 J Economics, 6(3): 291-301 (2015)

Perceptions of Organizational Politics at a National Electricity Provider in Southern African Development Community (SADC)

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KEYWORDS Organization. Perceptions. Common Goals. Management

ABSTRACT This paper explores the theoretical perceptions of organizational politics, identifies common factors and proceeds to empirically measure perceptions of organizational politics at a national electricity provider in the SADC region. It is important to note that the degree of organizational politics varies from one organization to another but the reality is that all organizations have some sort of internal political struggle that can rip it apart. Statistical analysis was done to identify common factors on perceptions of organizational politics. To achieve this, the "explanatory factor analysis" was used. To scientifically subject the data for factor analysis, the Bartlett test of sphericity and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (K-M-O) measure of sampling adequacy were performed to ensure that the factor analysis was the appropriate statistical tool. The research revealed that managerial behavior, poor communication of objectives, unexpected employee behavior and unhealthy managerial practices were identified as problematic perceptions of organizational politics at the national electricity provider. The paper recommends a continuous organizational renewal wherein the entire workforce engages in effective communication practices through deliberate training sessions across the board. Such openness in communication will clear out mistrust and doubt amongst employees and management leading to a healthy organizational life.

INTRODUCTION

The Business Dictionary (2014) defines organizational politics as the pursuit of individual agendas and self-interest in an organization without regard to their effect on the organization's efforts to achieve its goals. Robbins et al. (2009: 358) support this by referring to organizational politics as activities that are not required as one's formal role in the organization but that influence, or attempt to influence, the distribution of advantages and disadvantages within the organization. Robbins et al. (2009: 358) analyzes the definition as encompassing key elements of what most people mean when they talk about organizational politics. Thus, political behavior is outside one's specified job requirements. In recent decades, organizational politics (OP) has become a growing field of interest in management studies. However, one of the important aspects of this phenomenon, which has received little attention over the years, is the extent to which the key internal clients in an organizational setting such as managers and employees perceive organizational politics.

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In order to better understand organizational politics, it is necessary to clearly explain what an organization is. The Business Dictionary (2014) defines an organization as a social unit of people that is structured and managed to meet a need or to pursue collective goals. According to Veluri (2009:2), an organization is a group of individuals, who come together to realize their goals and further asserts that an organization represents a social unit deliberately constructed and reconstructed to seek specific goals.

It is important to note that human beings are born in organizations, educated by organizations and to acknowledge that they do spent most of their lives working in organizations. Even the families, with whom they spent most of their time, are also an organization. Hence, an organization is a group of individuals who agree to share their effort in the realization of common goals. The goals of an organization are therefore derived from individual goals. Individuals, in order to realize their goals, must join an organization of their choice. Aryee and Budhwar (2009:2) see an organization as a social market place where individuals engage in transactions to obtain favorable dealings. It is not merely a rational model of economic activities but is also a place where political activity and conflict takes place (Horton 2010). The constraints of bounded rationality and imperfect information limit the ability of organizations to develop a complete set of rules and procedures to guide and govern employee and management actions and behavior within an organizational setting.

Moorhead and Griffin (2004:393) define organizational politics as activities carried out by people to acquire, enhance, and use power and other resources to obtain their desired outcomes. Robbins et al. (2003:374) concur with the above sentiments when they say that whenever people get together in groups, power will be exerted. They stress that people want to carve out a niche from which to exert influence, to earn rewards, and to advance their careers and when employees in the organization convert their power into action, they are then described as being engaged in politics. Organizational politics therefore refers to those activities that are not required as one's formal role in the organization, but that influence, or attempt to influence, the distribution of advantages and disadvantages within the organization.

From the above assertions, it is clear that organizations are deliberately created and maintained by people who have different goals and ambitions. The inherent selfish nature of human beings makes them compete in order to realize their individual goals, thus overlooking or even undermining the goals of others. In order to overcome this, organizations develop common goals that reflect the individual interests of its members.

Despite the development of such common goals, some members will always try to meet their selfish ends, thus, individuals often find themselves having to rely on informal and unsanctioned means in making decisions, marking the beginnings and foundations of organizational politics. It is therefore clear that both informal and unsanctioned means of decision-making within the organization, present perpetrators of organizational politics with the opportunity to engage in political behavior.

