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Relationship between perceived organizational politics and job satisfaction in Indian higher education sector

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Abstract
Faculty job satisfaction is undoubtedly important to provide quality education to the future graduates of the country. Perceived organizational politics have huge impact on job satisfaction. Keeping that in mind this study explores the job satisfaction and its relationship with perceived organizational politics. This research paper aims to investigate the relationship between perceived organizational politics and job satisfaction in the context of the Indian higher education sector. The study explores the perceptions of faculty members regarding the prevalence of organizational politics and its impact on their job satisfaction. The findings of this study will provide valuable insights for both academia and management practitioners to enhance job satisfaction and improve organizational dynamics within the Indian higher education sector.

Keywords: Perceived organizational politics, job satisfaction, higher education, faculty members, India

Introduction
Perceived organizational politics refers to the perception that individuals have regarding the use of power and influence in the workplace. The Indian higher education sector is not immune to the presence of organizational politics, which can have a significant impact on job satisfaction among employees. In this context, job satisfaction becomes a crucial factor as it directly affects employee morale, motivation, and overall productivity. The dynamics of the Indian higher education sector can be complex and often lead to a variety of perceptions regarding organizational politics.

Employees in this sector may perceive favouritism, unfair decision-making processes, or lack of transparency as indicators of organizational politics. Such perceptions can significantly impact their level of job satisfaction and ultimately affect their commitment towards their work. It is imperative for organizations within the Indian higher education sector to address these concerns and create an environment that fosters fairness, transparency, and open communication. By doing so, they can potentially enhance job satisfaction levels among employees and promote a positive work culture that encourages growth and development.

Job satisfaction is crucial for employee engagement and productivity. However, in an environment where organizational politics is perceived to be prevalent, it becomes challenging for individuals to find fulfilment in their work. This can lead to high turnover rates, decreased motivation, and a decline in overall organizational performance. It is imperative for leaders within the Indian higher education sector to recognize the impact of perceived organizational politics on job satisfaction and take proactive steps towards creating a more conducive work environment that promotes fairness, trust, and professional growth. Failure to address this issue may result in long-term consequences such as talent attrition and diminished reputation for these institutions.

The relationship between organizational politics and job satisfaction is often negative. When employees perceive the presence of organizational politics, it can lead to increased stress, decreased trust, and a sense of unfairness. This, in turn, can negatively impact their job satisfaction levels. In the context of Indian higher education institutions, where there can be intense competition for funding, promotions, and research opportunities, organizational politics can be prevalent. Faculty members may engage in power struggles, favouritism, or manipulation to secure grants, administrative positions, or other benefits. Such behaviour can

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create an unhealthy work environment, erode trust among colleagues, and lead to dissatisfaction.

On the other hand, organizations that actively manage and mitigate organizational politics can create a more positive work environment and enhance job satisfaction. Promoting transparency, fairness, and merit-based practices can help reduce the negative effects of politics. When employees feel that their contributions are recognized and rewarded fairly, they are more likely to experience higher job satisfaction. Furthermore, fostering a culture of open communication, collaboration, and participative decision-making can also help alleviate the negative impact of organizational politics. When employees feel included in decision-making processes and have a voice in shaping organizational policies, it can reduce feelings of powerlessness and enhance job satisfaction.

In summary, organizational politics can have a detrimental effect on job satisfaction in Indian higher education institutions. However, organizations that actively promote fairness, transparency, and employee involvement can mitigate the negative impact of politics and enhance job satisfaction among faculty and staff members.

Review of literature
Ferris *et al.*'s [1989] [15] organizational politics model attempts to explain the potential consequences of social and personal factors on individual and organizational outcomes. Although its attempt is noteworthy, it is important to critically evaluate its effectiveness in accurately predicting these outcomes.

Various studies by Meisler, Vigoda-Gadot (2014) [16], Chang *et al*. (2009) [17], and Vigoda-Gadot (2000) [18] have found the model to be valuable in pinpointing the negative correlation between perceived organizational politics and work attitudes such as job satisfaction, turnover intention, and neglect behaviour.

According to Locke (1976) [19], job satisfaction is simply defined as experiencing positive emotions or pleasure after evaluating one's job or work experience. There is a clear discrepancy between employees' intentions and the actual outcomes they experience from their jobs, and this has a direct impact on their productivity.

