



Influence of Organizational Politics on Employee Job Performance and Internal Communication in Akwa Ibom State Civil Service

Kufre John Etuk & Nsikak Solomon Idiong

Faculty of Communication and Media Studies,

University of Uyo, Nigeria.

+2348032796406

etukkufre@crestnews.ng

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Abstract

This study investigated the influence of politics in organizations on employee job performance and internal communication in the Akwa Ibom State Civil Service. Five research questions were raised, and two hypotheses guided the study. The population of the study consisted of 35,865 civil servants in the Akwa Ibom State payroll, as stated in the 2012 Akwa Ibom Civil Service handbook, while the sample consisted of 387 civil servants selected through the use of the simple random sampling technique. The descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data gathered in the study. The descriptive statistics were used to analyze all the research questions, while the inferential statistics analysis (Pearson's Product Moment Correlation) was used to analyze and test the hypotheses at 0.05 levels of significance. A thirteen (13) item structured researcher-developed questionnaire titled "Politics in Organization and Employee Job Performance and Internal Communication" (POEJPICQ) and a six (6) question interview schedule were used to collect data for the study. The questionnaire was pilot tested on 10 civil servants in the study area who did not participate in the main study; the test-retest method was used, and the Pearson-product moment correlation was used to test the reliability of the

instrument, which yielded a high reliability coefficient of 0.87. The two null hypotheses formulated were tested at the 0.05 alpha level using the Pearson-product moment correlation analysis. The two null hypotheses were rejected, which implies there is a significant relationship between general political behavior, politics in organizations, and internal communication and job performance in Akwa Ibom State civil service. Based on the study's findings, it was recommended that constructive or positive politics be promoted in the Akwa Ibom State civil service, that positive factors encouraging general political behaviour be strengthened, that civil servants use positive political influence tactics instead of negative ones, and that the civil service management board ensure all categories of workers are positively affected by organizational politics; further research suggestions were also drawn from these findings.

Keywords: politics in organization, employee job performance, internal communication, Akwa Ibom State civil Service, organizational political behavior

Introduction

A recent study by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) and talent management company Development Dimensions International (DDI), published in a report called "Leadership Transition: Maximizing HR's Contributions," reveals that office politics is a major challenge facing leaders. Aronow (2004) posited that organizational politics found its way into the literature and textbooks of organizational behaviors in 1983. Since then, organizational scientists have offered various definitions of politics, incorporating elements of behavior that are formal and informal, sanctioned and non-sanctioned, focused on the use of power and influence, or based on coalition building. Aronow (2004) says the concept of organizational politics and the perceptions of organizational politics in the workplace evolved during the 1990s and are considered to be primary components in contemporary business practices.

Politics in an organization is associated with various work outcomes like performance assessment and extrinsic successes of the employees (Higgins & Gulat, 2003). It is also related to job satisfaction, turnover intentions, organizational commitment, and citizenship interpersonal facilitations (Witt, 2002). Several studies show that organization politics causes different problems for the organization and employees. Employees, in order to survive the political climate of any organization, get themselves into political behaviors that affect the employees and organization in a negative manner. Employees sometimes display political behaviors that manipulate the performance assessment and behaviors of the supervisors (Haggins, 2003).

Citing Berlo (1960), Moyer (2011) says the S-M-C-R model provided a richer interactional perspective. He emphasized relationships between source and receiver and suggested that the more highly developed the communication knowledge and skills of

sources and receivers, the more effectively the message would be encoded and decoded. Moyer also acknowledged the importance of culture in which communication occurs, the attitudes of senders and receivers, and strategic channel selection. Later models emphasized the transactional nature of the process and how individuals, groups, and organizations construct meaning and purpose (Harris & Nelson, 2008).

Statement of the Problem

Organization has been seen as a common place for people with varying interests and backgrounds. Often times, these interests interplay in the operation of the organization, which may affect the general performance of the organization. Although recent research by Robbins, Judge, and Vohra (2011) shows that developing countries such as Nigeria are perhaps more ambiguous and have more political environments in which people work, previous research has concluded that organizational politics have significant influence on job performance (Chen & Fang, 2007).

Meanwhile, Terrell (2019) believes that much of this alienation that employees feel at workplaces due to office politics is largely influenced by lack of open communication. Comparing the 1960s and 1970s, some researchers believe that the civil service, right from the 90s, had changed drastically and become politicized to the extent that most top officials now openly support the government of the day. However, the introduction of the quota system of recruitment and promotion and the constant interference of the officials and mass purges mean that political factors rather than merit alone may play a major role in civil service.

Currently, it is widely alleged that the Akwa Ibom State Civil Service is dominated by people from one ethnic group in the state due to certain personalities that occupied some top positions during the employment process. Many civil servants in the state, however, often complain of delayed promotion, favoritism, and nepotism. In view of this, do these actions really influence the way employees of the Akwa Ibom Civil Service communicate and perform their jobs? In other words, what influence does politics in an organization have on employee performance and internal communication?

Objectives of the Study

This study considers the following objectives.

- i. To determine the influence of politics in organizations on the internal communication and job performance in Akwa Ibom State Civil Service.
- ii. Assess factors that encourage general political behavior in the state civil service.
- iii. Examine political influence tactics used in the state civil service.
- iv. Examine which set of workers is greatly affected by politics in the state civil service.

- v. Determine the level of awareness of the politics in the organization by the Akwa Ibom State civil servants.

Research Questions

- i. Does politics in an organization influence internal communication and job performance in the Akwa Ibom State Civil Service?
- ii. What are the factors that encourage general political behavior in the State Civil Service?
- iii. What organizational political influence tactics does Akwa Ibom State Civil Service use?
- iv. Which category of workers is greatly affected by politics in the State Civil Service?
- v. What is the level of awareness of politics in the organization by the management of the Akwa Ibom State Civil Service?

