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Organizational Politics and Career Success in the Nigerian Maritime Industry

Paschal Onugha
Doctoral Student, Department of Management, University of Port Harcourt, Choba, Rivers State, Nigeria
W. O. Olori
Senior Lecturer, Department of Management, University of Port Harcourt, Choba, Rivers State, Nigeria

Abstract:
The aim of this paper is to contribute to the scanty but growing Nigerian literature on organizational politics. The study examines empirically the relationship between organizational politics and career success in Nigeria focusing on the Maritime Industry. Based on data collected from 75 completed questionnaires obtained from three maritime firms in Rivers State, the study find evidence that organizational politics have a negative and significant relationship with career success. The study also finds a positive and significant relationship between organizational politics and intention to leave organizations, and a negative and significant relationship between career success and intention to leave organization.

Keywords: Organizational politics, career success, intention to leave organization

1. Introduction

Generally, people work in organizations so that they can achieve certain objectives. These objectives vary across individuals and can be economic, psychological and/or social. While the economic reason for joining organizations includes good pay or salary and retirement benefits such as pension and gratuity, the psychological and social reasons may include friendship, personal reputation, status attainment and leadership. To achieve these objectives, individuals engage each other in interactions and expend a considerable amount of efforts in work places. Therefore, and according to Cropanzano, Howes, Grandey and Toth (1997), an organization represents a marketplace that attracts different people and groups for interactions and exchange of outcomes. For example, "pay is exchanged for productive performance and friendship might be exchanged for a desirable assignment" (p. 159). As in every market place, organizations are governed by rules which are enforced by people with different behaviour and style occupying leadership positions. Thus, the ideal job is one that leads to job satisfaction and ideal organization is one that meets the career objectives of its members.

One factor that has been found to have great influence on interactions and exchange of outcomes in the marketplace is politics. Politics in organizations as defined by Ferri, Russ and Fandt (1989), is any strategic behaviour or action of an individual aimed to maximize self-interest against team or organizational overall goals. Organizational politics is influenced by a wide range of individual attributes, such as Machiavellianism, positive affectivity and locus of control, and conditions in the work environment such as job autonomy, centralization and formalization (Bedi & Schat, 2013;Boudreau, Hochwarter & Thompson, 2010; Ferri, Russ & Fandt 1989).

Organizational politics and its attendant consequences deserves much more attention than it has presently attracted considering its strategic importance in organizations. The review of literature, starting from the seminal work of Ferri, Russ and Fandt (1989), generally suggest that organizational politics, whether actual or perceived, has a significant adverse effect on work outcomes. The aim of this paper is therefore, to examine empirically the relationship between organizational politics and career success in Nigeria focusing on the Maritime Industry. Based on the literature review, the study considers three hypotheses as follows:

→ H_{01}: Organizational politics has no significant relationship with career success
→ H_{02}: Organizational politics has no significant relationship with intention to leave organization
→ H_{03}: There is no significant relationship between intention to leave organization and career success

The relevance of this study is twofold. First, the review of relevant literature suggests that this area of research has received very little attention in Nigeria. Thus, considering the strategic importance of the Maritime industry in Nigeria, focusing on this sector contributes to the growing organizational politics literature in Nigeria. Second, the study adopts the two measures of career success of Judge and Bretz (1994); namely, Extrinsic and Intrisic career success. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study in Nigeria to consider career success as having both extrinsic and intrinsic dimensions.

The rest of this paper is structured as follows: Section two contains literature review. Section 3 describes the sample, data and method of analysis. Section 4 contains data analysis and discussion of findings. Section 5 concludes.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Framework

The concept of organizational politics and its effect on work outcomes has been the focus of research for more than three decades. Consequently, there are many views and definitions of organizational politics documented in the literature. According to Cropanzano, Howes, Grandey and Toth (1997), the definitions of organizational politics fall, at least, in two views; general and specific views. In the general view, organizational politics is considered as influence processes that shape outcomes in work settings. This view holds that politics is a set of social tools used to influence the functioning of an organization (Pfeffer, 1981). Thus, its effects can be positive or negative. It is in this sense that many authors have considered organizational politics as both functional and dysfunctional depending on the prevailing work place situations or circumstances

However, a more specific definition of organizational that is still gaining popularity is the one suggested by Ferri, Russ and Fandt (1989). They view organizational politics as any strategic behaviour or action of an individual aimed to maximize self-interest against team or organizational overall goals. A politically-oriented individual or group of persons uses organizational resources for self-promotions, favour a close friend and/or other selfish considerations at the expense of the organization. Thus, organizational politics has been considered as dysfunctional to the organization (Cropanzano, Howes, Grandey & Toth, 1997). SeeGandz and Murray (1980) and Kacmar and Ferris (1991) for examples of political behaviour that fits this definition.

