

Research Paper

The Relationship between Perceived Organizational Politics, Organizational Citizenship Behaviour, and Employee Engagement

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ABSTRACT

In organisational contexts, employee engagement, organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB), and perceived organisational politics (POP) are factors that affect employee performance. Understanding the links between these elements is critical for optimising organisational performance. The objective of this research was to examine the link between employees' perceptions of organisational politics, organisational citizenship behaviour, and employee engagement. The research employed a correlational methodology and gathered data from 150 employees. Stepwise linear regression and Pearson correlation were used to analyse the data. POP and engagement showed a negative link, while OCB and engagement showed a significant positive correlation. Employee engagement was significantly predicted by POP and OCB dimensions, according to regression analysis.

Keywords: *Perceived Organisational Politics, Organisational Citizenship Behaviour, Employee Engagement*

An organisation is a complex blend of people and policies that interact in dynamic ways. One consequence of this interaction of different people is Organisational Politics. The term 'organisational politics', often known as workplace politics or office politics, refers to each employee's agenda within an organisation and the activities they engage in to acquire, increase, and wield authority and resources to achieve a desired result. Ferris et al. (2018) similarly explain OP as "a social control mechanism in which action is strategically engineered to maximise short-term or long-term self-interest."

Political behaviour in an organisation manifest in various ways. It may include pressure to conform, restricted self-expression, and irregularities in organisational policies, such as favouritism and nepotism. Additionally, influential groups may prioritize their own interests, shaping workplace dynamics to their advantage.

People's opinions regarding the political situation of their workplace have an impact on how they do their job responsibilities. Employee productivity, satisfaction, and intention to leave are all impacted by these beliefs, which also affect how workers feel about their employer, supervisor, and coworkers (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992).

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Another important aspect of dynamic workplaces is the concept of Organisational Citizenship Behaviour. OCB as defined by Paul E. Spector refers to actions taken outside of the scope of one's job to benefit organisations and individuals within them. This can include taking time to assist a colleague, taking extra steps to benefit the organization etc.

Organ (1983) was one of the first to properly describe Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB), describing it as voluntary, discretionary behaviours that are not formally mandated by an organisation but contribute to its overall success. These actions are motivated by an employee's desire to help coworkers, enhance the workplace, and increase organisational success rather than being specifically rewarded or enforced.

To put it simply, OCB includes activities that are motivated by a person's initiative rather than by obligation and go beyond official job duties.

Organizational citizenship behaviour consists of many dimensions within it. Different authors have identified various dimensions. One of the classifications of Organisational Citizenship behaviour is based on who benefits from the helpful behaviour--the organisation or the individual.

- **"OCBO"** refers to employees' voluntary actions that are done for the organization's benefit, such as helping out other employees or taking part in voluntary projects.
- **"OCBI" or "OCBP"** refers to voluntary helpful behaviours towards coworkers or juniors, such as aiding a coworker who has a lot of remaining work or giving lunch to a coworker, among other things.

Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) is essential for improving employee satisfaction and workplace efficiency. According to research, OCB supports both individual professional development and organisational success.

According to Podsakoff et al. (2009) OCB is positively related to job performance as well as significantly lowers turnover intentions and actual turnover. They also identified that it also reduces employee absenteeism and OCBs were found to be positively associated to a range of organisational success indicators (e.g., productivity, efficiency, and profitability).

The term "Employee Engagement" refers to the degree of passion and commitment that employee has for their work. Engaged workers feel that their efforts have an impact and are concerned about both their work and the company's performance.

Employee engagement has been defined by various researches using different models and dimensions. Some of the most common models that are used to define employee engagement are: Kahn's (1990) Personal Engagement Theory: Employee engagement was first defined by Kahn (1990) as the degree to which workers bring their entire selves—emotionally, cognitively, and physically—to their jobs.

Schaufeli et al. (2002) defined engagement as a positive, satisfying work-related state of mind which is characterized by 3 dimensions- Vigor, dedication, and absorption. This model is commonly used in research and is the theoretical basis of the Utrecht Work engagement scale, which is also been utilised in this study.

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Numerous organisational outcomes, including performance, retention, customer happiness, and overall business success, are directly and significantly impacted by employee engagement. Engaged employees are more dedicated, effective, and inclined to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to benefit the company.

The current study is significant because it examines the intricate interaction among employee engagement, organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB), and perception of organisational politics (POP). Knowing how these elements interact is essential for both organisations and employees in the modern workplace, where people must continuously navigate political relations. In India, where hierarchical structures, intricate interpersonal relationships, and changing work environments frequently impact organisational dynamics, this research is also quite valuable.