The Concept of Organizational Politics

An important factor that affects the performance of an employee at work is organizational politics. Politics is a common phenomenon of almost every organization (Vigoda & Cohen, 2002a). They believe it is unlikely to have a politics-free organization because organizations are social entities where employees make efforts individually and in groups for valued resources, struggle for power, involve themselves in conflicts, and execute different influential tactics.

However, organizational politics (OP) has been defined and measured in several different ways due to diverse definitions and measures in the scholarly literature. In the early works like Allen et al. (2002), Samad and Amri (2011) define OP as intentional acts of influence to enhance and protect the self-interest of an individual or group. One of the earliest descriptions of organizational politics in the literature is from Mintzberg (2018). He defined organizational politics as "individual or group behavior that is informal, ostensibly parochial, typically divisive, and, above all in a technical sense, illegitimately sanctioned neither by formal authority, accepted ideology, nor certified expertise (although it may exploit any of these)."

Mintzberg (2018) also holds that the political arena in an organization has a functional role. He believed (1) a system of politics in organizations is necessary to correct certain deficiencies and dysfunctions, (2) leadership could be enhanced by bringing the strongest members of the organization into positions of authority in a somewhat Darwinian manner, (3) politics promotes a full debate of issues, (4) politics promotes necessary organizational change blocked by legitimate systems of influences, (5) politics can

facilitate decision-making, (6) politics causes a realignment of coalitions and shift in power, and (7) politics speeds up the death of a spent organization.

Hitherto, others discern politics more narrowly and view politics as dysfunctional too because employees involved in politics do things that are focused on achieving self-interest. The concern of this study is to explore dysfunctional aspects of organizational politics, particularly as they affect employee communication and job performance.

Perceptions of Organization Politics

Perception is “a process by which individuals organize and interpret their sensory impressions in order to give meaning” (Robbins et al. 2008). Perception of organizational politics consists of an individual observation of others’ self-interested behaviors, such as careful manipulation of organizational policies (Ferris and Kacmar, 2022). However, Rashid, Karim, Rashid, and Abid (2013) believe one’s perception can largely be different from objective reality. In organizations, people behave on the basis of perceptions about reality, not reality itself.

Citing Porter (1976), Rashid et al. (2013) say the basis of the argument is that even if an individual’s perception of political effects on organizational activities and decision-making processes is a misrepresentation of actual events, this perception is part of the individual’s views of reality and therefore will drive their associated cognitive and behavioral responses. However, perception of organizational politics has negative work outcomes and is harmful for employees as well as for the organization (Byrne, 2005). Workplace politics is not a passing event but a continuous activity that encompasses and operates in the organizational sphere; therefore, its impact on employees accumulates over time. More so, Kacmar and Ferris (2002) and Ferris and Kacmar (2022), cited in Kodisinghe (2010), argue that the higher the perceptions of politics are in the eyes of an organization member, the lower in that person’s eyes is the level of justice, equity, and fairness.

Thus, other studies, according to Kodisinghe (2010), have used the theory of procedural justice to argue that organizational politics is related to the leader-member exchange relationships as well as to the efficiency of human resource systems and to decision-making processes. Lack of minimal justice and fairness in these systems was found to be a major cause of higher perceptions of organizational politics and therefore hampered organizational performance. Citing Lewin’s (1936) argument, Kodisinghe believes that people respond to their perceptions of reality, not the reality itself. Likewise, politics in organizations should be understood in terms of what people think of it rather than what it actually represents.

Referring to Ferris et al. (2019), Kodisinghe (2010) stated that organizational politics is not only invisible and symbolic but also different across individuals because of subjective perception; as a result, the same political or non-political behavior by different observers depends on each observer’s prior experience, and Ferris (2002) also mentioned that perceptions of organizational politics consist of an individual’s perceptions of others’

political activities instead of one's own, such as favoritism, suppression of competing entities, and the manipulation of organizational policies. However, citing Ferris et al. (2019), Kodisinghe (2010) suggests that an increase in perceived organizational politics is associated with a decrease in job satisfaction. One possible explanation for this association is that decisions, such as resource allocation decisions, that are governed by political considerations are usually viewed as unfair. If an employee perceives decisions to be unfair, they will be unhappy. Furthermore, the stress that follows from working in a politically charged environment will add to employees' dissatisfaction with their job. The significant negative relationship between perceived organizational politics and job satisfaction has been identified by researchers. Kacmar and Baron (2019) cited eleven studies that reported a relationship between politics and job satisfaction.

Drory (2023) found that perceptions of politics were negatively related to job satisfaction and organizational commitment. He found that organizational politics has a potentially damaging effect on lower-status employees but no negative effect on higher-status employees. Vigode (2000) found out that perceptions of organizational politics have a negative relationship with job attitudes, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. And Robbins *et al.* (2016) conclude that when people see their work environment as political, the effect on their overall work attitudes and behavior is usually negatively affected.

Employees' Political Behavior

Citing Miles (1980), Latif et al. (2011) define political behavior in terms of organizational context as facilitating the "non-rational influence on decision-making" and existing as "back-stage" doings. However, some scholars believe that political behavior exists in informal structures and is more common to the promotion of their own and group motives than being a part of formal rules and regulations, which are regulated by organizational values and objectives.

