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The Impact of Interpersonal Conflict on Job Outcomes: Mediating Role of Perception of Organizational Politics

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Abstract

This research examines a theoretical model that connects interpersonal conflict, perception of organizational politics and job outcomes. I propose the perception of organizational politics mediate the relationship between interpersonal conflict and job outcomes. Using a sample of (N= 264) employees from six organizations of Pakistan. I found that interpersonal conflict positively affects perception of organizational politics and perception of organizational politics mediates the relationship between interpersonal conflict and job stress. Perception of organizational politics also mediates the relationship between interpersonal conflict and intention to quit. Furthermore Interpersonal conflict is also positively related to interpersonal and organizational workplace deviance, and perception of organizational politics significantly related to workplace deviance.

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Keywords: Interpersonal Conflict, Perception of Politics, Intention to Quit, Job Stress, Organizational Deviance, Interpersonal Deviance

1. Introduction

Conflict theorists frequently assume that conflict is natural, functional, dysfunctional and inherent phenomena of human and organizational relationship (Hawes & Smith, 1973; Sillars & parry, 1982). Interpersonal conflict is a stressor that effect organizational outcomes...
(Keenan & Newton, 1985) along with organizational outcomes, interpersonal conflict can have negative effects on employee attitudes and behaviors (Forne, 2000; Spector & Jex, 1998). Using operational definitions by Jex (1998), I conceptualize interpersonal conflict as a workplace stressor: "an organizational situation which requires an adaptive response" (p. 2). And based on conceptual model of Ferris, Russ and Fandt (1989) conflict is a stressor that is consistently related to perception of organizational politics (Drory & Romm, 1988; Frost, 1987; Gandz & Murray, 1980; Mintzberg, 1985; Porter, Allen, & Angle 1981). The essence of this association is that politics is a self-serving behavior and thus has potential to threaten the self interest of others (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997). When a threat is pursued by reprisal, conflict occurs (Kacmar & Carlson; Porter et al., 1981). The presence of conflict is essential element of perception of organizational politics (Drory & Romm, 1990). Based on conceptual frameworks (Jex, 1998 & Ferris et al., 1989) this study is an attempt to empirically investigate the relationship of these stressors (interpersonal conflict & perception of organizational politics) with job attitudes and behaviors. I develop a conflict – politics outcome relationships which explore that interpersonal conflict leads to perception of organizational politics which leads toward job outcomes such job stress, intention to quit, interpersonal and organizational workplace deviance.

An extensive research has been done on two important constructs, conflict and perception of organizational politics. Conflict is phenomenon that influences organizations at almost every level and processes (Barki & Harwick, 2001). Where as politics is a general phenomenon of almost every organization (Ferris & King, 1991; Zhou & Ferris, 1995; Vigoda & Cohen, 2002). Conflicts have negative outcomes and are harmful for individuals as well as for organization (Jehn & Mannix, 2001; Jehn, 1995, 1997; Amason, 1996). Perception of organizational politics also have negative outcomes and harmful for individuals as well as for organization (Drory & Romm, 1990; Vigoda, 2000, 2002; Kacmar & Ferris, 1993; Ferris, Russ & Fandt, 1989; Byrne, 2005). Conflict is functional as well as dysfunctional in nature (Amason & Schweiger, 1994; Amason, 1996; Jehn, 1993, 1995). The construct of organizational politics is also functional and dysfunction in nature (Ferris et al., 1989 Ferris & Kacmar, 1992; Drory, 1993; Cropanzano, Howes, Grandey & Toth, 1997). This resemblance between two constructs shows their strong relationship with each other (Mintzberg, 1985). The basic purpose of my research thesis is to find possible relationship between these two important variables, and to investigate the conflict- politics outcome, for how the two constructs have significant impact on attitude and behaviors such as job stress, intention to quit, interpersonal and organizational workplace deviance.

2. Review of literature

Conflict is widely defined as awareness by the parties involved of differences, contradictory wishes and interpersonal incompatibilities (Boulding, 1963). Mack and Snyder (1957) define conflict as a “particular kind of social interaction process between parties who have mutually exclusive or incompatible values” (p. 212)
Pinkley (1990) analyzed multidimensional framework for conflicts including: Emotional against Intellectual, Compromise against Win and Task against Interpersonal conflict. Guetzkpow and Gye (1954) differentiated conflict on the basis of substance of assignment and interpersonal relation. Interpersonal conflict is defined as disagreement between two individuals who perceive that they have incompatible objectives (Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2003).

