Article

Power, politics and job satisfaction among employees in Wolaita Sodo Polytechnic College, South Ethiopia

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Abstract: When power is exercised, it results in political behavior in organizations. Excessively held organizational politics can hurt an organization and its members though some consider wisely used political behavior as positive. This study was conducted at Wolaita Sodo Polytechnic College (WSPTC) to investigate the effect of power and political dynamism on employee job satisfaction. Cross-sectional survey design was used to collect data from stratified, randomly selected 146 informants. The Rahim Leader Power Inventory (RLPI), Interpersonal Power Inventory (IPI), Perception of Organizational Politics (POP), and Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) were employed to collect data. Descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were made using statistical packages (SPSS version 23). The findings revealed that when managers legitimate, coercive, and reward power bases are higher, then organizational politics becomes higher. Power concentration at higher positions results in increased organizational politics than when it was shared. Regression analysis uncovered that 47% (R-squared 0.468) of variations in job satisfaction were explained by POP and power dynamics. Hence, it is recommended that having power sharing, empowering subordinates, and moderate political maneuvering in the use of power and politics will be helpful in maintaining constructive relationships and job satisfaction.

Keywords: power bases; interpersonal power; job satisfaction; political behavior; POP

1. Introduction

Political behavior is a major part of organizational life that stems from the use of power or is sometimes considered the management of power in organizations (Mohd Yusof, et al., 2018). The importance of knowing power and politics in the context of organizations gives a manager better understanding and organizational culture (Camm, 2013); however, people often are uncomfortable discussing the concepts of power and organizational politics because both terms carry emotional, often negative connotation (Dhar, 2011; Hardy, 1993; Olorunleke, 2015). Despite such contentions, this study tried to investigate some important aspects of power and politics in Wolaita Sodo Poly Technique College (WSPTC), which is an educational institution where there was a high level of staff dissatisfaction, turnover, and short-lived leadership tenure experienced among other evidence.

In all organizations involving the human element, such as households, trade associations, business enterprises, colleges, and universities, etc., politics is characterized by struggle for power and influence, conflict, bargaining, reconciliation, resolution, and consensus (Olorunleke, 2015). Power dynamism exercised by the leadership and followers and the level of perceived organizational politics (POP) among the personnel impacting job satisfaction in some organizations. Among other

work-related behavior and outcomes, the amount of job satisfaction explained by power distribution and perceived politics was not yet given attention in public sector organizations in general and the Ethiopian context in particular.

Therefore, this study was conducted on the pursuit of indicating the effect of power and politics on employee job satisfaction at Wolaita Sodo Poly Technique College (WSPTC) in South Ethiopia. The main aim of this study was investigating the dynamism of power and politics and its impact on employee job satisfaction in WSPTC. More specifically, it was conducted to see the power bases used by the college management affecting POP; to assess the interpersonal power distribution among subordinates impacting POP; and to evaluate the effect of power bases, tactics, and interpersonal relationships, and the level of POP on employees' job satisfaction in the college.

2. Materials and methods

2.1. Operationalization of power and politics

Politics and power have been characterized as the last dirty words, and therefore it is simpler for most of us to discuss other topics than these topics (Olorunleke, 2015). They are also the most contested concepts because of the competing outlooks developed through time; for instance, politics was considered one of the important factors to get the jobs done in the organization (Brouer et al., 2012), and it was seen by others as damaging and divisive by generating counterproductive work behaviors (Meisler et al., 2019). The following sections discuss the definition of and arguments towards the descriptions of power and politics subsequently and in detail.

Power seems to be a straightforward concept, though it was a controversial concept. One simple and universal definition of power does not exist, although theorists have been struggling to do so over decades (Jones and York, 2016). Power refers to a capacity that one must influence the behavior of others so that the influenced act in accordance with the influencer's desires (Schein, 1977). Power could also be defined as the ability to overcome resistance on the part of others, to exert your will, and to get results that are consistent with your own interests and objectives (Ibid). It can be used to describe people, teams, departments, organizations, and groups. This influence may have an impact on employment decisions, job assignments, budgeting, goals, and a host of other organizational outcomes and behaviors.

The fact that power is a consequence of a dependence relationship is perhaps its most significant feature. Therefore, influence can be viewed as the application of power (Williams et al., 2016). Therefore, the idea of power defines how people interact with one another (Schein, 1977). Furthermore, power is a dynamic connection that evolves with circumstances and people since it is never absolute or static (Comstock, 1982). Managers in both public and private organizations utilize and gain power daily to achieve objectives and often to enhance their own standing. At times, individuals can find themselves in a position of powerlessness within their organization and may lose their influence as a result in interpersonal power relationships (Williams et al., 2016).

Aristotle was regarded as the first observer that man is a political animal (Cacciattolo, 2015; Camm, 2013). Political behavior encompasses efforts by

individuals to influence others to protect their self-interests, meet their own needs, and advance their own ends (Cacciattolo, 2015). Defined in this way, almost every behavior may be regarded as political because people are often egocentric when labeling actions as political behavior. Labeling behavior as political usually indicates that certain people are gaining something at the loss of others or the entire organization (Mokhtari et al., 2018). But employees could justify their own political behavior as defending legitimate rights or interests. It may be considered a political game by some. Therefore, unbiased understanding of political behavior and organizational politics was required that the scholars tried to do so.