According to Appelbaum and Hughes (2018), it is not uncommon for all members of an organization to exhibit political behavior. In the area of politics, everyone is a player. Subordinates, as well as their managers, can engage in the give-and-take of organizational politics. "Nonetheless, it is widely believed that political behavior is less common and less intense among employees in lower-level positions than among employees in higher-level positions. Some employees also adopt different political behaviors to adjust in the politically charged climate. Cook (2018), quoted in *economics*, discovered that individuals who perceive that their organizations are highly politically charged but do not want to leave support their stay. They try to control the situation despite job satisfaction because their motive is to stick to the organization; hence, their political behaviors provide those means to deal with the politically charged atmosphere of the organization.

Factors Contributing to Employee Political Behavior

Not all groups or organizations are equally political. Robbins et al. (2016) believe that in some organizations, politicking is overt and rampant, while in others, politics plays small roles in influencing outcomes. They added that recent research and observation have identified a number of factors that appear to encourage political behavior in the organization. Some are individual characteristics, derived from the unique qualities of the people the organization employs; others are a result of the organization's culture or internal environment.

Individual Factors

Sometimes people show political behavior to achieve their objectives, which cannot be achieved otherwise, and they may indulge themselves in political behavior to gain favors/benefits even at the cost of group benefits (Latif et al., 2011). Citing Ralston (1985), Appelbaum and Hughes (2018) identify the following three individual factors that they consider to be significant in encouraging political behaviors: Machiavellianism, locus of control, and work task uniqueness. However, aligning with Vecchio and Appelbaum (2015), they argue that an individual's unique characteristics are a result of a person's personality and achieved characteristics. Machiavellian-type individuals are described as manipulative and having little care for the feelings or well-being of others. Individuals high in Machiavellianism try to control and manipulate others by using tactics such as ingratiation much more often than individuals that are seen as having a low level of Machiavellianism.

Locus of control is the extent to which individuals believe that control over their lives lies within their own control or in environmental forces beyond their control. Robbins et al. (2016) note that "employees who are high self-monitors, possess an internal locus of control, and have a need for power are more likely to engage in political behavior. Externally oriented individuals, who believe that forces beyond their control are responsible for success, tend to prefer such extrinsic rewards as increased pay and job security. Meanwhile, individuals with an internal locus of control believe that their efforts will have a direct effect on their future outcome and are more likely to use political tactics to influence people.

Organizational Factors

Political activity is probably more a function of an organization's characteristics than of individual difference variables because many organizations have a large number of employees with the individual characteristics we listed, yet the extent of political behavior varies widely (Robbins et al., 2016). Although individual differences can foster politicking, the evidence more strongly supports the idea that certain situations and culture promote politics. Specifically, Robbins et al. (2016) say when an organization's resources are declining, when the existing pattern of resources is changing, and when there is an opportunity for promotions, politicking is more likely to surface.

Role ambiguity is one aspect that breathes organizational politics. This means the prescribed employee behaviors are not clear. Appelbaum and Hughes (2018) note that uncertainty occurs for an individual in a work group when tasks are not clearly identified by management. Thus, the more ambiguous a task is, the greater the individual using ingratiation behavior. In support of this, Robbins et al. (2016) say the greater the role ambiguity, the more he or she can engage in unnoticed political activity.

Organizational Political Influence Tactics

Nonetheless, it is widely believed that political behavior is far less common and less intense among employees in lower-level positions than among employees in higher-level positions. However, there are varieties of political tactics used by employees at virtually every organizational level. Appelbaum and Hughes (2018) identify some of these tactics.

Forming Coalitions and Networks: This political tactic consists of befriending important people. These people may not be in any position of obvious political value. Some people find that forming friendships with people in upper-level management can help gain access to important information.

Impression Management: A simple tactic that virtually everyone uses from time to time is the management of their outward appearance and style. By deliberately trying to exhibit this preferred image, an individual can make a positive impression on influential members of the organization (Appelbaum & Hughes 2018).

Information Management: A further tactic consists of managing the information that is shared with others. Releasing good or bad news when it is likely to have its fullest impact can greatly promote one person's self-interest or defeat the hopes of others.

Promote the Opposition: This may sound strange, but one way to eliminate opposition is to aid political rivals. Appelbaum and Hughes (2018) say it is possible to eliminate a political rival by helping that person become so successful that he or she is transferred to a desirable position someplace else in the organization. Recommending a rival for a new assignment or even a promotion with another division can make one's own work life easier.

Ingratiation: This tactic involves giving compliments or doing favors for superiors or co-workers. In the behavioral sciences, Appelbaum and Hughes say the notion of "social reciprocity" has been offered to help explain the process of ingratiation.

In social reciprocity, "there is a feeling of a social obligation to repay the positive actions of others with similar actions." Similarly, ingratiation means giving positive strokes to a person with the expectation that he or she will feel obligated to return them in some form (Vecchio & Appelbaum, 2015).

The Concept of Job Performance

The definition of job performance as a variable in empirical research and its acclaimed relevance in the field of industrial or organizational psychology (Sonnentag & Frese, 2002) differ across researchers. Viswesvaran (2001) attributes this dissimilarity to the characteristic of it being an abstract and latent construct with many manifestations which is a notion supported by Motowidlo (2003). Performance is a multidimensional construct where different types of behaviors need to be considered in order to understand it (Aguinis, 2009).