This study seeks to shed light on how employees view and react to the informal power structures and political behaviours that exist in workplaces by examining the relationship between employee engagement, organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB), and perceptions of organisational politics.

Organisations can lessen the detrimental effects of politics on morale and productivity by recognising these dynamics and finding strategies to promote a more cooperative and engaged workforce. This can help create more successful management techniques that boost employee performance and workplace culture.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Perceived organisational Politics and Employee Engagement

Jose and Kushwaha (2024) investigated the effect of perceived organisational politics (POP) on employee engagement, using emotional intelligence as a mediator. The results showed that POP has a detrimental effect on employee engagement by fostering a workplace where biases in decision-making, power abuse, and credibility problems are common. This study adds to our understanding of how workplace politics affect employee engagement and behaviour.

Fahmy et al. (2024) investigated the relationship between organisational politics perception (OPP) and work engagement (WE) in hotels and travel agencies, with a focus on the function of social capital. The study concluded that OPP has a negative impact on WE and causes disengagement. SC, on the other hand, mitigates the harm that OPP does to WE. Furthermore, SC itself has a positive impact on WE and a negative impact on OPP, indicating that it may help create a more engaging work environment.

Su and Xie (2023) investigated the impact of perceived organisational politics on work engagement, focussing on the Doctrine of the Mean (DoM), a Confucian tenet that promotes moderation and balance. The findings reveal that perceptions of organisational politics have a negative impact on work engagement. Relatively less of a negative impact is felt by recently hired staff members and those 50 and older who are approaching retirement. Employees between the ages of 30 and 50, on the other hand, exhibit a marked decrease in work engagement and are considerably more impacted by organisational politics.

Carvalho Chinelato et al. (2021) conducted a cross-level analysis to investigate the relationship between perceptions of organisational politics, psychological safety climate, and

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work engagement. The study discovered that individual perceptions of organisational politics significantly impact work engagement. Employees' perceptions of high levels of organisational politics reduce the benefits of a supportive organisational climate, which normally increases engagement.

Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) and Employee Engagement

Kanchana (2024) investigates the factors that affect employee engagement and how they affect millennial workers' intention to stay and organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) in Chennai's private sector banks. Employee engagement, OCB, and intention to stay are significantly positively correlated, according to the study. Millennial employees in banks report higher levels of engagement and OCB in comparison to peers.

Kumara and Krshunan (2024) explored the relationship between organizational sustainability practices, employee engagement, and organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB). According to the study, employee engagement is crucial for promoting OCB since engaged workers are more inclined to engage in discretionary workplace behaviours outside of their designated job duties. According to these results, companies looking to improve OCB should concentrate on engagement-driven projects, especially those that address environmental sustainability, gender equality, and job security.

Khairy et al. (2023) explored how workplace friendship (WF), organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB), employee engagement (EE), and internal branding (IB) interact in the hotel sector. The results show that there are significant relationships between OCB, EE, WF, and IB. Furthermore, the link between OCB and EE is moderated by WF.

Organizational Politics and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB)

Subongkod et al. (2024) examine the connection between organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) and organisational politics (OP). The results show that organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB-O) and behaviour towards people (OCB-I) are negatively correlated with OP. This implies that OP reduces workers' desire to take part in voluntary actions that are helpful to their company or coworkers.

Khan et al. (2024) explored the relationship between perceived organisational politics, work disengagement, and helping behaviours, focussing on the moderating influence of organisational virtuousness. The results show that, through the mediating effect of disengagement, perceived organisational politics considerably decreases helpful behaviours. However, it was discovered that organisational virtuousness lessened this detrimental effect by lowering disengagement levels and the correlation between helping behaviours and perceived organisational politics.

Kaur and Kang (2022) explored the relationship between the perception of organizational politics (POP) and organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) through the lens of conservation of resource (COR) theory. Their study found a negative association between POP and different facets of OCB, including behaviours directed at co-workers (OCBI), the organization (OCBO), and customers (OCBC). However, the study highlighted that political skill moderated this relationship, reducing the negative impact of POP on OCB.

Al-Madadha et al. (2021) investigated how organisational culture influences organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) while accounting for the detrimental impact of perceived

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organisational politics. Their research discovered that workplace culture influences how workers perceive political behaviour in organisations. This implies that a bad political environment may make workers less inclined to go above and beyond the call of duty. These results add to the increasing body of research on the negative impacts of organisational politics.