2.1. Conflict and outcomes

Another important construct of this research is job stress. Stress occurs when a key responsibility is assigned to individuals with out proper authority (Vansell, Brief, & Schuler, 1981). According to Beehr (1990) stress occurs when an employee feels embarrassment in an organization. The individual becomes stressed when work demand exceeds the individual’s belief of their ability to manage (Edwards, 1992). Job stress is due to stressors (individuals & organizational) which leads to negative physical, psychological or physiological reactions (Kahn & Byosiere, 1993). There are seven situational stressors and conflict is on them (Parasuraman & Alutto, 1981), work and non work conflict increase stress in workplace and affects the employees attitudes and behaviors (Babin & Boles, 1998). Jamal (2007) argues that work conflict is one factor that creates stress in an organization and work conflict is significantly related to job stress. Interpersonal conflict relates to inter-personal incompatibility, which normally consists of affective factors like friction, tension, animosity, and impatience (Spector & Jex, 1998; Amason, 1996). This argument suggests that interpersonal conflict may create stress in workplace. This research is an attempt to empirically investigate the relationship between interpersonal conflict and job stress. So, this research hypothesizes that interpersonal conflict may positively related to job stress.

2.1.1. Hypothesis 1: Interpersonal conflict will be positively related to job stress

According to Robinson and Bennett (1995) workplace deviance is “voluntary behavior of organizational members that violates significant organizational norms, and in so doing, threatens the well-being of the organization and / or its members” (p.556). Organizational deviance is a response to annoying stressors; it may be social, financial and working conditions (Robinson & Bennett, 1997). A behavior is said to be deviant when an individual or group in an organization violated or break the rules, traditions or internal regulations (Robinson & Bennett, 1995).

Researchers give different name to these behaviors like workplace deviance (Bennett & Robinson, 1997), Aggressive Behavior (Anderson & Pearson, 1999), Counterproductive behavior (Mangione & Quinn, 1975), Anti-social Behavior (Giacolone & Greenberg, 1997). Robinson and Bennett’s (1995) framework divide workplace deviance into two categories: interpersonal workplace deviance and organizational workplace deviance. Interpersonal deviance behavior is between individuals and employees of an organization who engage in
deviant behaviors such as sexual harassment and verbal and physical aggression (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). While organizational deviance is a behavior between employees and organization that engage in behaviors like theft, putting little effort in to work and sabotage (Robinson & Benett, 1995).

When members in an organization experience conflict, they may show deviant behavior (Merton, 1957). It is difficult for the professionals to avoid conflicts in an organization because it may lead to the adoption of deviant behavior by workers. This research hypothesized that interpersonal conflict is a stressor which may lead to interpersonal and organizational deviant behavior.

2.1.2. Hypothesis 2: Interpersonal conflict will be positively related to interpersonal and organizational workplace deviance

Another important construct of this study is the intention to quit. Intention to quit is defined as employee’s decision to leave the organization (Mobley, 1977). Employees may leave the organization voluntarily or involuntarily (due to certain reasons): voluntarily turnover may be due to unfavorable work environment where as greater or career objectives more attractive financial sources whereas involuntary turnover is normally from an employer or organizational side. Organization may want to terminate the employee due to incompatibilities, or retire the person due to old age; death is also included in involuntary turnover (Des & Shaw, 2001). The consequences of employee turnover are very important. When an employee leaves the organization the organization bears the cost of selecting, recruiting and training the new employee (Dalton, Todor & Krackhardt, 1982). Employee’s turnover has indirectly reduced the morale of remaining employees and loss of social capital (Des & Shaw 2001). The cost of employee turnover is difficult to measure especially when the employee is a good performer and has a high degree of knowledge and skill (Des & Shaw, 2001). One purpose of my research study is to investigate the antecedents of intention to quit; interpersonal conflict may be a possible antecedent of intention to quit. Literature gives strong support of a positive relationship between interpersonal conflict and intention to quit (Jehn 1995; Medina, Munduate, Dorado, Martinez & Guerra, 2000). This study is an attempt to further investigate the relationship of interpersonal conflict with intention to quit(Tseng, 2009).

2.1.3. Hypothesis 3: Interpersonal conflict will be positively related to intention to quit

Power struggles, conflict, consensus building and self serving interests are the bases of the political process (Drory, 1993). Mintzberg (1983) define politics as “individual or group behavior that is informal, ostensibly parochial, typically divisive, and above all, in the technical sense, illegitimate – sanctioned neither by formal authority, accepted ideology, nor certified expertise” (p. 172). Mintzberg (1985) related politics with conflict and called it political arena. Drory and Romm (1988) stated seven factors of politics, power attainment,
concealed motive, conflict, acting against organization, formal, informal and illegal behavior. Drory and Romm (1990) argue that there are controversies in defining the construct of politics and there is no general or basic definition explaining the complexity of this construct.