The increasing popularity of the second definition can be linked to its specific nature and consistency with the perception and description of organizational politics by individuals who participated in previous studies (Cropanzano, Howes, Grandey & Toth, 1997; Drory & Romm, 1988; Ferris & Kacmar, 1992; Gantz & Murray, 1980). Since, people are more concerned with what they perceive than the objective reality, the perception of politics by individuals in work places is more relevant for empirical studies than the actual politics, especially when the effects are related to work outcomes (Ferris, et al., 1993). Thus, perceived organisational politics is a key determinant of career success and explanatory factor for intention to leave organizations (Abubakar, Chauhan, & Kura, 2014).

2.2. Review of Empirical Studies

The relationship between perceived organizational politics and work outcomes has received considerable attention in the empirical literature. Starting from the seminal work of Ferri, Russ and Fandt (1989), what appears to have emerged from theoretical literature is that organizational politics has a negative and significant relationship with career success or work outcomes. However, there is no conclusive empirical support for this assertion.

Judge and Bretz (1994) investigate the relationship between political influence behavior and career success in US using regression and correlation analysis. The study identifies two forms of career success; extrinsic and intrinsic career success. While extrinsic career success is measured as salary, job level, number of promotions with current employer, and number of promotions in career except those with the current employer, intrinsic career success is measured as job satisfaction and life satisfaction. The study also subdivides influence behaviour into supervisor-focused tactics and job-focus tactics. The study is based on qualitative data collected through mailed questionnaire. The results show evidence that political influence behaviour as a significant predictive power for both intrinsic and extrinsic career success. The results further indicate that job-focused tactics, manifesting a strategy of self-promotion, has a negative relationship with career success. Contrarily, supervisor-focused tactics, manifesting a strategy of ingratiation, shows a positive relationship with career success.

Vigoda (2000) examines the relationship between perception of organizational politics, job attitudes, and several other work outcomes among 303 public sector employees in Israel using multiple standard and hierarchical regressions. The result indicate that perception of organizational politics has a negative relationship with job satisfaction and organizational commitment, and a positive relationship with intention to leave and negligent behaviour. Further, the results show evidence of a weak negative relationship between perception of organizational politics and employees' performance. The proportion of variation in work outcomes contributed by perception of organizational politics is higher that contributed by both attitudes and personal variables.

Using data collected from American and European executives, Boudreau, Boswell and Judge (2001) consider the effects of personality on executive career success. They examine both direct effects and the mediating effects of an array of human capital and motivation variables derived from previous studies. The results show, among other things that although, motivational variables have predictive power for career success, they seldom mediate the relationship between personality and career success in both America and Europe.

Aronow (2004) seek to determine to what extend and how organizational politics impacts the work of the internal human resource professional. The human resource domain examined includes both the Human Resource Management and the Organizational Development realms. The study focuses on the professional services sector in four US cities; Minneapolis, Minnesota and Chicago, Illinois, and is anchored on qualitative research methodology using focus group and interviews. The study produces four significant findings. First, in order to be effective, human resource professionals must have the ability to influence highly skilled, fact-based technical experts. Second, to be able to influence effectively, human resource professionals must demonstrate character. Third, there is a compelling desire to be at the table and align strategically with the business. This may entice the exchange of influencing decision making that is congruent with organizational and individual value sets with being a bottom-line driven business partner. Fourth, this exchange may dull the deliberate development of ethically and morally responsible social leadership skills by over-emphasizing shareholder return