There is no standard definition despite dozens of definitions of organizational politics published in different books. However, Olorunleke (2015) mentioned two frequently used definitions in most of the literatures he reviewed: "first, politics is seen as the process of influence that contains a general set of social behavior that can be either functional or dysfunctional" and "second, it includes generally dysfunctional behavior that is strategically designed to serve long-term or short-term self-interest."

Essentially, both types of politics emphasize the use of power (Comstock, 1982) to some gain in an organization or on self-serving and organizationally unapproved behaviors. Political behavior in an institution consists of activities that are not included as part of official responsibilities of an individual but that influence, or try to influence, the distribution of benefits and costs within the organizations (Mokhtari et al., 2018). Organizational politics was most often thought of and explained as behaviors that the organization itself undertook to influence attitudes and employee behavior (Wangui and Muathe, 2014). Politics in organizations contains activities by leaders, teams, or individuals to gain, maximize, and deploy power and other resources to attain preferred outcomes. These behavioral tactics exhibited by members of an organization are collectively termed as political strategies in organizations.

As indicated above, Aristotle was accredited for describing the idea of politics for the first time as he made the observation that man is a political animal (Cacciattolo, 2015; Camm, 2013; Wangui and Muathe, 2014). In Greece, he promoted politics as a way for unification in the Greek polis (city-state) with the need that the polis was an "aggregate of many members." Politics, for him, supplied a means of forming order out of diversity while avoiding models of totalitarian rule. Many systems of government in political science have built on this basic concept of politics and acknowledging contentious interests that politics implies as a means of maintaining a non-coercive form of social order (Olorunleke, 2015).

The other earliest literature on organizational power and politics, Il Principe ("The Prince"), remains a significant discourse on politics and power in organizational life that was written by Niccolò Machiavelli (1952–1532) 400 years ago (Ferris et al., 2019) as an early attempt at conceptualizing power and politics that has bearing on today's research and practice in organizational behavior. Additionally, organizational power studies also root their base in leadership. For instance, works of French and Raven (1959); Raven et al. (1998); Rahim (1988); and Kacmar and Carson (1997) were some of the studies that could be mentioned in this vein. However, only in the last 20 years has politics in organizations become a legitimate field of study, as suggested in Akaegbu (2018). The majority of the research was to ascertain how organizational politics affected workers' views, conduct, and productivity at work

(Wangui and Muathe, 2014).

In the majority of the studies conducted on the issues involving the relationship between politics and performance, it seems to be influenced by a person's comprehension of organizational politics' hows and whys. To study different relationships among variables in the organization's equity theory, social exchange theory, and theory of procedural justice are the different theories that have been employed as a theoretical lens to test the issue of organizational power and politics empirically (Wangui and Muathe, 2014). Researchers also used social exchange, leader–member exchange, political skill, and influence theories (Brouer et al., 2012). The present study tried to consolidate research approaches and the theories used in power and politics hereunder in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Summaries of theories/models used in power and organization politics research.

Studies	Theory/Model	Findings	Implications
Brass and Burkhardt (1993)	Structural and Behavioral Approaches	• Both structural and behavioral issues were relevant in the study of power dynamics.	• The separation of power potential from its use is unrealistic
Daud et al. (2013)	Need Theory	• The need for power has a negative significant relationship and impacts perceptions of politics.	• A political game is considered dirty and will reduce motivation.
French and Raven (1959)	Power Bases /Sources/	• Identified the bases of power leaders use to influence others.	• Behavioral influence of each power sources used by followers.
Brouer et al. (2012); Olorunleke (2015)	Social exchange theory	• Individual relational satisfaction; and • Trust and commitment will be fostered if success attained in social exchanges relationships;	• Managing expectation and making successful exchanges
Brouer et al. (2012)	LMX theory (Leader-member relationships)	• It needs norms of mutual obligations more than the employment contract.	• High quality relationships and exchanges.
Brouer et al. (2012)	Political skill and influence theories	• Individual social motives, situational adaptive behavior, dynamics of influence, and perceptual lenses that affect quality work relationship.	• High political skill is needed to bring about good job-related outcomes.
Olorunleke (2015)	Equity theory	• Perception of organizational politics affects perception of fairness, equity, and justice in organizations.	• Collective goals needed to be considered in managing politics.
Olorunleke (2015)	Procedural justice theory	• Lack of justice and fairness in systems and decision-making processes is found to be the main cause of organizational politics and hampers work outcomes.	• Maintaining procedural justice in the systems.
Cacciattolo (2015)	Person-based Inter-actionist Approach	• The understanding of personality traits in politics resulting to perception differences cause politics may not always negative effects.	• Politically skilled managers are effective in stressful organizations
Kisaka et al. (2020)	Max Weber's theory of bureaucracy	• The politics of organization mission contribute to employee performance.	• Mission is a key in institutional political dynamism.
Yang (2017)	Uncertainty Management Theory	• A perception of organizational politics significantly affects job performance negatively in organic and positively in mechanistic organizations structures respectively.	• Situational tactics are necessary.
Ferris and Kacmar (1992)	Political Characteristics, Actions and Outcomes Model	• Political outcomes are constructs influenced by political traits and political behavior.	• Focus should be given to political actions.

