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Differences in Perception on Organizational Politics among Male and Female Employees: A Case Study of a Public Institute

Pawani Dhungana[1], ⓘ **Bibhav Adhikari[2],** ⓘ **Namita Subedi[3]**

[1,2,3]Little Angels' College of Management, Kathmandu University

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ABSTRACT

Organizational politics refers to activities aimed at using influence tactics to serve personal or organizational interests, often perceived subjectively by individuals within a workplace. This study investigates the differences in perceptions of organizational politics between male and female employees at the Nepal Electricity Authority, Chabahil branch. Utilizing a quantitative descriptive methodology, data were collected via a Likert scale questionnaire distributed to all 45 employees. The research focuses on understanding how different factors—specifically relationships, communication, decisions, and resources—are perceived in terms of organizational politics. Results indicate a significant disparity in perception: 70% of male employees reported high levels of perceived organizational politics, compared to only 8% of female employees. Among the variables assessed, decision-making was identified as the most politicized aspect, while resources were perceived as the least politicized. These findings highlight the need for organizations to address gender disparities in perceptions of politics, which could inform strategies to enhance employee satisfaction and performance. The insights gained from this research are intended to guide organizational improvements, ultimately fostering a more equitable and productive work environment.

Keywords: organizational politics, gender differences, perception, Nepal Electricity Authority, decision-making

Introduction

Organizational politics encompasses a range of activities aimed at leveraging influence tactics to advance personal or organizational interests (Jarrett, 2017). Despite women demonstrating comparable performance to men in merit-based evaluations, research indicates that they often struggle more in navigating the political landscape of organizations (Eagly et al., 2002; Lyness & Thompson, 2000). As the presence of women in the workforce has increased, their effectiveness in senior roles has been affirmed, although they may employ different strategies to achieve similar outcomes (Chadwick, 2019).The inevitability of organizational politics is underscored by its role in resource allocation and control, which can lead to self-serving behaviors that impact workplace dynamics (Ferris et al., 2019; Pfeffer, 1981). Such politics can act as stressors, influencing job performance and creating gender-based disparities in perception (Shrestha, 2021; Danish & Bodla, 2008). Factors such as uncertainty in decision-making and competition for

limited resources exacerbate political behaviors (Gotsis & Kortezi, 2010). Furthermore, a lack of integrity in organizational systems contributes to heightened perceptions of politics (Vigoda-Gadot, 2007). This study aims to explore the differences in perceptions of organizational politics between male and female employees, addressing the general objective of understanding these disparities within the context of the Nepal Electricity Authority.

Problem Statement

Organizational politics is an inherent aspect of workplace dynamics that can significantly influence employee behavior, job satisfaction, and overall performance. Despite the increasing presence of women in the workforce and their proven effectiveness in leadership roles, research indicates that they often perceive organizational politics differently than their male counterparts. This disparity in perception can lead to unequal experiences in career advancement and job satisfaction, potentially hindering the overall effectiveness of organizations. At the Nepal Electricity Authority, Chabahil branch, there is a lack of empirical understanding regarding how male and female employees perceive organizational politics. Existing literature suggests that male employees may be more attuned to the political maneuvers within the organization, while female employees may experience a lesser degree of perceived organizational politics. This gap in understanding raises critical questions about the impact of gender on perceptions of workplace politics and the associated implications for employee engagement and performance. The problem is further compounded by the fact that organizational politics can act as a stressor, affecting job performance and employee morale. Therefore, it is essential to investigate the differences in perceptions of organizational politics among male and female employees to identify potential areas for improvement and develop strategies that foster a more equitable work environment. This research aims to fill this gap by exploring these perceptions and their implications for organizational effectiveness.

Research Objective

To determine the level of perception and examine the differences in the factors of organizational politics among male and female employees.