The high level political tempo in organizations is manifested by the differences in the positions held by the employees. Differences in positions between (managers and employees) obliviously compound the perceived view of organizational politics. Those placed in management positions always thrive to take advantage of the power vested in them in making decisions to their favour with employees, on the receiving end. The concept of organizational politics is therefore closely related to power in an organizational setting, thus, political behavior is the general means by which people attempt to obtain and use power. Put simply, the goal of such behavior is to get one's own way about things.

Organizational politics are defined as behavior that examines perceptions, explores the individual and organizational factors of organizational politics and concludes by providing strategies.

METHODOLOGY

The national electricity provider is a massive organization in Zimbabwe. In the 2012 budget it received a budget of USD 72 million, and similarly in proceeding years it topped the list in terms of government spending (Madsonzim 2012). On top of such a massive budget, the electricity provider has an adequate staff comprising of qualified managers, engineers, fitters and technicians. Equipped with a very adequate budget allocation, and the support of a qualified and experienced human resource base, one would expect the national electricity provider to generate adequate electrical power for the economy. However, contrary to this belief, the national electricity provider has become a mediocre performer for the past two decades, with load shedding becoming the order of the day in the entire country. This development has negatively affected the economy as a whole, and in particular, the mining sector, agriculture, manufacturing, as well as the service organizations that include hospitals, information and technology, schools and the tourism sector, which are adversely affected by poor and unreliable power provision (Newsaday 2011).

As if this is not enough, the national electricity provider continues to deny workers' rights. For example, workers are often questioned for engaging in collective job action, and are not allowed to give their opinion regarding the manner in which the organization is being run or should be run. There are generally mixed feelings and views on what employees feel and think about organizational politics, its prevalence and how it is perceived. Poor performance in state enterprises such as the national electricity provider could be a result of various reasons such as corruption, undercapitalization, and sanctions imposed on respective countries and lack of leadership as examples. In such massive organizations, organizational politics is a necessary evil that is beneficial to the organization if it is identified and measured. Butcher and Clarke (cited by Gotsis and Kortezi 2011:454), argue that organizational politics motivates the workforce in redefining the patterns of activity for organizational benefit. In support of this view, Clarke (2003:454) posits that organizational politics influences employee motivation that result in the overall improvement of organizational productivity. The presence of organizational politics if identified and measured can be a source of life to an organization that was already considered a mediocre performer, such as ZESA. In line with this school of thought, managers at ZESA can take advantage of politicized work environment to ignite a productive atmosphere. Employee perceptions of organizational politics at the national electricity provider with an ultimate aim of harnessing dysfunctional politics towards a productive organization were measured.

Objectives

The primary objective is to identify and empirically measure perceptions of organizational politics.

RESULTS

Morehead and Griffin (2004:394) describe organizational politics as all the visible and the not so visible forces in an organization that support, undermine, advance, promote individuals or groups of individuals for the purpose of gain or self-gain. It is present in all organizations and manifests itself differently in different organizational settings. Organizational politics is therefore ubiquitous and have widespread effects on critical processes (for example, performance evaluation, resource allocation, and managerial decision-making) that influence organizational effectiveness and efficiency (Kacmar and Baron 2009). Employees may engage in some legitimate, organizationally sanctioned political activities that are beneficial to work groups and organizations (Fedor et al. 2008).

Gove (2009) asserts that organizational politics often is easier to recognize than to describe. The general term politics simply describes a competition for power, but organizational politics involves those who seek power at the expense of others, with an “I win, you lose” attitude. Organizational politics represents behaviors that maximize self-interest and conflict with the collective goals and interests of others.

These divisive behaviors take many forms. At its worst, organizational politics manifest as outright manipulation and sabotage for the sake of one’s own upward mobility, power, or success. These tactics function as a means to win the regard of superiors or key decision-makers, both in and outside of the agency. Instead of honest, and professionally built relationships, organization politicians build relationships through deceit and chicanery (Gove 2009).

More often though, workplace politics take the more subtle forms of malicious gossip, rumors, or criticism through which the office politician controls the flow of information. For example, office politicians may spread nuggets of bad information that discredit and ruin the reputation of a coworker, or they might exploit the weaknesses of others to make them appear less competent. With these tactics, office politicians aim to undermine coworkers whom they perceive as threats to success.