Source: Own compilation from available literature.

Not every organization has the same political stance. For example, politicking is overt and pervasive in some companies, whereas it only has a minor impact on results in others. The pyramid-shaped organizational structure, subjective performance standards, environmental turbulence and uncertainty, emotional insecurity, manipulative tendencies, and disagreements that impede rational decision-making are some of the organizational and individual factors that Olorunleke (2015) classified as influencing political behavior. According to Eniola et al. (2015), the majority of literature enumerated a number of typical sources of uncertainty in organizations that lead to political maneuvering, including ambiguous goals, imprecise performance metrics, poorly defined decisions, intense competition between individuals or groups, and any kind of change.

Table 2. Factors that influence political behavior (organizational politics).

Categories	Factors	Sources/Authors
Organizational	Re-allocation of resources	Keum (2022)
	Resource scarcity	Olorunleke (2015); Wangui and Muathe (2014)
	Promotion opportunities	Hooi (2012)
	Low trust	Olorunleke (2015)
	Role ambiguity	Goo et al. (2022)
	Skill variety	Sultan et al. (2015)
	Unclear performance appraisal	Olorunleke (2015)
	Zero- sum reward practices/Favoritism	Alsalamah (2015)
	Democratic decision making	Gargiulo (1993)
	High performance pressures	Ferris et al. (2019)
	Self-serving senior managers	Kirchmeyer (1990)
	Organizational structure	Olorunleke (2015); Wangui and Muathe (2014)
	Centralization and Formalization	Sultan et al. (2015)
	Job autonomy	Sultan et al. (2015)
	Fairness/Procedural justice	Atinc et al. (2010)
	Organizational conflicts and disagreements	Olorunleke (2015); Wangui and Muathe (2014)
	Feedbacks	Sultan et al. (2015)
Individual	Age and Job- tenure	Sultan et al. (2015)
	Type A behavior and need of autonomy	Sultan et al. (2015)
	High self-monitors	Ferris et al. (2019)
	Internal locus of control	Ng et al. (2006)
	High Machiavellian/Manipulative personality	Olorunleke (2015)
	Organizational Investment	Olorunleke (2015)
	Perceived job alternatives	Ferris et al. (2019)
	Expectations of success	Agarwal (2016)
	Emotional insecurity	Olorunleke (2015)
Others	Environmental uncertainty/Turbulence	Olorunleke (2015); Wangui and Muathe (2014)

Source: Own compilation from available literature.

Any change is likely to incite controversy and promote politicking, especially if

it involves a major reallocation of resources inside the organization. By suggesting that such behavior is permissible, top management's politics effectively grant individuals lower in the firm permission to engage in political activity (Ferris et al., 2019). This is how different studies have identified several factors that appear to encourage political behavior though all the factors contributing to organizational politics and employees' political behavior could be categorized under organizational, individual, or environmental categories. Therefore, the following summary of the most cited factors in different empirical and theoretical literature was compiled in **Table 2** for the current study.

As we can see from **Table 2**, organizational politics affects almost every employee to some degree, becoming an inevitable and significant part of the entire organization (Hochwarter et al., 2020). Employees who feel victimized by office politics generally tend to develop negative behaviors towards work and the entire organization, affecting their performances (Jain and Ansari, 2018). However, the research synthesis by meta-analysis performed by scholars shows mixed results that perception of organizational politics has an effect on the job performance of individuals, but the relationship was statistically insignificant (Meisler et al., 2019; Miller et al., 2008; Vigoda-Gadot and Talmud, 2010).

All leaders use power to influence others to get the job done or for other wrong reasons (Somoye, 2016). Effective managers' ability to persuade others to carry out their duties efficiently is one of the most crucial factors in determining management effectiveness (Yukl, 2012). This is done so morally and successfully by true leaders. Others who hold management positions but are not capable of becoming successful leaders instead engage in inefficient and destructive use of power and political behavior (Peyton et al., 2019). Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely; and power is not always bad as medicines can kill if taken in the wrong amount are the old adages used by scholars to signify effective use of power in the organizations (Olorunleke, 2015). Therefore, by learning how power works in organizations, you will be better able to use your knowledge to become a more effective manager.

The personal bases of power (expert and referent) are definitely the most effective, according to researchers (Peyton et al., 2019). But in some studies, reward power was included besides the personal sources of power in the organizations. Both referent and expert power sources are positively associated with employees' satisfaction with the leadership, their organizational commitment, and their performance, whereas reward and legitimate power seem to be not related to these outcomes (Gürerk et al., 2018). One source of formal power—coercive power— becomes counterproductive in that it is negatively related to employee satisfaction and commitment (Peyton et al., 2019).