Meisler and Vigoda-Gadot (2014) examine the relationship between perceived organizational politics and emotional intelligence, and their interplay in the context of work outcomes in Israel. They use data collected from a sample of 368 employees to test a mediation effect of perceived organizational politics on the relationship between emotional intelligence on the one hand, and job satisfaction,

turnover intentions and negligent behaviour on the other. The result show that perceived organizational politics mediate the relationship between emotional intelligence and work outcomes. Similar results are found by Meisler (2014) using structural equation modeling. He examines the associations between emotional intelligence and both political skill and job satisfaction, as well as the possibility that political skill mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. Based on the data collected from a sample of 368 employees, the study finds that emotional intelligence has a positive relationship with both political skill and job satisfaction, and that political skill mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction

In Turkey, Kaya, Aydin and Ayhan (2016) examine the perceptions about organizational politics by members of different organizations and how these affect their perceptions of organizational justice and decisions relating to employee turnover using correlation and regression analysis. They use data collected through a survey of 259 individuals from both public and private sector. The variables are verified using confirmatory factor analysis. The results show that organizational politics has a positive and significant correlation with intention to leave, and that perceived organizational justice and intention to leave are negatively and significantly related.

In Nigeria, Abubakar, Chauhan and Kura (2014) examine the relationship between perceived organizational politics, organizational trust, perceived human resource management practices and employee turnover among Registered Nurses in Nigerian public hospitals using multiple regression analysis technique. One hundred and seventy-five Registered Nurses participated in the study. The results show that perceived organizational politics has a positive and significant and relationship with turnover intentions, and that both organizational trust and perceived human resource practices are negatively and significantly related to turnover intentions.

Arogundade (2016) investigate employees' reactions to perceived organizational politics and its effect on career satisfaction in Nigeria using correlation and regression analysis. The study is based on data collected from a sample of 300 employees of both profit and non-profit organization in Lagos metropolis. Simple random sampling technique is used to draw the sample. The results show evidence that perceived organizational politics has a negative correlation with career satisfaction, and that organizational politics are more in profit organizations than in non-profit organizations. The results also show that female employees perceive significantly more organizational politics than their male counterparts, and that 10% of the total variation in career satisfaction is accounted for by perceived organizational politics.

3. Methodology

3.1. Data and Sample
The data used in this study were collected using the survey method. The sample includes 75 employees (50 males and 25 females) of three maritime companies in Rivers State. Purposive sampling was used to select the local governments while convenience sampling technique was used to select the participants. The data were collected through the OPCI (Organizational Politics Career Success Intention to Leave) instrument which is a structured questionnaire designed by the researcher. The measurement of the main variables of interest were based on a 5-point Likert Scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Strongly Agree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

A demographic breakdown shows that 60% of the respondents are married, 32% are single, 5% are separated and 3% are widowed. 40% of the respondents are in 35 – 44 years age bracket, 32% are in 45 – 54 years age bracket, the rest are in 25 – 34 years are in 25 – 34 years age bracket. Average work experience and number of promotions the respondents have received are 15 years and 3 respectively. All the respondents have at least primary education.

3.2. Measures
- Perception of Organisational Politics (POP): Respondents were asked to indicate 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) their level of agreement with 5 statement items included in the modified POP scale (POPS). The original POPS scale was developed by Kacmar and Ferris (1991) and included 40 statement items. Accordingly, higher rating implies higher perception of organisational politics. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient for this scale is 0.86 or 86% which is substantially higher than the 70% Alpha threshold.
- Career Success (CS): Respondents were asked to indicate 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) their level of agreement with 5 statement items included in the CS scale. The scale is a modified version of the intrinsic career success used by Seibert and Kraimer (2001). The Cronbach Alpha coefficient for this scale is 0.88 or 88% which is also much higher than the Alpha threshold.
- Intention to Leave Organisation (ILO): Respondents were asked to indicate 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) their level of agreement with 5 statement items included in the ILO scale. The scale is adopted from Kaya, Aydin and Ayhan (2016) with a little modification. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient for this scale is 0.74 or 74% which is also higher than the 70% Alpha threshold.

3.3. Method of Data Analysis
The methods used for data analysis and hypothesis testing include mean, standard deviation, correlation and simple regression analysis. Hypothesis H_1 was tested by regressing career success on perception of organisational politics. Hypothesis H_2 was tested by regressing intention to leave organisation on perception of organisational politics. Hypothesis H_3 was tested by correlating career success and intention to leave.