According to Morehead and Griffin (2004: 401), organizational politics represents all the activities people perform to acquire, enhance, and use power and other resources to obtain their preferred outcomes in a situation where uncertainty or disagreement exists. Research indicates that most managers do not advocate the use of political behavior but acknowledge that it is a necessity of organizational life. Because managers cannot eliminate political activity in the organization, they must learn to cope with it. Schermerhor et al. (2010: 227) define organizational politics from different traditions. One tradition builds on the Machiavelli’s philosophy and defines organizational politics in terms of the management of influence to obtain ends not sanctioned by the organization or to obtain sanctioned ends through none sanctioned means. It is also considered has an art of creative compromise. Schermerhor et al. (2010: 227) assert that managers are often considered political when they seek their own goals, or when they use means that are not currently authorized by the organization or that push legal limits.

Robbins et al. (2009: 374) view the use of power as a central component of organizational politics. They stress that people want to carve out a niche from which to exert influence, to earn rewards, and to advance their careers and when employees in the organization convert their power into action, they are then described as being engaged in politics. Organizational politics therefore refers to those activities that are not required as one's formal role in the organization, but that influence, or attempt to influence, the distribution of advantages and disadvantages within the organization. Zanzi and O'Neil's (2009) review of the literature shows that definitions of organizational politics fall into two broad categories. The first sees organizational politics as negative and involves self-serving and unsanctioned behavior. Such behaviors are said to be divisive, illegitimate, and dysfunctional and can produce conflict (Gilmore et al. 2010). The second view sees politics in a more neutral light and accepts that it can sometimes be functional (Kumar and Ghadially 1989). Pfeffer (2008) for instance, defines politics as a social function that can contribute to the basic functioning of organizations. Both definitions agree, however, that organizational politics involves unsanctioned and informal forms of behaviors. George and Konstantinos (2011:1257) identify managerial perceptions as a key factor of organizational politics. According to George and Konstantinos (2011:1258), the debate on managerial perceptions as a contributor to the success of the organization is still a robust one. Jennifer et al. (2012:412) argue that social support to the employee by a manager is of critical importance as it provides emotional or instrumental resources. Unsupportive managerial behavior is detrimental to the normal motivational spirit of the employee (1996:174). It is therefore clear that unsupportive management destroys the potential for employees to trust their managers. In contemporary organizations, such as the national electricity provider, employees are increasingly loosing trust in management and in most cases they end up engaging in unexpected behavior such as gossiping, undermining fellow employees as well as the organization. According to Juddy et al. (2007:459), trust is a form of employee behavior that is variously associated with increased efficiency and effectiveness (Cuthbert and McDonough 1986), a positive psychological contract (Sparrow 1998), lower employee turnover, (Mishranisationa and Morrissey 1990), organizational flexibility (Gibson and Birkinshaw 2004), organizational performance, (Gould and Williams 2003), individual performance (Meyer and Gavins 2005), and successful change (Morgan and Zeffane 2003).

Ince and Gul (2011:106) argue that communication is at the center of the organization's political life, thus communication covers all aspects ranging from the objectives of the organization to the simple daily tasks that are performed by each and every employee. Argenti (2003) sees it as creating a positive atmosphere for all employees of the organization. For without effective communication, every move taken by the organization crumbles down. It is thus important to note that organizations are social units that congregate for production, formed by individuals who have different views and knowledge to reach a common goal. According to Donusumknagi (cited by Ince and Gul 2011: 108), organizational and administrative activities for adapting in and out of organizations and information exchange require an effective and functional communication system. Effective communication helps organizations strengthen employees to reach organizational goals Hinbi et al. (cited by Ince and Gul 2011:107). Communication at the organizational level helps transfer organizational objectives and goals to employees and intra-organization groups, as well as sharing organizational values and beliefs among employees (Demirel 2009)

In summary, organizational politics refers to actions by individual members such as managers and employees, which are directed towards the goal of furthering their own interest without regard to the wellbeing of others and the organization.