Staff members, groups, or managers must decide on a plan of action when they wish to affect the actions of others. The techniques used by people or organizations to try to control others or change their behavior are known as influence strategies. Nine different influence strategies have been found by research (Barthwal, 2013), including pressure, alliances, ingratiation, legitimacy, rational persuasion, inspirational appeals, consultation, exchange, and personal appeals. There are some strategies that work better than others. The most successful strategies are usually consultation, inspirational appeals, and rational persuasion, particularly when the audience is very

engaged in the decision-making process's results. Of the nine strategies, pressure is usually the least successful and has a tendency to backfire. Although people in different countries prefer different power methods, you are more likely to be successful if you start with softer strategies that rely on personal power, such as consultation, logical reasoning, and personal and inspiring appeals (Maes and Van Hootegem, 2022). When several tactics are employed together instead of separately, differences in efficacy become apparent. Similarly, when trying to influence those lower in the organizational hierarchy as opposed to higher, there are variances in effectiveness. This process is dynamic and complex, changing as circumstances do (Comstock, 1982; Yukl, 2012). To fully comprehend the efficacy of different influence strategies, one must be aware of the power sources at one's disposal, the direction of influence attempts (i.e., lateral, upward, or downward), and the objectives being pursued. According to Peyton et al. (2019), a significant amount of a manager's time is spent engaging in power-oriented activity in all three directions: lateral, upward, and downward.

A somewhat less obvious way to increase personal power is to learn political savvy which means dealing with better ways to negotiate, persuade individuals, and understand the goals and means that subordinates are most willing to accept (Barthwal, 2013). Possessing the ability (power) to affect other people's actions and employing that ability (power) successfully are two different things. Ineffective managers are those who think they can always effectively change other people's behavior by gaining enough authority to merely order people around. Power abuse has numerous detrimental effects on the individual as well as the business. Aggressive managers that use pressure tactics had the lowest performance reviews, the lowest incomes, and the highest levels of stress and strain at work when compared to other managers in the study (Bolden, 2011).

There must be power that has been discussed if you want to get things done in a group or organization. Here are several suggestions for how to deal with politics in a managerial career: Politics was considered as power in action; therefore, as a manager who wants to maximize his/her power, one ought to increase others' dependence on him/her. Few workers enjoy being helpless in their position and company. Steer clear of placing people in situations where they feel powerless. That means the power distribution through delegation and empowerment of subordinates was needed for the smooth flow of operations in the institutions. Individuals react to the different power bases in different ways. Develop and use an expert power base more effectively (Nejad et al., 2016) because it is helpful to engage in soft influence tactics as well as political maneuvering.

Effective managers accept the political nature of organizations (Somoye, 2016). You can better forecast other people's conduct and use that information to create political tactics that will benefit you and your team by evaluating behavior within a political framework (Soares, 2018). Some people are far more politically adept than others, which means they can control impressions and understand the underlying politics. Employees who have poor political skills and are unwilling to play the politics game generally relate perceived organizational politics to lower job satisfaction and self-reported performance, increased anxiety, and higher turnover. Politics-savvy people are likely to receive better performance reviews, higher pay raises, and more

promotions than politically inexperienced or incompetent people (Maes and Van Hootegem, 2022). The organizational politics should be adjusted to a fair level in light of the fact that politically astute people are also likely to show higher job satisfaction and be better able to neutralize job stressors (Peyton et al., 2019).

It is not quite clear how much power affects people's ability to make decisions and interact with others in organizations (Sturm and Antonakis, 2015). However, attempts were made in some recent empirical studies conducted in different locations having different social and organizational cultures. Studies have demonstrated, for example, that intragroup power struggles are common and negatively impact group results, such as innovation, performance, and viability (Greer and Chu, 2020). Likewise, one important social influence process that can be classified as either dysfunctional or functional is organizational politics (Cacciattolo, 2015) which goes to both the organization and its employees (Wangui and Muathe, 2014). The political process can even determine organizational existence and strategic direction.

There are studies on organizational power, although the number of the studies was very low (Kiziloglu, 2016). This was because scholarly examination of the properties and outcomes of power has only recently begun in management studies (Sturm and Antonakis, 2015), as some of them were also indicated in the above table. Political capital generates power not only resource dependence but also status, identification, and legitimacy in organizations (Ocasio et al., 2020).

But evidence also showed that employees consider political behavior in organizations as positive when used professionally and fostering cooperation among members but negative when politics is used for serving self and destructing team spirit among various units in the organization (Sonaike, 2013). According to similar theoretical considerations, politics frequently impedes regular organizational procedures, such as decision-making, promotions, and awards, and impairs performance and productivity at both the individual and organizational levels (Wangui and Muathe, 2014). When it goes too far, it can have detrimental effects on an organization and its members who are not very good at politics or who don't want to play the game. These include lower job satisfaction, higher levels of stress and anxiety, more employee turnover, and worse performance (Ibid).