Literature has related employees' performance in organizations based on two perspectives, namely task performance (TP) and contextual performance (Borman et al., 2019). Task performance refers to two activities mainly: activities that transform raw materials into goods and services in an organization and activities that help with the transformation process by, for example, providing planning, coordination, and supervision to ensure organizational efficiency and effectiveness (Casio & Aguinis, 2019). Accordingly, skills and abilities are the two main factors that contribute to task performance. Meanwhile, contextual performance refers to behaviors that influence the effectiveness and efficiency of an organization. Aguinis (2009) suggests that a good environment in which task performance can occur will help to achieve these goals. Additionally, personality is one of the important aspects that plays a significant role in influencing contextual performance (CP). Among the characteristics of CP as suggested by Aguinis (2009) are persisting with enthusiasm and exerting extra effort to complete task activities, volunteering to carry out task activities that are not formally part of the job, helping and cooperating with others, following organizational rules and procedures, and endorsing, supporting, and defending organizational objectives.

Based on the above, it can be concluded that both TP and CP are important, especially in managing the performance of employees in an organization. Aguinis (2009) supports that TP and CP are important dimensions of a performance management system to ensure organizational efficiency, effectiveness, and performance. TP, as defined by Borman and Motowidlo (2019), has five dimensions that include (1) job-specific task proficiency, (2) non-job-specific task proficiency, (3) written and oral communication proficiency, (4) supervision in the case of a supervisory or leadership position, and (5) management. In contrast to TP, Rotundo and Sackett (2002) and O'Brien and Allen (2008) suggested that voluntary behaviors that are deviant and damaging to the organizational goals, which are considered in negative form, are also a part of employees' performance construct. Such dysfunctional behaviors are generally labeled as counterproductive work behaviors (CWB). CWB refers to actions that adversely affect the well-being of the organization (Rotundo & Sackett, 2002).

Rotundo and Sackett (2002) assert that organizational performance is a result of accumulated individual performances. Hence, high organizational performance implies a high level of job performance from each of its employees and vice versa. Job performance, on the other hand, has been proven to be affected by a multitude of factors. Among these

factors is OP, whereby empirical studies found that OP has negatively affected job performance (Kacmar et al., 2019; Ferris et al., 2002; Rosen et al., 2006). This simply means that the higher the level of OP, the lower the level of job performance, and thus the lower the level of OP will mean the higher the job performance magnitude. However, some research shows that employees are more satisfied and want to remain with the politically charged organization when the rewards are fairly distributed and received by them. It doesn't matter to the employee how fair the process is through which these rewards are determined as long as they are receiving rewards. (Harris, Andrews & Kacmar, 2007)

In several research studies, it has been concluded that job and pay satisfaction get more impact from distributive justice than procedural justice. The employees are generally more sensitive and respond negatively to perceived politics when they are hurt in terms of rewards. The politics are then viewed from the perspective that they are affecting them personally. In the highly political environments, the work attitudes like job satisfaction and turnover intentions are highly affected by the distributive justice (fair distribution of rewards) present in the organization.

Byrne (2005) concluded through his study that in the political environment, when employees perceive that there is a higher level of procedural fairness, the GATGA (go along to get ahead) component of organizational politics mitigates its effects on employees' turnover intentions. This component of organizational politics refers to individuals getting along with the actions by others to gain benefits. This is an example of covert and indirect behavior used by employees to ensure achievement of personal gains. The relationship between the component of organizational politics, that is, GPB (general political behavior), and turnover intentions is not moderated by procedural justice. GPBs are obviously self-serving behaviors to achieve personal gains. The reason behind this is that politics exists when the environment is ambiguous and there is little predictability, whereas procedural justice reduces ambiguity. Procedural justice brings in stability and lowers the ambiguity. Fair procedures and GPB (general political behaviors) cannot co-exist and are opposing at high levels at the same time (ukessays.co.uk/essays/economics/organizational-politics.php).

Both the components of organizational politics are negatively related to in-role job performance; the relationship between organizational politics and job performance is not moderated by both procedural and interactional justice. Miller, Rutherford & Kolodinsky (2008) discovered through their findings that the relationship between organizational politics and job satisfaction is not moderated by ethnicity, work setting, age and cultural differences. These moderators also had no effect on the relationship between job stress and organizational politics. The moderators of age, employment sector, ethnicity and domestic or international sample didn't moderate or affect the link between the perception of organizational politics and job stress. The turnover intentions were lower in the political environments for the employee working for private sector employees than for public sector employees.

For the employees who don't want to participate in workplace politics through political behaviors and political influence strategies and consider it as against their goals and interests, organizational politics have an emotional impact on them. These emotional reactions to politics are higher levels of stress and job burnout. Such employees in politically charged organizations build up in themselves the emotional disaffection and hostility from work; this is the consequence of workplace politics and inequity in the organizational climate. Their mental state possibly directs towards stress, nervous tension, and job burnout, and all this can contribute towards the hurtful behavior; one of the responses of this is the aggressive behavior towards others (colleagues and supervisors).

Aggressive behaviors are unfavorable for the organizational climate, as they take the form of verbal assaults and can get aggravated to the extent of a physical attack or pure violence. Vigoda's (2002) model suggests that politics leads towards the weakening of organization and contributes towards the instability and low productivity of the organization if and when politics exceeds a certain intensity

Perceived Organizational Support and Employee Performance

POS may provide an important link between management communication and performance, as evidenced by the social exchange approach. Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) refers to "voluntary actions of individuals that are motivated by the returns they are expected to bring and typically do in fact bring from others" (p. 91). This perspective maintains that, based on the norm of reciprocity, employees strive to repay with increased effort and dedication to their organizations the reception of tangible and socio-emotional rewards (Blau, 1964; Eisenberger *et al.*, 1986; Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011) cited by Neves and Eisenberger (2016). Moreover, and in line with this reasoning, Allen (2022) found that POS mediated the relationship between management communication and employee affective commitment to the organization.

