

# Relationship between Organizational Politics, Emotional Intelligence and Career Success

Sowmya.KR<sup>a</sup> and Panchanatham.N<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Department of Management Studies,  
Rajalakshmi Engineering College, Tamilnadu, India.

<sup>b</sup> Business School, Annamalai University,  
Tamilnadu, India.

## Abstract

Career is a great concern of any individual in the prevailing competitive scenario. An employee irrespective of any industry is involved in several behavioural aftermath in the emotional survival in the chosen career. It has been strongly agreed and proved by researchers that Employees' perception of organizational politics influences career success. This is due to several aspects not limited to job dissatisfaction, turnover intention, job burnout and job anxiety. Recent literature since 1990 signifies the role of emotions in influencing career success of an employee. The study proposed to explore the relationship between organizational politics, emotional intelligence and career success. It was found from the study that balancing emotions intelligently helps in career success in addition to coping with organizational politics.

**Keywords:** organizational politics, emotions, emotional intelligence, career, political skill, career success

## Introduction

### Organizational Politics

Organizational politics (OP) has been one of the popular subject in industrial or organizational psychology due to its impacts on organizational outcomes such as job dissatisfaction (Poon, 2004), turnover intent (Harris et al., 2005), disloyalty, lowered perceived innovation (Parker et al., 1995) as well as lowered job performance (Byrne, 2005). However, it was not until the last twenty years that OP is discussed in earnest in the literature despite the rampancy of OP in the organizational settings. However, recently a few studies emphasise that career success is influenced by organizational politics and that emotions influence career success. Since career is a major requirement of an individual in the society, this study is proposed to be attempted to study the influence of organizational politics on career success being moderated by emotional intelligence. In the early works like Allen et al. (1979), OP is defined as intentional acts of influence to enhance or protect the self-interest of individuals or groups.

### Emotional Intelligence

Emotions are closely related to people's purpose, goals, plans, and requires (Brown, George-Curran and Smith, 2003), so emotional intelligence can be defined as the ability to be aware of own and others emotions and feelings and to manage the emotions in self and

others (Goleman, 1995). Emotional intelligence is also defined as a subset of “social intelligence” which involves the ability to consider one’s own and others’ feelings and emotions to guide one’s thinking and actions (Salovey and Mayer, 1989). Then they defined it again as “the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate them so as to assist thoughts, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to regulate them so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth (Mayer and Salovey, 1997). The most important construct in their definition which we require to explain is “emotions”. Van Maanen and Kunda (1989) explain that emotions are “ineffable feelings of the self-referential sort”, and are comprehensively defined as “self-referential feelings an actor (employee) experiences or, at least, claims to experience in regard to the performances he or she brings off in the social world” (Van Maanen and Kunda, 1989). Feeling explanation refers to basic (e.g. joy, love, anger) and social emotions (e.g. shame, guilt, jealousy, envy), as well as to related constructs as affect, sentiments and moods (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1995). Emotional intelligence include some abilities to perceive, appraise and express emotion accurately and adaptively, understand emotion and emotional knowledge and make apply of the knowledge by accessing or generating feelings to facilitate thought, whilst reflectively regulating emotions (Salovey, Mayer, & Caruso, 2002; Tarasuik, Ciorciari and Stough, 2009). Emotional intelligence skills have close relationship to motivation and can be explained the gateway to learn all the life and gain to success. A lot of researches show that emotional intelligence skills are essential to each learner (Low & Nelson, 1999).

### **Career Success**

Career success is of concern to individuals and also organizations (Judge et al, 1999). Researchers go on to try identify some organizational and individual factors that improve employees’ career success (Boudreau, Boswell & Judge, 2001; Judge and Bretz, 1994; Seibert & Kraimer, 2001; Wayne et al, 1999). Also a lot of studies have taken in base of multivariate approaches to identifying the career success predictors (Kirchmeyer, 1998), but no large-scale systematic attempts have been to summarize the existing literature. By considering “promotion slam” or “job direction” these days, most of employees think that going up the ladder means success. This topic refers to promotion in organization hierarchy and getting raised or personal authority implicitly. Thus all staff see their success in connection with financial positions, pulls and fame. But in profession terms, career success splits into objective and subjective dimensions (Friedman & Greenhaus, 2000; Hall, 2002; Kirchmeyer, 2002). Jaskolka et al (1985) believe that success is a relatively concept of evaluation and judgment (Jaskolka, Beyer & Trice, 1985). Objective success or internal success is the observable part of the job success and refers to outputs, promotions, positions and ranks (Gattiker & Larwood, 1988).