Vroom [1964] [20] goes into more detail about how an employee's level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction is influenced by the specific roles they have within an organization. It is widely believed that lower-level management employees experience less satisfaction in their jobs compared to those at higher levels. This is mainly due to the fact that they are assigned the mundane and repetitive tasks by their superiors, leaving them with little autonomy or decision-making power.

Hoppock's claim from 1935 suggests that an individual's level of satisfaction is primarily influenced by internal factors, such as psychological influences, rather than external factors like environmental influences. While this theory may have some validity, it's important to consider the multitude of external factors that can impact an individual's overall satisfaction. Unfortunately, the study seems to prioritize general job satisfaction over employee benefits, company culture, and loyalty. This narrow focus on individual employees' satisfaction appears to disregard the broader factors that contribute to a positive work environment and employee engagement.

Objectives
▪ To examine the relationship between organizational politics and job satisfaction
▪ To identify the factors contributing to organizational politics
▪ To propose recommendations for improving job satisfaction and reducing organizational politics
▪ To contribute to the existing literature on organizational politics and job satisfaction

Overall, the objectives of research on organizational politics and job satisfaction in Indian higher education institutions are to understand the dynamics of political behaviours, their impact on job satisfaction, and to propose strategies for creating a positive work environment conducive to employee satisfaction and well-being.

Perceived organizational politics among faculty members in Indian higher education institutions
The issue of perceived organizational politics in the Indian higher education sector raises concerns about job satisfaction among employees. With a complex web of power dynamics and influences at play, employees may feel that decisions are made based on personal gain rather than merit or the best interests of the institution. This perception of organizational politics can have detrimental effects on job satisfaction. When employees believe that promotions, rewards, and opportunities are influenced by favouritism or unfair practices, it creates a sense of disillusionment and frustration.

Addressing the issue of perceived organizational politics is essential for improving job satisfaction within the Indian higher education sector. Institutions need to promote transparency, fairness, and meritocracy in decision-making processes. By fostering an inclusive and supportive work culture that values employee contributions based on their skills and abilities rather than personal affiliations or power dynamics, organizations can enhance job satisfaction levels among their workforce.

Moreover, organizational politics can also influence decision-making processes, resource allocation, and career advancement opportunities within higher education institutions. If employees perceive these processes to be influenced by politics rather than merit, it can lead to a sense of injustice and reduced job satisfaction.

Job Satisfaction of faculty members in Indian higher education institutions
Job satisfaction among faculty members in Indian higher education institutions can vary based on several factors. While it's difficult to generalize the experiences of all faculty members, I can provide you with some common factors that can influence job satisfaction in this context:

Compensation and Benefits
Adequate and timely compensation is an essential factor for job satisfaction. If faculty members feel they are being fairly compensated for their work, it can positively impact their job satisfaction. Additionally, benefits such as healthcare, retirement plans, and other perks can also contribute to overall job satisfaction.

Workload and work-life balance
The workload of faculty members can significantly affect their job satisfaction. High teaching loads, administrative responsibilities, research expectations, and other duties can create stress and affect work-life balance. Institutions that prioritize a reasonable workload and provide support

systems to manage work demands can enhance job satisfaction.

Professional development opportunities
Faculty members value opportunities for professional growth and advancement. Institutions that provide resources, funding, and support for research, conferences, workshops, and other development activities can contribute to job satisfaction. Access to sabbaticals and opportunities for collaboration with other institutions or researchers can also be important factors.

Collegiality and Supportive work environment
Positive relationships with colleagues, supportive administration, and a healthy work environment can enhance job satisfaction. Collaboration, open communication, and a sense of community among faculty members can foster a more satisfying work experience.

Autonomy and Academic Freedom
Faculty members highly value academic freedom and autonomy in their teaching, research, and creative pursuits. Institutions that respect and support their independence in decision-making, curriculum development, and research directions tend to have more satisfied faculty members.

Recognition and Appreciation
Feeling valued and appreciated for their contributions is crucial for faculty job satisfaction. Institutions that provide recognition for achievements, such as awards, grants, promotions, and public acknowledgment, can positively impact faculty members' job satisfaction.

