

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MANAGERS' POLITICAL INTELLIGENCE AND EMPLOYEES' POLITICAL BEHAVIOR: A CASE STUDY IN TEHRAN UNIVERSITY OF MEDICAL SCIENCES

Hossein Dargahi^a, Fatemeh Ehteshami^b

^a *Department of Health Management and Economics, School of Public Health, Health Information Management Research Center, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran*

^b *Department of Health Management and Economics, School of Public Health, Health Information Management Research Center, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran*

Abstract

Human resource is among important assets of organizations. Therefore, understanding the employees' behaviors especially their political behaviors by managers is significantly important. The managers can perform successfully using their political intelligence in predicting and controlling the employees' political behaviors in organizations. Therefore, this study aimed to determine the relationship between managers' political intelligence and employees' political behaviors in headquarters departments of Tehran University of Medical Sciences (TUMS) in 2017-2018. This research is a descriptive-analytical cross-sectional study. The data collection tools were two validated researcher-made questionnaires namely political intelligence and political behavior questionnaires. The statistical population of this research included the staff and senior and middle managers of the headquarters departments in Tehran University of Medical Sciences. Stratified sampling was used to select the participants. SPSS software was used to analyze the data. Mean, frequency, frequency percentage and standard deviation were used to present the descriptive findings, and K2 and Pearson correlation tests were applied to report the inferential results. There was a significant difference among the employees in different headquarters departments in terms of their political behaviors ($P=0.008$). The findings showed that managers' political intelligence and employees' political behaviors were moderately upward; however, no significant relationship was found between managers' political intelligence and employees' political behaviors ($P>0.05$). It is recommended that TUMS managers should increase their political intelligence by participation in organizational behavior workshops and apply other methods especially political behavior management to predict or control of their employees.

Keywords: Employees' political behaviors, Managers' political intelligence, Tehran University of Medical Sciences.

1. Introduction

These days in the organizations with different goals and duties, the existence of efficient human resource can affect efficiency rate of organizations. Organizational behavior management has a significant role in employees' performance in a way that skillful and qualified human resource is a strategic factor and the most important ones in increasing

the efficiency and effectiveness [1].

On the other hand, political behaviors is among those activities which are not formally necessary to be done, but it affects reward system and resource allocation, and it is performed to achieve the power in the organization by some employees [2]. Therefore, the new organizations have more political behaviors development domain and

we can call the 21st century organizations as the political ones [3].

Some managers are aware of unsaid rules of political games instinctively, and they have high political intelligence and act tactfully and successfully in promoting and obtaining of the problems solution and protect the organizational profits [4]. In fact, the managers' political intelligence is an effective management of organizations' political environment through a set of skills and behaviors. Political intelligence helps managers to understand and know how their authority concepts and also using substitute and additional resource for maintaining the managers' authority [5]. Political intelligence is an aspect of managerial intelligence as Owen suggested three parts including rational, emotional and political [6]. Therefore, political intelligence is a managers' active ability for influence and direction of their power levers, and one of the most important ways for controlling the employees tendency to political behaviors [7].

Political intelligence of managers is essential to understand the power, increasing success, stress reduction and better relationship with their employees. Since, political behaviors of employees are inevitable and irremovable, political intelligence can be applied to minimize the effects of political behaviors in all organizations [8]. Organizational leaders can change the organizations appropriately using political intelligence [Mombini&Mombini, 2012]. Managerial intelligence, especially political intelligence should use for training entrepreneurs and reviving entrepreneurship economy and creating business models [9].

On the other hand, political behaviors in recent decades has developed significantly in all organizations. Political behaviors could not be removed from the organizations, but managers' political intelligence can prevent the political behaviors promotion through the clearly job description, communication development and information clarity, and reduction of uncertainty organizational culture and unnecessary competition [10]. The reasons of employees' tendency to political behaviors are understanding the uncertainty and ambiguity in work environment that cause the employees

to think more about personal benefits; therefore, these causes the negative consequences of political behavior in the organization [11]. Political behaviors resulting from organizational characteristics and individual psychology can reduce employees' efforts in attaining the innovation. As a result, organizations need employees who think about innovation without thinking of political behaviors [12].

