"Workplace Politics in Educational Institutions: An Interpretive Structural Modeling (ISM) Analysis"

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Objective: The focus of this research is on many-sided dimensions of work-based politics in university institutions and schools' approach through institutional and symbolic. The Study aimed to realign the factors and people influencing political status emerging in workplace and check out drawbacks of political formation that can mislead employee interest and performance development.
	Importance: Institutions of learning, though they are mostly given credit for being the knowledge banks, are not the true political-free zones and can be prone to political agendas and workplace politics. Even 'power game' and 'good old boy system' can be easily subsumed in learning institution. These issues can impair employee well-being as well as organize outputs.
	Method: This study used a method called Interpretive Structural Modeling (ISM) to explore key factors in organizational politics. First, the study identified important variables through literature review and 10 expert interviews and defines how these variables influence each other. These relationships are categorized and displayed in a matrix.
	Results: By performing the ISM Analysis, this study aims at identifying and classifying the key characters, which is the powerful as well as the confirmatory which probe into the possible consequences. The study examined thirty causal factors affecting organizational politics. Experts were interviewed to understand how these factors influence each other by using interpretive structural modeling (ISM) and a Cross-impact matrix multiplication applied to classification (MICMAC) analysis and to ascertain the interrelationships between the causal factors.
	Future Implications: This investigation allows access the organizational political behavior in educational settings, which is a beginning of a further studying and creation of the workplace where each person would feel one with the environment through focusing intervention on problematic areas.
	Keywords: Administrative political issues, educational institutions, Interpretive Structural Modeling (ISM), Employee welfare, Power dynamics

Introduction:

The Shadowy Side of Education - Exploring Workplace Politics in Educational Institutions

Human interaction being as complex as it is, education institutions are considered as places of knowledge sanctuaries, but they are not. They too are subject to these complexities. Education for excellence and equally for young minds is one of the topics that is brought up very infrequently as well as the opportunity of the workplace politics can be discovered. Such practice is an example of the 'hidden curriculum' manifested through the unequal power dynamics, favoritism, and networking games which often find confirmation in employment context, no matter what effects in terms of employees' job experiences, quality of their life, and overall efficiency of the organization (Nguyen & Ngo, 2022). Recognition of workplace politics in educational environment and its solution can be stated as one of its most important tasks for multiple reasons. For example, overworking and chronic stress may be deemed to be an exclamation mark on employees' general health and wellness condition. The view to the intrigues that surround politics can make an individual feel ignored, disbelief, and lowered moral of their job. Other than that, their mental and emotional health would also be

affected (Hassan & Ashkanasy, 2015). For one thing, there is decline in the performance standard because of employees getting more absorbed in the institution's politics; thus, the focus is moved from core academic and administrative units which could lead to lower productivity as well as innovation in the institution (Smith, 2020). In addition, ignoring the political aspects of the work environment can cause the phenomenon of evil behavior, which is manifested in microaggressions, discrimination, and finally unethical decision making which, in turn, contribute to destroying the very values and objectives of the organization (Jones, 2018). Undoubtedly, the essence of exploring the intricacies of work politics in educational institutions is important for the achievement of a welcoming and critically productive environment at the levels of individuals, the institution, and the community. These studies attempt to respond to critical issues by deploying Interpretive Structural Modeling (ISM) to identify the basic factors which both exert influence on and are influenced by workplace politics in these platforms.

Literature Review:

Unveiling the Multifaceted Nature of Workplace Politics in Educational Institutions

Workplace politics exist in organizations in diverse and broad range of society and in the education sector the nature of the workplace politics remains unique due to the nature and structure of the education institutions. The fixed power structures, characterized by hierarchies and complicated procedures of bureaucratic systems, cause people who have authority and power to use them to influence others or even to control them (Smith, 2020). People can end up being powerless and helpless. However, they can become angry if this hover of energy is not managed well, potentially contributing to dissatisfied employees and political behavior.