METHODOLOGY

Aim and Objectives

The goal of this research is to investigate the relationship among the variables Perception of organisational Politics (POP), Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) and Employee Engagement. They study has the following objectives:

- To explore the relationship between perceptions of organisational politics (POP) and employee engagement in organisational settings.
- To investigate the relationship between Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) and Employee Engagement to analyse the impact of voluntary workplace behaviours on engagement levels.
- To Determine whether the dimensions of Perceived Organisational Politics (POP) and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) are significantly related to employee engagement.
- To assess if gender and age influence or moderate the relationships among POP, OCB, and employee engagement.

Hypotheses

- **H0:** There is no significant correlation among Perceived Organizational Politics (POP), and Employee Engagement.
- **H02:** There is no significant correlation among Organisational Citizenship behaviour (OCB), and Employee Engagement
- **H03:** Age and gender do not significantly influence the correlations between POP, OCB, and Employee Engagement.

Variables

- **IVs:** Perception of Organizational Politics (POP) & Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB)
- **DV:** Employee Engagement

Research Design

The study employed a quantitative research methodology that involved collecting and analysing numerical data that can be measured. Statistical analysis techniques were used to carry out the analysis. The main objective of the study was to establish a connection between the Independent and Dependent variables; thus, the Correlation research method was deemed appropriate. To further the analysis process regression analysis was also run on the variables.

Sample

A sample of 150 people, including 75 men and 75 women who worked for a variety of organisations and sectors, comprised this study. To ensure that everyone had an equal chance of taking part in the study, the sample was chosen using an easy-to-understand method of random sampling. The participants' ages ranged from 23 to 55 (M = 34.473, SD

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= 8.68), and their years of work experience ranged from 6 months to 35 Years ($M = 8.38$, $SD = 7.53$).

Tools used

- 1. The Perception of Politics Scale (POP):** To examine POP, The Perception of Politics scale by Kacmar & Carlson was used. The scale has a total of 15 items and was scored using a 5-point Likert rating scale. The scale measured three dimensions of POP- “Go along to get ahead”, “General political behaviour” and “Pay and promotion policies”. The scale has a Composite reliability of $\alpha = .87$ as reported by Kacmar and Ferris. For this particular study, Cronbach Alpha was calculated to establish reliability, and the value came out to be .764 which is deemed as Acceptable.
- 2. Organizational Citizenship Behavior Checklist (OCB-C):** To measure Organisational Citizenship Behaviour, the tool developed by Paul E. Spector was utilized. The scale consists of 20 items which measure discretionary behaviors using a 5-point Likert scale. The scale measures 2 dimensions – Acts towards the organisation or “OCBO” and towards the coworkers or individuals “OCBP”. The scale is highly reliable; Fox et al. (2009) showed a reliability coefficient of .89 and .94 for two self-report samples. The Cronbach alpha statistic for the current sample came out to be .89.
- 3. The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9):** Employee engagement was measured using the UWES- 9 developed by Schaufeli and Bakker. The 9-item version of the scale was used and it measures 3 subdimensions namely -Vigor, Dedication, and Absorption. UWES-9 has a good level of reliability with the Cronbach alpha value range of .89-.97. The current Cronbach Alpha statistic was .83.

Procedure

The study began with a review of literature on the variables and by refining the research objectives. Working professionals in India were invited to complete standardized instruments measuring the three variables. Participants received brief instructions, provided informed consent in line with APA (2017) guidelines, and were assured of confidentiality and the option to withdraw at any time. All responses were checked for completeness, scored according to each scale’s guidelines, and prepared for analysis. The final dataset was cleaned, coded, and analysed using SPSS.

Statistical Analysis

The data was analysed using SPSS (Version 29). Pearson’s product moment correlation coefficient was used to examine the relationships among perceived organizational politics (POP), organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB), and employee engagement. Stepwise linear regression was then performed to identify the extent to which the dimensions of POP and OCB predicted employee engagement. To explore demographic influences, separate regression analyses were conducted for gender to assess potential variations in predictive associations. Additionally, three age-based models (23–30, 31–40, and 41–55) were run to evaluate differences in how POP and OCB influenced employee engagement across age groups

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to APA’s ethical standards. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, with data kept secure and accessible only to the researchers. Participants were debriefed and

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offered the option to receive study findings.

RESULTS

Table 1 Correlation between Perception of Organisational Politics and Employee Engagement among employees

		N=150	
		Total POP	Total Engagement
Total POP	Pearson Correlation	1	-.423**
Total Engagement	Pearson Correlation	-.423**	1

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

According to Table 1, The Pearson Product correlation of POP and Employee Engagement among employees was found to be moderately negative and statistically significant. ($r = -.423, p < .01$). As a result, H_0 is rejected since a rise in employees' perceptions of organisational politics (POP) would lead to a decrease in employee engagement, and vice versa.