### **The relationship between EI and career success**

Emotional intelligence can actually be more influential upon an individual's success in life (personally and professionally) than cognitive intelligence (Stewart, 2008). People with high levels of emotional intelligence abilities are more likely than who have less emotional intelligence to achieve high levels of success in their workplace. Specially, scholars have stated that social skills are necessary for executive level leaders; as individuals ascend the organizational hierarchy; social intelligence becomes an relevant determinant increasingly of who will and will not be successful (Carmeli, 2003). Emotional intelligence is also an important of personal relationships success, family functioning, and success in the workplace (Salovey, Mayer & Causo, 2002). It’s found that the emotionally intelligence people have enjoyed more career success, feel less job insecurity, lead more effectively,

are more adaptable to stressful events, possess better coping strategies and indicate greater sales success than those who have low emotional intelligence (Yousuf & Ahmad, 2007). Goleman focuses on the importance of emotional intelligence in general work success of people and achievement in their life. Other researchers since Goleman have claimed that emotional intelligence can predict important occupational and educational variables (Fisher & Ashkanasy, 2000). The importance of emotional intelligence to individual and career success can be explained by how important relationships have become in evaluating personal and organizational success (Robbins, 2005). Emotionally intelligent people are able to be effective in pursuing the right career that is a career which matches the values, goals, and vision of the individual. Furthermore, it is believed that individuals who have high levels of emotional intelligence will have higher levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment, that will make both the individuals and organizations more successful (Stewart, 2008).

## Review of Literature

Organizational politics has been a topic of research since the 1970s. But emotional intelligence is a topic of study only since 1990. Several studies have been done to test the relationship between organizational politics and job outcomes. A significant relationship has been identified between employees' perception of politics and job outcomes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job involvement.

Sowmya, K. R & Panchanatham, N (2009)<sup>A</sup> identified 10 factors that caused employee turnover intent in the banking sector namely job satisfaction, job recognition, pay & promotions, coworker & supervisor behavior, future opportunities, other job availabilities, and organizational politics using weighted average score and Mean Score Relative Importance (MSRI scale by Alam, 1986) and found that organizational politics was the first main reason causing an employee to leave the workplace in comparison to all the other major factors. Sowmya, K. R & Panchanatham, N (2009)<sup>B</sup> studied about the struggle for Political Survival in an Organisation. The study discussed about an important model of politics proposed by Robina Chatam which classified the group of people as dolphins, baboons, Foxes and Sheep in an organization. According to her the successful model was the dolphin which represented a positive behaviour and mannerism in the workplace. Sowmya, K. R & Panchanatham, N (2011)<sup>a</sup> Exploratory factor analysis by principle component method was exploited to identify the factors Organizational Factors, supervisor Behaviour, Coworker Behaviour, Job Recognition and Job Security. Of these identified factors organizational factors and supervisor behavior were the most important factors influencing the satisfaction level of the public sector banks and the new private sector banks in Chennai. Sowmya, K. R & Panchanatham, N (2011)<sup>b</sup> identified four factors namely Affirmative, Continuance, Normative and Organization affinity types of commitment that influenced the attachment of the employees in the banks in Chennai. Sowmya, K. R & Panchanatham, N (2011)<sup>c</sup> The study identified seven important factors namely Job Challenge, Self Expression, Motivation, Work Culture, Work environment, Job attachment and Job fulfillment influencing the job involvement of employees in the banks in Chennai, using exploratory factor analysis by principle component method. Sowmya, K. R & Panchanatham, N (2011)<sup>e</sup> tested job burnout as an outcome of organizational politics and found a negative relationship between both the variables and concluded that though the employees were affected by organizational politics they did not feel burned out in the workplace. Sowmya, K. R & Panchanatham, N (2011)<sup>f</sup> Studied about the behavioural intentions as turnover intention and absenteeism in the workplace

due to organizational politics and found a strong positive correlation between turnover intention and absenteeism. Sowmya, K. R & Panchanatham, N (2011)<sup>d</sup> studied the employees' perception about organizational politics in banking sector. In this study the researchers identified six factors influencing Organizational politics in the banks in Chennai, India. They were Organizational Policies, Coworker Behaviour, Going along to get ahead, Supervisor Approach, Individual Influence and Organizational Influence.