Such mixed empirical results and positions underpinned by theoretical arguments prevail in the literature, and power and politics are separately analyzed in most of the studies so far. However, power and politics were pervasive ingredients in interpersonal relations affecting the work outcome and attitudes. But one cannot address all of their effects, and hence the case study presented hereunder was focused on the combined effect of both on job satisfaction only because it predicts organizational performance (Bakotić, 2016) as well as employee engagement (Singh, 2017) and thus representative construct to other effects.

2.2. Respondents and sampling

A quantitative approach by means of cross-sectional survey design was used in this inquiry to collect the primary data. A person's perception reference point determines what he or she classifies as organizational politics (Olorunleke, 2015). Research showed that power-oriented behavior performed by a permanent, tenured

employee is seen as more legitimate and less harsh than the same behavior performed by temporary employees (Robbins et al., 2018). Therefore, this study was focused on permanent employees only who are currently working in the college from whom data collection was made during 19–23 July 2021.

Employees in the institution, both academic and administrative staff as well as individuals in management positions and subordinates in different sections were considered as the prospective informants of the study. The number of employees from the records of the human resource department of the college shows that a total of 237 employees was there in the institution out of which 30 were in managerial positions. Using the population proportion formula used in much social science research (Taherdoost, 2017);

$$n0 = \frac{p(1-p)z^2}{e^2} \text{ and } n = \frac{n_0 \times N}{n_0 + N}$$

where n_o is the initial sample calculated based on the *p* which is the population proportion; *e* is the precision level; *z* is the standard score of confidence interval; *n* is the adjusted size of the final sample; and *N* is the size of the population.

Using this statistical formula, 146 informants were selected to give their opinion by assuming 50% as an estimate of unknown p, as this could maximize the variance and produce the maximum sample size at a 95% confidence interval and 5% error margin adjusted for the known population factor (*Ibid*). Stratified randomized sampling technique was used to select the subjects. Therefore, 18 informants from employees in managerial positions and 128 from subordinates were involved in the study. The sampling frame used to draw the respondents was constructed from their payroll to give equal chance to the members of the institution, and a random number table was employed to select individual informants.

2.3. Data collection method

There are different approaches available to investigate power and politics in organizations. When we want to investigate power sources and their application in organizations, structural and behavioral approaches are available because the separation of potential power from its use would be unrealistic according to Brass and Burkhardt (1993). Politics, or organizational politics, is considered power in action, and understanding of organizational politics requires analysis of power, coalitions, and bargaining. That means power is the most important construct in relationship studies (Dunbar, 2015); it is the contest for political action and encompasses the most basic issues underlying organizational politics (Omisore and Nweke, 2014). Rahim Leader Power Inventory (RLPI) (Rahim, 1988) was employed to see the power bases used by the leadership, and Interpersonal Power Inventory (IPI) (Raven et al., 1998) was used to see the power distribution among the subordinates. There are options to use POP versions devised by Ferris and Kacmar (1992) and/or Kacmar and Carlson (1997). However, the present study chooses the latter due to its simplicity and popularity in different studies so far.

Organizational politics, as well as the distribution and use of power, have several job-related outcomes (Gencer et al., 2018; Khalid and Ishaq, 2015; Vigoda-Gadot and Talmud, 2010), and the scope of this research was focused on job satisfaction only.

Job satisfaction can be defined as an individual's feelings about their work and their attitudes towards various aspects of their work (Jabid et al., 2021), as well as attitudes and perceptions that may influence the degree of fit between the individual and the organization (Mohd Yusof, et al., 2018). From the different approaches to measure job satisfaction, the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ), particularly the short form, was used in this study (Weiss et al., 1967).

2.4. Data analysis techniques

The data analysis was made using descriptive and inferential statistics by a statistical package (SPSS version 23) accessible to analyze the frequency, percentage, and average score index of the constructs in all four scales, viz., RLPI, IPI, POP, and MSQ. Then correlation and OLS regression were performed to see the relationships and effects.

3. Results and discussion

The result of the quantitative survey was presented hereunder in the order of the objectives of the inquiry mentioned above. Firstly, the management's power base used in the organization in the study and interpersonal power distribution were shown. Secondly, the effects of power bases of leadership and interpersonal power inventory on the perception of organizational politics were given. Finally, the effects of power bases used by leaders, interpersonal power interaction, and perceived organizational politics prevailing in the college on employee job satisfaction were presented.

3.1. Respondents' demographic characteristics

The data was collected from permanent employees of WSPTC, and 145 usable filled questionnaires were returned from the survey. Out of the informants, 77 (53.1%) were male, and the remaining 68 (46.9%) were female respondents. As far as their age was concerned, 59.3% of the respondents were aged 40 years or below, while the remaining 40.7% were aged 41 years or more. The educational status of the respondents showed that 60.7% of the respondents have a diploma or its equivalent (involving different levels of certification of the TVET program) and below. The other 39.3% of the respondents have had higher qualifications, such as a bachelor's degree or more. Moreover, 54 (37.2%) of the respondents were from the academic section, and the larger part, comprising 91 (62.8%) respondents, were drawn from the staff who are responsible for supporting the line in the academic operations of the college.