Informal networks made up of either individuals or groups whose ties are based on either social relations or similar interest and by relation also get power over the institution. This type of cooperation can be authentic or counterproductive if underlying motives and tactics are not well defined. While they provide means for collaboration and information sharing, the dark side may cause bias in decision-making, isolation, and self-motivation (Jones 2018). Citizens from excluded groups might develop an unfair concept and such feeling would result in further degrading the existing governance within the institution. Conflict of roles and ambiguity of roles is called a key factor of political issues becoming harsh at the workplace. As employees face clashing obligations, can't understand what is expected from them and are unsure of what their job duties entail, these factors can lead to tension and fear (Brown & Green, 2019). Employees are most of the time ashamed and not self-confident in their activities which leads them to political behaviors that help them to be familiar with environment and achieve their positions especially within the institution (Hassan & Ashkanasy, 2015). The result of the work politics of institutions of learning is a significant issue and this is quite clear in its consequences for the various stakeholders. Research revealed that there exists a significant negative connection between workplace politics and the psychological welfare of workers. A political behavior may cause political participants to gradually develop distrust, nihilistic attitudes and dissatisfaction on work which may impair mental as well as emotional health of the participants (Hassan & Ashkanasy, 2015). This means that employees can become more stressed, tired or even not show up at work, which can negatively affect not only their well-being but performance and engagement which, in the end, leads to lower productivity. Research findings indicated that stressful conditions could constrain the performance of the organization. When employees are over-focused on dealing with political cultures and working on the interpersonal side of things, their concentration squeezes on to the core academic and administrative areas. This may end up affecting the whole institution's efficiency which would eventually lead to lower productivity and innovation, and the decline of the institution itself (Nguyen & Ngo, 2022). Besides, the work environment politics can foster a state of terror and hush, where people shun to voice out their concerns or dissent owing to fear that they might encounter reprisal This is because it may constrain free discourse and cooperation which are basic for the smooth operation of the organization. Formal power structures are the Hierarchical systems and bureaucratic systems which create the opportunities for those holding positions of power in such operations to manipulate or rather control others (Smith, A. B., 2020). Informal coalitions meant Individuals from networks which developed through social ties or common interests can gain more influence than organizational or formal structure that could create bias and lead to exclusion (Jones, M. A., 2018). Demands that are conflicting, expectations that are unclear and job responsibilities that are uncertain may all be stressors that lead to stress and anxiety, making people more likely to engage in political behaviors just to cope up in the given setting leads to Role conflict and ambiguity. (Brown, D. J., & Green, T. P., 2019). This kind of organizational politics can bring about undesirable effects not only to the individual worker but also to the institution. Engaging in political machinations increases the likelihood of developing distrust, cynicism, and dissatisfaction at work, which in turn damages one's psychological and emotional well-being (Hassan, S. S. & Ashkanasy, N. M., 2015). When the employees spend time on politics, their attention to perform functions might be diverted, then their productivity and innovation may be hence got diminished (Nguyen, T. T., Ngo, H. T, 2022).

Workplace Politics within educational establishments, particularly within the realm of higher education, represent a notable area of concern with ramifications for both workforce efficiency and the well-being of employees. Scholarly investigations have pointed to the pivotal roles played by workplace educators and

professionals in academia in shaping the dissemination of knowledge (Rainford, J., 2020). Additionally, partnerships involving academics and professionals, like collaborations between trade unions and researchers, could influence policy outcomes and the welfare of their members (Farrell, L., 2001). Research has also shed light on the influence of organizational politics perceptions on the work-related results of nurses, encompassing facets like job contentment, stress levels, burnout, and intentions to leave their positions (McGrath-Champ, S., Gavin, M., Stacey, M., & Wilson, R., 2022). Furthermore, instances of workplace harassment, including forms like gender-based harassment and bullying, are pervasive within higher education environments, underscoring the necessity for efficacious interventions and protocols to tackle these pressing concerns (Labrague & et al., 2017). These research outcomes emphasize the critical need to comprehend and navigate workplace dynamics within educational institutions to cultivate a work environment that is both constructive and conducive to productivity. Workplace dynamics in educational settings within Indian educational institutions are subject to a multitude of influences. Studies conducted by scholars have proven that the way a workplace is interpreted in relation to inclusivity, the utilization of inclusive methodologies, the overall climate, and the efficacy of leadership have a notable impact on the organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) shown by educators in colleges in western Uttar Pradesh (Panicker, A., Agrawal, R. K., & Khandelwal, U., 2018). Furthermore, it has been observed that demographic factors like age, gender, level of education, and the nature of the organization also have a significant impact on the prevalence of workplace incivility experienced and initiated by employees in service-oriented establishments, including academic institutions in India (Chaudhary, R., Lata, M., & Firoz, M., 2022). These research findings underscore the significance of recognizing individual variations, fostering inclusiveness, and considering socio-demographic elements in the management of workplace relationships within educational environments in India.