Table 2 Correlation between Organizational citizenship behaviour and Employee Engagement among employees.

		N=150	
		Total OCB	Total Engagement
Total OCB	Pearson Correlation	1	.230**
Total Engagement	Pearson Correlation	.230**	1

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

According to Table 2, The Pearson Product correlation between OCB and Employee Engagement among employees was found to be weakly positive and statistically significant. ($r = .230, p < .01$). This suggests that as OCB increases, Employee Engagement also tends to increase, although the relationship is weak. Hence H_{02} is rejected since an increase in organizational citizenship behaviour among the employees would lead to an increase in employee engagement and vice versa.

Table 3 Overall regression of factors of Perception of organisational politics with employee engagement

Factors of POP	Standardized Beta	Coefficients	R Square	Sig.
Factor 2 – Go Along to Get Ahead	-.455		.207	<.001

A stepwise regression showed only One out of the 3 factors of the independent variable POP i.e. Factor 2 that is “go along to get ahead” was retained as a significant predictor of Employee Engagement ($F(1, 149) = 38.628, p < .001$). Moreover $R^2 = .207$ depicts that Factor 2 explains 20.7% of the variance in employee engagement.

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Table 4 Regression of factors of POP with Engagement on the basis of Age Range

Age Range	Factors of POP	Standardized Coefficients Beta	R Square	Sig.
31-40	Factor 2 – Go Along to Get Ahead	-.448	.201	<.001
41-55	Factor 1 – General political behaviour	.234	.512	<.001
	Factor 2 – Go Along to Get Ahead	-.747		.050

The dimensions of perception of organizational politics were further regressed on the basis of age range. For 31-40 age range Factor 2 was a significant predictor of engagement and explained 20.1% of the variance in employee engagement. For age group 41-55, Factor 1 and Factor 2 were Significant Predictors of employee engagement. 51.2% of the variance in employee engagement is explained by the combination of these two factors of POP for this particular age group.

Table 5 Regression of factors of POP with Engagement on the basis of gender

Factors of POP	Standardized Coefficients Beta		R Square		Sig.
	Men	Women	Men	Women	
Factor 2– Go Along to Get Ahead	-.504	-.409	.254	.167	<.001

Stepwise regression analysis of the factors of perception of organisational politics on the basis of gender revealed that for both men and women factor 2 was the significant predictor of employee engagement levels. For men, 25.4% of the variance in employee engagement is explained by this model. For women 16.7% of the variance in employee engagement levels are explained by the model.

Table 6 Overall regression of factors of organisational citizenship behaviour with employee engagement

Factors of OCB	Standardized Coefficients Beta	R Square	Sig.
OCBO	.305	.093	<.001

A stepwise linear regression revealed “OCBO” dimension of the scale acts as significant predictor of employee engagement where the model explains 9.3% of the variance in employee engagement.

Table 7 Regression of factors of OCB with Engagement on the basis of Age Range

Age Range	Factors of OCB	Standardized Coefficients Beta	R Square	Sig.
31-40	OCBO	.444	.197	<.001
41-55	OCBO	.377	.142	.013

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Further Stepwise regression analysis was conducted to determine the influence of Organizational Citizenship Behaviour dimensions on Employee Engagement across different age groups. For the 23–30 age group, no significant predictors were identified. For the 31–40 age group, “OCBO” was identified as a significant predictor explaining 19.7% of the variance. For the 41–55 age group, “OCBO” was also a significant predictor explaining 14.2% of the variance.

Table 8 Regression of factors of OCB with Engagement on the basis of gender

Factors of OCB	Standardized Coefficients Beta		R Square		Sig.
	Men	Women	Men	Women	
OCBO	-	.389	-	.151	<.001

Regression analysis on the basis of gender revealed for men, there were no significant predictors. For Women “OCBO” acts as a significant predictor of employee engagement. 15.1% of the variance in employee engagement is explained by the model.

DISCUSSION

The aim of this research was identified whether there is correlation among the Perception of Organisational Politics (POP) and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour and Employee Engagement among employees. The study had a null hypothesis that there will be no significant relationship among POP and Engagement of employees of employees as well as OCB and Engagement levels of employees. The study further aimed to understand how the different factors of POP and OCB predict employee engagement as well as understand if gender and age led to any variations in the impact of these factors on Engagement if there are any.

