"Perception of organizational politics and employee performance: Antidotal role of impression management"

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PERCEPTION OF ORGANIZATIONAL POLITICS AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE: ANTIDOTAL ROLE OF IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT

Abstract

The perception of organizational politics seriously affects working people, and it is an unavoidable detrimental aspect of an organization. Prior studies are focused on the detrimental consequences of perceived organizational politics and not paid attention to its remedial actions. Therefore, proper intervention as a corrective action for the harmful effect of organizational politics perception was essential. Hence, this study was motivated to know: (a) the effect of the perception of organizational politics on employees' performance, and (b) the mitigating role of impression management (self-promotion and ingratiation) for the detrimental effect of perception of organizational politics on work performance. Perceptual cross-sectional data was taken from 725 employees working in Nepalese banks. Quantitative data analysis revealed that perception of organizational politics has a detrimental impact on employee performance; impression management (self-promotion and ingratiation) worked as an antidote for such effects. The study's unique findings were a different form of association of perception of organizational politics with work performance under the different situations of impression management (self-promotion and ingratiation). Moreover, those employees were less suffered from the perceived organizational politics who were good in impression management (self-promotion and ingratiation). Impression management (self-promotion and ingratiation) is controlled, as an antidote, comparatively more effectively for the high poli-tics perceiver than the low perceiver. Numbers of theoretical and practical implications are suggested to cure perceived organizational politics' detrimental outcomes on employee performance.

INTRODUCTION

Perceived organizational politics is the fact of organizational life (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992), and no one organization can ignore its existence and workplace consequences. In developed countries, large numbers of studies have been carried out to measure the antecedents and consequences of the perceived organizational politics. Most of these studies (e.g., Buchanan & Badham, 2008; Ferris et al., 1989; Mintzberg, 1983; Rosen & Levy, 2013) have revealed the harmful impact of perception of organizational politics on employee outcomes. On the one hand, the perception of organizational politics in the workplace as a political coalition (March, 1962) is inevitable where organizational activities revolve around politics (Hochwarter, 2012; Mintzberg, 1983). On the other hand, its dominant effects on employees are detrimental (Bedi & Schat, 2013; Chang et al., 2009; Miller et al., 2008). Therefore, proper interventions to cure organizational politics' detrimental impacts on employee outcomes are obligatory for every organization.

But, past studies were lacking in this direction. More significantly, no study is carried to measure impression management as an antidote for the detrimental impact of perceived organizational politics on performance.

Employee outcomes like turnover intention, job satisfaction, work engagement, commitment, burnout, and creativity are affected by the perception of organizational politics. However, this study has selected employees' work performance as there is always debate about the employees' low productivity, especially in developing and least developing countries (ILO, 2008). Moreover, Nepalese employees have a deep-rooted concept of Bhansun (to influence the decision-making process through political leaders, union leaders, or any other influential person for someone's benefit). In Nepal, very few people believe that their performance leads to their career advancement without Bhansun. There is always blame from employer to employee that employees' performance is not expected to increase their salary and benefits. Again, it is the reality that many of the employees will not have access to Bhansun, and such people will perceive their work environment as highly political, which creates stress and ultimately deteriorates their performance.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

1.1. Perception of organizational politics

Organizations are the political battlefield where alliances form and collapse in acquiring and practicing power, and regular groups are conducted as a struggle to control limited sources (Ferris et al., 2000). During such process, employees (as a political actor or witness of political activities, or affected third parties) perceive an event from their perspective that may or may not be accorded with the realities of the event because individuals respond, not necessarily reality per se, based on their perceptions of reality (Lewin, 1936). Therefore, organizational politics are largely studied from the perspective of employees' perception invented from the workplace's political activities. Perceived organizational politics is about the perception of an individual of the self-fascinated acts or practices of others usually linked to manipulating corporate processes and often involve intimidating strategies, even influencing others for the desired objectives (Kacmar & Ferris, 1991).