4. Data Analysis and Results

4.1. Descriptive Analysis of the Responses

Tables 1, 2 and 3 show the percent and mean responses of the employees to the statement items relating to the three variable scales; Perception of Organization Politics (POP), Career Success (CS) and Intention to Leave Organization (ILO). From table 1, none of the respondents indicated either strongly disagree or disagree for all the statement items. For statement items POP1, POP2, POP3 and POP4, more than 75% of the respondents indicated either strongly agree or agree, with a mean response of almost 4 for each of the items. The statement item POP5 has a mean response of 3.61. The variable (Gran) mean is 3.96. indicating that overall, the respondents perceive their organizations as political and therefore unfair and unjust.

For each of the statement items in table 2, more than 70% of the respondents indicated either disagree or strongly disagree; none of the them indicated agree or strongly agree. Both the variable (Grand) mean and the mean response for each item is approximately 2, indicating, overall, that the respondents all disagree that they have achieve success in career since they joined their present organization.

From table 3, more than 78% of the respondents indicated either agree or strongly agree for the statement items ILO2, ILO3 and ILO4, while for statement item ILO1, more than 70% indicated either strongly agree or agree. However, 40% of the respondents indicated neither agree nor disagree for the statement "I may likely join a private organisation where politics is less perceived", while more than half of them indicated agree. Only 4% indicated agree. Both the variable (Grand) mean and the mean response for each item is more than 3.5, indicating overall, that the respondents all agree that they have intention to leave their present organizations.

ID	Perceived Organizational Politics (Reliability Alpha α = 0.86)	Percent of respondents					Mean	SD	Remark
		1	2	3	4	5			
POP1	Favoritism rather than merit determines who gets ahead around here	–	–	18.7	48.0	33.3	4.15	0.71	Agree
POP2	There are groups or cliques who hinder the effectiveness around here	–	–	21.3	57.3	21.3	4.00	0.65	Agree
POP3	There is a group of people in my department who always get things their way because no one wants to challenge them	–	–	21.3	57.3	21.3	4.00	0.65	Agree
POP4	People here usually don't speak up for fear of retaliation by others or losing their jobs	–	–	20.0	56.0	24.0	4.04	0.66	Agree
POP5	I have seen people deliberately distort information requested by others for purposes of personal gain	–	–	45.3	48.0	6.7	3.61	0.61	Agree
Variable: POPS (Grand Mean)							3.96	0.53	Agree

Table 1: Percent and mean responses for Perceived Organizational Politics

ID	Career Success (Reliability Alpha α = 0.88)	Percent of respondents					Mean	SD	Remark
		1	2	3	4	5			
CS1	In most ways, my present job is close to ideal	24.0	64.0	12.0	–	–	1.88	0.59	Disagree
CS2	Since I joined this organisation I have made progress toward meeting my life goals.	6.7	66.0	33.3	–	–	2.27	0.57	Disagree
CS3	I am satisfied with my job and life	18.7	70.7	10.7	–	–	1.92	0.53	Disagree
CS4	So far, I have gotten the important things I want in life	18.7	70.7	10.7	–	–	1.92	0.53	Disagree
CS5	My life has significantly improved since I joined this organisation	21.3	68.0	10.7	–	–	1.89	0.55	Disagree
Variable: CSS (Grand Mean)							1.97	0.46	Disagree

Table 2: Percent and mean responses for Career Success

ID	Intention to leave organization (Reliability Alpha α = 0.74)	Percent of respondents					Mean	SD	Remark
		1	2	3	4	5			
ILO1	I often think about quitting	–	6.7	21.3	48.0	24.0	3.89	0.84	Agree
ILO2	I intend to quit my present job	–	–	20.0	64.0	16.0	3.96	0.60	Agree
ILO3	I am actively searching for an alternative to my present job	–	1.3	17.3	62.7	18.7	3.99	0.64	Agree
ILO4	Next year I will probably look for a new job outside this organization		1.3	20.0	58.7	20.0	3.97	0.67	Agree
ILO5	I may likely join a private organisation where politics is less perceived		4.0	40.0	50.7	5.3	3.57	0.66	Agree
Variable: ILO (Grand Mean)							3.87	0.48	Agree

Table 3: Mean responses for Intention to Leave organization

4.2. Simple Correlation and Regression Analysis

Table 4 presents the results of simple correlation and regression analysis for POPS and CSS. As this table shows, the coefficient of -0.402 indicates that POPS and CSS are negatively related. The Pearson correlation coefficient also indicates that there is a moderate negative and significant correlation between POPS and CSS (r =. -0.465, p =0.000).