However Ferris et al., (1989) argues that the construct of politics is a three dimensional construct. Kacmar & Ferris (1991) described three dimensions as first, “general political behavior”, individuals ‘self serving behaviors to gain preferred outcomes, second “go along to get ahead”, in which individual show silence and act passively for their own benefits. Third, “pay and promotion policies”, Individuals involved in the implementation of policies and react politically in decision- making process(Tseng, 2009).

2.2. Perception of organizational politics

Power struggles, conflict, consensus building and self serving interests are the bases of the political process (Drory, 1993). Mintzberg (1983) define politics as “individual or group behavior that is informal, ostensibly parochial, typically divisive, and above all, in the technical sense, illegitimate – sanctioned neither by formal authority, accepted ideology, nor certified expertise” (p. 172). Mintzberg (1985) related politics with conflict and called it political arena. Drory and Romm (1988) stated seven factors of politics, power attainment, concealed motive, conflict, acting against organization, formal, informal and illegal behavior. Drory and Romm (1990) argue that there are controversies in defining the construct of politics and there is no general or basic definition explaining the complexity of this construct. However Ferris et al., (1989) argues that the construct of politics is a three dimensional construct. Kacmar & Ferris (1991) described three dimensions as first, “general political behavior”, individuals ‘self serving behaviors to gain preferred outcomes, second “go along to get ahead”, in which individual show silence and act passively for their own benefits. Third, “pay and promotion policies”, Individuals involved in the implementation of policies and react politically in decision- making process.

2.3. General political behaviour

Political behavior is high in organizations where rules and policies for guidance are not clearly defined by authorities (Fandt & Ferris, 1990; Ferris et al., 1989; Kacmar & Ferris, 1993; Kacmar & Carlson, 1997; Drory & Romm, 1990). In organizations, where no rules and polices exist, individuals gradually develops their own rules and polices for self interest and for attaining a better position in organizations.

Another important factor that is influenced by ambiguity is a decision making process. When the decision making process is uncertain it may found to be influenced by politics (Drory & Romm, 1990). People make decisions independently based upon their own interpretation when organizations have no well-defined rules, policies and guidance which results in irrational decision making and involvement of politics in decision making process (Cropanzano, Kacmar & Bozeman, 1995).
Scarcity of valued resources such as transfers, raises, office space and budgets causes rivalry among individuals and groups leads toward politics. The organizations which have limited valued resources may have high political environment (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997). Attractive and beneficial resources may also be important factors of political behavior (Drory & Romm, 1990). “In some cases, a scarce resource, such as the organization’s tickets to a sporting event, may only be valued by a few individuals, and hence, the actions engaged in to secure this resource may not be as competitive as those used to secure a scare resource valued by all, such as a raise or a promotion”( Kacmar & Carlson, 1997 p.630).

2.4. Go along to get ahead

In an organizations, few individuals shun conflict, and therefore, they do not oppose others influence. Generally conflict avoidance behavior appears as non-political activity, but it is a form of political behavior (Kacmar & Calson, 1997; Farris & Kacmar, 1992). In organizations, political and non political behaviors are differentiating on the basis of individual’s intentions (Drory & Romm, 1990). If a behavior is sanctioned specifically for the purposes of one's own self-interests, then the individual will react politically. In this approach, individuals silently achieve the desired goal. Conflict arises in an organization when the self-serving behavior shows peril to curiosity of others (Porter, Allen & Angle, 1981). Go along to get to the ahead, can be a logical and lucrative approach to take in order to precede one's own self-interests when working in a political surrounding (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997)

2.5. Pay and promotion policies

The last dimension of perception of politics is pay and promotion policies, that how organization is effected by political behavior through implementation of policies (Ferris et al., 1989). According to Kacmar and Carlson (1997) political activities involved in a reward system of organizations through different ways such as “individually oriented rewards induce individually oriented behavior” (p. 631). Individually oriented behavior is opposite to organizational behavior, it may be political or self serving behavior. Thus, it may create an environment that promotes political behavior (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997). Pay and promotion policies influenced by political behavior also affect the individuals who do not act politically in organizations. Consequently people who are perceived inequity regarding rewards may become more involved in political activities in future (Kacmar & Ferris, 1993; Kacmar & Carlson, 1997).

2.6. Perception of organizational politics and outcomes

Literature gives a strong support that the politics move towards different stress related impacts in organizations (Jex & Beehr, 1991; Matteson & Ivancevich, 1987; Ferris,
According to Matteson & Ivancevich (1987) stress is “an adaptive response, moderated by individual differences, which is a consequence of any action, situation, or event that places special demands upon a person” (p. 10). Beehr (1990) defined stress as any aspect due to which employees feel uneasiness in a workplace. Selye’s (1975) defines stress as a reaction of stressful occasions which may be physiological, psychological and behavioral factors. Literature suggests that job stress in organizations is due to different factors such as role conflict (Beehr, 1998), role ambiguity (Jamal, 1985) and lack of power (Burke, 1988).