Muhammad et al 2013 studied influence of organizational politics on job outcomes with personality factors as moderating factor. The study found that the moderation factor definitely caused a difference in the output due its moderation. Bolanle 2013 found a positive relationship between organizational politics and job related negative emotions moderated by workplace incivility.

The discussed literature clearly shows that organizational politics in a way affected the career success directly or indirectly. Off late Emotional intelligence is a significant study of recent days and it can be considered as a tool to tackle or overcome organizational politics effectively. Hence the researcher has made an attempt to study the impact of organizational politics on career success and relationship between emotional intelligence and career success.

Mohammed 2013 studied the relationship between political behavior on career path and found a significant relationship between both. This was similar to the finding by Nima Saeedi et al 2012 which found a positive relationship between Emotional intelligence and Career success. Farook et al 2011 tested the influence of Organizational politics on Job outcomes moderated by Political skills, revealed a significant moderation by the moderating factor. Judge, T. A. 1992 has given his significant finding that there is significant relationship between Political behaviour and Career success. This finding is in concurrence with several studies that have been conducted until after two decades. Christopher et al 2009 found that Organizational politics showed a positive relationship with Intent to turnover though moderated by Frustration and job satisfaction .

From the discussed literature it can be concluded that the chosen area of study attracts scholarly attraction from all sectors and all countries as it is a perception based study.

## **Conceptual Framework of Research**

Organizational politics was studied using the scale consisting of three major factors namely General political behaviour, Going along to get ahead and pay & promotion policies. Emotional intelligence was measured using self-emotions, others' emotions, regulation of emotions and use of emotion. Career success was studied using the scale consisting of output, promotion, position and ranks.

## **Methods and Procedures**

### **Problem Statement**

Concern for career success is the most prevailing among the present generation. Several studies say that it is being influenced by emotions in workplace. As such employees' perception of organizational politics seems to be influencing the career success in several ways in the organization. Hence, this study has the need to study the relationship among all the three aspects.

### **Sample Design**

Data was collected selectively from manufacturing sector employees from the most predominant metropolitan city namely Chennai, in south India. 400 questionnaires were

distributed to the respondents out of which 272 usable responses were received, out of which 62% were male responses and 38% were female responses, 78% were married and 22% were unmarried. Judgement sampling by Non-probability method was exploited for choosing Chennai city, Tamilnadu, India as place of study and the manufacturing sector as the sector of study.

### **Statistical Tools Used**

Pearson's correlation was used to study the relationship between organizational politics and career success; Organizational politics and emotional intelligence; emotional intelligence and career success.

### **Research Measures**

#### *Organizational Politics*

The independent variables of this study is organizational politics (overall OP) and its components or dimensions of general political behavior (GPB); going along to get ahead (GATGA) and pay and promotion policies (PPP). The levels of organizational politics perceived by the respondents was gauged using measurement developed by Kacmar and Carlson's (1997). The Perceptions of Organizational Politics Scale (POPS) was used to measure Organizational Politics which contains 15 items and can be divided into three components mainly GPB (two items); GATGA (seven items); and PPP (six items).

#### *Career Success*

Extrinsic career progress consists of four variables. Salary, job level (defined as number of positions above entry level), number of promotions with current employer, and number of promotions in career except those with the current employer, will be used as measures of extrinsic career success. The four variables were summed to form an overall extrinsic factors scale.

Intrinsic career success is manifested by job satisfaction and life satisfaction. Job satisfaction will be measured by a single-item measure of overall job satisfaction, the Faces Scale (Kunin, 1955). Life satisfaction was measured by the Satisfaction with Life Scale, a 5-item measure of life satisfaction that compares favorably with other measures of life satisfaction (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). The statements include (1) in most ways my life is close to ideal, (2) the conditions of my life are excellent, (3) I am satisfied with my life, (4) so far I have gotten the important things I want in life, and (5) if I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing. Respondents indicate on a 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) scale their agreement with these five statements that are intended to elicit overall life satisfaction.