The differences between understanding of Hong Kong and American managers about applying power through political behaviors was reported as a comparative study [13]. Nicolas believed political behaviors tendency was found in medical schools that create challenges for medical education [14]. Wilson showed that through participative leadership, increasing employees organizational motivation and commitment, political behaviors would also be decreased. As a result, managers and leaders' political intelligence was a necessary tool to create effective change in the organization [15]. There are four aspects of political skills in the organization called social intelligence, individual influence, networking ability and visible honesty [16] ; [17]. According to the aforementioned content, this study is aimed to determine the relationship between managers' political intelligence and employees' political behavior in headquarters departments of Tehran University of Medical Sciences in 2018. The results of this research may help the policymakers of human resource management of Iranian health care system to create desire environment for attaining the organizational goals.

2. Materials & Methods

This study was a cross-sectional, descriptive and analytical study. The research population included all employees and managers working in headquarters departments of Tehran University of Medical Sciences in 2018. Stratified sampling was used to select 236 employees and 106 managers. Data collection tools were two validated researcher-made namely political intelligence and political behavior questionnaires. The validity of the questionnaires were confirmed using a panel of experts, including management sciences and or-

ganizational behavior expert panel. The reliability of the questionnaires were also checked using Cronbach's Alpha was reported 0.78 for political behavior and was obtained 0.89 for political intelligence. Demographic details including age, gender, academic degree of managers and employees were also collected by the questionnaires. The political behavior questionnaire included 28 main Likert-scale items was used where strongly disagree=1, disagree=2, almost agree=3, agree=4, and strongly agree=5. The political intelligence questionnaire included 10 main Likert-scale items related to managers' political intelligence including little=1, a little=2, moderate=3, much=4, and very much=5. In total, 236 employees completed political behavior questionnaires and 106 political intelligence questionnaires were collected from senior and middle managers. Therefore, the response rate was 100% for every questionnaire.

The included criterias for completion of questionnaires were minimally one year work experience and tendency to cooperative with researchers, and the excluded criteria was lack of tendency for completion of the questionnaires. Ethical consideration was observed prior to distribution of the questionnaires, required agreement received from the directions and explanation of the research goals to the managers and employees, assured the confidentiality of collected data, and finally consent form was gained from the respondents.

The SPSS software was used to analyze the collected data. At descriptive statistical level, frequency, frequency percentage, mean and standard deviation, and at analytical statistical level, K2 and Pearson correlation tests were applied.

3. Results

The demographic details results showed most (62%; 66) of managers were male, had Ph.D. degree (54%; 57) and were between 40 to 50 years old (42%; 45).

Also, most(64%; 153) of employees were female, had BA (BS) degree (34%; 80), and were between 30 to 40 years old (41%; 97).

Table 3 showed, there was a significant difference among the employees in different vice-chancellorships headquarters departments in terms of their political behavior($P=0.008$). The employees believed, the highest tendency towards political behaviors was observed in Treatment Vice-Chancellorship (73.5%) with the mean of 109.74 and standard deviation of 1.33, and the lowest tendency towards political behaviors was observed in Development of Management and Resource Planning Vice Chancellorship (37.5%) with the mean of 101.14 and standard deviation of 1.99.

As it was observed in table 4, there was no significant difference among the managers in different Vice Chancellorships headquarters of Tehran University of Medical Sciences in terms of their political intelligence mean scores ($P=0.62$).

4. Discussion

In this study, managers' political intelligence in different headquarters departments of Tehran University of Medical Sciences was evaluated as moderate. Therefore, it seems the managers should improve their political intelligence using communication skill, face to face meeting with employees and information transfer networking; and also strengthen their power to have appropriate organizational consequences [18]. Increasing the perception of political intelligence of managers causes organizational success, stress reduction, external relation improvement, and increase group performance using their political intelligence [19]. High political intelligence of managers will stop the conflicts in the organization [20].