Perceptions of organizational politics refer to actions by organizational members that are perceived to be self-interested and directed toward furthering own goals (Kacmar and Baron 2009). Some examples of these actions include withholding information from coworkers, failing to enforce policies and procedures appropriately, using flattery to gain favors, shifting blame, and maligning others to make one look better. Although organizational politics are not sanctioned behaviors, Ferris et al. (2008) claimed that they are present in varying degrees in all organizations. Because it is difficult for an individual to determine accurately if another's behaviors are self-serving, organizational politics researchers have focused almost exclusively on perceptions of such behaviors. Ferris et al. (2009) also pointed out that people's behaviors and attitudes in such settings are largely a result of their perceptions. Thus, when perceptions are high in an organization, organizational members feel a great deal of uncertainty and ambiguity because they do not know what actions will be rewarded, punished, or even recognized. Not surprisingly previous researchers such as Ferris (2005) found that these perceptions are consistent predictors of negative outcomes (for example, Byrne 2005; Ferris et al. 2002; Harris and Kacmar 2005; Kacmar et al. 2009; Rosen et al. 2006; Vigoda 2000, 2008).

Traditionally, managers are known for making political decisions that may derail or move the organization forward. It is therefore critical to explore some of the management perceptions on organizational politics. Cavanaugh et al. (cited by Morehead and Griffin 2004:394) provide interesting results of a survey on managers' perception of political behavior. The results of the survey revealed that political behavior:

- Influenced salary decisions in their organizations;
- Has an effect on hiring decisions;
- Is more prevalent at higher levels of the organization than at lower levels;
- Is unfair, unhealthy, and irrational; and
- Is an undesirable and unavoidable facet of organizational life.

The results of the survey also show that political behavior in organizations, like power is pervasive. Instead of ignoring or trying to eliminate political behavior, managers might more fruitfully consider, when and how politics can be used constructively. As eluded by Morehead and Griffin (2004: 396), managers blame ambiguity of goals, scarce resources, changing technology and environment, the impact of none programed decisions and organizational change as causative factors for political behavior. However, managers perceive that political behavior can successfully be addressed by way of controlling information and lines of communication, using outsides experts, controlling the agenda, game playing, image building, building coalitions, and controlling decision parameters.

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Factors Influencing Organizational Politics Perceptions (OPP)

According to Ferris et al. (2002: 179, 254), Organizational Politics Perception (OPP) is underpinned by three categories of "antecedent" influences, namely:

- Job/work influences;
- Organizational influences; and
- Personal influences.

Job/Work Influences

Draf (cited by Muhahammad 2007: 237) identifies scarcity of resources and job ambiguity as determinants of organizational politics. According to Muhammad (2007: 236), when organizational resources that employees value (for example, monetary incentives, promotions or advancement promotions) are limited, they would need to compete for such resources. Muhahammad (2007: 237) suggests that one way to influence the outcome of organizational resource allocations is to rely on political tactics in a self-serving fashion.

Organizational Influences

Ferris et al. (2002: 179) identified centralization, formalization and hierarchical level as variables for organizational influences. Centralization refers to the degree to which power is differently distributed with an organization (Schmike et al. 2000). On the other hand, formalization refers to the rules, regulations and written policies. Highly formalized organizations are characterized by written policies, procedures and rules. Thus, highly formalized organizations attempting to provide clear expectations about how people should behave in certain situations. This relationship indeed is what the research findings suggest.

Personal Influences

Personal influences can be refereed to as individual influences because they vary from one individual to another. These factors include core self-evaluation, Machiavellianism, narcissism, employee training and several more influences depending on situations prevailing in the respective organization.

According to Robins (2012:114), personality refers to the dynamic concept describing the growth and development of an individual's whole psychological system. In a nutshell, personality can be viewed as the sum total of ways in which an individual reacts to and interacts with others in an organization.

Core self-evaluation refers to the perspective wherein individuals see themselves as capable or incapable in controlling the environment in which they work (Robins 2012: 114). In line with this thought, individuals with a negative core self-evaluation tend to dislike themselves as powerless in the organization, hence becoming less political.

Locus of control is considered very central in influencing organizational politics as it explains the degree to which individuals believe that they are masters of their own fate or destiny.

The personality characteristic of Machiavellianism is named after Nicollo Machiavelli who researched widely on how power can be gained and used. The Machiavellianism study, despite being conducted many years ago, is still relevant to contemporary organizational practices as cited in Robins and Judge (2012:165), when they describe the extent to which power can be amassed and used in a contemporary organization as a political weapon to control others. Robins and Judge (2012:166) defines Machiavellianism as the degree to which an individual is pragmatic, maintains emotional distance and believe that ends can justify needs. The Machiavellianism study focused on high and low Mach personalities are to behavioral outcomes, which are still relevant to contemporary practices.