1.2. Perception of organizational politics and work performance

From the theory of social exchange, a highly political work environment undermines employees'

trust in any reward system due to arbitrariness and obvious unfairness (Rosen et al., 2006). Since organizational politics is seen as counterproductive behaviors in the workplace that usually distract employees from the performance of their in-role tasks, a negative relationship should be established between organizational politics and job performance. However, a review of current empirical work on this relationship is inconclusive. Besides, Hochwarter et al. (2006) tested the positive effect of organizational politics perceptions on job performance. Miller et al. (2008) have stated the correlations between the perception of organizational politics and job performance have fluctuated from −.32 to .12. Hence, this relationship's direction is not settled and insists on further study hypothesizing without a particular direction of these variables' association.

1.3. Moderator in the relationship between perception of organizational politics and work performance

Perception organizational politics model, suggested initially by Ferris et al. (1989) and tested by scholars with modification in a different context (e.g., Ferris et al., 1996; Harrell-Cook et al., 1999; Kacmar et al., 1999; Parker et al., 1995; Valle & Perrewe, 2000), states that the relationship between the perception of organizational politics and subsequent results is moderated by perceived control and understanding. Understanding refers

to the knowledge of how and why things happen in an organization the way they do. If an individual has a clear understanding of who is responsible for making decisions and why they have been chosen to be the decision-makers, there would be a better understanding of how and why things happen the way they do than others who do not understand the decision-making process in the organization (Kacmar et al., 1999). Likewise, control reflects the degree to which individuals can influence their environment (Ferris et al., 1996). It is possible to interpret workplace politics as a threat and lead to more negative outcomes if staff perceive that politics is going on in their work environment and have/or feel little control over the process; however, if employees feel that they have a high degree of control over the process and results and are expected to produce positive results.

Reactions to a perception of organizational politics can be differing (be moderated) by the degree of personal resources as understanding and control of the individual. There are several ways to optimize the impact on employee outcomes in the workplace of perceived organizational politics. The impact of organizational politics on employee results (both as challenge requirements and hindrance requirements) is moderated by the organization, work, and personal resources, so intervention should also be aimed at optimizing and managing organizations, jobs, and personal resources (Albrecht & Landells, 2012). Regarding the ways to improve outcomes due to perception of organizational politics, Hochwarter et al. (2004, p. 45) argued that "having some level of control over the work environment and understanding the underlying rationale for organizational phenomenon can partially ameliorate the harmful effects of politics perceptions." Therefore, this study considers employees' impression management behaviors (understanding and control resources) as personal or individual level resources that may improve the relationship between organizational politics and work performance.

1.4. Impression management as a moderator

On the preceding review premises, it is assumed that the relationship between the perception of organizational politics and work performance is significant. However, this study suggests that by engaging staff in

impression management (self-promotion and ingratiation) behavior as a coping mechanism to reduce ambiguity and as an attempt to gain an understanding of the situation and control over the environment, the effects of perceptions of organizational politics will be improved. Using impression management (self-promotion and ingratiation) skills and behavior, someone develops a near and dear relationship with the target person to understand the proper intention and circumstances of the target person, then using their proper understanding of the situation as well as the use of unusual behavior they can perceive that process and outcomes are in their control. Vigoda and Cohen (2002) tested that less damaging perceptions of organizational politics were also experienced by employees who were very involved in political strategies. Empirical analysis advocates that impression management is positively associated with their perceived politics (Ferris et al., 2000), and impression management contributes to employee outcomes. More specifically, the impacts of perceived organizational policies on job satisfaction, supervisor satisfaction, turnover intent, and job stress were moderated by impression management (Harrell-Cook et al., 1999; Valle & Perrewe, 2000). This is why it is suggested that impression management (ingratiation and self-promotion) will have a moderating effect on the perceptions of organizational politics.

As empirical evidence lacks, managers are in problems on how to cure their employees of the harmful impact of the perceived organizational politics, especially to acclimatize the deteriorated employees' performance caused by perceived workplace politics.

A response to the stated problems and gaps, in the context of an underdeveloped country, this study was carried out to examine: (a) the impact of employees' perception of organizational politics on their work performance, and (b) employees impression management (self-promotion and ingratiation) behavior as an antidote to cure the detrimental impacts of perception of organizational politics on work performance.