Ferris et al., (1989) proposed that perception of organizational politics can be one of the reasons of job stress; numbers of studies empirically test the relationship of these two constructs. These two construct (politic and stress) pay much more intention theoretically as well as empirically from mid 1990s like Gilmore, Ferris, Dulebohn, & Harrell-Cook, (1996) projected that politics is the source of stress. Cropanzano et al., (1997) studied the politics in relation to individual stress related aspects like fatigue, somatic and job tension and found significantly positive relationship between politics and stress related variables. Ferris et al., (1996) investigate this relationship with sample size of 822 university employees and found a significantly positive correlation between perceived politics and stress. Ferris (1996) predicted that there are some resemblances in both constructs, like both variables (politic and stress) are perception based. Politics is normally clandestine preponderated by uncertainty and stress repeatedly related to uncertainty. So both constructs have attributes of uncertainty and ambiguity (Ferris et al., 1989). Both constructs are situational based where people may lose or get something depending on how they react to the circumstances. On the basis of similarity of these two important variable, Vigoda (2002) defines stress as “an individual’s response to job-related environmental stressors, one of which would be politics”, on the basis of above mentioned literature this research hypothesizes that perception of organizational politics is positively related to job stress.

2.7. Hypothesis 4: Perception of organizational politics will be positively related to job stress

Individuals who face high pressure in job may feel great stress, show nervous behaviour and have less tolerant behaviour with others; such indicators may also lead towards various kinds of workplace deviance (Vigoda, 2002). Political behaviour is the involvement in social interaction that damages individual politically which includes gossip, favouritism and rumour spreading and one of the important dimensions of workplace deviance (Robinson & Bennett, 1995).

Organizational politics leads to negative consequences like stress and burnout, and stress possibly move towards some dimensions of workplace deviance. If we look at the literature of organizational politics, it gives some indication of potential emergence of workplace deviance in a highly political environment. Gilmore et al.,(1996) used the word “hostile environment” which refers to the possible environment due to organizational politics.
According to Vigoda (2002) aggressive behaviour is one of the important consequence of organizational politics and he hypothesized that organizational politic is positively related to aggressive behaviour. So if politics create hostile environment and is positively related to aggressive behaviour which indicates that organizational politics may lead to interpersonal and organizational workplace deviance thus, we expect that workplace deviances may a consequence of organizational politics, thus this research hypothesis that

2.8. Hypothesis 5: Perception of organizational politics will be positively related to interpersonal and organizational workplace deviance

Employee’s turnover indirectly reduces the morale of remaining employees and loss of social capital (Des & Shaw, 2001). The cost of employee turnover is difficult to measure, especially when an employee is a performer and has a high degree of knowledge and skill (Des & Shaw, 2001). Job attitudes may leads to actual behaviours (Vigoda, 2000). The organizations where employees perceived high organizational politics may hearten to leave the organization physical as well as psychologically (Cropanzano et al., 1997). Employees may be present in organization but may think about political consequences and/or other things (Bozeman, Perrewe, Kaemar, Hochwart and Brymer, 1996). An indicator of psychological intention to leave is talking with employees about non work related matters (Hulin, 1991).

Ferris, Harrell-cook and Dulebohn (1998) suggest that perception of organizational politics leads toward negative consequences and intention to quit is one of the major outcomes. When employees in an organization mistreat politics to attain egotism, and thus break organizational rules and norms, the effect on employees is foreseeable. The employees who suffer due to politics may respond in different way and intention to quit is one way to respond. Thus, I expect that organizational politics is positively associated to intention to quit.

2.9. Hypothesis 6: Perception of organizational politics will be positively related to Intention to quit

2.10. Conflict and perception of organizational politics

Mintzberg (1985) introduced three dimensions of conflict - pervasiveness, intensity and stability. He grouped these four dimensions in four types that he called political arena. First, confrontation a type of conflict that is intensive but confined and brief or unstable in nature: second, the shaky alliance: is the type of conflict which is moderate, confined and comparatively lasting or stable in nature, Third, politicized organization is the type of conflict which is moderate, pervasive, probably lasting or relatively stable in nature. Lastly, complete political arena is a type of conflict that is intensive, pervasive and unstable in nature and it is called “ideal type” of conflict in organization. According to Wamsley and Zald (1973) conflict is an important part of organizational politics, the existence of conflict
between part of parties involved in organizational politics and a necessary condition of politics (Wamsley & Zald 1973; Wildavsky, 1974). Conflict, power, personal and group interests and competition for less resources are the antecedents of organizational politics (Drory & Romm, 1993). In the light of above literature I hypothesize the following relationships:

2.11. Hypothesis 7: Interpersonal conflict will be positively related to perception of organizational politics.

2.12. Perception of organizational politics as mediator

The rationality behind proposing the mediated link of perception of organizational politics between interpersonal conflict and job outcomes is that interpersonal conflict is reported to be positively related with perception of organizational politics. The main association between interpersonal conflict and job outcomes is also extensively reported in previous literature. Here the premise behind mediation argument lies in stressful nature of both constructs and negative impact of both conflict and politics with job outcomes. The research reports a negative link of conflict and perception of organizational politics with outcomes such as workplace deviance, intention to quit and job stress. The rationality of this argument is based on the notion that conflicts arise and raise politics in the organization which in turn affects ultimate job outcomes of individuals. I can say that the reported link between interpersonal conflicts and several job outcomes exists through organizational politics. If we control the politics in this link, this link will no more exist in a work setting. To prove this conception, I will be using the theoretical justification of (Barron & Kenny, 1986) which suggests the following conditions to be met for testing of such unique mediated links between two constructs. They suggested mediated multiple regression analysis technique for these relationships. The pre-requisites for theoretical justification of (Barron & Kenny, 1986) are firstly, the main link between conflict type and perception of politics should be positive. Secondly, the main relationship between conflict and job outcomes should be clearly established. Thirdly, when controlling for mediated construct, the reported main link should be insignificant. Theoretical justification for the first two pre-requisites is clearly met from the reported literature and on the basis of this, I am going to test the third condition for mediation effect. Hence, I am in a position to propose that the main link between conflict type and job outcomes is through organizational politics. Organizational politics is a proposed mediator between conflict type and job outcomes such as organizational deviance, interpersonal deviance, job stress and intention to quit.
2.13. Hypothesis 8: Perception of organizational politics (POP) will mediate the relationship between interpersonal conflict and outcomes such as job stress, interpersonal and organizational workplace deviance and intention to quit.

Figure 1

3. Research methodology

3.1. Sample and data collection procedures

The survey was distributed among employees in 6 different organizations: ranging from small entrepreneurial business enterprises to large multinational organizations. Two organizations were top private banks of Pakistan, and one was a well known multinational beverage company. One of them was a multinational electronic manufacturing company and a corporate office of a textile unit in Pakistan. Also, one of the samples was a government educational institute of Pakistan. A total of 350 questionnaires were distributed out of which 290 were returned with a response rate of 82 percent. After deducting unfilled questionnaires, finally 264 were available for statistical analysis.

A cover letter explained the purpose and importance of this research and that participation was voluntary in nature, strict anonymity was ensured to all the respondents. Respondents include employees working in upper management, middle management, and lower management. The qualification of respondents ranged from high school to post graduate. 76% of the total employees were at least graduate, from remaining 24 %, twenty
two percent have college education and remaining two percent were had at least completed their high school education.

The respondents had a mean age of 32.51 years with (S.D = 8.26). Mean tenure with the organization was 12.25 years (S.D = 9.50). 81 percent of them were male and 19 percent were female which indicates positive growth of female participation in different organizations within Pakistan. Previous studies in Pakistan have reported 6 percent female participation (Raja, Johns & Ntalianis, 2004).

3.2. Measures

The responses were obtained through self-reported measures. The research was conducted in English, as English is well understood in the majority of working areas, especially by those in sampling frame. Perviously conducted research in Pakistan was done using instrument in English (Raja et al., 2004; Butt, Choi, & Jaeger, 2005; Butt & Choi, 2006) that’s why there is no need for standardized back translation.

3.3. Perception of organizational politics

The 12-item scale of perception of organizational politics by (Kacmar & Ferris, 1991) was used to assess the construct of perception of organizational politics which cover all three dimensions of politics (political behavior, go along to get ahead, and pay and promotion policies). Sample item for political behavior is “one group always gets their way” for go along to get ahead are “Favoritism not merit gets people ahead” sample items for pay and promotion policies “Pay and promotion decisions are consistent with policies”. All returns were taken on 5-point Likert-scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = neither disagree nor agree, 4 = Agree, and 5 = strongly agree. The Alpha Reliability of this scale is (α = .71).

3.4. Interpersonal conflicts

4 -items scale of Spector & Jex, (1998) was used to measures interpersonal conflict. Sample item for interpersonal conflict is “How much friction is there among members in your organization”. Response were taken on 5-point likert-scale ranging from 1= None to 5=A lot. The Alpha Reliability of this scale is (α = .73).

3.5. Workplace deviance

14 -items scale by (Aquino, Lewis & Bradfield, 1999) was used for interpersonal and organizational workplace deviance. 6-items were used to measure interpersonal deviance; sample item for interpersonal deviance is “I made an obscene comment or gesture at a co-worker”. 8-items were used to measure organizational deviance; sample item for
organizational workplace deviance is “I lied about the number of hours I worked”. Responses were taken on 5-point likert scale 1=Never, 2=One to Three times, 3=Four to ten times, 4=Eleven to Twenty times, 5=More than Twenty times. The Alpha Reliability of interpersonal deviance scale is (α = 0.79) and for organizational deviance is (α = .85).