The major findings of the study are:

The first major finding of the study was the identification of correlation between the two variables POP and Employee Engagement which was taken out using Pearson’s correlation coefficient. Table 1 shows that there exists a statistically significant negative correlation among Perception of Organisational Politics and Employee engagement levels. Thus, the Null hypothesis was rejected.

Numerous earlier research has demonstrated that employee perceptions of organisational politics, notably when an employee believes that their organisation and coworkers act politically for their personal gain at the expense of others, result in lower levels of employee engagement.

The present study's findings are consistent with those of Jose and Kushwaha (2024), Su and Xie (2023), Carvalho Chinelato et al. (2021), and Fahmy et al. (2024), among others, who found that employee engagement levels are negatively correlated with perceptions of organisational politics, which in turn causes disengaged employees in an industry or organisation.

The second objective of the study was to evaluate the correlation between the variables OCB and Employee Engagement which was taken out using Pearson’s correlation coefficient. As we can see from Table 2, there exists a statistically significant Positive correlation among

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Organisational Citizenship Behaviours and Employee engagement levels. However, despite being statistically significant this correlation is weak. Thus, the Null hypothesis was rejected.

Additionally, the results of this study are in line with those of earlier research. Kanchana (2024), Kumara and Krshunan (2024), Fahmy et al. (2024), demonstrate a positive association between employee engagement levels and corporate citizenship behaviours.

However, the weak correlation suggests that, in addition to OCB, multiple other mitigating factors influence employee engagement levels. The research by Kumara and Krshunan (2024), supports this. Their research emphasises how organisational sustainability programs, job stability, and gender equality contribute to the OCB- employee engagement relationship. The Third finding was discovered using regression analysis to further understand the specific dimensions of POP and their impact on Engagement levels. Table 3, shows that out of the three factors of POP regressed against Engagement levels, only one factors i.e. Go Along to Get Ahead is a significant Predictor of Employee Engagement levels. 20.7% variance in Engagement levels of the sample is attributed to the go along to get ahead factor of POP.

The Go along to get ahead dimension of Kacmar and Carlson's Perception of Organisational Politics Scale measures how much employees feel under pressure to fit in, keep quiet, or side with influential people in order to further their careers or stay out of trouble. This dimension essentially represents a work environment where political behaviour inhibits free speech, independent thought, and creativity, causing employees to strategically follow the rules rather than question them.

POP dimensions were also assessed on the basis of Age and gender to identify significant predictors of Engagement levels. According to Table 4, There were no significant predictors of Engagement levels in the age range 23-30 i.e.: Individuals in their early stages of career. However, for the age range of 31-40 and 41-55 The factors go along to get ahead and General political behaviour and go along to get ahead respectively are significant predictors of Engagement levels of Mid-career and Late career Employees.

This is consistent with a prior study by Su and Xie (2023) that found that newly hired employees, or those in the early career age group, experience less of a negative impact of POP. In contrast, employees between the ages of 30 and 50 show a marked decline in work engagement and are significantly more impacted by organisational politics.

Similarly, according to Table 5, on the basis of Gender the factor Go along to get ahead is a significant predictor of Engagement Levels in both Males and Females.

The study also regressed the two factors of OCB to identify significant predictors of Engagement Levels. Table 6 shows that only the factor OCBO i.e.: Discretionary behaviours of the employees towards their organisation is a significant predictor of their engagement levels in the entire sample. It accounts for 9.3% of change in the Regression of OCB factors carried out on the basis of Age Range showed interesting results as Table 7 shows similar to POP, there is no significant predictors for the 23-30 range. However, for the Mid Career and Late career category OCBO is a significant predictor of the variance in Engagement levels.

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Another interesting finding of the study on the basis of gender reveals that for men there was no significant predictors however for women OCBO presents itself as a significant predictor of employee engagement levels. This finding is consistent with Ariani (2013), who reported that women tend to exhibit higher levels of Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) compared to men. This difference in OCB levels may help explain why male employees did not exhibit any OCB dimension as significant predictors.

These findings suggest that employees are more inclined to go the extra mile for their organization as a whole (OCBO) rather than engaging in discretionary behaviours that specifically benefit individuals (OCBP). This highlights the greater impact of organizational-focused citizenship behaviours on workplace dynamics compared to person-focused acts of kindness or support.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study demonstrates a significant negative relationship between perceptions of organisational politics and levels of employee engagement. Employee engagement levels and organisational citizenship behaviour are positively correlated. This study contributes to the growing literature for both companies and people, and it asks for future research to determine how to eliminate politics inside a company and develop a culture of helping behaviours in order to improve engagement.

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Conflict of Interest

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