

THE IMPACT OF PERCEPTION OF POLITICS ON IN-ROLE PERFORMANCE: MEDIATING ROLE OF ORGANIZATION CYNICISM & MODERATING ROLE OF UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of perception of politics on in-role performance. Organizational Cynicism is mediating the process while uncertainty avoidance has moderation role in this study. Data was collected from the sample of 108 employee of Islamabad hospitality industry. For the purpose of data collection study uses adopted questionnaire. Results are indicating that perception of politics has a negative significant relationship with in-role performance. Full mediation is established and uncertainty avoidance shows no moderating relationship with organizational cynicism and in-role performance.

KEYWORDS: Perception of politics, Organizational cynicism, Uncertainty avoidance, In-role performance.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decades the researchers are working on employee satisfaction, employee turnover rate, employee commitment and employee performance etc. So, there is also perception of politics in organizations which is used by employees within the organizations for their benefits, and this has become a field of great concern in business administration, management & applied psychology. Many studies have recommended that the ways by which employees perceive their workplace in terms of political climate is significance in many facets (Vigoda-Gadot, 2007). This behavior is also been touched by the researchers to find

out the impact on organization, that to what extent perception of politics can affect the organization. The organizations are facing this problem that how employee perceive the organizational politics and it will positively or negatively affect the employee. It totally depends on employees' perception.

The perception of politics can be defined by many researchers over the past decades. "Perceptions of politics usually reflect employees' views about the level of power and influence used by other organizational members to gain advantages and secure their

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interests in conflicting situations” (Vigoda-Gadot et al., 2003). On the other hand Vigoda-Gadot (2008) in his another paper he mentioned that absence of the minimum level of justice & fairness at organizations was found the main cause of higher perception of organizational politics & thus there are also some connected issues for the organizational outcomes.

Perception of politics is triggers to cynical feelings in employee (Miller et al., 2008), organizational climate (Liu, Liu & Wu, 2010), trust in the organization (Davis & Gardner, 2004), turnover (Daskin & Tezer, 2012) and decreases organizational performance (Byrne, 2005).

Ferris et al. (2002) suggested that there is negative relationship between perception of politics and in-role performance. Where as in-role performance is the activities done by the employees for the proper execution of the job which is predefine by the employer (Miller et al., 2008). Cohen et al., (2008) mentioned that in-role performance is emphasizing on the personal aims and achievements.

Bedeian (2007, p. 11) defined cynicism as “an attitude resulting from a critical appraisal of the motives, actions, and values, of one’s employing organization”. Cynicism can also be defined as that it may give birth to negative thoughts and emotions regarding organizations by an individual towards their organizations (Johnson & O’Leary-Kelly, 2003). Naus et al., (2007) suggested that if there are a high level of conflict of roles and on the other side some opportunities then the individual has more chances to have cynical behavior towards organization.

Hofstede, (1980) proposed the dimension of culture named as uncertainty avoidance, and

that it is defined by Hofstede, (1984) “Uncertainty avoidance measures the individual’s tolerance of ambiguity, or uncertain situations, as well as his fear of the unknown”. It shows that how individuals in a society have attitude towards risk and have trust on societal level. In link with this study of Ferrin & Gillespie, (2010), they suggested that trust incorporate societal cultures and in that societal cultures one can influence on the bases of trust. And by taking a culture in the studies which gives advantage because culture is different from country to country.

Other studies shown that when employees have high uncertainty avoidance, the tension triggered by uncertainty makes them seek greater stability in their professional career at workplace to avoid risks, so they have to show positive performance (Clugston et al., 2000; Hofstede, 2001).

The above discussed variables are not studied in the particular relationship, while uncertainty avoidance is taken as possible moderator on the relationship of organizational cynicism and in-role performance. The main purpose of this study is to find out the relationship of perception of politics on in-role performance, with mediating role of organizational cynicism and the most importantly culture dimension is taken as a moderator in a context of Pakistan.

From a social exchange theory perspective, political working environments are associated with ambiguity and uncertainty and studies suggested that uncertainty as a major predictor of perception of organizational politics (Ferris et al., 2007) and on the other hand (Alkan & Turgut, 2015) mentioned that if employees perceive an imbalance in the employee-organization exchange, they start to decrease effort from their job. And resultantly the in-role performance immensely affects.