Employees with high POS have been found to have a greater felt obligation to aid the organization in reaching its objectives, stronger affective commitment to the organization, and increased expectancy of reward for high performance, and all of these outcomes have consistently been found to be associated with increased in-role and extra-role performance (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). The meta-analysis performed by Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) showed a moderate relationship of POS with in-role performance and extra-role performance directed toward the organization. Such a relationship is stronger with extra-role performance, due to the more voluntary nature of many extra-role activities, which allow for more opportunities for employees to demonstrate their desire to reciprocate (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011).

Recently, preliminary empirical evidence on the direction of causality between POS and performance has been gathered (Chen, Eisenberger, Johnson, Sucharski, & Aselage, 2009), providing evidence that POS leads to extra role performance. Taken together, these results suggest that POS is a key social exchange mechanism, as employees

try to reciprocate the positive valuation received from the organization (Eisenberger et al., 2001), quoted by Neves and Eisenberger (2016). Therefore, POS should mediate the relationship between management communication and both the performance of standard job activities (in-role performance) and of actions favorable to the organization that go beyond assigned responsibilities (extra-role performance).

The Concept of Employee Communication

In modern days, we understand ‘communication’ as one of the most dominant and important activities in organizations (Harris & Nelson, 2008). Fundamentally, relationships grow out of communication, and the functioning and survival of organizations are based on effective relationships among individuals and groups. In addition, organizational capabilities are developed and enacted through “intensely social and communicative processes” (Jones, Watson, Gardner, and Gallois, 2004).

Communication helps individuals and groups coordinate activities to achieve goals, and it's vital in socialization, decision-making, problem-solving, and change-management processes. Internal communication also provides employees with important information about their jobs, organization, environment, and each other. Communication can help motivate, build trust, create shared identity, and spur engagement; it provides a way for individuals to express emotions, share hopes and ambitions, and celebrate and remember accomplishments. Communication is the basis for individuals and groups to make sense of their organization, what it is, and what it means. This type of communication, in turn, includes activities of sending and receiving messages through various layers of authority, using various message systems, and discussing various topics of interest to the group we belong to or the company we work for. Organizational communication research has mainly been conducted in both the business management field and the communication field; however, researchers in the public administration field have provided little knowledge about organizational communication and its roles and effects.

Several studies emphasize that effective communication can enhance organizational outcomes (Garnett, Marlowe, & Pandey, 2008; Pandey & Garnett, 2006). Communication can influence the perceptions and opinions about persons, communities, organizations, governments, and even society. One of the outcomes of administrative communication is related to the flow of information, regulations, policies, and procedures. As a managerial tool, communication is frequently used to share information with members, to coordinate activities, to reduce unnecessary managerial burdens and rules, and ultimately to improve organizational performance.

As people work together, they develop some important formal and informal relationships with each other. All people are of different personalities and natures; their thinking, perception, and viewpoints are also different. They cannot understand each other until and unless they effectively communicate. Citing Lukazewski (2006), Ali and Haider (2016) say, “The greatest continuing area of weakness in management practice is the human dimension. In good times or bad, there seems to be little real understanding of the

relationships between managers, among employees, and interactions between the two. When there are problems, everyone acknowledges that the cause often is a communication problem. So now what? Little understanding of relationships leads to little satisfaction. People want open communication channels and a system of common understanding.

Communication behavior such as facial expression, eye contact, vocal expression, and body movement is crucial to the superior-subordinate relationship. Nonverbal messages play a central role in interpersonal interactions with respect to impression formation, deception, attraction, social influence, and emotional expression (Burgoon et al., 2020). Nonverbal immediacy from the supervisor helps to increase interpersonal involvement with their subordinates, impacting job satisfaction. The manner in which supervisors communicate with their subordinates may be more important than the verbal content.

The quality of communication by an organization or manager can improve justice perceptions by improving employee perceptions of manager trustworthiness and also by reducing feelings of uncertainty (Kernan & Hanges, 2002). In a poll, Domeyer, according to Ali and Haider (2016), notes that "communicating with staff and on their behalf plays a vital role in building job satisfaction. Managers who promote employees' viewpoints, support their staff, and limit the impact of office politics show they value and respect their team members. In leading by example, they not only encourage staff to develop similar skills but also promote a more positive corporate culture," she said. The organizations that provide opportunities to the employees to show their aptitudes and utilize their talents are more likely to retain their workforce.

Decision-Making and Employee Efforts

According to Rajhans (2016), the company's decision-making process includes active communication throughout the organization. Employees are allowed in as many ways as possible to offer their ideas and opinions and be part of the decision-making process. There is a suggestion scheme through which everybody can give his suggestion or idea. The department heads and other officers can give their ideas for improvement through continuous improvement proposals as well as weekly coordination meetings. If management finds it suitable, the ideas are implemented. This open communication allows employees to be a part of company decision-making and participate in the company's success. In case of any extraordinary suggestion for improvement or effort done by any employee in matters of concern like safety, quality, cost cutting, etc., the effort is communicated to top management by the operations in charge, and the employee is recommended for written appreciation and monetary rewards. This motivates the employees and increases their sense of belonging towards the organization.

In terms of the relational aspect, organizational communication can be divided into two dimensions: internal (intra) organizational communication and external organizational communication. Goldhaber (2023), cited by Eunju (2009), defines organizational communication as "the process of creating and exchanging messages within a network of

interdependent relationships to cope with environmental uncertainty.” The concepts and perceptions of organizational communication cover messages, characteristics of senders and receivers and their relationships, functions, media, environment, and so on. Among them, this study explores the notion of organizational communication by looking at the two types of internal and external communication and considering some ways in which those types could be described.