Workplace politics in educational institutions can be examined through Interpretive Structural Modeling (ISM) [Sushil., 2012); (Prasad, U. C., & Suri, R. K., 2011)]. ISM facilitates the visualization and comprehension of the intricate relationships and power dynamics present within organizations (Wambach, J. A., 1995). Within educational institutions, ISM can unveil the interconnectedness among technology, authority systems, and employee groups (Byford, I., 2011). Through the application of ISM, it becomes feasible to pinpoint the factors influencing continuity and transformation in the field of education, providing valuable insights for decision-makers and implementers (Hansen, J. V., McKell, L. J., & Heitger, L. E., 1979). Moreover, ISM can assist in investigating the efficiency of organizational frameworks in unionized workplaces within higher education support services, bringing attention to aspects such as participation, union identification, and union efficacy. ISM offers a systematic methodology for dissecting workplace politics and organizational dynamics in educational environments.

Thus, literature showed a landscape of workplace politics in educational institutions. Formal power structures, informal coalitions and role conflict/ambiguity impact on the educational institution. There is the need to resolve the complexity of workplace politics and demands developing the friendly and productive work environment in educational institution.

Methodology & Theoretical Framework

The study utilizes Interpretive Structural Modeling (ISM) which is a qualitative research technique, and which has been popularized in many educational organizations. At the outset, the main variables that are critical in shaping organizational politics are determined after thorough literature reviews and interviews with domain subject-matter experts. After that, interviews were held with experts and defined the nature of pairwise relations between these variables which were put into this category as MT, MA, B or NR. Implications for Interpersonal and Social Communication Finally, the connections were represented in a matrix layout. As a result, the ISM model came into being through the interaction of drivers and dependent variables. In this way, expert's discussions helped refine the model further by constructing more comprehensive and trustworthy scenarios. The critical variables into the ISM analysis of the political climate in the educational institutions' staff teams included employees' professional and personal development, as well as other specific aspects, such as equal distribution of rewards and further opportunities for promotion and career development. Based on the provided introduction and literature review, the following key variables can be considered for the ISM analysis of workplace politics in educational institutions: Based on the provided introduction and literature review, the following key variables (Table 1.1) can be considered for the ISM analysis of workplace politics in educational institutions:

• Independent Variables:
Formal Power Structures: The dimension in research is the organization of people within hierarchical structures which have distinctive lines of bureaucracy and authority.
Informal Coalitions: 'Networks' here means members of social media created by a person through a relationship or interest, who may affect people without any formal structure in a way to create favoritism and indoor outsiders (Jones, 2018).
Role Conflict and Ambiguity: Deriving from the impact of mixed and inconstant job goals and the lack of information in the job description, cognitive load is one of the factors that can lead to cognitive fatigue in humans (Brown & Green, 2019).

• **Dependent Variables:**
Employee Well-being: The degree of engagement of the staff members who work within this institution is a crucial factor, and it incorporates the emotional, mental, and physical aspects, for instance, level of satisfaction, stress, and burnout (Hassan & Ashkanasy, 2015).

Type of Variable	Independent Variables	Formal Power Structures (FPS)	Informal Coalitions (IC)	Role Conflict & Ambiguity (RCA)
Dependent Variables	Employee Well-being (EWB)	MA	B (MT & MA)	MA
	Institutional Performance (IP)	MT	B (MT & MA)	MA
Mediating Variable	Political Behaviors (PB)	MT	MT	MT

Table-1.1 Key Variables influencing Workplace Politics in Educational Institution

Institutional Performance: This multiplier term covers whole raft of effectiveness issues that influence the institution to achieve its educational and executive goals, including factors like academic achievements, students' satisfaction and administrative efficiency (Nguyen & Ngo, 2022).

• **Mediating Variables:**
Political Behaviors: This malleable measure incorporates all the possible strategies and tactics people use to maneuver strategically, which can be gaining allies, sharing information and navigating (Smith, 2020).