3.6. Job stress

13-items scale by (Parker & Decotiis, 1983) was used to measure job stress, sample of items were “I have too much work and too little time to do it” and “I frequently get the feeling I am married to the work unit”. Responses were taken on 5-point likert scale ranging form 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree. The Alpha Reliability of this scale is (α = .79).

3.7. Intention to quit

3-Items scale by (Vigoda, 2000) had been used to measure intention to quit. A sample item is “lately, I have taken interest in job offers in the newspaper”. Responses were taken on 5-point likert scale ranging form 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree. The Alpha Reliability of this scale is (α = .67).

3.8. Control variables

Results of one way analysis of variance shows that job nature and organization type shows momentous affect on mediator (POPS) and all other outcomes, while all other variable show no significant impact of mediator and outcomes. Gender, age, tenure and education did not have any effect on mediator and criterion variable. Therefore for this study I control organization type and job nature.

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive statistics and correlations

Table 1 shows descriptive statistics, correlations and reliability. The mean of interpersonal conflict was 2.80 (S.D = 0.66), mean for perception of politics is 3.38 (S.D = 0.58), mean for job stress is 3.37 (S.D = 0.54), mean for interpersonal deviance is 1.83 (S.D = 0.67), mean for organizational workplace deviance is 2.31 (S.D = 0.53) and mean for intention to quit is 3.38 (S.D = 0.66).

Correlations results supported almost all hypotheses of the study 1,2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 which shows that interpersonal conflict is positively related to job stress (r = .25 p < .01). The association among interpersonal conflict and interpersonal workplace deviance (r =.33 p < .01) and with organizational workplace deviance (r =.52 p < .01). The relationship between
interpersonal conflict and intention to quit is \( r = .33 \ p < .01 \), the correlation between perception of organizational politics and job stress \( r = .56 \ p < .01 \) with interpersonal workplace deviance \( r = .08 \ ns \) with organizational workplace deviance \( r = .40 \ p < .01 \) and with intention to quit \( r = .48 \ p < .01 \) Interpersonal conflict is positively related to perception of organizational politics is \( r = .29 \ p < .01 \)

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**Table**

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**Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations and Reliabilities**

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<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Mean</th>
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<td>1. Age</td>
<td>2.4</td>
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<td>2. Gender</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.387</td>
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<td>3. Tenure</td>
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<td>1.199</td>
<td>.65**</td>
<td>-.01</td>
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<td>4. Qualification</td>
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<td>.03</td>
<td>-.25**</td>
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<td>5. Interpersonal conflict</td>
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<td>-.09</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.031</td>
<td>(.73)</td>
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<td>6. Perception of Politics</td>
<td>3.384</td>
<td>0.576</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.033</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.29**</td>
<td>(.71)</td>
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<td>7. Job Stress</td>
<td>3.37</td>
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<td>-.06</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>.20*</td>
<td>.25**</td>
<td>.55**</td>
<td>(.79)</td>
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<td>8. Organizational Deviance</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>0.836</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>.52**</td>
<td>.40**</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>(.85)</td>
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<td>9. Interpersonal Deviance</td>
<td>1.838</td>
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<td>-.18*</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.33**</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>.46**</td>
<td>(.79)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Intention to quit</td>
<td>3.388</td>
<td>0.913</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.135</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.33**</td>
<td>.48**</td>
<td>-.18*</td>
<td>.42**</td>
<td>.18*</td>
<td>(.87)</td>
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</tbody>
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**Note:**
- *****Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)**
- ****Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed) N= 254**
- *Alpha reliabilities are mentioned in bold parenthesis*
4.2. Regression

Table 2 shows all regression results of interpersonal conflict, perception of organizational politics and outcomes.

4.3. Interpersonal conflict and outcomes

Hypothesis 1 predicted that interpersonal conflict will be positively related to job stress. To check this prediction, I regressed interpersonal conflict with job stress ($\beta = .24, p < .01$) which shows strong support for hypothesis 1. Hypothesis 2 states the interpersonal conflict will be positively related to interpersonal deviance and organizational workplace deviance. I regressed interpersonal conflict with both types of workplace deviance ($\beta = .34, p < .001$), organizational deviance ($\beta = .50, p < .001$) which strongly supported hypothesis 2. Hypothesis 3 states that interpersonal conflict will be positively related to intention to quit ($\beta = .50, p < .001$) which strongly supports the hypothesis. Hypothesis 7 states that interpersonal conflict is positively related to perception of organizational politics. Regression result show that interpersonal conflict is significantly related with perception of organizational politics ($\beta = .25 p < .01$) supporting hypothesis 7.

