Measuring Organizational Political Perceptions in Construction Industry Employees

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Abstract
Although organizational politic behavior is present in every firm, it is often difficult to measure. The "Politics Perception Scale", developed by Kacmar and Ferris [1] in 1991, was used to measure the political behavior within the firm. The absence of such a research for construction sector employees is the starting point of this study. In this study, the perceptions of organizational politics encountered in construction sector employees were analyzed using the "Politics Perception Scale". Data on the items directed to the participants were collected by a questionnaire. Frequency distribution of measurement items was obtained and reliability analysis was made for the data. Graphical distributions of the items used in the measurement of the factors that constitute the perception of organizational politics scale (POPS) are presented. Correlation coefficients between factors were calculated by correlation analysis. The results showed that among the 5 factors that constitute the perception of organizational politics scale, the factor of "self-serving content" ranks first in organizational behavior.

Keywords: Organizational politics, political perception, construction firms.

1. Introduction
Today, the concept of organizational politics is one of the controversial issues in many areas. A major research organization has examined the effects of organizational politics on organizational outcomes [2]. Organizational politics refers to "a social impact process, where behaviours are strategically designed to maximize short or long-term personal interests, despite the interests of others"[3]. Whether political behaviour is useful or harmful to companies depends on how this behaviour is perceived rather than the reality [4]. Cho and Yang [5] stated that organizational politics behaviours have significant impacts on the motivation of the employee and this is reflected in the employee's work performance.
Even though there is no doubt that domestic politics is a common phenomenon in every organization (e.g. [6]; [7]; [8]; [9]), little is known about the nature and limits of organizational politics ([10]; [11]; [13]). In the literature, there are two approaches dominating the discussions related to organizational politics. The first approach focuses on the impact tactics of employees in business life, which is the best indicator of political behaviour. Many studies have investigated possible causes and consequences for impact tactics, along with possible typologies ([11]; [13]; [14]; [15]; [16]). The second approach is relatively new and focuses on individual perceptions of organizational politics rather than political behaviour or impact tactics of the employees. According to Kacmar and Ferris [1] and Kacmar and Carlson [17], perception of organizational politics represents considering the work environments of the respondents as a political area in nature, interfering with the personal interests of others and thus the degree of individual injustice.
The literature review has shown that the concept of perceptions of organizational politics is not investigated for companies operating in the construction industry. In this study, a research was conducted for companies operating in the construction industry by benefiting from perceptions of

organizational politics studies ([18]; [19]) carried out for different sectors.

1.1 Organizational Politics

Organizational politics are considered as a significant dimension of organizational functioning. Ferris et al. [20] defined organizational politics as behaviours strategically designed to maximize personal interests. However, most people think that this definition reflects the concept of organizational politics negatively. Mitzberg [6] suggested that organizational politics reflects illegitimate power relations between members of an organization. Gandz and Murray [4] stated that employees often see politics as unfair and abusive behaviours. Many studies ([21]; [22]; [23]; [24]; [25]) have focused on the "perceptions of organizational politics", in which organizational politics that reveals individual and organizational results is conceptualized negatively, and its relationship to negative policies.

According to various definitions in the literature, the political behaviours in the work place are actions that are not officially approved by the workplace and aim at achieving one's personal goals [26]. These political behaviours include personal gain, stabbing in the back (daggering), adulation, skipping the chain of orders for approval, lobbying higher levels for better job assignments or promotion or not sharing the necessary information with other employees. Here, it is important to stress that while similar political behaviour can often be ignored by the organization, these behaviours are not strictly prohibited in organizations [27]. In other words, the existence of political behaviours that are theoretically opposite to organizational policies can improve employees' perceptions of politics.

In this study, the "Perceptions of Organizational Politics Scale", which was developed by Kacmar and Ferris [1] and translated into Turkish by Erol [18], was applied to the construction sector employees. A total of 21 items were used to measure the factors. These factors are "Go Along To Get Ahead Content (F_1)", "Self-serving Content (F_2)", "Coworkers Content (F_3)", "Cliques Content (F_4)" and "Pay and Promotion Content (F_5)", respectively. The items used for measurement are given in Table 1.

