensively, and demographic variables has little or no effect on practicing organizational politics(Antic and Darrat, 2010).

Statistical analysis

Data analyzed using AMOS v20 it's a specific package of structural equation modeling which is a comprehensive statistical approach that applies set of regression equations simultaneously to determine the direct and indirect relationships between research variables.

Measuring scale reliability and validity

Current research used the internal consistency method to test scale reliability to evaluate the degree of questions clarity and homogeneous between statements measuring each variable as indicated in (table 3) as calculated by SPSS program. Results indicated high internal consistent

reliability all values of alpha Cronpach ranged from (0.776 to 0.919), which indicated that this scale will provide the same results each time measurement is repeated.

Table (3)
Internal consistent reliability

Constructs	No.of statements	Alpha Cronpach
Political skills	6	0.897
Machiavellianism	4	0.776
locus of control	4	0.804
Organizational politics	15	0.953
Job performance	10	0.919
Total reliability	39	0.880

Results of structural equation modeling:

The research hypotheses are tested statistically using AMOSv20 . It's a special package of structural equation modeling , which is considered a comprehensive statistical approach to test the relationship between latent variables and observed variables by analyzing set of regression equations simultaneously ,to test the direct relationship between independent variables (political skills-Machiavellianism- internal locus of control) and job performance and simultaneously with the indirect relationship between independent variables (political skills-Machiavellianism- internal locus of control) and job performance through organizational politics. The relationship examined by the program illustrated in figure (1):

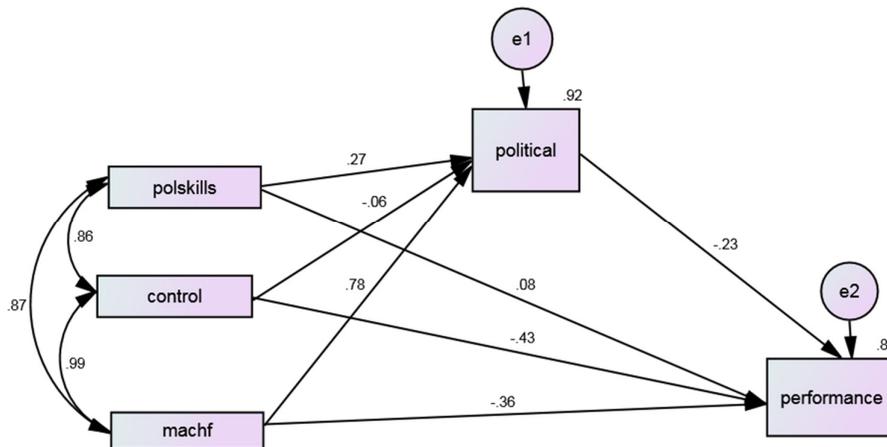


Figure (1)

Table (4)
Impact Of individual Determinants And Job Performance

Independent variables	St. beta	T-value	Sign	Dependent variable
Political skills	0.08	1.208	0.026	Job performance
Locus of control	-0.36	-1.938	0.000	
Machiavellianism	-0.43	-0.530	0.709	

Analysis of results shown in table (4) reveal that.

Political skills have statistically significant impact on job performance [T-value=1.208, $\beta=0.08$ with P= 0.026]. Considering the statistical finding it can be said that individuals with high political skills have better job performance than others, therefore hypothesis H₁₁ is strongly supported.

Regarding locus of control, it has statistically significant impact on job performance [T-value = -1.938, β = -0.36 with P = 0.000]. which confirm results of previous studies , which found that external locus of control view work environment negatively they blame circumstances, luck and environmental factors for their failure or negative outcomes which in turn negatively affect job performance (Ng and Sorensen, 2008, Kodisinghe, 2010). Therefore hypothesis H₁₂ is supported.

With respect to Machiavellianism results reveal that it has not statistically significant relationship with Job performance [T-value = -0.530, β = -0.43, P = 0.709], which means that hypothesis H₁₃ is not supported.

The previous table indicated that path coefficient between personal traits (political skills, Machiavellianism , internal locus of control) and job performance are all negative except for political skills, which means that highly politically skilled employees with internal locus of control have better job performance than others. (Hypothesis H₁ partially supported) .

Table (5)
Impact of individual determinants on organizational politics.

Independent variables	St. beta	T-value	Sign	R ²	Dependent variable
Political skills	0.27	7.132	0.030	0.67	Organizational politics
Locus of control	-0.06	-3.261	0.001		
Machiavellianism	0.78	0.810	0.012		

Analysis of results shown in table (5) reveal that.