To get the objectives mentioned above, the current study has proposed the following hypotheses:

H1:   *Employees' perception of organizational politics impacts employees' work performance.*

The positive or negative direction of impact depends on whether they perceive organizational politics as a stressor challenge or a stressor obstacle.

H2: *Impacts of perception of organizational politics on work performance are moderated by impression management behavior, i.e., self-promotion and ingratiation, of the employees. These mean employees' impression management behaviors improve the relationship between the perception of organizational politics and work performance.*

2. RESEARCH METHODS

2.1. Measures

All measures except control variables were measured on the five-point Likert scale. Respondents were invited to demonstrate their agreement or disagreement on a scale from one (strongly disagree) to five with the items. All the constructs were measured from the already developed and tested measure in another context. However, some items were rephrased to understand better and cover the content of this study.

2.1.1. Perception of organizational politics

Nine items of the Likert scale were employed to measure the perception of organizational politics. Out of nine items, six-item were adopted from the Kacmar and Ferris (1991) scale, and the remaining three items were added to ensure the content validity of the construct in the Nepalese context. These added items are: (1) in this organization, people do what is best for them, not what is best for the organization, (2) here, people are more concentrated to please senior and influential people who can help them, and (3) here, individuals are assaulting each other in the back to look good in front of others. The composite reliability of the conceptual perception of organizational politics was calculated, and .94 was found in this research.

2.1.2. Impression management

Seven items for each measure measured the impression management behavior (i.e., self-promotion

and ingratiation). The scale developed by Bolino and Turnley (1999) was used for five of the seven items for each construction. In addition to Bolino and Turnley's five-item scale, this study has added two items for both constructs (i.e., self-promotion and ingratiation) to ensure content validity in the Nepalese context. Added items for self-promotion are: (1) I make people know that I am competent and intelligent than my co-worker, and (2) I make people know about my connection with an influential person. Similarly, added items for ingratiation are: (1) I agree and confirm for my colleagues' opinions and values so that they accept me, and (2) I do remind and repeat what my colleague likes. These added behaviors are prevalent in the Nepalese organization. In this study, composite reliability was computed and found .91 and .90 for self-promotion and ingratiation, respectively.

2.1.3. Work performance

Work performance was measured based on May et al.'s (2002) six items. A sample item includes: I almost always perform better than what can be characterized as acceptable performance. In this study, the composite reliability of the construct work performance was computed and fund .89.

2.2. Sampling and questionnaire administration

Two sets of questionnaires were designed (Set-A and Set-B). Set-A was designed to measure the employees' work performance by their supervisors. Set-B was designed to measure the employees' perception of organizational politics, self-promotion, and ingratiation by concerned employees themselves. Altogether 1,200 questionnaires were distributed as per the researchers' convenience, but only 851 (71%) set the pair-matched questionnaires (matching supervisor and subordinates) were returned. Out of the pair-matched questionnaires, 725 (60.42% of the distributed questionnaires) were retained for analysis to reach an acceptable measurement model.

2.3. Common method variance

As Podsakoff et al. (2003) suggested, researchers have implemented three essential strategies to avoid the problem of common method bias like (1)

predictor variable and dependent variables were measured from different sources. The respondent rated perception of organizational politics and management of impressions (self-promotion and ingratiation). However, work performance was rated by the respondent's immediate supervisors, (2) around 24% (seven items) of the questionnaire were reverse-scored to decrease the possible impacts of response pattern biases by integrating adverse expressed items in the questionnaire, and (3) questions measuring different variables (e.g., independent, moderating, and dependent) were offset so that respondents could not recognize the corresponding constructs of the items.

Alongside these remedial measures, the current study has tested Harman's one-factor test to know the degree of common method bias. According to Podsakoff et al. (2003), Harman's one-factor or single-factor test is one of the most widely used techniques used by researchers to measure the problem of common method variance. Researchers may conclude that the bias is serious when the analysis (from Harman's one-factor test) retains only one factor or a single factor explains most covariance (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The analysis revealed that four-factor models explained only 29.19% of the variance when loaded on a single factor in the current study. Suppose the single factor explains less than 50% of the variance. In that case, the result shows that the bias is not so severe as to make the analysis invalid even though it may still slightly inflate or deflate regression coefficients (Cho & Lee, 2012).