A research results induced in Haifa showed that political intelligence and skill may create job satisfaction of employees [21]. Corporate political strategy provides assessment of the political environments through political intelligence [22]. This is compatible with the results of current study in order to improvement of employees performance and productivity, and create appropriate climate in this organization.

Political behaviors in all organizations cannot be removed, because it is an inevitable phenomenon. Therefore, the managers' function is to

Table 1: Demographic information of managers in headquarters departments of Tehran University of Medical Sciences

Variable	N	%	Variable	N	%	Variable	N
Gender			Age (years)			Degree	
Female	40	38	Under 30	11	10	Diploma	8
Male	66	62	30-40	35	33	A.D	7
			40-50	45	42	BA (BS)	0
			Above 50	15	15	MA (MS)	34
						Ph.D.	57

Table 2: Demographic information of employees in headquarters departments of Tehran University of Medical Sciences

Variable	N	%	Variable	N	%	Variable	N	%
Gender			Age (years)			Degree		
Female	153	64	Under 30	45	19	Diploma	28	12
Male	83	36	30-40	97	41	A.D	35	15
			40-50	61	26	BA (BS)	80	34
			Above 50	33	14	MA (MS)	69	30
						Ph.D.	24	10

control political behaviors in a constructive and reasonable range as some of them are functional and can be exploited to achieve the organizational goals. Usually, an average amount of controlled political behaviors are necessary as the organization survival tools [23]. Other researchers also reported that effective use of political behaviors in all organizations is an effective factor for organizational productivity improvement, reasonable decision making, and attaining the organizational goals [24].

The results of current research showed there was a significant difference among the employees in different headquarters departments in terms of their political behaviors that Treatment Vice Chancellorship employees had the highest political behaviors mean score and those in the Development Management and Resource Planning Vice Chancellorship had the lowest mean score of political behaviors. The type of job nature, authority and responsibility, the types of customers and their wants and needs specially the directors and managers of medical field of hospitals that is

incompatible with incomplete resources may create high tendency to political behaviors among the employees of treatment sectors of health care system [25].

However, the employees' political behaviors of Tehran University of Medical Sciences employees (TUMS) was moderately evaluated upward. [23] examined Tehran University of Medical Sciences employees' tendency to show political behaviors as low [23]. Another study evaluated Tehran University of Medical Sciences employees' political tendency as average [7]. Therefore, the results of these studies are compatible with the findings of the current research. Although, it seems the tendency of TUMS employees to political behaviors has increased from low level in 2012 to a moderately upward in 2018 that is remarkable. Whereas, there is no possibility of eliminating political behavior, therefore, TUMS managers should try to keep it as minimally by their political intelligence or other managerial skills for attaining the organizational goals.

Generally, there was no significant relation-

Table 3: Frequency distribution of employees' political behaviors' tendency levels in headquarters different departments of Tehran University of Medical Sciences

			Political behavior		Total	Mean	SD	P value
			High	Moderate				
Vice-Chancellorship Headquarters departments	Internation	N	11	9	20	103.53	1.5	0.008
	Relations	%	55	45	100			
	Studentship	N	12	9	21	101.41	3.02	
	Development of	%	57.1	42.9	100			
	Management and	N	15	25	40	101.14	1.99	
	Resource planning	%	37.5	62.5	100			
	Food & drug	N	11	9	20	102.21	2.48	
		%	55	45	100			
	Health	N	12	9	21	107.73	3.09	
		%	57	43	100			
	Treatment	N	25	26.5	34	107.74	1.33	
		%	73.5	10	100			
	Education	N	20	10	30	102.21	2.48	
	%	66	34	100				
Research &	N	15	15	30	103.53	1.5		
Technology	%	50	50	100				
Social &	N	10	10	20	2.22	104.5		
Cultural	%	50	50	100				
Total	N	131	105	236	2.22	104.5		
	%	55	45	100				

ship between managers' political intelligence and employees' political behaviors in current study. Therefore, the managers cannot predict and control their employees' political behavior through their political skill and intelligence appropriately, and consequently the political behaviors of the employees are moderately upward. But, it was declared that there was a positive and significant relationship between managers' political intelligence and political behaviors of the General Administration of Youth and Sport and the Sport Boards managers in Fars Province, Iran. Moreover, The results of this study showed that political intelligence has predicted 66% of managers' political behavior [26] that was not compatible with our study results. However, it was not possi-