2. Research Methodology

In order to measure perceptions of organizational politics of the employees working in the construction industry, a survey study titled "Perceptions of Organizational Politics Scale (POPS)" was conducted and the data were collected. The survey form used within the scope of this study was prepared in the light of the principles set by scientific research methods [28]. The evaluation of the survey was done with a five-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree". The survey form titled "Perceptions of Organizational Politics in the Construction Industry" consists of 3 main sections and includes 25 questions. 4 of these 25 questions are categorical and 21 are Likert-type questions. The items (scales) used to collect the data required and measure the factors within the scope of the study were developed by adapting the scales, whose reliability has been tested in previous scientific studies (e.g. [18]), to the context of the construction industry.

The data obtained through the survey with 25 questions were carefully transferred to the computer. Frequency analysis related to the measurement items was performed with SPSS program. The distribution and average of the data received in regard with the measurement items were determined using the frequency analysis. The reliability analysis was carried out with the SPSS program in order to measure the reliability of the data collected. The perceptions of organizational politics of the employees working in the construction industry were tried to be measured by interpreting the responses of the respondents to each measurement item with the help of graphics. Finally, the correlation analysis was performed to determine whether there is a correlation between the factors that constitute the perceptions of organizational politics.

3. Findings

The sample of this study, which aims to examine the perceptions of organizational politics, was determined by considering the construction companies and projects (sector employees) operating within the province of Balıkesir. Project managers, project directors, technical office managers, construction supervisors and engineers were identified as the target respondents of the research. After determination of the sample and target respondents, a total of 60 construction companies or construction projects that meet the specified criteria were contacted either by visiting or by telephone and e-mail. 47 respondents participated in the survey carried out within the scope of the study. Respondents filled out the entire two-page survey form, which was prepared in a clear format. The survey study aimed at measuring perceptions of organizational politics was evaluated in the light of the information received from 47 respondents.

Table 1. Perceptions of organizational politics scale

Measurement order	Factors	Items to measure factors
1. item	Go Along To Get Ahead Content	Those, who quitted the job, left the work place because they realized that only hard work was not enough to get ahead.
2. item		In times of crisis and uncertainty, it is seen that those who get out of the works evasively get ahead better.
3. item		There is no place for those who say "yes sir" to everything; It is desirable to come up with good ideas even if it means disagreement with the superiors.
4. item		Employees are encouraged to say their thoughts, even if their ideas are criticized.
5. item		In our department, the people with higher performance get promoted.
6. item		The hard-working people receive the rewards.
7. item	Self-serving Content	There are opposing groups that hinder productivity.
8. item		Most employees appear to have created rules to meet their needs in cases, where the rules are not clear.
9. item		While the resources (budget, material, etc.) are distributed, the saying "breasts are not given to a baby who does not cry" really works.
10. item		Administrators use a selection system to hire people whose perspectives are similar to them or who can help them in the future.
11. item		The rules and policies regarding promotion and salary are fair, but the way superiors implement these rules and policies is unfair.
12. item	Coworkers Content	My colleagues do not help others.
13. item		If a colleague offers you help, he will do so not because he really cares about you, but because he is expecting something from you in return.
14. item		When my superior (supervisor) communicates with me, his purpose is not to help me, but to show himself better to other in the work place.
15. item	Cliques Content	A new recruiter soon learns who to get along with.
16. item		You can get what you want if you have a man.
17. item		There have been influential groups that no one can afford to oppose.
18. item		Regardless of the quality of the work you do, you can get on with your business by getting on well with everyone.
19. item	Pay and Promotion Content	Salary and promotion policies are reported to employees.
20. item		Rules and policies regarding promotion and salary are clearly defined.
21. item		Bilateral relations, rather than the quality and amount of the work done, are effective in salary and promotion.
The evaluation was made considering that items 3-4-5-6-19-20 are reversed.		