Narcissism describes a person who has a sense of -importance, who requires much admiration, sense of entitlement and is very arrogant (Brown and Hall 2004: 588). Individuals, who are considered narcissists, consider themselves as better leaders than their colleagues. In current management practices, and in particular at the national electricity provider, cases where individual managers consider themselves as the best are innumerable. Some employees view themselves as indispensable and that if they are dismissed from work, the organization will not function properly. For example, the general manager of the biggest power station, Gwariro viewed his position as the most influential, to the extent that he believed that the current power outages were partly caused by his suspension from the organization (Newzimbabwe 2012)

The individual training offered to employees play a major role in enhancing the political life of the respective employees in the organization. The national electricity provider provides some training to some to its employees. According to Halepota and Shah (2011: 283), training is an important positive predictor of individual positive attitudes. By providing training to employees, the organization has a chance to reshape its organizational culture, which in a way has an impact on the prevailing political environment.

In a nutshell, it is clear from the discussions above that politics in an organization is influenced by both individual and organizational factors. While organizational factors relate to the organization as a function of the organization's characteristics, individual factors relate to all the facets that reside in the individual employee such as Machiavellian and narcissism. By and large, both are considered by Robins and Judge (2012: 130) as major influencers of organizational politics and managers are warned to identify and measure such tendencies in order to successfully deal with them.

DISCUSSION

KMO and Bartlett's Test

The adequacy of the sample and the suitability of employing factor analysis were determined by the K-M-O measure of sampling adequacy and the Bartlett test of sphericity. The K-M-O measure of sampling adequacy was performed to ensure that the sample employed was adequate. Table 1 presents the results.

Table 1: The K-M-O and Bartlett Test

K-M-O and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Oklin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.906
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	6513.680
	df	253
	Sig	0.000

The K-M-O value is 0.906. This signifies that statistically, the sample is adequate. The high KMO value in excess of 0.90 signifies an excellent sample. Regarding the Bartlett's test of sphericity, the value is below 0.005. This means that the strength of the relationship among variables is not strong. Resultantly, this measure shows that factor analysis is a suitable statistical technique to analyze the data.

Exploratory Factor Analysis

The exploratory factor analysis identified three factors by means of the Varimax rotation. According to Field (2007: 749), Varimax is a method of orthogonal rotation that attempts to maximize the dispersion of factor loadings by loading a smaller number of variables highly onto each factor resulting in more interpretable cluster of factors. Factor loadings equal and above 0.40 are considered to be significant and are used in the analysis (Statistica 2006). Table 2 shows that all 23 statements loaded onto four factors. The factor loadings are shown in the Table 2.

Factor 1: Managerial Behavior

A total of eight statements, namely 10, 13, 11, 9,8,12,7 and 6 loaded on factor 1. All the statements under factor 1 relate to the manner in which managers deal with organizational politics within the national electricity provider. The factor is thus labeled as managerial behavior. Statement 10, 13 and 11 are above 0.80, which suggests that respondents are dissatisfied with the manner in which managers perceive organizational politics. The factor explains a variance of 42. Managers are expected to behave in a manner

Table 2: Factor loadings: Perceptions of organisational politics

Statements	*No*	*Factors*			
		1	*2*	*3*	*4*
It is common to push the blame on others	10	.891			
Infighting is prevalent among employees	13	.875			
Criticisms among peers is common	11	.859			
Hiding of important information is common	9	.794			
Favouritism is common	8	.765			
Peers support each other	12	.643			
The central government controls the department	7	.638			
Managers make decision that derail the organisation	6	.565			
The department is regulated by rules	24		.903		
The department is regulated by policies	25		.888		
The department does have clear objectives	22		.882		
Employees are not sure on how to achieve targets	21		.838		
Employees feel that they can accomplish personal goals	18		.755		
Employees are not sure whether their employment contracts can be renewed	19		.722		
Decisions are made through consultations	16		.646		
Backstabbing is common in this department	2			.864	
Gossiping is a common phenomenon in this department	3			.849	
Employees' views are upheld	1			.823	
The department relies on informal communication for advertising new jobs	4			.748	
The department relies on informal communication when inviting employees to staff meetings	5			.560	
Promotions are based on favouritism	17				.708
Managers decisions are upheld	23				.599
Employees are not sure of what their targets are	20				.539
% of variance explained		42.42%	16.59%	9.01%	6.24%
Cumulative percentage		42.42%	59.02%	68.04%	74.28%