Individual determinants both political skills and Machiavellianism have statistically significant positive impact on organizational politics, which means that individuals with higher political skills and high Machiavellianism traits have more tendency to practice organizational

politics behavior more than others .Therefore hypothesis H21 and H23 is strongly supported.

Regarding locus of control, it has statistically significant negative impact on organizational politics [T-value = -2.304, β = -0.241 with P = 0.02], the negative sign refers to the internal locus of control, So we can conclude that employees with external locus of control have low tendency to engage in organizational politics behavior than others on the other side individuals with internal locus of control have low tendency to engage in organizational politics behavior. They are able to adapt and change their behaviors easily to achieve their goals (Angelova, 2016), and also they are able to engage in more upward influence tactics with their mangers compared to those with external locus of control (Martin etal.,2005), therefore hypothesis H22 is supported.

The value of coefficient of determination $R^2 = 0.67$ as revealed in Table (5) which means that all independent variables both organizational and individual determinants explain about (67%) of variance in practicing organizational politics behaviors, therefore hypothesis H2 is strongly supported.

Table (6)
Impact of organizational politics and job performance.

Independent variables	St. beta	T-value	Sign	Dependent variable
Politics	-0.298	-1.701	0.018	Job performance

Analysis of results shown in table (6) reveal that.

There is a statistically significant negative direct impact of organizational politics on job performance. Thus [T-value = -1.701, β = -0.298 with P = 0.018], therefore H3 is strongly supported, which means that as employees practice more organizational politics their job

performance will decrease; as they depends on organizational politics behaviors and to achieve self-interests and privileges in the organization rather than through serious work.

Table (7)
The indirect impact of independent variables on job performance

Independent variables	St. beta	Sign.	Mediating	Dependent	R ²
Political skills	0.042	0.047	politics	Job performance	0.85
Locus of control	-0.033	0.028			
Machiavellianism	0.010	0.061			

Table (7) indicates that independent variables have statistically significant indirect relationship with job performance except Machiavellianism haven't significant relationship with job performance where it has (P-value > 0.05).

Job performance and both political skills and locus of control has significant relationship in the direct model and in the indirect model through organizational politics; which mean that organizational politics has partial mediating effect in the relationship between independent variables and job performance, which means that hypothesis H4 is strongly supported.

Table (8)
Direct, indirect and total effects among research variables.

Effect	Direct	Indirect through politics	Total
Political skills→performance	0.08	0.042	0.122
Locus of control→performance	-0.36	-0.033	-0.393
Machiavellianism→performance	-0.43	0.010	-0.42
Politics→performance	-0.298		

All values are significant at p-value < 0.05.

Table (8) indicated that independent variables have a joint indirect impact on job performance through organizational politics which causes an increase in the standardized total effect. For political skill and internal locus of control except for Machiavellianism, which means that organizational politics mediate the relation between personal traits (political skills and internal locus of control) and job performance

Conclusion

Generally; employees engage in organizational politics when they perceive little or no control on their work environment, and also to protect or maximize their short term or long term interests within the organization (Fairholm ,2009;Abbas, 2017) .

Some personal traits increase the tendency of employee to engage in organizational politics within organization (O'connor,2001), according to the quantitative analysis and results of the hypotheses testing there is a significant impact of personal traits and organizational politics on job performance in public hospitals in Zagazig city, Collectively, external locus of control has negative impact on job performance, also political skills have significant positive relationship with job performance, while Machiavellianism don't have significant relationship with job performance.

Moreover considering each independent variable, this research concludes that employees with high political skills ,high Machiavellianism and internal locus of control have more tendency to practice organizational politics than others. Finally current research found that organizational politics partially mediate the relationship between personal traits (political skills and internal locus of control) and job performance.

Recommendation

Its agreed upon that organizational politics can't be eliminated but it can be minimized. Current research presents some mechanisms to minimize organizational politics as follows:

- 1- Providing managerial training to hospital administrative leadership to understand organizational politics and its effect on employee's performance and other work outcomes.**
- 2- Provide managerial training to leadership in hospitals on how to manager organizational political practices.**
- 3- Provide managerial training on how to deal with informal groups (coalitions) within organization they affect decision making processes and affect achieving organizational goals.**
- 4- Focusing on team works to perform work related tasks reduce employees self- serving behavior instead of that they focus on achieving team goals.**
- 5- Increasing congruence goals between employees and their organization which in turn increase commitment toward organizational goals.**
- 6- Machiavellianism personality has more likelihood to be involved in organizational politics behavior , so that personality tests must be conducted prior to employment and avoid hiring such individuals for the best of their organizations**

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