LITERATURE REVIEW

PERCEPTION OF POLITICS AND IN-ROLE PERFORMANCE

Perception of Politics has two important attributes which is defined as: First, perception of politics is that variable which portrays the person assessment of the behavior employee witnesses and experiences in their work floor. Second, POP is that type of behavior which arises in the organization at the expense of other employees (Bedi & Schat, 2013). Crawford, Lepine, & Rich (2010) suggested that with Perception of Politics energy start draining with an extent that employee loses their individual resources.

Generally job performance is divided in to two main constituents that is task performance also known as in-role performance and the other is contextual performance also known as extra-role performance (Motowidlo & Van Scotter 1994). Miller, Rutherford & Kolodinsky, (2008) they defined these concepts are as: in-role performance includes duties that are important to execute their job simply mentioned in their job description. Extra-role performance contains that type of acts that are not their part of job description like helping colleagues.

Studies suggested that there is negative relationship between perception of politics and in-role performance (Ferris et al., 2002; Miller et al., 2008; Bedi & Schat, 2013). In another study of Chang et al. (2009), they suggested that perception of politics is a type of stress which is directly affects the performance of an employee. In highly politicized environment in an organizations employees are obliged to employ their behavior in impression management which ultimately deviates them from actual job related tasks and affects their performance (Rosen, Harris, & Kacmar, 2009).

On the basis of the above discussion the proposed hypothesis is:

H₁: *Perceptions of organizational politics is negatively associated with in-role performance.*

MEDIATING ROLE OF ORGANIZATIONAL CYNICISM BETWEEN PERCEPTIONS OF POLITICS & IN-ROLE PERFORMANCE

The word cynicism is derived from the word "cynic", which foundation is from ancient Greek philosophy arise from about 500 B.C., both of them are the way of thinking and the way of life (Metzger, 2004). The cynicism concept is the focus of different disciplines in the parameter of social sciences, such as: philosophy (Ulaş, 2002), political sciences (Schyns & Koop, 2007), and administration (Kasalak & Aksu, 2014). Dean et al., (1998, p. 345) defined Organizational cynicism as: "a negative attitude toward one's employing organization, comprising three dimensions: 1. a belief that the organization lacks integrity; 2. negative affect toward the organization; and 3. tendencies to disparaging and critical behavior toward the organization that are consistent with these beliefs and affect". Bedeian defined the organizational cynicism as "an attitude resulting from a critical appraisal of the motives, actions, and values, of one's employing organization" (Bedeian, 2007, p. 11). Abraham, (2004) mentioned that there are various types of cynicism that is: social cynicism, employee cynicism, work cynicism, servant cynicism and last but not the least organizational cynicism. Davis & Gardner, (2004) mentioned that organizational cynicism is characterized by frustration and hopelessness as well as disrespect toward the organization and employee believes that the decisions are made within the organization is lack of sincerity.

Apaydin, (2012) revealed that organizational cynicism evolves as implicit or explicit strong criticism, also develops negative beliefs and feelings for the organization. Wanous and his colleagues mentioned that there is an attitude and negative expectancy associated with cynicism (Wanous, Reichers & Austin, 2004). Whenever an employers are fail to sustain the balance for not fulfilling their responsibilities, the results can be in organizational cynicism (Johnson & O'Leary-Kelly, 2003).

Neves, (2012) provides evidence regarding the association between performance and organizational cynicism. He suggested that, if employees perceive that the organization is not fulfilling their expectations and keeping their words, then the employees are not very much concerned to give ultimate performance and also they deviate from their prescribed tasks. Employees will show cynical behaviors while doing their jobs. In contrast studies suggested that organizational cynicism has been proposed to negatively influence in-role performance (Byrne & Hochwarter, 2008; Kim et al., 2009; Chiaburu et al., 2013).