that successfully reduces dysfunctional politics. Contrary to this, the finding suggests that managers at the national electricity are part of the problem as they contribute to a dysfunctional work environment. For example, they engage in negative criticism, blame their peers, favour other employees and make disastrous decisions. Managerial behavior plays a major role in an organization, which is predominantly politicized. According to George and Konstantinos (2011: 1257), the behavior of a manager is a determinant factor to organizational success. It includes such aspects as divergent management cognition, how managers develop their mental models of competition and how managers effectively meet organizational goals (Daniels et al. 2002). It is clear from the above that respondents (employees) are not happy with managerial behavior. Jennifer et al. (2012) argue that managerial support to the employee is of critical importance as it provides emotional or instrumental resources. Unsupportive managerial behavior is detrimental to the employee's motivation (Cohen et al. 2000). Hence, managerial behavior has a negative effect of reducing productivity at the national electricity provider.

Factor 2: Poor Communication of Objectives

Statements 24, 25, 22, 21, 18, 19 and 16 are all loaded on factor 2 and are related to poor communication of objectives within the national electricity provider. The factor is thus labeled as poor communication of objectives. Seven factor loadings out of eight are above 0.75, which shows good reliability and consistency. It however gives support that communication of objectives at the national electricity provider is problematic. For a massive organization such as the national electricity provider, effective communication is a basic requirement. Without effective communication, the organization is destined to collapse. The rules, regulations and policies save as the communication tool for the national electricity provider. Unfortunately respondents are not happy with the overall communication of objectives. The factor explains a variance of 16.59 percent. Literature reviewed underscores the importance of communication of organizational objectives as a pillar of strengths underpinning the success of the organization. Ince and Gul (2011:107) posit that organizations that fail to effectively communicate objectives to its internal stakeholders such as the employees are unlikely to meet their targets. The national electricity provider has fallen prey to this as respondents have decried that objectives are not effectively communicated.

Factor 3: Unexpected Employee Behavior

Five statements namely, 2, 3, 1, 4, and 5 are loaded on factor three with factor 2,3 and 1 reflecting factor loadings above 0.80. Statement 4 had 0.748, while statement 5 had 0.539. All the statements under this factor deal with unexpected employee behavior suggesting that employee behavior at the national electricity provider is problematic. This suggests that employees at the national electricity provider engage in dysfunctional politics. The factor explains a variance of 9.01 percent. Judy et al (2007:459) identify lack of trust by employees towards their managers as a recipe for unexpected employee behavior leading to gossiping and backstabbing as examples, thereby negatively affecting performance, effectiveness and the general healthy flow of work processes.

Factor 4: Unhealthy Managerial Practices

Only three statements, namely 17, 23, and 20 loaded on factor 4. All the statements relate to unhealthy managerial practices at the national electricity provider. The factor loadings confirm that unhealthy managerial practices present problems for the organization, in particular engaging in favoritism, poor decision-making as well as setting unrealistic targets for the employees. The factor explains a variance of 6.24 percent. Managers are at the fulcrum of the organization, as such their practices must unite employees, support the organizational goals as opposed to engaging in favoritism and making decision that derail the organization. Managers must be good politicians, they should shun favoritism, gossiping and backstabbing, to name a few. Butcher and Clarke (1999: 11) posit that managers who are good politicians must be able to read hidden agendas, work on the informal and formal decision-making processes and decipher the subtext of what is said and not said. Politics is so central to managerial work, hence skills to improve managerial practices should also be central to the development of managers (Clarke 1999:11). Managers at the national electricity provider do engage in managerial practices that are counterproductive (unhealthy) as reflected by the findings.

Reliability

The reliability of the four factors is shown in Table 3. It is clear from the table that all the factors have a return of reliability coefficient, which is well above 0.7. The high alpha coefficient indicates that the four factors possess excellent reliability and internal consistency.

Table 3: Reliability statistics

Data sets	*Cronbach's alpha*
Factor 1	0.927
Factor 2	0.934
Factor 3	0.889
Factor 4	0.859

The results showed that managerial behavior, poor communication of objectives, unexpected employee behavior and unhealthy managerial practices are common perceptions of organizational politics at the national electricity provider. In a nutshell, managers and employees are the main players in the political game.