Relationship between communication and perceived organizational support (POS)

The effective implementation of organizational strategies and human resources (HR) policies depends on open two-way communication between management and employees (Goggin, Bowman et al., 1990; Tourish, 2005), as cited by Neves and Eisenberger (2016). Upward communication allows employees to point to the internal contradictions and problems that beset their organizations (Tourish & Craig, downloaded by George Mason University at 07:12 14 November 2016 & Amernic, 2010). It influences personnel and operational decisions, as well as adjustments in policies and strategy (Glauser, 1984), quoted by Neves and Eisenberger (2016). Referring to Allen (2022), Neves and Eisenberger further say, management communication can increase POS by allowing managers to describe general goals and strategies and to provide needed information on a timely basis that helps employees carry out their jobs. Such communication can lessen employees’ anxiety and uncertainty regarding organizational change (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011) while stimulating the emergence of innovative ideas and blocking the development of groupthink.

Without an open two-way communication line between management and employees, senior managers may become out of touch with their employees, underestimate (or miss) emerging problems, and develop strategies that are misaligned with the perceptions of their employees (Tourish, 2005). Effective communication with management should be particularly effective in increasing POS because high-level managers formulate policies and goals and therefore are considered by lower-level employees as strongly representative of the organization (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011). Open communication with management may signal that the organization cares about the well-being and values the contribution of its employees, thus increasing POS.

Several aspects of management’s communication, such as quality of information received from management, positive job-related feedback, and conversations about support, as well as employees’ satisfaction with communication, have been found to be positively related to POS (Allen, 2022, 2015), as cited by Neves and Eisenberger (2016). Although organizational support theory suggests that management communication leads to POS, high POS may lead employees to perceive that managers engage in more positive communications.

Employees view managers as agents of the organization (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Levinson, 1965), as mentioned by Neves and Eisenberger (2016) and therefore may interpret the openness of their communication as indicative of the organization’s support.

However, the opposite direction of influence is also possible. That is, POS might lead to more positive perceptions of management communication. The rationale for this reverse relationship can be found in confirmation bias literature. Confirmation bias is generally described as a situation in which individuals reinforce their existing attitudes by selectively collecting new evidence, by interpreting evidence in a biased way or by selectively recalling information from memory (Oswald & Grosjean, 2004).

Methodology

The population comprises all the civil servants in Akwa Ibom State payroll which according to 2016 Akwa Ibom Civil Service handbook is thirty-five thousand, eight hundred and sixty five (35,865). It is only civil servants in ministries that will be examined. The head of Civil Service was also interviewed.

The research adopted a cluster sampling technique and Meyers's (2002) guides for sample size. The guide stipulates that from 100,001 to 500,000 the sample size will be 384; from 50,001 to 100,000 the sample size will be 383; from 10,001 to 50,000 the sample size will be 381; from 5,001 to 10,000 the sample size will be 370; from 3,001 to 5,000 the sample size will be 357; from 2,001 to 3,000 the sample size will be 341; from 1,001 to 2,000 the sample size will be 322; and for 1,000 the sample size will be 278. Since the estimated population of the civil servants in the state is 35,865, the sample size for the study was 387.

Table 3.1: Sample Size Distribution of Questionnaire in Akwa Ibom State Civil Service

Ministries	Sample Size
Women Affairs and Social Development	38
Youth and Sports	38
Local Govt and Chieftaincy Affairs	38
Lands and Town Planning	39
Housing and Urban Renewal	38
Health	39
Culture and Tourism	38
Commerce and Industry	38
Education	39
Finance	39
Total	384

Description of Research Instruments

The major instrument for data collection was the questionnaire. It contains thirteen items, which are made up of a section. All the thirteen questions on the influence of politics were on a 5-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (UD), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The second instrument schedule has 6 questions that were

directed to the permanent secretary of the Bureau of Labor, Productivity, and Manpower Development, Lady Barr. Nse Mercy Isang. The questions sought answers on policies put in place to stem politics in the state civil service.

Table 3.2: Scoring of the Instrument

Response	Abbreviation	Score	
		Positive Item	Negative Item
Strongly Agree	SA	5	1
Agree	A	4	2
Undecided	UD	3	3
Disagree	D	2	4
Strongly Disagree	SD	1	5

The data was analyzed using frequency table and simple percentage, while the Pearson, Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test the two hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance.

Data and Results

Table 4.1: Influence of politics in organization on internal communication and job performance in Akwa Ibom State Civil Service

Option	Number/ Percentage (%) Agree	Number/ Percentage (%) Disagree	Number/ Percentage (%) Undecided	Total
There is politics in Akwa Ibom State Civil Service.	227 (59%)	116 (30%)	44 (11%)	387 (100%)
Treatment at work place affects communication and performance	256 (66%)	103 (27%)	28 (7%)	387 (100%)
Without politics communication and performance increases.	208 (54%)	101 (26%)	78 (20%)	387 (100%)
Politics in civil service affects communication and performance.	233 (60%)	124 (32%)	29 (8%)	387 (100%)

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Results in Table 4.1 show the opinion of respondents in each option on the influence of politics in organizations on internal communication and job performance in the Akwa Ibom State Civil Service. From the result, it is obvious that there is a level of politics in the civil service. This is evident in the 59% majority of respondents who attested to that, as against the 30% of respondents who disagreed and 11% of respondents who were undecided about

it. Again, 66% of respondents attested that treatment at the workplace affects communication and performance of civil servants.

This is against the 27% of respondents who disagreed with that and 7% who were undecided. It is also indicated that 54% of respondents agreed that the absence of politics in the civil service would increase communication and performance. This is, however, against the 26% who disagreed and 20% who were undecided. Lastly, 60% of respondents attested that politics in the civil service affects communication and performance. However, 32% disagreed with this, while 8% were undecided about it. From the finding of this study, it is seen that politics in an organization has a high influence on internal communication and job performance in the Akwa Ibom State Civil Service.