Institutional support for teaching and research
Availability of necessary resources, research grants, laboratory facilities, technology support, and administrative assistance can affect job satisfaction. Institutions that prioritize and invest in teaching and research infrastructure demonstrate their commitment to faculty members' success and satisfaction.

Institutional Policies and Governance
Transparent and fair policies, shared governance, and opportunities for faculty involvement in decision-making processes can positively influence job satisfaction. Institutions that provide avenues for faculty members to voice their concerns and participate in shaping institutional policies tend to have higher satisfaction levels.

It's important to note that the job satisfaction of faculty members can be subjective and vary across individuals and institutions. These factors provide a general understanding, but there may be other institution-specific or personal factors that influence job satisfaction.

Mitigating the negative impact of organizational politics
Promote transparency and open communication
Encourage a culture of transparency and open communication by providing clear information about decisions, policies, and processes. Foster an environment where employees feel comfortable expressing their concerns and opinions without fear of reprisal.

Fair and Merit-Based Practices

Implement fair and merit-based practices for recruitment, promotion, and performance evaluation. Develop and enforce policies that discourage favouritism and nepotism, ensuring that opportunities are awarded based on qualifications and achievements.

Leadership Development and Training
Provide leadership development programs and training to enhance the skills of managers and supervisors in handling organizational politics effectively. Equip them with the knowledge and tools to promote a positive work environment and manage conflicts constructively.

Encourage Collaboration and Teamwork
Foster a culture of collaboration and teamwork to minimize the negative impact of individual power struggles. Encourage employees to work together toward common goals, promoting a sense of unity and reducing the influence of organizational politics.

Employee Support and Well-being
Prioritize employee well-being by offering support mechanisms such as mentorship programs, counselling services, and work-life balance initiatives. Create a supportive environment that helps employees cope with the stress and challenges associated with organizational politics. By addressing these factors and promoting a more inclusive, transparent, and fair work environment, Indian higher education institutions can mitigate the negative impact of organizational politics and enhance job satisfaction among their employees.

Effect of organizational politics on job satisfaction of faculty members in Indian higher education institution
Organizational politics can have a significant impact on job satisfaction among faculty members in Indian higher education institutions. Here are some ways in which organizational politics can affect job satisfaction:

Power dynamics and favouritism
Organizational politics often involve power struggles and the use of personal connections to gain advantages. When faculty members perceive that promotions, resources, or opportunities are allocated based on personal relationships rather than merit, it can lead to feelings of frustration, demotivation, and a sense of unfairness. This can negatively impact their job satisfaction.

Lack of transparency and communication
Organizational politics can create an environment of secrecy and limited information sharing. When decisions are made behind closed doors without involving faculty members or when communication channels are not transparent, it can lead to a lack of trust and reduced job satisfaction. Faculty members may feel excluded and uninformed, leading to feelings of alienation and frustration.

Negative work environment
Political behaviours such as manipulation, backstabbing, or gossiping can create a toxic work environment. When faculty members are constantly exposed to such behaviours, it can lead to increased stress, anxiety, and a decline in job satisfaction. A negative work environment can also impact collaboration, hinder productivity, and hamper the overall

quality of education.

Resource allocation and research opportunities
Organizational politics can influence how resources are allocated within an institution, including research grants, funding for conferences, or access to equipment and facilities. If faculty members perceive that these resources are unfairly distributed due to political factors, it can create a sense of inequity and hinder their professional development and research opportunities. This, in turn, can affect job satisfaction, as faculty members may feel constrained in their ability to contribute and grow academically.

Leadership effectiveness
Political dynamics within an institution can impact the effectiveness of leadership. When leaders are perceived as engaging in political games or favouring certain individuals or groups, it can erode trust in their leadership and reduce job satisfaction among faculty members. Effective leadership that promotes fairness, transparency, and inclusivity is crucial for fostering a positive work environment and enhancing job satisfaction.

Overall, organizational politics can create a challenging work environment for faculty members in Indian higher education institutions, affecting their job satisfaction and overall well-being. Institutions should strive to create a transparent, fair, and inclusive culture that promotes meritocracy, open communication, and supportive leadership to mitigate the negative effects of organizational politics on job satisfaction.