2.4. Measurement model

Confirmatory factor analysis was used to analyze Moment Structures (AMOS) version 24 before analyzing the data. A total of 29 measuring items, in the first stage, were loaded for the corresponding four latent constructs (perception of organizational politics, self-promotion, ingratiation, and work performance). From the 29 measuring items, one item of self-promotion and another item of ingratiation were removed from the measurement model because they were loading less than .60 (Awang, 2015) in their corresponding latent construct. Removed measuring items were 'I make people know that I am competent and intelligent than my co-worker from self-promotion,

and 'I do remind and repeat what my colleague like' from ingratiation. In the second phase, from the modification indices, five pairs of error terms within respective latent constructs showed the covariance error term more than .30 (Awang, 2015) were correlated to set as a free parameter estimate. Finally, a good model fit index was achieved as a result (CMIN/DF = 2.96, DF = 308, CFI = .95, NFI = .94, RMSEA =.05, and Pclose = .20).

2.5. Validity

In this study, convergent and divergent validity were measured. The computed result showed that there was no disquiet of convergent validity as all the items in a measurement model were statistically significant (Awang, 2015), and Average Variance Extraction (AVE) for every latent construct was greater than .50 (Awang, 2015; Hair et al., 2010). Similarly, there was no concern of divergent validity because the Maximum Shared Variance (MSV) was measured less than Average Variance Extraction (AVE) in every case (Hair et al., 2010), and the square root of AVE was higher than the inter-construct correlation of corresponding factor (Gaskin & Lim, 2016).

2.6. Data analysis

Firstly, before employing factor analysis, incomplete respondents, unengaged respondents, and outlier data (having P1 values of Mahalanobis d-squared less than .05) (Gaskin, 2011) were removed. Secondly, confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was employed to ensure the goodness of fit index and the data's reliability and validity. Subsequently, to compare the CFA factor retention with factor loaded from Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), an EFA was employed. Factor retention from CFA and factor loading from EFA confirmed the items of each construct. Consequently, the goodness of fit index confirmed that collected and refined data were well fitted with a measurement model; therefore, factors were imputed from latent construct to observed variable (Gaskin, 2012) for further analysis. Lastly, causal relationships from inferential statistics were calculated. Hierarchical Regression Model (HRM), as the guidelines provided by Baron and Kenny (1986), has been estimated to measure the moderating (interactive) effect of perception of or-

ganizational politics and impression management (self-promotion and ingratiation) on employees' work performance.

2.7. Control variables

Demographic variables like gender, age, tenure, unionization, union's membership, and designation of the employees have included as control variables in this study because of demographic variables effect on the perception of organizational politics (Ferris et al., 1996; Ferris & Kacmar, 1992; Valle & Perrewe, 2000).

3. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

As depicted in Step 2 of Model 1 in Table 1, the coefficient of perception of organizational politics was negatively and statistically significantly associated ($B = -.31$, $p < .01$, $\Delta R^2 = .13$) with employees work performance after controlling the effect of demographic variables, self-promotion and interactive impact of self-promotion and perception of organizational politics. Likewise, as shown in Step 2 of Model 2 in Table 1, again, the coefficient of percep-

tion of organizational politics was negatively and statistically significantly associated ($B = -.39$, $p < .01$, $\Delta R^2 = .13$) with employees work performance after controlling the effect of demographic variables, ingratiation, and interactive effect of ingratiation and perception of organizational politics. Hence, there was a negative impact of employees' perception of organizational politics on their work performance (*H1* is supported). This means that an increase in employees' perception of organizational politics causes a decrease in their work performance or decreased organizational politics, causing increased work performance.