ble to eliminate political behaviors from the modern organizations, but their effects can be reduced by using political intelligence of managers. Managers using their political intelligence, should limit the effects of negative political behaviors; otherwise, they will see their fall without knowing its reason [8]. Study of 69 fulltime and 185 part-time employees showed that politics is related to negative work outcomes, while support is related to positive ones. Therefore, for preventing of work stress, job tension, and burnout, the managers need political intelligence [27]. Result of a study from 189 respondents indicated that political skill and intelligence of managers will be able to predict and control the political behaviors of employees through focusing on interpersonal as-

Table 4: Frequency distribution of managers' political intelligence levels in different departments of Tehran University of Medical Sciences

			Political intelligence			Total	Mean	SD	P value
			High	Moderate	Low				
Vice-Chancellorships Head quarters depart- ments	International Relations	N	1	7	0	8	33.75	1.36	0.62
		%	12.5	87.5	0	100			
	Studentship	N	5	9	1	15	32.13	1.9	
		%	33.3	60	6.7	100			
	Development of management and Resource planning	N	4	10	2	16	31.06	1.84	
		%	25	62.5	12.5	100			
	Food & drug	N	5	5	0	10	35.1	2.35	
		%	50	50	0	100			
	Treatment	N	11	15	2	28	34.12	1.15	
		%	39.3	53.6	7.1	100			
Health	N	4	4	1	9	33	1.95		
	%	44.4	44.4	11.1	100				
Education	N	5	5	2	12	33.75	1.36		
	%	42	42	16	100				
Research & Technology	N	5	5	2	12	35.1	2.35		
	%	42	42	16	100				
Social & Cultural	N	4	2	0	6	33.18	1.75		
	%	66	34	0	100				
Total	N	44	62	10	106	33.18	1.75		
	%	41	58	1	100				

pects of justice and performance [28]. The results of all above research are not compatible with the results of current research that showed there was no significant correlation between the political intelligence of managers and control of political behaviors tendency of employees. Lack of high political intelligence among TUMS managers cause increased tendency political behaviors of the employees since 2012 to 2018.

The current research had several limitations. This was a cross-sectional research using two questionnaires for collecting the required data. Although these kinds of investigation are useful, but self-assessment technique and the internal and external organizational climate and environment

can effect these findings. Second, in this study, only the relationship between managers' political intelligence and employees' political behaviors has been examined, while other factors can also affect the employees' political behaviors which has not been determined in this study. Third, this research has been conducted in Tehran University of Medical Sciences. Therefore, the results of this study can not be generalized to other organizations.

5. Conclusions

In modern organizations, human capital are considered as an important factor in organiza-

tional productivity. Therefore, managers must apply political intelligence to understand their employees' behaviors especially political behaviors and they must be predicted and controlled political behaviors of employees' in this organization. But, the results of current research found that there was not a significant correlation between these managers' political intelligence and their employees' tendency to political behaviors. In the other words, it seems the political behaviors tendency level of Tehran University of Medical Sciences employees has increased since 2012 to 2018 as shown in three previous studies. Therefore, it is recommended TUMS managers should increase their political intelligence by participation in organizational behaviour workshops and human resource management training courses and apply other methods especially political behavior management to predict and control their employees' political behaviors.

6. Acknowledgements

This article is the result of research project No. 39297 sponsored by the Deputy of Research and Technology of Tehran University of Medical Sciences. The authors appreciate all managers and employees working at the headquarters departments of Tehran University of Medical Sciences who have collaborated in preparing this research.

Authors' contributions

Fatemeh Ehteshami and Hossein Dargahi participated in the design this study, data collection and interpreted the results and written the manuscript. Hessein Dargahi revised final written manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare there have no conflict with each other.

References

[1] Salarvand A, Dargahi H. The relationship between organizational climate and organizational citizenship behavior among the headquarters departments staff of. *System*. 2016;1(19):45–53.