On the basis the hypothesize hypothesis is:

H₂: *Organizational cynicism mediated the relationship between perception of politics and in-role performance.*

MODERATING ROLE OF UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONAL CYNICISM & IN-ROLE PERFORMANCE

Gelfand, Erez, & Aycan (2007) mentioned that national cultures, though social in nature, are imitated in the values profiles and other intellectual characteristics of the individuals in the society. On the other side few researchers have studied cultural values at the individual level using Hofstede's (1984) framework, because few studies suggested that each of his

cultural dimensions also different across individuals within a society (Cohen, 2006; Cohen & Keren, 2008).

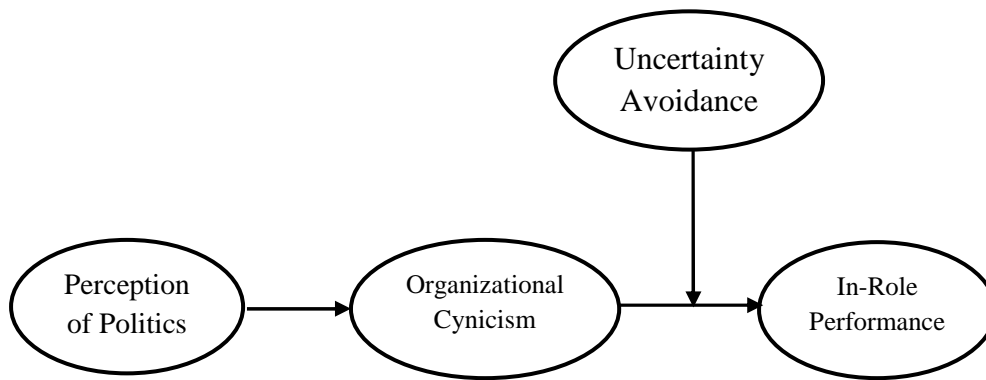
Hwang & Lee, (2012) mentioned that in strong uncertainty avoidance cultures, individuals feel threatened by anonymous or ambiguous situations, resulting in increased nervous stress and anxiety and the need for formal rules and structure in the workplace and personal relationships. On the other side in contrast Anseel and his colleague mentioned that organizations operating in a high uncertainty avoidance culture will use more prescribed rules, procedures, and structures for providing feedback than cultures portrayed by low uncertainty avoidance (Anseel & Lievens, 2007).

Cohen, (2007) mentioned that individuals who have a high degree of uncertainty avoidance seek greater stability and avoid risk he also suggested that higher levels of uncertainty avoidance will have a stronger relationship to in-role performance.

H₃: *Uncertainty avoidance moderates the relationship between organizational cynicism and in-role performance such that organizational cynicism will have a stronger negative relationship with in-role performance for employees who have high level of uncertainty avoidance than employees who have low level of uncertainty avoidance.*

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The research model of current study considers one independent variable i.e. Perception of Politics, while In-Role Performance as dependent variable. Organizational Cynicism is mediating the process, while Uncertainty Avoidance has a moderating role between Organizational Cynicism and In-Role Performance.



METHODOLOGY

PROCEDURE AND SAMPLE

Perceptions of politics can fluctuate significantly across organizations. In order to capture maximum variance in politics, through personal contacts questionnaires was used for collection of data from Islamabad hospitality industry. The sample of the study target was all white collar employees in each location for two reasons. First, that organizational politics is more likely to play a role among managers and professional workers because they have to manage people and resources. Second, due to low education levels, that lower level blue collar workers would not be able to respond to a questionnaire in English effectively. Respondents completed the self-report version that contained items related to perception of politics, organizational cynicism and uncertainty avoidance. In addition, the respondents reported their age, gender and qualification in the demographics section. The supervisor of each respondent completed the supervisor-report version that contained questions on in-role performance. Both the respondents and their supervisors returned the completed questionnaires.

Data collection was done through questionnaires; Population of current study was employee of hospitality industry of Islamabad. Sampling was done using the convenient sampling technique. A total of 150 questionnaires were distributed out of which

114 were received back and 108 were usable. So the response was 72%. Likert Scale with five responses was used. Responses included (1: Strongly Disagree, 2: Disagree, 3: Neither, 4: Agree, 5: Strongly Agree).