As presented in Step 4 of Model 1 in Table 1, the coefficient of the interactive effect of perception of organizational politics and self-promotion to predict work performance was significantly ($B = .25$, $p < .01$, $\Delta R^2 = .12$) associated. Hence, employees' self-promotion moderated the relationship between their perceptions of organizational politics and work performance (*H2* is supported, with self-promotion as a impression management). Likewise, as depicted in Step 4 of Model 2 in Table 1, the coefficient of the interactive effect of perception of organizational politics and ingratiation to predict work performance was statistically and

Table 1. Regression result testing direct and moderating effects: association of perception of organizational politics, self-promotion, and ingratiation with work performance

Independent variables	Dependent variable: work performance	
	Model 1	Model 2
Step 1: Demographic control variables		
Gender	−.12**	−.05
Age	−.06	−.08*
Tenure	.01	.07
Unionization	.12*	.09*
Membership	−.08**	−.05
Designation	−.06*	−.04
ΔR^2	.08**	.08**
Step 2: Main effect		
Perception of organizational politics	−.31**	−.39**
ΔR^2	.13**	.13**
Step 3: Main effect		
Self-promotion	.31**	
Ingratiation		.29**
ΔR^2	.16**	.17**
Step 4: Interactive effect		
Perception of organizational politics x Self-promotion	.25**	
Perception of organizational politics x Ingratiation		.23**
ΔR^2	.12**	.11**

Note: **, *, the mean difference is significant at the .01 and .05 levels, respectively.

significantly ($B = .23$, $p < .01$, $\Delta R^2 = .11$) associated. Hence, employees' ingratiation moderated the relationship between their perceptions of organizational politics and work performance (*H2* is supported, with ingratiation as a impression management).

The interactive effect of organizational politics perception and impression management (self-promotion and ingratiation) on work performance was presented in a graph, as suggested by Aiken and West (1991), to see the precise form of moderation under different situations. Graphic presentation of interactive effects of perception of organizational politics and self-promotion to predict the work performance has been shown in Figure 1. Figure 1 shows that the graphs representing the high, medium, and low self-promotion levels were not parallel and were sloped negatively. Self-promotion representing graphs were becoming less steep with an increase in self-promotion (low to high), which means self-promotion has buffering moderation in the relationships between the perception of organizational politics and work performance.

The graph representing a low value of self-promotion was comparatively steeper than both mid-value and low-value representing graphs. This showed a relatively strong negative prediction of organizational politics' perception of employees' work performance with a low self-promotion level. In opposite order, there was a relatively weak negative prediction of perception of organizational politics on the work performance of those employees who had a high level of self-promotion. Likewise, for the employees who perceived a low level of organ-

izational policies, for them significantly, it does not matter whether self-promotion was either low, medium, or high. The mitigating result was nearly the same. However, with the increasing level of perception of organizational politics from low to high, differences in mitigating power of the low, medium, and high levels of self-promotion were increasing. Moreover, as depicted in Figure 1, at a fixed point of perception of organizational politics (e.g., high level), as the level of self-promotion increased, the effect of the perception of organizational politics on work performance was increased.

Graphic presentation of interactive effects of perception of organizational politics and ingratiation to predict the work performance has been shown in Figure 2. As shown in Figure 2, graphs representing the high, medium, and low levels of ingratiation were not parallel and were sloped negatively. Ingratiation representing graphs is becoming less steep with an increase in the level of ingratiation (low to high), which means ingratiation has buffering moderation in the relationships between the perception of organizational politics and work performance.