4.4 Perception of organizational politics and outcomes

Hypothesis 4 predicts that perception of politics (POP) will be positively related to job stress. To check this hypothesis, I regressed perception of organizational politics with job stress ($\beta = .57 p < .001$) which significantly supported hypothesis 4. Hypothesis 5 predicts that perception of organizational politics will be positively related to interpersonal deviance and organizational workplace deviance. Regression result shows that ($\beta = .14$ ns) perception of organizational politics and interpersonal workplace deviance is not significantly related. Hypothesis 5 predicts positive relationship of perception of organizational politics with organizational deviance ($\beta = .37 p < .001$) that supports hypothesis 5. Hypothesis 6 predicts that perception of politics is positively related to intention to quit ($\beta = .40 p < .001$) supporting hypothesis 6.
4.5 Mediation analysis

This study predicted that perceptions of organizational politics mediate the relationship between interpersonal conflict and outcomes such as job stress, interpersonal deviance, organizational deviance and intention to quit. According to Baron and Kenny (1986) mediation can be established with the help of three regression tests. First interpersonal conflict (independent variable) should be related to perception of politics (mediator). Second, interpersonal conflict and mediator (perception of politics) should be related to outcomes. Third when interpersonal conflict (Independent variables) and perception of politics (mediator) are concurrently incorporated in regression, through multiple regression then the relationship between interpersonal conflict (Independent variable) and the outcomes should be insignificant as compared to the main effect.

Hypothesis 8 states that perception of organizational politics mediates the relationship between interpersonal conflict and outcomes such as stress, interpersonal workplace deviance, organizational workplace deviance and intention to quit.

To test the mediating effects of perception of politics, I regress job stress, perception of politics and relational conflict together to perform Multiple Regression Analysis. An first we
entered control variables into the equation, in second step we entered perception of organizational politics (mediator) and in the third step we entered relationship conflict (independent variable). As shown in table 3, there was a significant decrease in the effect size of interpersonal conflict for job stress (from .24, p < .001 to .10 p < .06 p < .26 n.s). Also a significant reduction in variances (from $\Delta R^2 = .3$, to $\Delta R^2 = 0.01$). These result confirm full mediation condition prescribed by (Baron & Kenny, 1986), supporting hypothesis 8 for job stress.

Hypothesis 8 also states that perception of politics mediate the relationship between interpersonal conflict and interpersonal workplace deviance. As shown in table 3, there is significant no decrease in the effect size of interpersonal conflict for interpersonal deviance (from .34, p < .001 to .34 p < .001) also it shows no significant reduction in variances. Hence the second part of my hypothesis 8 was not supported by this data.

Hypothesis 8 also states that perception of organizational politics mediates the relationship between interpersonal and organizational deviance. As shown in table 3, (from .50, p < .001 to .43 p < .001) there is no significant decrease in the effect size of interpersonal conflict for interpersonal deviance and shows no significant reduction in variances. Hence, the data did not support this part of the hypothesis.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Table 3</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Table 3</strong> Mediator Regression Analysis Interpersonal Conflict &amp; Outcomes</td>
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<td><strong>Predictors</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Main Effects of POP</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Step 1</strong></td>
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<td>Control Variables</td>
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<td><strong>Step 2</strong></td>
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<td>Politics</td>
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<td><strong>Step 3</strong></td>
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<td>Interpersonal Conflict</td>
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N = 264. Organization type and job nature used as control variables

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001
Hypothesis 8 also states that perception of politics mediates the relationship between interpersonal conflict and intention to quit. As shown in table 3, there is significant decrease in the effect size of interpersonal conflict for intention to quit (from .24, p < .05 to .14 p < .16) and shows significant reduction in variances (from $\Delta R^2 = .16$, to $\Delta R^2 = 0.01$) which shows that perception of politics mediates the relationship between interpersonal conflict and intention to quit as per conditioned prescribed by (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

5. Discussion and Conclusion

My aim of this research was to study on harmful affects of interpersonal conflict and perception of organizational politics, and study the possible antecedents of behavioural outcome, by doing this, this research endeavoured to link different streams of research in organizational behaviour such as interpersonal conflict, perception of politics, job stress, organizational deviance, interpersonal deviance and intention to quit.

This research extends the harmful consequences of conflict in different ways. Firstly, this research provided strong empirical evidence for interpersonal conflict, perception of politics with outcome such as workplace deviance, job stress and intention to quit. Secondly, by relating interpersonal conflict with perception of politics and job stress, current studies have established that interpersonal conflict leads towards politics in organizations and creates stress which has harmful consequences for individuals as well as for the organization. Although there is a great deal of harmful consequences of politics (Vigoda 2000, 2002; Ferris et al., 1996; Kacmar & Carlson, 1997), but the important thing that associate conflict and politics are hardly ever investigated. To my little knowledge up till know, this research is the first research that measure the mediating role of perception of politics in relation with conflict and job outcomes.