Literature Review

One of the dominant theoretical perspectives in the literature on gender and workplace politics is social role theory, as articulated by Eagly and Karau (2002). This theory posits that men and women are socialized into distinct roles and expectations that shape their behaviors and experiences within the workplace. Complementing this is the social construction of gender theory, proposed by Ridgeway (2011), which asserts that gender differences in the workplace arise from social and cultural processes rather than biological determinism. This framework emphasizes how social interactions and institutional practices reinforce gender roles and stereotypes.

Another significant perspective is the glass ceiling theory, which contends that women encounter invisible barriers that hinder their advancement to top organizational positions. Kanter (1977) highlighted that such barriers often manifest as discrimination and bias, limiting women's opportunities for progression and involvement in decision-making processes.

Additionally, agency theory suggests that self-interested managers (agents) may prioritize their personal goals over those of shareholders (principals) (Eisenhardt, 2018). This concept is particularly relevant in understanding how men and women navigate organizational politics, as men are often stereotyped as more assertive and self-promotional, traits that align with the self-interested behaviors described by agency theory. Consequently, these stereotypes may make men more comfortable engaging in political maneuvering to achieve their objectives (Antill, 2018).

Together, these theories provide a comprehensive framework for analyzing gender dynamics in workplace politics, revealing how socialization, cultural constructs, and systemic barriers shape the experiences of men and women in organizational settings.

Empirical Literature Findings

The following table summarizes key findings from the empirical literature on organizational politics, highlighting the contributions of various studies as well as their identified gaps.

Table 1

Review Table

Title	Author(s)	Year	Findings	Gaps
Through the Labyrinth: The Truth about How Women Become Leaders	Eagly & Carli	2007	The authors argue that gender diversity in leadership is crucial for organizational success and suggest steps organizations can take to support women's leadership development and promote gender equality.	The research and conclusions may not reflect more recent changes in societal attitudes and organizational practices since its publication in 2007.
Employee's Perceptions of Organisational Politics and Stress at Workplace	Danish et al.	2014	The study indicates that organizational politics significantly contribute to workplace stress, particularly in the public sector, and emphasizes the need for organizations to mitigate its negative effects.	The focus is primarily on stress factors rather than the experiences or opinions of employees regarding organizational politics.
Perception of Organizational Politics and its Impact on Job Performance	Shrestha	2021	Findings suggest that organizational politics negatively impact employees' job performance, affective commitment, and job satisfaction.	The cross-sectional design captures only a snapshot in time, limiting the ability to determine causality between perceived politics and job performance.
Investigating Gender Differences in Organizational Politics among Lawyers	Brafford	2019	The study found that women lawyers engage in more networking behavior than men and perceive a more negative organizational climate.	The reliance on self-reported data may introduce bias, affecting the validity of the findings.
Gender in the Labor Market: The Role of Equal Opportunity and Family-Friendly Policies	Doran, Bartel & Walfogel	2016	The findings indicate that equal opportunity policies have contributed to reducing gender inequality in the labor market, while family-friendly policies have had limited impact due to low availability and utilization.	The data primarily derive from the American Time Use Survey and the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997, which may not capture the experiences of older women or those who have exited the workforce.