The graph representing a low value of ingratiation was comparatively steeper than both medium value and low value representing graphs. This showed a relatively strong adverse prediction of organizational politics perception on employees' job performance with a low level of ingratiation. In opposite order, there was a relatively weak negative prediction of perception of organizational politics on the work performance of those employees who had a high level of ingratiation. Likewise, for the
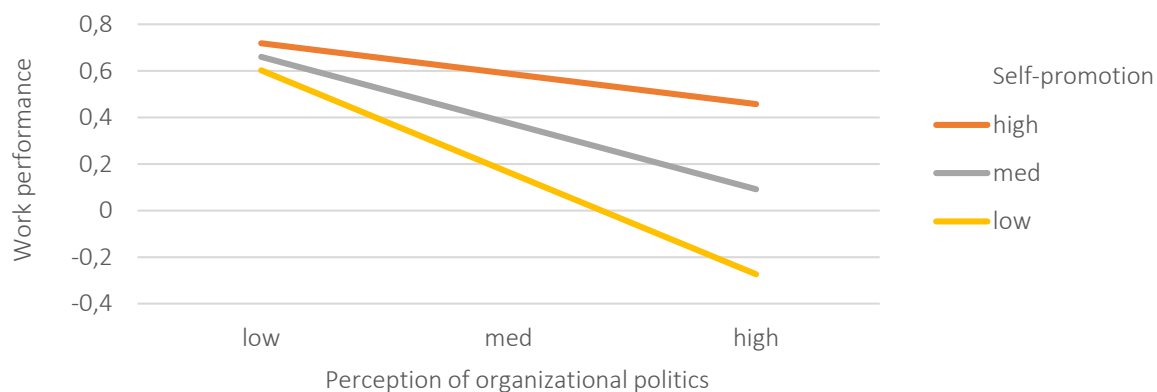

Figure 1. Interactive effect of perception of organizational politics and self-promotion on work performance
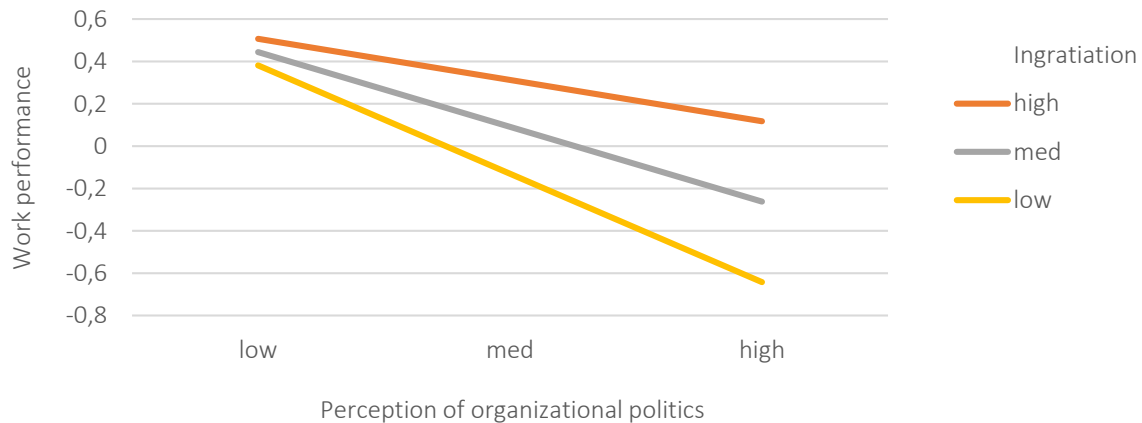
Figure 2. Interactive effect of perception of organizational politics and ingratiation on work performance

employees who perceived a low level of organizational polities, for them significantly, it does not matter whether ingratiation was either low, medium, or high. The mitigating result was nearly the same. However, with the increasing level of perception of organizational politics from low to high, differences in mitigating power of the low, medium, and high levels of ingratiation were increasing. Moreover, as depicted in Figure 2, at a fixed point of perception of organizational politics (e.g., high level), as the level of ingratiation increased, the effect of organizational politics on work performance was increased.

4. DISCUSSION

This study tested a significant negative impact on the work performance of the perception of organizational politics. This means an increase in employees' perception of organizational politics causes to decrease in their work performance. The results of this research are in line with the results of Kacmar et al. (1999), Kumar and Ghadially (1989), and Vigoda (2000), etc. However, this study's finding contradicts the result of Hochwarter et al. (2006) who concluded that the perception of organizational politics has a positive impact on job performance. Moreover, Randall et al. (1999) have found an insignificant relationship between organizational politics perceptions and employee outcomes.