3.2. Managements' power base and interpersonal interactions among employees

The managements' power base and tactics were measured by employee version of RLPI scale that comprises 5 power bases as constructs: viz., expert power, referent power, reward power, coercive power and legitimate power having 7 items for each and a total of 35 items with 5-point Likert scale. The score of response ranges from 18–29 out of a maximum possible 35 points with mean 22.8 (showing mediocrely exerted power from the leader) and standard deviation 3.00 (showing the variability among the power bases used by leaders). Similarly, the interpersonal power spread

among employees of the college was measured by IPI scale that comprises 11 power bases as constructs: viz., reward impersonal, coercive impersonal, expert power, referent power, informational power, legitimate power, legitimate reciprocity power, legitimate dependency power, legitimate equity power, reward personal and coercive personal powers having 3 items for each and a total of 33 items with 5-point Likert scale. The score of response ranges from 7.82–10.91 out of a maximum possible 15 points with mean score of 9.33 and standard deviation 0.78 showing fluidity of interpersonal power with little variability among the respondents.

3.3. Role of power base of leaders and followers on perceived organizational politics

Organizational politics was measured by the POP scale. The scale was prepared of 13 items measured using a 5-point Likert scale. The data in the study showed that the mean POP score was 48.3 and its standard deviation was 2.58. This indicates that the level of perceived politics in the college was slightly higher because the maximum score was 65. From the constructs in the RLPI scale, leaders' power bases showed significant positive correlation to POP legitimate power ($r = 0.645$, $p < 0.001$), reward power ($r = 0.635$, $p < 0.001$), and coercive power ($r = 0.517$, $p < 0.001$). The cumulative RLPI score also showed a positive and significant correlation with the POP score. But the use of expert and referent powers showed a negative but insignificant correlation with POP.

In the case of interpersonal power in the organization from components of the IPI scale; coercive personal power, coercive impersonal power, and reward personal power have negative and significant correlations with POP ($r = -0.71$, -0.622, and -0.586, $p < 0.001$, respectively). Legitimate reciprocity power ($r = 0.393$, $p < 0.001$); legitimate dependence power ($r = 0.544$, $p < 0.001$); and legitimate equity power ($r = 0.549$, $p < 0.001$) exhibited positive significant correlation with POP. The pooled IPI score also exhibited a negative significant relationship ($r = -0.334$, $p < 0.001$) with the POP score. However, informational, reward, expert, and referent powers didn't show significant correlation with PO.

Regression analysis was performed by taking POP score as the dependent variable and both RLPI score and IPI score as independent variables. The regression model fulfilled all the OLS assumptions. The result of the analysis indicated that the combined effect of both leadership power bases and power distribution among employees on POP was statistically significant, as the ANOVA *F-statistic was* 47.01 and was significant at $p < 0.001$. The *R*-squared of the model was 0.398, meaning around 40% of the employees' perception of the organizational politics was explained by the power bases of leaders and interpersonal power relationships among employees as indicated in the model summary in **Table 3**.

Table 3. Model summary of effects of IPI and RLPI scores on POP.

Model Summary [b]

Model	*R*	*R* Square	Adjusted *R* Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	0.631[a]	0.398	0.390	2.01571	2.369

a. Predictors: (Constant), IPI_SCORE, RLPI_SCORE.
b. Dependent Variable: POP_POLITICS.

However, the leadership power base designated by the RLPI score only positively and significantly explains the employee's perception of organizational politics as indicated by its coefficient ($B = 0.491$, $p < 0.001$), which showed that a unit increase in RLPI score results in a 0.5 increase in POP score, and the IPI score has a negative but insignificant effect on the perception of organizational politics as indicated in the coefficients table hereunder (see **Table 4**).

Table 4. Coefficients of predicators of POP.

Coefficients [a]									
Model	**Unstandardized Coefficients**		**Standardized Coefficients**	***t***	**Sig.**	**95.0% Confidence Interval for B**		**Collinearity Statistics**	
	B	**Std. Error**	**Beta**			**Lower Bound**	**Upper Bound**	**Tolerance**	**VIF**
1 (Constant)	41.142	2.928		14.050	0.000	35.353	46.930		
RLPI_SCORE	0.491	0.060	0.572	8.223	0.000	0.373	.609	0.875	1.143
IPI_SCORE	−0.437	0.230	−0.132	−1.899	0.060	−0.893	.018	0.875	1.143

a. Dependent Variable: POP_POLITICS.