Title	Author(s)	Year	Findings	Gaps
Politics and Workplace: An Empirical Examination of the Relationship between Perceived Organizational Politics and Work Performance	Bodla & Danish	2017	Perceived organizational politics are negatively correlated with job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job involvement, while positively associated with job stress and turnover intentions.	The sample comprised mid-career employees from business organizations in Pakistan, limiting the generalizability of the findings to other populations, such as younger employees or those in different cultural contexts.
Research on Perceptions of Organizational Politics and its Influence on Employee Silence	Sun &Xia	2018	The study reveals that awareness of organizational politics significantly influences employee silence, job anxiety, and self-protective behaviors.	The reliance on self-reported data may introduce bias due to subjective interpretations and the willingness of respondents to report their perceptions honestly.
Organizational Politics and Employee Behavior: A Comparison between the U.S. and Lebanon	Tlaiss	2012	Findings suggest that male employees are more likely to perceive organizational politics as a positive force, while female employees tend to view it negatively.	The study's focus on Lebanon limits the applicability of the findings to other cultural contexts, particularly those with different organizational dynamics.
The Role of Gender in Organizational Politics: A Review and Research Agenda	Tata & Prasad	2012	The study indicates mixed evidence of gender differences in perceptions of organizational politics, influenced by various factors such as organizational culture and individual characteristics.	The research fails to integrate various theoretical perspectives that could enhance the understanding of gender roles in organizational politics.
Perception of Organizational Politics: A Restricted Nonlinearity Perspective of its Effects on Job Satisfaction and Performance	Ellen et al.	2021	The study finds that low to moderate levels of perceived organizational politics can positively affect job satisfaction and performance, while excessive levels lead to negative outcomes.	The demographic and geographic diversity of the sample may limit the applicability of the findings to other contexts.
Impact of Perceived Organizational Politics on Job Satisfaction: With Reference to BFIs in Kathmandu Valley	Acharya	2021	The research indicates that moderate levels of perceived organizational politics can enhance job satisfaction and performance, but this effect reverses when politics become excessive.	The study does not fully account for various contextual factors that could influence the relationship between organizational politics and job outcomes.

This synthesis of empirical literature underscores the complex interplay between organizational politics and various employee outcomes, while also identifying critical gaps that warrant further investigation.

Methodology

The research employs a quantitative methodology, utilizing a descriptive research design to investigate differences in perceptions of organizational politics between male and female employees at the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA), Chabahil branch. Data collection was facilitated through the administration of questionnaires, employing a survey method to identify patterns and trends in employee perceptions. The study's participants comprised all employees of the NEA Chabahil branch, with a total sample size of 45 employees obtained through a total enumeration method. This approach ensured that data were collected from every employee within the organization. Questionnaires were distributed physically to employees in their offices, containing personal demographic information such as gender, age, job role, and educational background. Additionally, the questionnaires included a series of Likert scale questions designed to assess perceptions of organizational politics, allowing respondents to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement on a five-point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring their voluntary participation. Data collected from the surveys were coded numerically and analyzed using various descriptive statistics, including mean, standard deviation, Chi-Square, and T-test, facilitated by the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 29.0 for Windows. To ensure the accuracy and consistency of the measures, a pilot study was conducted to identify and rectify potential errors. A standardized survey was utilized for data collection, and face validity was established by having five experts in the field evaluate the questionnaire items for relevance and appropriateness (Holden, 2010).For reliability assessment, internal consistency was measured using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded a reliability coefficient of 70.3%, indicating acceptable reliability for the questionnaire (Brown, 2002). This comprehensive approach to data collection and analysis aims to provide a robust understanding of the differences in perceptions of organizational politics between male and female employees at NEA.

Table 2

Realibility Statistics Using Cronbach's Alpha

Reliability of Statistics	n = 10
Cronbach's Alpha	N of items
0.703	21

Note. Questionnaire 2023

Table 2 shows reliability statistics of Perception of Organizational politics among male and female employees. The reliability test was done in the Nepal Electricity Authority, branch of Baneswor. According to the table, the Cronbach's Alpha Based on standardized items is 0.703 for 21 items and 10-sample size. The reliability test showed that the data were 70.3% reliable for 21 items, which showed that the questionnaire is reliable at a good and acceptable level (Cronbach, 1951).