The age range of the respondents participated in the research is given in Figure 1. Considering the data given in Figure 1, 6.4% of the participants are "20-25", 44.7% are "26-30", 10.6% are "31-35", 19.1% are "36-40", 10.6% are "41 -45", 4.3% are in the "46-50" and 4.3% are in the "51 and over" age range, respectively. The answers given in response to the question "Do you feel that you are working in a corporate company?" are shown in Figure 2. 87% of the respondents consider themselves working in a corporate company, while the remaining 13% do not feel this way.
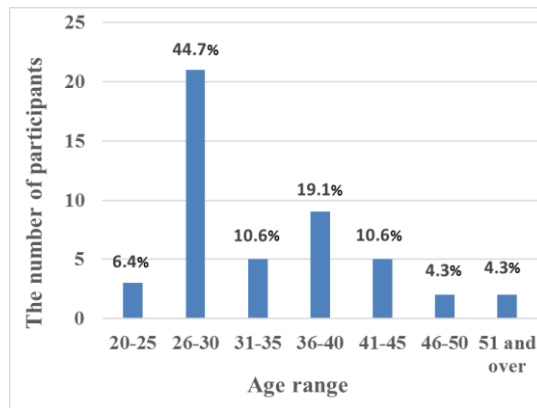
Figure 1. Age range of the respondents
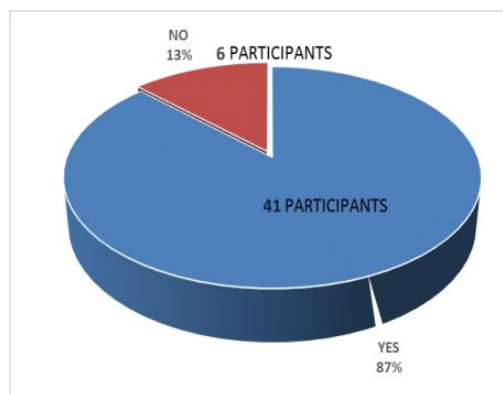
Figure 2. Do you feel as working in a corporate company?

The answers given in response to the question "Did you get benefits by using your bilateral relations in the workplace?" are shown in Figure 3. 89% of the respondents stated that they did not try to have any benefits, while the remaining 11% stated that they obtained benefits by using their bilateral relations. Finally, the answers given in response to the question whether the respondents are always honest at the workplace are shown in Figure 4. 72% of the respondents stated that "yes, I am acting honestly", while the remaining 28% stated that "I am not acting honestly".
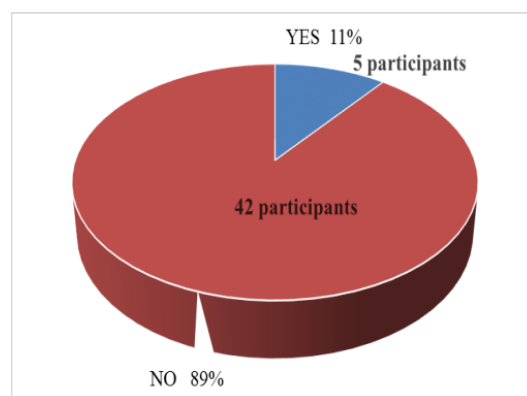
Figure 3. Did you get benefits by using your bilateral honestly elations in the workplace?
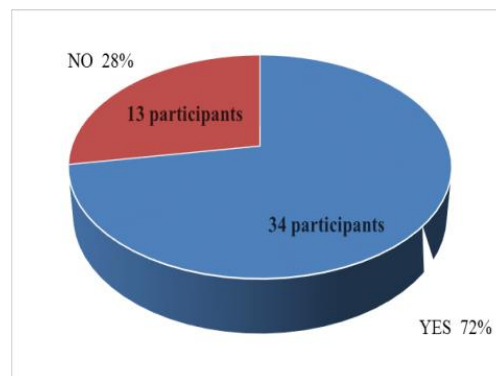
Figure 4. Do you think that you always act at the work place?