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

The sample consists of 51.9% males and 48.1% females. The sample consist of participants belongs to different age groups. 25.9% were between the age of 25-30, 47.2% between 31-35 years, 26.9% were between 36-40 years.

In the term of qualification, 11.1% of the respondents were Bachelor, 39.8% of the respondents were Masters, had Master's Degree, and 49.1% had MS degree.

MEASURES

All constructs were measured using self-reported instruments except for in-role performance, which was measured using supervisory ratings to avoid method bias issues. Responses for all variables were assessed using a 5-point Likert type scale with anchors of 1 = 'Strongly Disagree', 2 = 'Disagree', 3 = 'Neutral', 4 = 'Agree', and 5 = 'Strongly Agree'.

PERCEPTION OF POLITICS

15-item measure of perception of politics from the scales developed by Kacmar & Carlson (1997), to assess this construct. 15 scale contains three sub-dimensions of perceived politics: general political behavior (two items),

go along to get ahead (seven items), and pay and promotion policies (six items), and sample items include, "People in this organization attempt to build themselves up by tearing others down", for the first dimension, "Agreeing with powerful others is the best alternative in this organization", for the second dimension and "When it comes to pay raise and promotion decisions, policies are irrelevant", for the third dimension.

ORGANIZATIONAL CYNICISM

Organizational Cynicism was measured using Dean, Brandes & Dharwadkar (1998). This scale comprised a total of 14 items. Sample items are as "I believe my organization says one thing and does another" and "My organization expects one thing of its employees, but rewards another".

UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE

Uncertainty Avoidance scale was adopted from Ang, Van Dyne & Begley (2003). 5-item scale was used to measure Uncertainty Avoidance. A sample items are "I prefer work that has detailed standard operating procedures spelled

out" and "Rules and regulations are important because they inform employees what the organization expects of them".

IN-ROLE PERFORMANCE

In-Role Performance Williams & Anderson (1991). 15-item scale was used to measure In-Role Performance. A sample items are "Adequately completely assigned duties" and "Gives advance notice when unable to come to work".

CONTROL VARIABLES

In keeping with prior studies (Ang et al., 2003; Chen et al., 2014; Wang et al., 2013), Gender, Age and Educational level of respondent have been treated as control variables for all statistical analyses.

RESULTS

CORRELATION ANALYSIS

The very purpose of correlation is to indicate the relation between two variables or to examine whether the two variables move in similar or opposite directions.

Table 1. Correlation Analysis

	Variables	1	2	3	4
1	POP	(.724)			
2	OC	.633**	(.709)		
3	UA	.245**	.238**	(.665)	
4	IRP	.054	-.021	.208**	(.799)

Correlation analysis and Reliabilities of measures (in parentheses), POP = Perception of Politics; OC = Organizational Cynicism; UA= Uncertainty Avoidance; IRP = In-Role Performance; n = 108.

** p < 0.01.

Results indicate a statistically significant positive relationship of POP with Organizational Cynicism (.633**), Uncertainty Avoidance (.245**) and with In-role Performance (.054) no significance occurs. Organizational Cynicism also has a statistically significant positive relationship with Uncertainty Avoidance (.238**) and with In-role Performance (-.021)

there is no significant results. Finally, Uncertainty Avoidance shows a significant positive relationship with In-role Performance (.208**).

REGRESSION ANALYSIS

For drawing conclusions regarding the dependence of one variable on another,

regression analysis is used. Regression shows the extent to which a variable depends on another, independent variable on which it is being regressed. After controlling demographic variables Gender, Age and Qualification.

Table 2. Regression

Predictors	Organizational Cynicism			In-Role Performance		
	β	R^2	ΔR^2	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Perception of Politics						
Step1						
Control Variables		.056			.016	
Step 2						
POP	.463*	.114	.058*	-.243*	.074	.058*
Organizational Cynicism						
Step1						
Control Variables					.016	
Step 2						
OC				-.272***	.270	.254***

Control variables were Gender, Age and Qualification, n = 108. * p<.05 *** p<.001

Hypothesis 1 assumes that *Perception of Politics is negatively associated with in-role performance*. Table 2 indicates that POP is negatively significantly associated with In-Role performance with $\beta = -.243^*$ and $p = .013$, so on the base of this strong support hypothesis 1 (H1) is accepted. There is positive significant relationship between POP and Organizational Cynicism (.463*) and also there is negative

significant relationship between organizational cynicism and in-role performance (-.272***). They were tested in order to test the mediation process because according to Baron and Kenny (1986), mediation test will not run unless and until all three paths are results as significant. In this study all the three paths are significant. The mediation test are in the next table: 3.