Table 3

Respondent Description

	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	27	60
Female	18	40
Age		
Less than 18	-	–
18-40	16	35.6
41-60	21	46.7
Above 60	8	17.8
Median (Q1, Q3): = 41 (33.47, 57.06)		
Education Level		
High- School	11	24.4
Under-Graduate	13	28.9
Post- Graduate	11	24.4
Others	10	22.2
Job Role		
Low Level	20	44.4
Middle Level	16	35.6
High Level	9	20

Note: Field Survey, 2023

The results of the questionnaire reveal important demographic insights and perceptions of organizational politics among the 45 respondents, comprising 27 males (60%) and 18 females (40%). Age distribution among the respondents indicates that there were no individuals below the age of 18. The majority of respondents fell into the following age groups: 16 individuals (35.6%) were aged 18-40, 21 individuals (46.7%) were aged 41-60, and 8 individuals (17.8%) were over 60 years old. In terms of educational background, the sample included 11 high school graduates (24.4%), 13 undergraduates (28.9%), 11 postgraduates (24.4%), and 10 respondents (22.2%) categorized as "others," which encompasses individuals with education levels below the specified options. Regarding job roles within the organization, 20 respondents (44.4%) identified as low-level employees, 16 respondents (35.6%) as middle-level employees, and 9 respondents (20%) as high-level employees. This distribution highlights a predominance of low to middle-level positions among the respondents.

When analyzing perceptions of organizational politics, the data indicate a notable divergence between male and female respondents. Among the 27 male employees, 19 (70.4%) perceived high levels of political activity within the organization, while 8 (29.6%) perceived low levels of politics. Conversely, among the 18 female employees, 10 (55.6%) perceived low levels of politics, and 8 (44.4%) perceived high levels. Overall, 18 respondents (40.0%) perceived low levels of politics, while 27 (60.0%) perceived high levels. To assess the statistical significance of these perceptions, a Chi-Square test was conducted, yielding a Chi-Square value of 3.025. This value measures the difference between observed and expected frequencies, with a smaller Chi-Square indicating a higher correlation between these values. In this case, the Chi-Square value of 3.025 exceeds the threshold of 0.05, suggesting that there is no significant difference in the perceived levels of organizational politics based on gender. Additionally, the probability value (P-value) was

found to be 0.082, further indicating that there is no statistically significant relationship between perceived organizational politics and gender. These findings suggest that while there are observable differences in how male and female employees perceive organizational politics, the statistical analysis indicates that these differences are not significant. This outcome highlights the need for further investigation into the factors influencing perceptions of organizational politics and suggests that organizational culture may play a critical role in shaping these perceptions across genders.

Table 4

Association of Organizational Politics with Gender

Level of Politics Perceived (n=14)					
		Low	High	Value	p-value
Gender	Male	8 (29.6)	19(0.4)	3.025	0.082
	Famale	10(5.6)	8(44.4)		

Note. Field Survey, 2023

The Chi-Square value obtained from the analysis is 3.025. The Chi-Square test measures the difference between observed and expected frequencies, providing insight into the relationship between categorical variables. In general, a smaller Chi-Square value suggests a higher correlation between the observed and expected values.

In this study, the Chi-Square value of 3.025 is greater than the significance level of 0.05, indicating that there is no statistically significant difference in the perceived levels of organizational politics between male and female employees. Additionally, the probability value (P-value) associated with this test is 0.082. The P-value serves as a critical metric for quantifying the statistical significance of the results. In this context, a P-value greater than 0.05 further supports the conclusion that there is no significant relationship between gender and the perception of organizational politics.

Overall, these statistical findings suggest that, despite observable differences in how male and female employees perceive organizational politics, the differences are not statistically significant. This outcome implies that both male and female employees may experience similar levels of perceived organizational politics within the workplace, highlighting the need for further exploration into the underlying factors that shape these perceptions.

Meanwhile, the factors that determine perception of politics among the genders are shown in the given table 5.

Table 5

Level of Organizatioal Politics Perceived among the Four Variables

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-vale	p-value
Relationship	Male	27	3.36	0.70	1.058	0.296
	Famale	18	3.13	0.67		
Communication	Male	27	3.36	0.70	1.058	0.296
	Female	18	3.13	0.67		
Decision	Male	27	3.44	0.73	0.293	0.771
	Female	18	3.37	0.87		
Resources	Male	27	3.27	1.02	0.429	0.67
	Female	18	3.13	1.02		

Note. Field Survey, 2023

Table 5 shows the mean, standard deviation, t-value and p-value of each variable with genders.