Although the meta-analysis of Miller et al. (2008) reported correlations between the perception of

organizational politics and job performance ranging from negative −.32 to positive.12, the negative impact was concluded by a large number of prior empirical evidence. However, few studies tested the positive impact of perception of organizational politics of work performance, and reasonable causes of such finding could be other organizational factors that significantly affect perception of organizational politics on work performance. For example, the interactive effect of the transformational leadership style with the perception of organizational politics to predict work performance may be optimistic. Transformational leaders are concerned with the challenges that followers face in performing their daily tasks (Avolio, 1999). Transformational leaders cooperate with their subordinates in explaining the process of organizational decision-making and the impacts of such decisions (Syrek et al., 2013). Employees can get explanations of why the organization is engaged in political decision-making in interactions with the transformational leader (Ferris & Hochwarter, 2011). Therefore, employees feel that their manager and the company are generally concerned with their well-being (Ghosh et al., 2014). Therefore, as suggested by the theory of social exchange (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005), employees do better work.

As expected, impression management's moderating effect (self-promotion and ingratiation) in the relationship between perception of organizational politics and work performance has been tested and found in this research. This implies that organizational politics' direct impact on work per-

formance changes due to employees' impression management. In other words, the direct effect of organizational politics perception on work performance will be affected when organizational politics perception interacts with employees' impression management.

In this study, impression management moderation (self-promotion and ingratiation) was buffering. Such findings are partially consistent (or inconsistent) with few prior studies. For example, Vigoda and Cohen (2002) stated that employees effectively involved in political strategies perceive organizational politics as less harmful and eventually contribute to positive impacts for both the employee and the organization. Harrell-Cook et al. (1999) have shown the significant interactive effect of perception of organizational politics and self-promotion on job satisfaction and satisfaction with supervisors, but the insignificant interactive effect on turnover intention. Besides, Harrell-Cook et al. (1999) noted the significant effect of the perception of organizational politics on supervisor satisfaction, but the interactive effect of ingratiation and perceived organizational politics had an insignificant effect on job satisfaction and turnover intent.

Similarly, Valle and Perrewe (2000) have tested that the use of self-protective political tactics exacerbates the harmful effect of organizational politics perception on turnover intent, job satisfaction, and work stress. However, Valle and Perrewe (2000) tested that proactive behavior as a moderator in the relationship between organizational politics perception and employee outcomes (job satisfaction, job stress, and turnover intention) was insignificant. Hochwarter (2003) also assured that staff engaged in political activities had reported higher job satisfaction levels and dedication when the work environment was perceived as highly political.

The moderating effects (self-promotion and ingratiation) of impression management in the relationship between organizational politics perception and work performance are not sufficiently studied in different contexts, and the empirical evidence available does not show absolute consistent results. Impression management (self-promotion and ingratiation) has, as hypothesized, worked as an an-

tidote to the harmful effect of organizational politics perception on work performance. In terms of moderation, this study's fundamental concept was the perceived control of employees and understanding of their working environments that translate stressor (e.g., politics) into possibilities or threats and thus moderate the relationship between the results of stressors (Ferris et al., 1996). Here, understanding is knowledge about the causes of significant events in the workplace (Sutton & Kahn, 1986). This applies to the degree to which one understands why and how things happen the way they do (Ferris et al., 1989). Likewise, perceived control represents the "…extent to which one believes they can exercise influence over people and condition, or more generally, over one's relevant environment" (Ferris et al., 1989, p. 162). Therefore, control reflects the degree to which individuals can influence their environment (Ferris et al., 1996). These two concepts are distinct but overlapped because, if one develops the understanding of the how and why of organization politics occurring in their workplace, probably they could exercise some control over both political process and outcomes (Ferris et al., 1989). If staff perceive their work environment more politically and perceive little or no understanding or control of the process, Ferris et al. have stated that politics could be interpreted as a threat and would be expected to lead to more negative results. If employees understand the causes and consequences of political behavior, they feel that a high degree of control over the process and results, more positive results should result.