The distribution of the data obtained related to the items given in the Likert scale as a result of the frequency analysis is given in Table 2. In the measurement performed with the Likert scale, the item "you can get what you want if you have a man" received the highest number of responses, which is "I strongly agree" by 18 respondents. On the other hand, the item "my colleagues do not help others" received the highest number of responses, which is "I strongly disagree" by 6 respondents.

The Perceptions of Organizational Politics Scale (POPS) developed by Kacmar and Ferris [1] consists of five subscales (factors). A total of 21 items were presented to the respondents for the measurement of each factor. It is statistically important to measure whether the data obtained from the respondents are reliable or not. Reliability analyses of the data obtained were performed with the help of SPSS program. Reliability analysis is performed in order to determine the consistency of the questions included in the scale. Cronbach's alpha (α) values obtained from reliability analysis, and mean and standard deviation values related to factors are given in Table 3.

Cronbach's alpha (α) value is a weight standard change mean found by proportioning the sum of variances of the questions in the example to the general variance. A Cronbach's alpha (α) value of 0.70 and above means that the questions in that group will be considered reliable [29]. Since the Cronbach's alpha value of all factors given in Table 3 is greater than 0.70, the measurement performed is statistically reliable.

At this stage of the study, the distribution of the items used for the measurement of each factor and the means of the factors are presented in Figure 5. The average of 6 items regarding the "Go Along To Get Ahead Content" factor was found to be 3.199. The 2nd and 5th items received the highest value (3.489), while the 1st item received the lowest value. Considering the "Self-serving Content" factor, 9th item received the highest value (4.106), while the 11th item received the lowest value (3.683), and the average of the factor was found to be 3.889. The average of "Coworkers Content" factor was found to be 3.135, while the 13th item received the highest value (3.255) and the 12th item received the lowest value (3.00), respectively. The average of "Cliques Content" factor was found to be 3.638, while the 16th item received the highest value (3.979) and the 18th item received the lowest value (3.298). At last, the "Pay and Promotion Content" factor was measured by 19th, 20th and 21st items, and the 21st item received the highest value (3.511) and the 20th item received the lowest value (3.340). The average of the measured factors was found to be 3.433.