These two scales were standardized and summed to form an overall measure of intrinsic career success.

#### *Emotional Intelligence*

The Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (Law, Wong, and Song 2004; Wong and Law 2002). This 16-item self-report scale consisting of four dimensions: Self—Emotions Appraisal (SEA), Others—Emotions Appraisal (OEA), Regulation of Emotion (ROE), and Use of Emotion (UOE).

## Results and Discussion

### Relationship between Organizational Politics and Career Success

It can be interpreted from table 1 that the correlation between organizational politics and career success is negative. The finding also suggests that there is significant relationship between going along to get ahead and pay & promotion policies with career success unlike general political behaviour that showed a negative relationship with career success.

**Table 1.** Correlation between Organizational Politics and Career Success

Variables	N	R	P
Organizational Politics and Career Success	272	-0.439**	0.001
General Political Behaviour & Career Success	272	-0.006	0.700
going along to get ahead & Career Success	272	0.004	0.411
Pay & Promotion policies & Career Success	272	0.115**	0.001

\*P ≤ 0.05, \*\*P ≤ 0.01

Source: Primary Data

Further from table 1 it is evident that there is negative correlation between organizational politics and career success. It means that if employees perception of organizational politics was greater it affected the career success of the employees.

### Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Career Success

It can be interpreted from table 2 that the correlation between Emotional Intelligence and career success is significant at p<0.05 level. From the table 2 it is visible that and the finding also suggests that there is significant relationship between going along to get ahead and pay & promotion policies with career success unlike general political behaviour that showed a insignificant relationship with career success.

**Table 2.** Correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Career Success

Variables	N	R	P
Emotional Intelligence and Career Success	272	0.768**	0.001
Self-Emotions appraisal & Career Success	272	0.006**	0.001
Others emotions appraisal & Career Success	272	0.040	0.508
Regulation of emotion & Career Success	272	0.005**	0.001
Use of emotion & Career Success	272	0.097**	0.001

\*P ≤ 0.05, \*\*P ≤ 0.01

Source : Primary Data

From table 2 it is evident that there is significant correlation between emotional intelligence and career success. Therefore, the H1 is accepted at P ≤ 0.01 level of significance. It means that if an employee has emotional intelligence he will successful in his career.

### Relationship between Organizational Politics and Emotional Intelligence

It can be interpreted from table 3 that the correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Organizational Politics is significant at  $p < 0.05$  level. From the table it is visible that and the finding also suggests that there is significant relationship between General Political Behaviour, Going along to get ahead and Pay & Promotion policies with emotional intelligence.

**Table 3.** Correlation between Organizational Politics and Emotional Intelligence

Variables	N	R	P
Organizational Politics and Emotional Intelligence	272	0.600**	0.001
General Political Behaviour & Emotional Intelligence	272	0.550	0.887
going along to get ahead & Emotional Intelligence	272	0.004	0.850
Pay & Promotion policies & Emotional Intelligence	272	0.505**	0.001

\* $P \leq 0.05$ , \*\* $P \leq 0.01$

Source : Primary Data

From table 3 it is evident that there is significant correlation between Organizational Politics and emotional intelligence. Therefore, the H3 is accepted at  $P \leq 0.01$  level of significance. It means that if an employee has emotional intelligence he will be able to overcome organizational politics in an effective manner.

### Conclusion and Discussion

The examination of most recent topic emotional intelligence was tested for its relation with organizational politics. A positive relationship was found between both the factors and its components. Similarly career success was tested for its relationship with emotional intelligence and organizational politics. A negative relationship was found between organizational politics and career success. This was in concurrence with findings by Stewart, 2008, Yousuf & Ahmad, 2007 and Robbins, 2005. The findings from the present study highlights the significance of emotional intelligence, and career success. Balancing emotions intelligently helps in career success in addition to coping with organizational politics. This gives way to future research in examining emotional intelligence as a moderator between Organizational politics and career success. It will give great findings and will help very accurately which will enhance the emotional survival in career amidst the prevailing organizational politics from individual point of view.

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