Research Question Two: What are the factors that encourage general political behavior in the state civil service?

Table 4.2: Factors which encourage general political behavior in the Akwa Ibom State Civil Service

Option	Number/ Percentage (%) Agree	Number/ Percentage (%) Disagree	Number/ Percentage (%) Undecided	Total
Individual factors trigger political behavior in Civil Service	325 (84%)	206 (53%)	58 (14%)	387 (100%)
Organizational culture triggers general political behavior	123 (32%)	20 (5%)	42 (11%)	387 (100%)
External political influence can trigger political behavior	153 (40%)	68 (17%)	166 (43%)	387 (100%)

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Data in Table 4.2 indicates the opinion of respondents in each option on the factors that encourage general political behavior in the Akwa Ibom State civil service. From the result shown, a 53% majority of respondents attested that individual factors trigger political behavior in the civil service, as against the 32% of respondents who agreed to that and 14% of respondents who were undecided about it. Also, 84% of respondents attested that organizational culture triggers general political behavior.

This is, however, against the 20% of respondents who disagreed with that and 11% who were undecided. Subsequently, a 43% majority of respondents were undecided whether or not external political influence can trigger political behavior. This is against the 40% who attested to it and 17% who disagreed. From this finding, it is obvious that only organizational culture is said to trigger general political behavior.

Research Question Three: What organizational political influence tactics does Akwa Ibom State Civil Service use?

Table 4.3: Organizational political influence tactics used by Akwa Ibom State Civil Service

Option	Number/ Percentage (%) Agree	Number/ Percentage (%) Disagree	Number/ Percentage (%) Undecided	Total
Favoritism is frequently seen in Akwa Ibom State Civil Service	317 (82%)	103 (27%)	71 (18%)	387 (100%)
Nepotism is frequently seen in Akwa Ibom State Civil Service	213 (55%)	78 (20%)	46 (12%)	387 (100%)
Backstabbing is frequently seen in Akwa Ibom State Civil Service	263 (68%)	41 (11%)	29 (7%)	387 (100%)

Source: Field Survey, 2015

The result in Table 4.3 shows the opinion of respondents in each option on organizational political influence tactics used by the Akwa Ibom State Civil Service. The result shows that a 55% majority of respondents attested that favoritism is frequently seen in the Akwa Ibom State civil service; this is, however, against the 27% of respondents who disagreed with that and 18% of respondents who were undecided about it. Also, 68% of respondents attested that nepotism is frequently seen in the state civil service. This is against the 20% of respondents who disagreed with that and 12% who were undecided. Lastly, an 82% majority of respondents attested that backstabbing is frequently seen in the Akwa Ibom State civil service. This is, however, against the 11% who disagreed to that and 7% who were undecided. Conclusively, it is seen from the findings that the three political influence tactics mentioned in the study are utilized by the Akwa Ibom State Civil Service, with backstabbing taking the lead, followed by nepotism, and lastly, favoritism.

Research Question Four: Which set of workers is greatly affected by politics in the state civil service?

Table 4.4: Category of workers greatly affected by politics in the state civil service

Option	Number/ Percentage (%) Agree	Number/ Percentage (%) Disagree	Number/ Percentage (%) Undecided	Total
Females are the most influenced by Politics in the Civil Service	242 (63%)	51 (13%)	94 (24%)	387 (100%)

Males are influenced most by Politics in Civil Service	253 (65%)	73 (19%)	61 (16%)	387 (100%)
Employees at lower level use politics to influence management	206 (53%)	129 (33%)	52 (14%)	387 (100%)
Management uses politics to Influence Employees at Lower Level	264 (68%)	75 (20%)	48 (12%)	

Source: Field Survey, 2015

The result of data in Table 4.4 shows the opinion of respondents in each option on the set of workers greatly affected by politics in the Akwa Ibom State Civil Service. From the result, a 63% majority attested that female workers are the most influenced by the politics in the civil service. This is against the 13% of respondents who disagreed and 24% of respondents who were undecided about it. However, 65% of the majority respondents attested that male workers are influenced most by the politics in the civil service. This is against the 19% minority of respondents who disagreed with it and 16% who were undecided. The result also indicated that 53% of respondents attested that management uses politics to influence employees at lower levels. This is, however, against the 33% of respondents who disagreed with that notion and 14% who were undecided. Lastly, a 60% majority of respondents attested that employees at lower levels use politics to influence management. This is against the 20% of respondents who disagreed with it and 12% who were undecided about it. It is therefore concluded that all categories of workers in the Akwa Ibom State Civil Service are affected by organizational politics.

Research Question Five: What is the level of awareness of politics in the organization by the management of the Akwa Ibom State civil service?

Table 4.5: Level of awareness of politics in the organization by the management of Akwa Ibom State civil service.

Option	Number/ Percentage (%) Agree	Number/ Percentage (%) Disagree	Number/ Percentage (%) Undecided	Total
Politics is sometimes outwardly seen in civil service.	269 (70%)	73 (19%)	45 (11%)	387 (100%)
Civil service discuss politics among themselves	206 (53%)	129 (33%)	51 (14%)	387 (100%)

Source: Field Survey, 2015

The result in Table 4.5 shows the opinion of respondents in each option on the level of awareness of politics in the organization by the management of the Akwa Ibom State civil service. The result shows that a 70% majority of respondents attested that politics is sometimes outwardly seen in civil service; this is, however, against the 19% of respondents who disagreed with it and 11% of respondents who were undecided about it. Subsequently, a 53% majority of respondents attested that civil servants discuss politics among themselves. This is against the 33% of respondents who disagreed with that and 14% who were undecided about it. Hence, from the result above, it is evident that there is a high level of awareness of organizational politics in the management of Akwa Ibom State civil service.