3.4. Impact of the dynamism of power and politics on employees' job satisfaction

A shortened version of the MSQ, consisting of 20 items on a 5-point Likert scale, was utilized in the study to measure the job satisfaction of the participating employees. Employees' job satisfaction scores, as indicated by the data gathered, range from 33.00 to 80.00, with a mean score of 51.04 and a standard deviation of 11.82. The fact that the value was below the median suggested that there was job dissatisfaction, and the significant standard deviation further suggests that job satisfaction level severely varies among college employees. Despite the fact that expert and referent powers showed a positive correlation that was statistically insignificant, legitimate power ($r = -0.418$, $p < 0.001$), reward power ($r = -0.323$, $p < 0.001$), and coercive power ($r = -0.286$, $p < 0.001$) showed a significant but inverse relationship with the job satisfaction score. The job satisfaction score was positively correlated with the interpersonal power relationship factors of personal coercive power ($r = 0.369$, $p < 0.001$), personal reward power ($r = 0.341$, $p < 0.001$), and coercive impersonal power ($r = 0.291$, $p < 0.001$). Conversely, legitimate reciprocity power ($r = -0.301$, $p < 0.001$), legitimate dependence power ($r = -0.203$, $p < 0.001$), and legitimate equity power ($r = -0.238$, $p < 0.01$) were negatively significant. There was no statistically significant relationship between work satisfaction and the other IPI scale components. The RLPI, IPI, and POP indices all showed statistically significant relationships with the job satisfaction score. There was a negative connection between job satisfaction and RLPI (-0.316, $p < 0.001$) and POP (-0.672, $p < 0.001$). However, there is a positive link between IPI and employees' job satisfaction scores ($r = 0.176$, $p < 0.001$).

The statistical output of OLS regression revealed in the model summary below in **Table 5** also showed the results in tandem with the correlation analysis. As indicated by the ANOVA, the combined effect of these three variables was statistically significant (F-statistic $= 41.4$, $p < 0.001$). The regression analysis passed all the model fitness tests in which R-squared was 0.468, implying 47% of employee job satisfaction

of the employees was explained by power base and influence tactics, interpersonal power distribution, and perception of organizational politics.

Table 5. Model summary of effects of IPI, RLPI and POP scores on job satisfaction.

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	0.684[a]	0.468	0.457	8.71050	2.216

a. Predictors: (Constant), POP_POLITICS, IPI_SCORE, RLPI_SCORE.
b. Dependent Variable: MSQ_Job Satisfaction.

Despite such a result, only the perception of organizational politics has a strong negative effect on the employees' job satisfaction, as indicated by the standardized beta coefficient ($\beta = -0.778$, $p < 0.001$) indicated below in **Table 6**. This implies that an increase of 1 standard deviation in the perception of organizational politics results in a 0.78 standard deviation in the job satisfaction score of the employees.

Table 6. Coefficients of predicators of employee job satisfaction.

Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	213.348	19.563		10.906	0.000	174.673	252.023		
1 RLPI_SCORE	0.609	0.314	0.155	1.941	0.054	−0.011	1.228	0.593	1.687
IPI_SCORE	−0.452	1.008	−0.030	−0.449	0.654	−2.445	1.540	0.853	1.172
POP_POLITICS	−3.563	0.363	−0.778	−9.824	0.000	−4.279	−2.846	0.602	1.662

a. Dependent Variable: MSQ _Job Satisfaction.

4. Discussion

Earlier studies found that contextual performance and job happiness are more favorably correlated with personal power than positional power. When followers perceive higher levels of organizational politics, their job happiness is negatively correlated with the leaders' exercise of positional authority (Dirik and Eryılmaz, 2018). The empirical evidence in this survey also implied that when the power of leaders or managers was consolidated, the perceived politics in the organization was higher. More specifically, when a manager's legitimate power, coercive power, and reward power are higher, the organizational politics become higher. This was in line with the empirical literature surveyed in this study. Autocratic leadership predicts disruptive political behavior in the organization (Hussain et al., 2020). A positive relation of organizational politics was observed with transactional leadership and a negative relation with transformational leadership, as indicated by the research conducted in public universities in Pakistan (Durrani, 2014).

According to Schein (1977), the bases of individual power bases moderate the evolution of political behavior in organizations as a means of obtaining desired outcomes, which was probably the hidden intent of the power holder in the organization. The data obtained from the survey confirmed a negative interrelation

with organizational politics perception, though legitimate reciprocity, legitimate dependence, and legitimate equity interpersonal power bases positively impact the formation of political behavior. That means it was partially in line with the theoretical propositions of power and politics in the organization. This is due to the fact that political skill, or interpersonal power interrelationships, and the leaders' power bases and tactics drive the formation of political behavior (Mokhtari et al., 2018), but the relative usage of distributed or shared leadership varies across countries and sectors (Bolden, 2011).

Positional power bases result in job stress and hence dissatisfaction as empirically tested in research conducted in Turkey (Erkutlu et al., 2011; Erkutlu and Chafra, 2006). In contrast, referent, expert, and reward power bases, or non-coercive power bases, have a positive impact on job satisfaction (Junaimah, 2015; Lee and Tui Low, 2008). This was also the same in the survey findings, where the data exposed that legitimate, reward, and coercive power bases negatively affected job satisfaction. It was also revealed that interpersonal power distribution improves job satisfaction, though it was statistically insignificant. This finding was also supported by the study that showed a significant positive relationship between harsh power bases and job stress and a negative relationship between soft power bases and job stress from interpersonal power bases (Erkutlu et al., 2011; Erkutlu and Chafra, 2006), as it was known that when job stress increases job satisfaction decreases and vice versa. Harsh bases of interpersonal power have a significant positive correlation with job satisfaction, which was contradicting to the findings reported by Western culture like America (Raven et al., 1998).