[2] Farahbakhsh S, Nikpay I, Shojaei A. *Journal of New Thoughts on Education*. 2016;12(3):7–32.

[3] Dubrin AJ. *Political behavior in organizations*. USA, California: Sage Publication; 2009.

[4] Jarret M. The 4 types of organizational politics. *Harvard Business Review*. Available from: hbr.org; 2018.

[5] Anonymous. What is political intelligence? Academy for political intelligence. Available from: www.tafpi.com; 2015.

[6] Goltz SM. Considering political behavior in organizations. *The Behavior Analyst. Today*. 2003;4(3):354–366.

[7] Dargahi H, Raadabadi M, Mojbafan A, RajabiVasokolaee GH. The Relationship of Organizational Commitment and Political Behavior Tendency among the Employees of. *Science*. 2015;11(21).

[8] Mombini Y, Doostar M. The Components and Functions of. *Political Intelligence Political Knowledge Science- Research*. 2014;20(1):65–86.

[9] Owan J. *How to manage. Art of making things happen*. London: Prentice Hall; 2006.

[10] Salajeghe S, Nazeri M. *Analytical*; 2010.

[11] Fani A, F, Danaiefard H. *Hasanzadeh A*; 2014.

[12] Hadizadehmoghadam A, Rezaie SA, Akbari K. *Strategic Approach of*; 2010.

[13] Ralston DA, Giacalone RA, Terpsta RH. Ethical perceptions of organizational polities: a comparative evaluation of American and Hong Kong managers. *J Bus*. 1994;13(12):989–99.

[14] Nicholas B. Power and the teaching of medical ethics. *J Med. Ethics*. 1999;25(6):507–13. PMID: 10635507 .

[15] Wilson PA. theory of power and polities and their effects on organizational commitment of senior execution service members. *J. AdministratSoci*. 1999;31(1):120–41.

[16] Peled A. *Development Journal*. 2000;21:20–29.

[17] Ferris GR, Munyon TP, Basik K, Buckley MR. The Performance Evaluation Context: Social, Emotional, Cognitive, Political, and Relationship Components. *Journal Human Resource Management Review*. 2008;18146(163):10–1016.

[18] Dargahi H, Rahmani H, Bigdeli Z, JavadiGhale E, Yousefzade N. Managerial quotient: a systematic review among managers of Tehran University of Medical Sciences. *Scientific Research*. 2016;6(4):467–474.

[19] Mombini Y, Mombini F. *Theoretical Model of Transformational Leadership Based on Political Intelligence*. vol. 46; 2013.

[20] Adams SM, Zanzi. A (2006). *Developing political intelligence for making feasible decisions*. *Journal of management. Development*;25(4):350–367.

[21] Meisler G. Exploring emotional, political skills, and job satisfaction. *Employee. Relations*. 2014;36(3):280–293.

- [22] HaritzGorostidi M, Xiaokany Z. Corporate political strategies: a contemporary literature review. *Journal of Advances in Management Research*. 2017;14(3):375–404.
- [23] Dargahi H. Organizational behavior of employees of Tehran University of Medical Sciences. *Journal of Medical Ethics and History of. Medicin*. 2012;5:1–7.
- [24] Fritsch J. Toward theory of personal politics. *Human Resource Development. Review*. 2010;9(3):236–248.
- [25] Basu S, Andrews J S, D. Comparative performance of private and public health care systems in low and middle income countries: A systematic review. *Public Library of Science Medicine*. 2012;9(6):10–1371.
- [26] Keshavarz L, Farahani A, Shahrabaz M. Regressive analysis of the political intelligence and the political behavior of the General Administration of Youth and Sport and the sport boards Managers'; 2016.
- [27] Cropanzano R, Howes JC, Grandey AA, Toth P. The relationship of organizational politics and support to work behaviors, attitudes; 1999. Available from: <http://doi.org/10.1002/>.
- [28] Treadway DC, LA, j S, Perry SJ, Shaughnessy BA. Political skill as a moderator of the relationship between subordinate perceptions of interactional justice and supervisor rating of interpersonal facilitation. *American Journal of Business*. 2013;28(2):233–251.