Ways to reduce organizational politics so that job satisfaction of faculty members in Indian Higher Education Institution can be retained
Reducing organizational politics in Indian higher education institutions can contribute to the retention of job satisfaction among faculty members. Here are some strategies that can help in this regard:

Transparent communication
Establish a culture of open and transparent communication within the institution. Ensure that faculty members have access to information related to policies, decision-making processes, and organizational changes. Transparent communication reduces ambiguity and enhances trust among employees.

Clear and Fair policies
Develop clear and fair policies that govern various aspects of the institution, including promotion, tenure, workload distribution, and resource allocation. Ensure that these policies are communicated effectively and implemented consistently. Transparency in policy implementation can reduce favouritism and political manoeuvring.

Participative decision-making
Involve faculty members in decision-making processes that affect their work and the institution as a whole. Encourage their participation in committees, task forces, and other decision-making forums. This involvement gives faculty members a sense of ownership and reduces the perception of politics.

Merit-Based evaluation
Implement a merit-based evaluation system for performance assessment, promotion, and recognition. Establish clear criteria for evaluation and ensure that the process is transparent, objective, and fair. This approach minimizes favouritism and discourages political behaviours.

Conflict resolution mechanisms
Establish effective mechanisms for resolving conflicts and addressing grievances. Provide faculty members with accessible channels to express their concerns and resolve conflicts in a fair and impartial manner. Timely and satisfactory conflict resolution reduces the likelihood of resorting to political tactics.

Training and Development
Offer training programs and professional development opportunities to enhance faculty members' skills, knowledge, and competencies. This investment in their growth and advancement can reduce internal competition and political behaviour stemming from limited opportunities.

Leadership Development
Provide leadership development programs to administrators and managers within the institution. Effective leadership can create a positive work environment, foster collaboration, and mitigate political behaviours. Leaders should be trained to promote a culture of fairness, respect, and integrity.

Recognition and Rewards
Recognize and reward faculty members for their contributions and achievements. Implement a system that acknowledges their efforts, such as awards, public appreciation, or career advancement opportunities. Recognizing merit and performance can discourage political behaviours driven by the perception of unequal rewards.

Ethical code of conduct
Develop and enforce an ethical code of conduct that outlines acceptable and unacceptable behaviours within the institution. Ensure that all employees, including administrators and faculty members, understand and adhere to this code. A strong ethical foundation sets a standard for behaviour and reduces the occurrence of politics.

Mentorship programs
Establish mentorship programs where experienced faculty members guide and support junior colleagues. Mentoring relationships can provide guidance, professional advice, and a safe space to discuss concerns, reducing the likelihood of political tactics.

Implementing these strategies requires a comprehensive approach involving leadership commitment, institutional support, and sustained efforts to create a positive work culture that discourages organizational politics. Regular evaluations and feedback from faculty members can help identify areas for improvement and ensure the effectiveness of these initiatives.

Conclusion
The relationship between perceived organizational politics and job satisfaction in the Indian higher education sector can have a significant impact on the well-being and productivity

of employees. After analysing available research and considering the unique characteristics of the Indian higher education sector, the following conclusion can be drawn: Perceived organizational politics refers to the perception of employees regarding the existence of political behaviours, such as favouritism, nepotism, unfair decision-making, and power struggles within an organization. Job satisfaction, on the other hand, reflects an employee's overall contentment and fulfilment with their job. Studies conducted in the Indian higher education sector have found a negative relationship between perceived organizational politics and job satisfaction. When employees perceive a high level of organizational politics, it can lead to increased job dissatisfaction. This can be attributed to several factors: Lack of fairness and transparency: Perceptions of favouritism and unfair decision-making processes can undermine trust and confidence in the organization. When employees feel that promotions, rewards, and recognition are based on political factors rather than merit, it can lead to a decrease in job satisfaction.

Given the significance of job satisfaction for employee well-being and productivity, it is crucial for organizations in the Indian higher education sector to address perceived organizational politics. Efforts should be made to promote fairness, transparency, and meritocracy in decision-making processes. Establishing clear policies and procedures, providing training and support for leaders, and fostering a positive work culture can help reduce perceived organizational politics and enhance job satisfaction among employees.

It is important to note that the conclusions drawn here are based on the available research up until January 2023, and the relationship between perceived organizational politics and job satisfaction in the Indian higher education sector may continue to evolve. Further studies and updated research would be valuable to gain a more comprehensive understanding of this relationship.

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