The study results were strongly supported by the findings of earlier studies on the negative effect of organizational politics on employees' job satisfaction (Ayobami, 2013; Bedi and Schat, 2013; Hassan et al., 2017; Jabid et al., 2021; James, 2019; Javed et al., 2014; Miller et al., 2008; Wangui and Muathe, 2014). But the study conducted in private universities in Ankara, Turkey (Durnali and Ayyildiz, 2019) revealed that perceptions of organizational politics and job satisfaction were moderately positively related, which confirms that healthy organizational politics generates a competitive environment and innovation in an organization as posited by Agrawal (2013). The impact of politics and power in organizations offers a political analysis of intra-organizational relationships when politics and power struggles are commonplace. We look to people and human resources for support in any organization. This explains why power struggles and organizational politics are inevitable (Omisore and Nweke, 2014).

5. Conclusion

The power bases used by management that affect POP include the excessive use of positional power bases such as legitimate power, reward power, and coercive power bases. However, the personal bases of power (referent and expert power) of the leadership in the organization didn't predict the formation of political behavior in the organization. When the power was shared among the members of the organization, there was no significant level of effect in the formation of political behavior as indicated in the findings. From this we can conclude that power concentration at the

higher positions results in a higher level of organizational politics than when it was dispersed among employees in the organization that shares power and empowers them.

The level of perceived organizational politics in the college was above average or slightly higher, and it has so many impacts coupled with the leadership power bases and tactics. Among other effects of power and political dynamism in organizations on employees' job satisfaction were the usual criteria that could be used to see work-related employee behavior. In the study, the power tactics as well as the politics affect employee satisfaction negatively, which further affects employee performance, job stress, organizational commitment, turnover intention, etc. This means the dynamism of power and politics in organizations impacts the work-related behavior of employees, starting from satisfaction at the individual level and the organization's productivity at large.

A person's success or failure at using or reacting to power is largely determined by understanding power, knowing how and when to use it, and being able to anticipate its probable effects. It is wise to have a balanced use of power and politics in achieving organizational goals and objectives (Somoye, 2016). The hybrid configuration of the power constitution of an organization and its members was important to success (Bolden, 2011) because any power base is seen potentially to be double-edged: effective usage depends entirely upon organizational climate and culture (Singh, 2009). It is also recommended that increasing personal sources of power (Fuqua et al., 2004) improves the effectiveness of leaders, though its compatibility was contingent on different situational factors. To sustain in the changing situations and power dynamism, socially responsible power use in the context of ethical leadership (Haller et al., 2018) was recommended for the leadership and executive practitioners in the case-studied institution and other organizations.

Similarly, without political awareness and skill (Hartley and Fletcher, 2008), we face the inevitable prospect of becoming immersed in bureaucratic infighting, parochial politics, and destructive power struggles, which greatly retard organizational initiative, innovation, morale, and performance (Hartley and Branicki, 2006). Managerial political wisdom (Nejad et al., 2016) is essential to a full understanding of organizational politics, its causes and effects; practitioners may take corrective action to minimize factors that inhibit innovation efforts and encourage those behaviors that enhance innovation activity (Wangui and Muathe, 2014). Political maneuvering should be managed to keep it constructive and within reasonable bounds because organizational politics is not inherently bad. That means in contemporary management perspective, nobody can say that organizational politics was completely bad and should be avoided despite the literature on organizational politics having historically focused on a negative viewpoint of politics (Soares, 2018).

6. Limitations and future research directions

Despite the pervasiveness of power and politics in organizations, its many facets did not gain the attention of researchers (Schein, 1977); it was not adequately researched (Bodla, 2013); and it lacked full integration (Treadway et al., 2013); dyadic relationships allow upward influence, interactions, perceptions about the working relationship, and the direction of influence (Williams et al., 2016). Therefore, it is

required to see the use of power and politics in institutions in developing countries perspectives, and this study tried to fill this gap. But it needs further elaboration using business enterprises and targeting a wider population for gaining representative findings of the culture. It will be necessary to see the path of the effect by using alternative methodological analysis to see the direction of influence among the behavioral variables that might be seen as a research arena for researchers and academicians.

This study suffers from the weaknesses of a survey study conducted in one institution. This is since the representativeness and generalizability of the findings could be limited to only the organization involved in the study. It was highly recommended to include qualitative data when required because explanations of power exerted and political behavior were social phenomena, we could not be fully quantified.

Author contributions: Conceptualization, ST; methodology, ST and ZA; software, ST; validation, ST and ZA; formal analysis, ST; investigation, ST; resources, ST and ZA; data curation, ST; writing—original draft preparation, ST; writing—review and editing, ZA; visualization, ZA; supervision, ZA; project administration, ST. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Conflict of interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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