Table 5 presents the results of simple correlation and regression analysis for POPS and ILOS. As this table shows, the coefficient of 0.821 indicates that POPS and ILOS are positively related. The Pearson correlation coefficient also indicates that there is a very strong positive and significant correlation between POPS and ILOS (r = 0.905, p=0.000).

Table 6 presents the simple bivariate correlation results for CSS and ILO. As this table shows, the Pearson correlation coefficient of -0.425 indicates that there is a negative CSS and ILOS.

1	2	3	4
Variable	**Coefficient**	**t-Statistic**	***p*-value**
Constant	3.567	9.961	0.000
POPS	-0.402	-4.484	0.000
R-Square	0.216	**Durbin-Watson**	1.988
Pearson r	-0.465	***p*-value (Pearson)**	0.000

Table 4: Regression and Correlation results for POPS and CSS

1	2	3	4
Variable	**Coefficient**	**t-Statistic**	***p*-value**
Constant	0.626	3.470	0.000
POPS	0.821	18.187	0.000
R-Square	0.819	**Durbin Watson**	1.625
Pearson r	0.905	***p*-value (Pearson)**	0.000

Table 5: Regression and Correlation results for POPS and ILOS

Correlation		**ILOS**	**CSS**
ILOS	Pearson r	1	-0.425
	p-value	–	0.000
CSS	Pearson r	-0.425	1
	p-value	0.000	–

Table 6: Bivariate correlation between ILOS and CSS

4.3. Hypothesis Testing

→ H_{01}: Perceived organizational politics has no significant relationship with career success

To test hypothesis 1, the information in columns 3 and 4 of table 4 is used. The decision rule is to reject the null hypothesis if the test is significant, otherwise do not reject the null. As we can see from table 4, the p-value in column 4 is zero, indicating that the test is highly significant. The null hypothesis that perceived organizational politics no significant relationship with career success is therefore rejected.

→ H_{02}: Organisational politics has no significant relationship with intention to leave organization.

To test hypothesis 2, the information in columns 3 and 4 of table 5 is used. The decision rule is to reject the null hypothesis if the test is significant, otherwise do not reject the null. As we can see from table 5, the p-value in column 4 is zero, indicating that the test is highly significant. The null hypothesis that perceived organizational politics no significant relationship with intention to leave is therefore rejected.

→ H_{03}:There is no significant relationship between intention to leave organization and career success.

To test hypothesis 3, the information in table 6 is used. As usual, the decision is to reject the null hypothesis if the test is significant, otherwise, do not reject the null. As we can see from table 6, the p-value is zero, indicating that the test is highly significant. The null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between intention to leave organization and career success leave is therefore, rejected.

4.4. Discussion of Findings

The results show evidence that perceived organizational politics and career negatively and significantly related. The more the employees perceive their organizations as political, the less they are likely to achieve success in their jobs or career. Employees feel that they cannot make progress in life and/or achieve any meaningful career success in an organisation where favoritism rather than merit determines who gets what. This evidence is consistent with our hypothesis and agrees with a number of previous studies includingJudge and Bretz (1994), Vigoda (2000) and Arogundade (2016).

The results also show evidence that perceived organizational politics and intention to leave are positively and significantly related. The more politics is perceived in an organization, the more likely the employees are willing to leave the organization. Employees feel safer in organizations that encourage hardwork and are less political. This finding is in agreement with a previous studies including Kaya, Aydin and Ayhan (2016).

Finally, the results show evidence of a significant negative correlation between intention to organization and career success. The more the employees feel that their present job can give them satisfaction, the less they are likely to leave the organization and vice versa.

This is also consistent with the argument by Kaya, Aydin and Ayhan (2016) that if justice is embedded, organizations are less likely to lose their employees.

5. Conclusions

The aim of this paper is to examine empirically the relationship between organizational politics and career success in Nigeria focusing on the Maritime Industry. Consistent with theoretical expectations and previous studies, the study find evidence that organizational politics have a negative and significant relationship with career success. There is a positive and significant relationship between organizational politics and intention to leave organizations. Finally, there is a negative and significant relationship between career success and intention to leave organization.

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