Hypotheses Testing

The study tested two hypotheses. This was to further confirm the findings of the work and make them more valid. Specifically, the study tested the following:

- i. General political behavior in the Akwa Ibom State Civil Service will affect internal communication and job performance.
- ii. There is a significant relationship between politics in an organization, internal communication, and job performance.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between general political behavior in the Akwa Ibom State Civil Service and internal communication and job performance.

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Analysis was adopted to test this hypothesis; the result of the analysis is presented in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Pearson product moment correlation of the relationship between general political behavior and internal communication and job performance in Akwa Ibom State Civil Service

Variables	ΣX ΣY	ΣX^2 ΣY^2	ΣXY	Df	r-cal.	r-crit.	Decision at $P < 0.5$
General political Behaviour	4056	46090	90096	385	.86	.098	Sig Reject Null
Internal Communication and Job Performance	8127	179487					

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Significant at .05 alpha level; df= 385, N =387

Analysis in Table 4.6 shows that the calculated r-value of .86 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.98 at the .05 alpha level and 385 degrees of freedom. Since the calculated r-value is greater than the critical r-value, the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant effect of general political behavior on internal communication and job performance in Akwa Ibom State civil service, is rejected, while the alternate hypothesis is retained. This means that there is a significant relationship between general political behavior and internal communication and job performance in Akwa Ibom State Civil Service.

Hypothesis Two: There is a significant relationship between politics in an organization and internal communication and job performance.

Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis was adopted to test this hypothesis; the result of the analysis is presented in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Pearson Product Moment Correlation of the relationship between politics in organization and internal communication and job performance

Variables	ΣX ΣY	ΣX^2 ΣY^2	ΣXY	Df	r-cal.	r-crit.	Decision at P<0.5
Politics in Organization	4071	45385					
			89391	385	.86	.098	Sig Reject Null
Internal Communication and Job Performance	8127	179487					

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Discussion of Findings

From the result above, it is evident that politics in an organization influences internal communication and job performance in the Akwa Ibom State civil service. This finding is in agreement with the statement of Higgins and Gulat (2003), who stated that politics in organizations is associated with various work outcomes like performance assessment and extrinsic successes of the employees. This finding is also at par with Latif et al. (2011), citing Eisenhardt and Bourgeois (1988), who stressed that politics, at whatever level is practiced in firms, consumes time, confines information sharing, and develops communication obstacles. And that, any organization that is prevalent with politics, generates stress, contributes less in promoting favorable job characteristics, and has high employee turnover (Pune, 2003).

From the result above, it is evident that organizational culture encourages general political behavior in the Akwa Ibom State civil service in a greater percentage, followed by external political influence and then individual factors. This finding is in agreement with

Robbins *et al.* (2016), who stated that political behavior actively is probably more a function of an organization's characteristics than of individual difference variables because many organizations have a large number of employees with different individual characteristics, yet the extent of political behavior varies widely. Although individual differences can foster politicking, the evidence more strongly supports the idea that certain situations and cultures promote politics. Robbins *et al.* further noted that when an organization's resources are declining, when the existing pattern of resources is changing, and when there is opportunity for promotions, politicking is more likely to surface.

The finding further supports Appelbaum and Hughes (2018), who noted that it is not uncommon for all members of an organization to exhibit political behavior and that, in the area of politics, everyone is a player. Subordinates, as well as their managers, can engage in the give-and-take of organizational politics. This finding and the statement by Appelbaum and Hughes are, however, in disagreement with Cook (2018), who stated that political behavior is less common and less intense among employees in lower-level positions than among employees in higher-level positions.

The finding of this study is further at par with Latif *et al.* (2011), who opined that sometimes people show political behavior to achieve their objectives, which cannot be achieved otherwise, and they may indulge themselves in political behavior to gain favors/benefits even at the cost of group benefits.

The finding of this study agrees with that of Appelbaum and Hughes (2018), who noted that the promotion of opposition is a major political tactic used to aid political rivals. Appelbaum and Hughes also identified forming coalitions and networks, impression management, information management, and ingratiation as political tactics that consist of befriending important people and management of their outward appearance and style in order to make a positive impression on influential members of the organization. Some people find that forming friendships with people in upper-level management can help gain access to important information, which in turn may allow them the opportunity of backstabbing others and being favored over others soon. Conclusively, it is deduced from the finding that the three political influence tactics mentioned in the study are utilized by the Akwa Ibom State Civil Service.

Conclusion

Organizational politics has a high influence on internal communication and job performance and can have a positive influence in the Akwa Ibom State Civil Service if properly played. It is also seen that organizational culture triggers or encourages general political behavior in Akwa Ibom State civil service. Other factors, like individual and external factors, can also trigger general political behavior in the civil service if well managed.

The three political influence tactics mentioned in the study are utilized by the Akwa Ibom State civil service, with backstabbing taking the lead, followed by nepotism, and lastly, favoritism. Positive political influence tactics would bring about positive growth.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study and the conclusions reached.

- i. Constructive or positive politics should be encouraged in the Akwa Ibom State Civil Service since all levels of workers are directly or indirectly involved in organizational politics.
- ii. More positive factors that encourage general political behavior in an organization should be encouraged in the Akwa Ibom State Civil Service.
- iii. Positive organizational political influence tactics should be used by Akwa Ibom State Civil servants, rather than destructive or negative ones.

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