Managers are at the fulcrum of the organization, and the success or failure entirely depends on the manager's perceived view on organization politics and the manner in which they participate in the political game. It was found that managerial behavior presents some problems for the majority of the employees at the national electricity provider. These findings are in line with George and Konstantinos (2011: 1257), as they argue that the capability of an organization depends on managerial perceptions of the environment. Pecotich et al. (1999) posit that executive behavior and interpretation of the environment in which the organization operates vary; hence it is "how managers perceive the environment". Therefore, the manners in which managers perceive organizational politics (handling interpersonal relationships, employee promotions and decision-making as examples) are matters of concern at the national electricity provider.

The national electricity provider's communication is problematic; it lacks the effective interactive communication of organizational objectives across the board. Organizations therefore require effective communication of objectives in order to enable the workforce to be part and parcel of what is prevailing in the organization. Ince and Gul (2011:106) assert that communication of organizational objectives facilitates internalization of goals and policies from all employees, give the idea that employees are considered as important interactivity, increase job satisfaction, maintain operation of the organization and attain the objective of the organization. The efficiency of an organization is dependent on effective communication of objectives as much as by the management (Demirtus 2010). The paper thus has identified a lack of communication of the objectives at the national electricity provider as cause for concern. If the national electricity provider effectively communicates the objectives of the organization across all departments, there is bound to be support of the organizational objectives by the majority of the workforce.

Unwanted employee behavior has been identified by the research as being problematic. To this effect, trust amongst employees and management has been identified as the dependent variable that gives rise to wanted or unwanted employee behavior. If there is trust between employees and management, the organization is bound to be productive, efficient, and flexible as well as posting low levels of employee turnover (Juddy et al. 2007:459). The national electricity provider is characterized by high levels of mistrust amongst employees and management. For example, the prevalence of gossiping and backstabbing as forms of unexpected employee behavior.

Unhealthy managerial practices have been identified as problematic for employees at the national electricity provider. Managers are in most of the cases found wanting at the national electricity provider. For example, unfair labor practices, unfairness on allocation of resources and staff promotions are prevalent at the national electricity provider.

CONCLUSION

Organizational politics is an inevitable development in any organization and is perceived differently by both managers and employees. It is evident from the primary research and literature review that the perceived view of organizational politics at the national electricity provider is skewed towards negative perceptions of politics. Managerial behavior, employee behavior, communication of organization's objectives and unhealthy managerial practices presents potential challenges for power utility. The following article explores the effects of organizational politics at the national electricity provider.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It becomes clear from the above that organizational politics has the potential to have widespread impact on the effectiveness and efficiency of organizations through various organizational processes such as performance appraisal, resource allocation and improving managerial decision-making. The research revealed four (4) factors as negatively affecting organizational life at the national electricity provider. The factors are managerial behavior, poor communication of objectives, unexpected employee behavior and unhealthy managerial practices. It is therefore recommended that:

- Managers should attend regular in-house and outside training on contemporary managerial behaviors. Managers must be abreast of current and situational behaviors in the respective industry and in particular, all employees holding positions of managers must attend some regular appraisal sessions on expected managerial behaviors in public enterprises. Most managers lack management experience, therefore offering some managerial development courses would improve their perception and managerial behavior.
- Organizational objectives must be communicated to all employees. The research therefore recommends that a clear communication strategy of the objectives should be put in place. For example, objectives of the organizations must be part of the mission statement and must be explained and taught to all employees then openly displayed on company notice boards so that everyone becomes aware of what the organizations entails to achieve.
- A code of ethics and code of conduct must be compiled, communicated and signed by all employees. The code should be compiled by experts in consultation with the employees. It is in this code of ethics and conduct where "unwanted employee behaviors" are clearly spelt out and the proposed action is specified for those who fail to abide by the code. The code will also address issues related to unhealthy managerial practices and the action taken against managers who engage in such unhealthy managerial practices.
- Overall, the national electricity provider must regularly have workshops on effective communication, appraisals on company policy, objectives, and the does and don'ts of organizational life.

NOTE

1. This article was extracted from the PhD study by Emmanuel Muthambara (student number 23385189) at the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus). The degree was conferred in May 2014.

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