The detection of interpersonal conflict as antecedent of politics is a vital contribution to literature of organizational behaviour. I deemed that this gap in literature deserves awareness and exploration due to high importance of these two constructs for organizations. Conflict and politics work as stressors and create stressful environment which has a negative effect on individual’s and organizations. Research studies have shown that job stress and other negative behaviors are due to stressful environment which increase employee turnover and absenteeism (Jackson & Maslach, 1982; Shirom, 1989; Ganster & Schaubroeck, 1991; GolLeiter & Maslach, 1988). The implication of the study finding is that employees who have interpersonal conflicts in an organization create a political environment which leads to negative consequences.

Current study covers relevant topics which may explain work place variation in employee work attitude by the means of politics and conflicts. Political environment exist where employees have higher level of conflicts, and in this political environment employees have to face higher level of stress which may push them to leave the organization. This research motivates other researchers in the organizational behavior stream to reexamine
conflicts and politics in social context and will implement it for betterment of individuals and organization.

Hypothesis 2 supports that interpersonal conflict was positively related to interpersonal deviance, organizational deviance which clearly shows that if employees have interpersonal conflicts then its leads to interpersonal deviance such as sexual harassment, verbal and physical aggression and organizational workplace deviance such as theft, putting little effort in to work and sabotage. Hypothesis 5 supports that perception of organizational politics is positively related with organizational workplace deviance. Literature proved that different organizational deviance such as theft, putting little effort in to work and sabotage (Robinson & Benett, 1995; 1997) happened in organizations. According to North-western National life Insurance Company, in 1992 near about 25 million workers were involved different kinds of deviant behaviours in USA. These findings are consistent with the theoretical future directions of Vigoda (2002). According to him “employees who experience large-scale political activities in the workplace may react aggressively”(p.356). In a high political environment it’s manager’s responsibilities to identify such circumstances and develop a defensive mechanism to handle such a dangerous crime.

6. Practical Implementation

There are several practical implications of this research. But most importantly, it could help managers to realize political situations, its antecedents and consequences. For example, as this research found that interpersonal conflict would be one of the reasons which lead to employee turnover through organizational politics. When managers are capable to identify this situation they would be in better position to handle it. Further this research model conflict – politics aftermath may propose incessant worsening in productivity.

Another important contribution of this research is the relationship between conflict-politics and intention to quit. Although, this research is based on the work of different studies which examine the affect of politics and intention to quit (Vigoda, 2002; Ferris et al., 1989, 1993, 1996b; Bozeman et al., 1997; Kacmar, Bozeman, Carlson & Anthony, 1999; Cropanzano et al., 1997). These studies found a direct relationship between organizational politics and work outcomes but did not investigate the mediating effect of perception of politics in relation to intention to quit. To my knowledge, no study has yet investigated the mediating effect of perception of organizational politics in relation with interpersonal conflict and intention to quit. The hypothesis 8 supported that organizational politics mediate the relationship between interpersonal conflict and intention to quit. These findings help that in a high political environment managers should understand such situation and develop some strategies to save organizations from such hazardous loss.
7. Future Research Directions

The model of the study is based on conflict-politics aftermath. This model should be tested with other outcomes such as job creativity, job commitment, burnout, organizational citizenship behaviors, aggressive behavior and workplace violation. This model may open new streams for possible antecedents of organizational politics and possible consequences of conflicts and politics. Furthermore, a possible moderating variable regarding conflict-polit should be investigated. Although similar model with cross-sectional and longitudinal context should be empirically tested in different cultures.

8. Limitation of Study

This research has several limitations. First, this research is cross sectional in nature, I believe that longitudinal study would be better explaining these relationships. Second, all findings were based on self reported data so we expects that there is a possibility of common method error, while previous studies also used self reported measure (Vigoda, 2002; Ferris et al., 1996). Third, measure of intention to quit (.67) had low reliability which is one of the limitation of this study, although intention to quit had low reliability but show significant results with all variables and politics partially mediate the relationship of interpersonal conflict and intention to quit.

Regardless of its limitation, this research has investigated a missing connection in conflict politics literature and uncovered appealing finding that motivates for future work. The limited research on relationship between interpersonal conflict, perception of organizational politics and outcomes especially job stress, intention to quit, and workplace deviance, should hearten empirical examiner and theory developer. Although, it’s not possible to eliminate the emergence of conflict and politics in workplace, but this research will be helpful for employees to manage the consequences of these constructs in a better way.

References