Table 2. Frequency distribution of measurement items

| Questionnaire Items	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Not Decided		Agree		Strongly Agree		Average
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
1	4	8.5	16	34.0	14	29.8	12	25.5	1	2.1	2.787
2	1	2.1	11	23.4	7	14.9	20	42.6	8	17.0	3.489
3	2	4.3	12	25.5	15	31.9	14	29.8	4	8.5	3.128
4	2	4.3	17	36.2	9	19.1	14	29.8	5	10.6	3.064
5	1	2.1	6	12.8	14	29.8	21	44.7	5	10.6	3.489
6	0	0	15	31.9	10	21.3	18	38.3	4	8.5	3.234
7	0	0	5	10.6	9	19.1	26	53.3	7	14.9	3.745
8	2	4.3	3	6.4	1	2.1	27	57.4	14	29.8	4.021
9	1	2.1	2	4.3	5	10.6	22	46.8	17	36.2	4.106
10	1	2.1	3	6.4	6	12.8	23	48.9	14	29.8	3.979
11	2	4.3	7	14.9	8	17.0	19	40.4	11	23.4	3.683
12	6	12.8	14	29.8	9	19.1	10	21.3	8	17.0	3.000
13	4	8.5	13	27.7	8	17.0	11	23.4	11	23.4	3.255
14	2	4.3	14	29.8	11	23.3	15	31.9	5	10.6	3.149
15	2	4.3	5	10.6	8	17.0	20	42.6	12	25.5	3.745
16	2	4.3	5	10.6	3	6.4	19	40.4	18	38.3	3.979
17	1	2.1	9	19.1	7	14.9	24	51.1	6	12.8	3.532
18	2	4.3	13	27.7	7	14.9	19	40.4	6	12.8	3.298
19	4	8.5	9	19.1	5	10.6	20	42.6	9	19.1	3.447
20	5	10.6	10	21.3	4	8.5	20	42.6	8	17.0	3.340
21	1	2.1	10	21.3	8	17.0	20	42.6	8	17.0	3.511
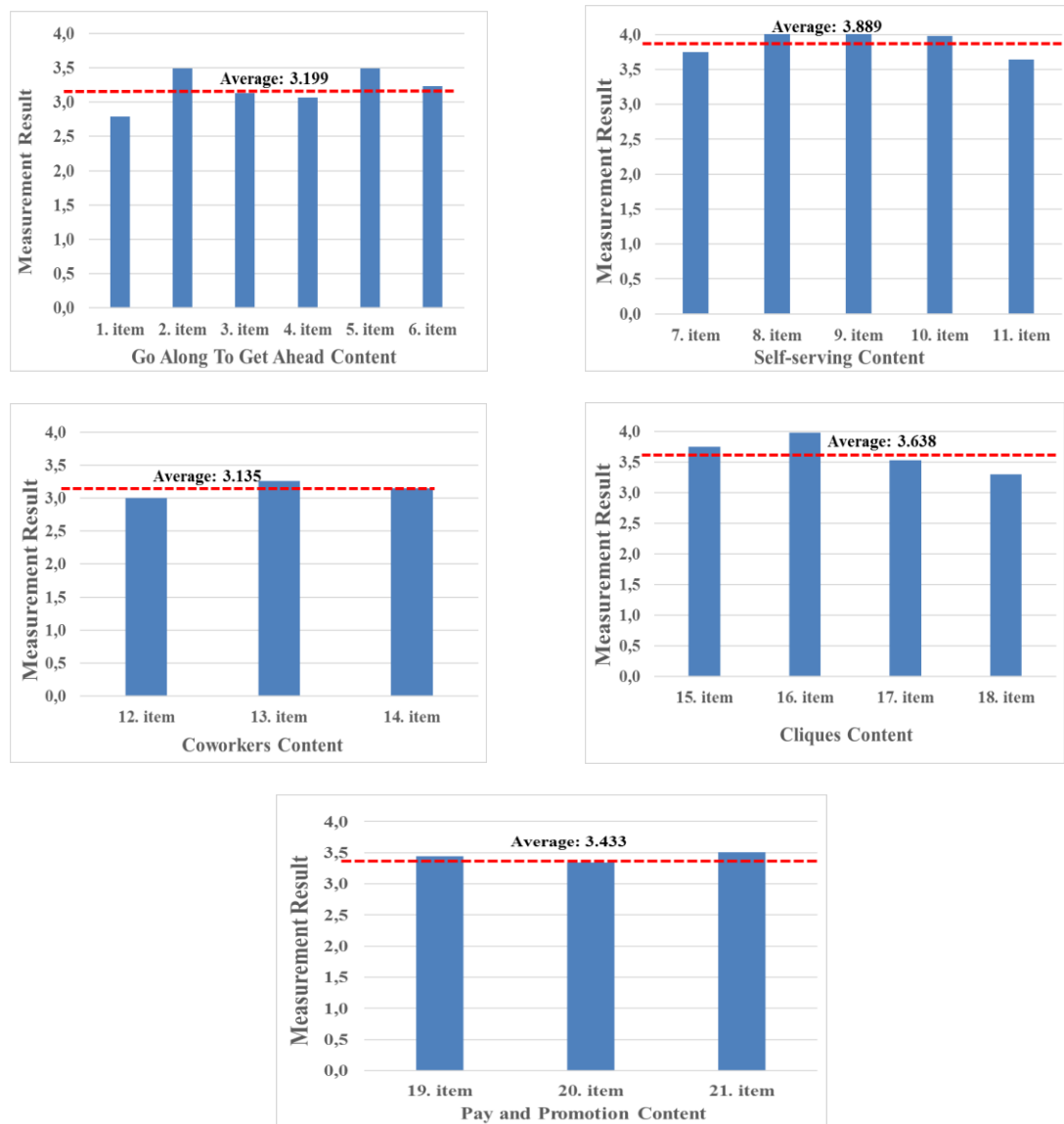
Figure 5. Distribution of the statements used to measure the factors