Table 3. Mediated Regression Analysis

Predictors	In-Role Performance		
	β	R^2	$R^2 \Delta$
Step 1			
Control Variables		.016	
Step 2			
Organizational Cynicism	.256***	.270	.254***
Step 3			
Perception of Politics	.124	.285	.014

Control variables were Gender, Age and Qualification, n = 108

*** p<.001

Above result presents Mediated Regressions Analysis, in which gender, age and qualification are entered as control variables. So, the above table 3 shows there is full mediation of

Organizational Cynicism between POP and In-Role Performance. Hence, Second hypothesis (H2) is accepted.

Table 4. Moderated Regression Analysis

Predictors	In-Role Performance		
	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Uncertainty Avoidance			
Step1			
Control Variables		.016	
Step 2			
Organizational Cynicism	.549***		
Uncertainty Avoidance	.339***	.633	.617***
Step 3			
Org. Cynicism x UA	.352	.645	.012

Control variables were Gender, Age and Qualification, UA= Uncertainty Avoidance n = 108.

*** p<.001

Result of Moderated Regression Analysis indicates that Uncertainty Avoidance does not moderate the relationship between organizational cynicism and in-role performance ($\beta=.352$, with insignificant value). Hence, third hypothesis (H3) is rejected.

DISCUSSION

Regardless of common agreement among researchers, empirical evidence has exposed variations of the influence of POP on various outcomes. In this study, not only tested for the mediating role of organizational cynicism in accounting for some of the observed variation in effects, but also incorporated the moderating role of uncertainty avoidance to better understand how perception of politics can impact the in-role performance of an employee.

The first hypothesis which shows the relationship between perception of politics and in-role performance which is accepted. There is negative relationship between POP and in-role performance. This result is aligned with the findings of Ferris et al., (2002). In-role performance of an employee can be affected by perception of politics in an organizations among employees that can immensely affects overall performance of employee. When employee perceive that there is politics around here so how would I struggle and work hard to

fulfill my job obligations and on the other side few employees are using politics to gain benefits from an organization. And in contrast an employee reduce the performance and ultimately it affects the overall performance.

This study suggests that relationship between POP and in-role performance cannot be explained unless and until organizational cynicism is not taken between these two variables, and providing this relationship second hypothesis is accepted. Studies shows that when there is POP there will definitely cynicism like study of Chiaburu et al., (2013) suggested that POP is strongly related to cynicism. So, POP leads to cynical behaviors in an organizations and leads to poor performance and decrease productivity of an employee, studies also suggested this phenomena like organizational cynicism related to low in performance (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993; Byrne & Hochwarter, 2008).

Pakistan has a high number in uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 1980) but in this study third hypothesis is rejected, uncertainty avoidance does not moderates between organizational cynicism and in-role performance. It was expected that with high uncertainty avoidance societies, the employees of hospitality industry the employees have low performance in such situations. But the results of this study indicates that the employees who

have cynical behaviors does not affect the performance of an employee, maybe there are many other reasons for affecting this type of relationship in a society where there are high tendency to uncertainty avoidance. This relationship can be defined on the basis of frustration-aggression theory (Barker, Dembo & Lewin, 1941), cynical employees have low performance irrespective of cultures of different societies. In this regard, employees who have cynical behaviors will tend to decrease his/her efforts in cultures where there have high/ low uncertainty avoidance.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The data was collected from a limited sample, a larger and more diverse sample can be provided for more comprehensive information on the issue. Similarly it will be useful to collect data longitudinally. Thus, this study contributes understanding of perception of politics construct in a different cultural setting. Most of the studies consider perception of politics as a negative factor but in Pakistani context, employees mostly consider it as positive since it provides a channel to gain organizational benefits though politics rather than effort.

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