The concept of understanding and control as a moderator in the relationship of perceived organizational politics to employee outcomes has been empirically tested in different contexts, including this study. In this study, the employee has translated their stress from perceived organizational politics as opportunities that contributed to mitigate the detrimental effect on work performance. This means due to impression management (self-promotion and ingratiation), the employee understands their workplace circumstances accurately (causes and consequences of political happenings) and can control the situation for their interest (process and outcomes) or neutralize others' self-serving behavior, and ultimately contribute to mitigating the detrimental effect of perception of organi-

zational politics on work performance. Hence, the degree of perception of control and understanding due to impression management (self-promotion and ingratiation) could be the possible causes for mitigating the detrimental effect of perceived organizational politics work performance.

Interactions were plotted in the graph using the procedure outlined by J. Cohen and P. Cohen (1983) and Aiken and West (1991) to examine the nature and form of the interaction more closely. Graphs (Figure 1 and Figure 2) revealed the precise form of impression management's buffering moderation (self-promotion and ingratiation) in the relationship between perception of organizational politics and work performance. Regarding the buffering moderation, the study's first novel finding was the degree and direction of association of perception of organizational politics and work performance under different levels of impression management (self-promotion and ingratiation). For example, a relatively strong negative prediction of perception of organizational politics on work performance is for those employees who had a low level of impression management (self-promotion and ingratiation) and vice versa. This means employees good in impression management are less suffered from their perceived political working environment than their co-workers who cannot exhibit good impression management.

Regarding buffering moderation, the second novel finding of the study is the mitigating strength of impression management (self-promotion and ingratiation) under various levels of perception of organizational politics. This study revealed employees who perceive a low level of organizational politics; for them, the impact of perception of organizational politics on work performance were similar whether their impression management (self-promotion and ingratiation) are low, medium, or high. However, with the increasing level of perception of organizational politics from low to high, differences of mitigating power of the low, medium, and high-level impression management (self-promotion and ingratiation) were increasing. This means that at lower levels of perception of organizational politics, an increase in impression management (low to high) as mediators does not contribute to the detrimental effect of perception of organizational politics on work performance. However, with the increase in perception of organizational politics from low to high, impression management (low to high) contributes to a decrease in work performance's marginal effect.

Regarding the buffering moderation, the third novel finding was that at a given (i.e., highest level) point of perception of organizational politics, the impact of perception of organizational politics on work performance increased as impression management (self-promotion and ingratiation). This means an employee who perceives their workplace as highly political will increase their impression management (self-promotion and ingratiation) cause to increase their performance.

CONCLUSION

This research showed that employees' work performance was negatively affected by the perception of organizational politics. It indicates that an organization can increase employees' work performance by decreasing their perception of organizational politics. Therefore, to minimize organizational politics's perception, an organization can intervene in its sources. For example, such intervention on sources could be: making effective formal communication system, employee's involvement in decision making, clarity of role and responsibility among employees, inter-group cooperation, support and trust of senior management, fairness in reward and punishment (Parker et al., 1995), minimizing political behavior of a co-worker, supervisor, subordinates, and executives (Hill et al., 2016). Likewise, in this study, it was proved that impression management (self-promotion and ingratiation) mitigated the detrimental effect of perception of organizational politics on work performance. Therefore, an organization can invest (e.g., for training) to create and enhance employees' impression management (self-promotion and ingratiation) to be cured of the detrimental impact generated from perceived organizational politics on work performance. Moreover, this impression management's mitigating strength (self-promotion and ingratiation) for the detrimental effect of perception of organizational politics on work performance was

relatively strong for employees with a high level of perception of organizational politics. Increasing impression management (self-promotion and ingratiation) means the marginal benefit is more remarkable for high politics perceiver than low perceiver. Therefore, an organization can increase their impression management (self-promotion and ingratiation), focusing on high organizational politics perceiver than low perceiver. Consequently, organizations enjoy the more significant marginal benefit to increase employees' performance by intervening in their impression management (self-promotion and ingratiation).

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceptualization: Ganesh Bhattarai.
Data curation: Ganesh Bhattarai.
Formal analysis: Ganesh Bhattarai.
Funding acquisition: Ganesh Bhattarai.
Investigation: Ganesh Bhattarai.
Methodology: Ganesh Bhattarai.
Project administration: Ganesh Bhattarai.
Resources: Ganesh Bhattarai.
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