Table 3. Standard deviations of factors (σ) and Cronbach's alpha (α) values

FACTORS		Number of Questions	Standard Deviation (σ)	Cronbach's alfa (α)
Go Along To Get Ahead Content	(F_1)	6	0.667	0.719
Self-serving Content	(F_2)	5	0.700	0.771
Coworkers Content	(F_3)	3	1.122	0.876
Cliques Content	(F_4)	4	0.835	0.758
Pay and Promotion Content	(F_5)	3	1.033	0.796

In the final stage of the study, the correlation analysis presented in Table 4 was performed in order to determine the correlation between the factors. Correlation analysis is a statistical method used to determine whether there is a linear relationship between two numerical measurements; if any, the direction and severity of this relationship. If the data has a normal distribution, the Pearson correlation coefficient is preferred; however, if the data is not normally distributed, the Spearman Rank correlation coefficient is preferred. Pearson correlation coefficient was used in the analysis as the survey data showed normal distribution. If the correlation coefficient is negative, there is an inverse relationship between the two factors. In other words, one of the factors increases, while the other decreases. If the correlation coefficient is positive, it is interpreted that "one factor increases while the other increases". If the correlation value is less than 0.2, then the correlation between the factors is considered to be "very weak", if it is between 0.2 and 0.4, the correlation is "weak", if it is between 0.4 and 0.6, the correlation is "moderate", if it is between 0.6 and 0.8, the correlation is "high" and if it is greater than 0.8, the correlation is considered to be "very high", respectively. Considering the data given in Table 4, the correlation coefficients of five different matches were found to be statistically significant. All of the correlation coefficients, which were found to be significant, were also positive.

Table 4. Correlation values of the factors with each other

		V_1	V_2	V_3	V_4	V_5
F_1	Pearson Correlation	1	0.317*	0.281*	0.131	0.292*
	Sig.		0.030	0.049	0.379	0.046
F_2	Pearson Correlation	0.317*	1	0.116	0.043	0.473**
	Sig.	0.030		0.438	0.772	0.001
F_3	Pearson Correlation	0.281*	0.116	1	0.334*	0.213
	Sig.	0.049	0.438		0.022	0.151
F_4	Pearson Correlation	0.131	0.043	0.334*	1	0.213
	Sig.	0.379	0.772	0.022		0.151
F_5	Pearson Correlation	0.292*	0.473**	0.213	0.252	1
	Sig.	0.046	0.001	0.151	0.087	
* Significance Value $\leq$ 0.05.						
** Significance Value $\leq$ 0.001.						

4. Conclusions

This study aims to examine the perceptions of organizational politics of technical personnel working in the construction companies or projects within the province of Balıkesir by using the "*Perceptions of Organizational Politics Scale*" developed by Kacmar and Ferris [1]. Considering both the number of construction firms and their projects in Balıkesir and the epidemic disease period, the data obtained from the 47 respondents through the survey is very valuable despite the fact that it is limited.

Considering the findings of the study, it is seen that the age of 80.8% of the respondents is 40 years and under. This shows that data has been collected from a group of young employees. The number of people considering themselves as working in a corporate firm is remarkable. This can be explained by the facts that the city of Balıkesir offers a comfortable working environment, and the low workload and small number of employees of the companies provide a sense of belonging to the employees. For similar reasons, the respondents are more transparent and honest in their bilateral relations.

When the findings obtained from the evaluation of the 5 factors that constitute the Perceptions of Organizational Politics Scale are evaluated, "Self-serving Content" factor takes the first place, followed by "Cliques Content", "Pay and Promotion Content" and "Go Along To Get Ahead Content" factors, respectively. "Coworkers Content" factor takes the last place. It is surprising to see that the average of the factor findings that constitute the Perceptions of Organizational Politics Scale of the respondents, who say that they are mostly honest and transparent in bilateral relations, is above 3.00. In the correlation analysis regarding the factors, the highest correlation coefficient was obtained between "Pay and Promotion Content" and "Self-serving Content" factors. Although the correlation coefficients between the 5 factors that were statistically significant were low, the changes in the factors were in the same direction since the correlation coefficients between these factors are positive.

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