In examining the four variables — Relationships, Communication, Decisions, and Resources—the mean scores for male employees are consistently higher than those for female employees, as illustrated in the accompanying table. However, despite these differences in mean scores, statistical analysis indicates that there is no significant difference in perceptions between male and female employees regarding these variables. The findings suggest that male employees perceive more organizational politics in comparison to female employees as 70% male perceived higher organizational politics whereas only 44.4% female employees perceived high organizational politics which is similar to the findings by Kacmar et. al. (2003), Li (2017) and Danish (2013).

The finding suggests that female employees perceive less organizational politics in comparison to male employees which contradicts with the findings by Eagly and Carli (2007); Bodla and Danish (2008) and Brafford (2019).

The research found decision to be the factor where organizational politics is highly perceived whereas the findings by Shrestha (2021), states that politics exist at government offices mainly over pay and promotional policies. The finding may differ with this also because out of 45 respondents, 20 which is 44.4% employees were low level employees who might not be involved in decision making process. Also, NEA is a government owned organization in which the decisions, new rules and regulations are made by the government. In spite of being government owned organization, there is no significant relationship between the genders and perception on organizational politics, which means that employees do not perceive organizational politics to exist in the organization very significant level which again contradicts with the findings by Shrestha (2021) which has stated that politics exist strongly at government offices.

The study has assisted in determining which are most and least perceived factors on organization's politics in Nepal Electricity Authority. The research findings will be useful for Nepal Electricity Authority, branch of Chabahil, as they will be able to identify factors or areas that require improvement in order to increase employee satisfaction and enhance their work performance. Increased perception on work politics also might make the organization's environment unpleasing. The organization can improve in the area where most of the employees have perceived organizational politics i.e., Decision variable. Maintaining proper work environment is also linked with employee retention which is important for any organization.

This finding suggests that while male employees may perceive higher levels of organizational politics related to Relationships, Communication, Decisions, and Resources, the differences are not statistically significant. Consequently, both male and female employees may share similar perceptions of these aspects of organizational politics, indicating that gender does not play a critical role in shaping perceptions within these specific variables. This outcome underscores the importance of considering other factors that may influence perceptions of organizational politics beyond gender alone.

Conclusion

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the perceptions of organizational politics among male and female employees at the Nepal Electricity Authority, Chabahil branch. The results indicate that while there are observable differences in the mean scores between male and female employees across the four variables examined—Relationships, Communication, Decisions, and Resources—these differences are not statistically significant. A closer examination of the data reveals that a high number of female employees perceive the Decision variable as a significant factor contributing to organizational politics. Interestingly, the mean score for male employees is also highest for the Decision

variable, suggesting that both male and female employees view decision-making processes as the most influential factor in shaping perceptions of organizational politics within the organization. Furthermore, female employees tend to perceive Communication, Relationships, and Resources as the least influential factors in organizational politics. In contrast, male employees have the lowest mean score for the Resources variable, indicating that they view this factor as the least influential in their perceptions of organizational politics. These findings underscore the importance of decision-making processes in shaping employee perceptions of organizational politics, regardless of gender. The lack of significant statistical differences between male and female employees suggests that organizational culture and policies may play a more prominent role in influencing these perceptions than gender alone. The study's conclusions highlight the need for organizations to critically examine their decision-making processes and ensure transparency, fairness, and inclusivity in these practices. By addressing potential areas of concern related to decision-making, organizations can foster a more equitable and positive work environment, reducing the negative impact of perceived organizational politics on employee well-being and performance. Future research could explore the specific aspects of decision-making that contribute to perceptions of organizational politics and investigate the role of organizational culture in shaping these perceptions across different contexts. Additionally, qualitative studies could provide deeper insights into the lived experiences of male and female employees navigating organizational politics and the strategies they employ to navigate these challenges effectively.

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