MT: Reveals Relationships Between (It depicts mechanisms of interdependency in the educational establishments workplace politics field.) A: Places (Workplace politics in educational institutions are depicted via the table.) The law specifically identifies these relationships as need-driven (exerting influence on others), receptive (affected by others), and instrumental (playing a role in the relationship between other variables). Autonomy variables that include formal structures of power, informal coalitions, and job role conflicts & ambiguities may add up to determine how employees' well-being issues and management performance are managed. Another example of how formal structures can promote, and slow down health simultaneously is when they are too rigid. Hence, they can also usher in more processes for performance improvement. Besides that, coalitions may play for or against wellbeing based on their actions, while similarly they help productivity by teamwork and may also slow it down by purposeful or accidental disruptions of work. Institutional performance and the condition of its workers have a reciprocal relationship in which slower political processes are affected by every autonomous variable.

Matrix construction:

Variables	FPS	IC	RCA	EWB	IP	PB	LS	OC
FPS (Formal Power Structures)	-	MT	B (MT & MA)	MA	MT	MT	B (MT & MA)	MA
IC (Informal Coalitions)	MT	-	B (MT & MA)	B (MT & MA)	B (MT & MA)	MT	B (MT & MA)	MA
RCA (Role Conflict & Ambiguity)	B (MT & MA)	B (MT & MA)	-	MA	MA	MT	MA	MA
EWB (Employee Well-being)	-	-	-	-	MA	B (MT & MA)	B (MT & MA)	MA
IP (Institutional Performance)	-	-	-	-	-	B (MT & MA)	B (MT & MA)	MA
PB (Political Behaviors)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 1.2- Matrix Construction

- **MT: Moves Towards** (One variable causes another to travel in one path in a certain direction.)
- **MA:** No longer depends on (One variable breaks or dries off another.)
- **B (MT & MA):** They interact with each other through an intensely complex mechanism bidirectionally.
- Matrix creation consists of introducing the pairwise correlation of variables into a visually structured expression such as matrix (Table 1.2). In the model presented here, the elements indicate the connections between various variables concerning workplace politics in educational settings. The matrix contains the

information about each cell in the table which reflects the type of relationship between two variables classified as MT, MA, B and NR. For example, "RCA (role conflict and ambiguity)" intersects on "IC (informal coalitions)". Such an entry indicates that Role Conflict & Ambiguity and Informal Coalitions influence each other. In some cases, Role Conflict & Ambiguity could move in the direction of Informal Coalitions, whereas in some cases, it can bring a distance between them. Another noticeable feature is the absence of a cell in the column "PB (Political Behaviors)" intersecting with any other variable, which reflects the insignificance of the variability of Political Behaviors against the other variables from the list. With matrix construction providing of the relations between variables as begins in graphical form the analysis and understanding of the complex interactions inside a system is got easier.

Structural Self-Interaction Matrix (SSIM)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
Formal Power Structures		V	X	A	V	V
Informal Coalitions			X	X	X	V
Role Conflict and Ambiguity				A	A	V
Employee Well-being					A	X
Institutional Performance						X
Political Behaviors						

Figure- 1.1-Structural Self-Interaction Matrix (SSIM)

Table 1.2 provided a comprehensive overview of potential interconnections among various components of workplace politics. It categorized variables such as formal power hierarchies, informal alliances, and role conflicts as factors that could potentially impact aspects like employee welfare and organizational performance. The symbols employed in the table denote the nature of these influences. For example, an "X" represents an intricate, two-way effect, where the factors mutually influence each other. An "A" indicates that one factor is influenced by another, while "V" suggests that one factor impacts another in a specific manner. It is important to understand that this Structural Self-Instructiveness Matrix (SSIM) serves as a starting point for a further investigation recognized as Interpretive Structural Modeling (ISM) (Figure 1.1). ISM assists scholars in grasping the complex web of relationships among these variables. The complex interconnections revealed here call for further exploration to determine the exact nature and direction of these influences. The SSIM played a crucial role as a significant starting point to investigate the potential linkages among distinct aspects of workplace politics. Table 1.2 showed the initial connections among different facets of workplace politics in educational establishments. It specifically focuses on variables such as formal structures, informal groups (coalitions), role clarity (conflict & ambiguity), employee well-being, and institutional performance. The symbols portrayed in the table elucidate a narrative about the reciprocal influence of these factors. The symbol "X" denotes a convoluted two-way influence, where variables mutually affect each other. The symbol "A" signifies that one variable is influenced by another, while "V" indicates that one variable influence another in a particular direction. This preliminary illustration, referred to as a Structural Self-Interaction Matrix (SSIM), merely marks the inception. Although it portrays potential cause-and-effect relationships, it fails to encompass the entire panorama. For instance, if formal structures exert an influence on political behaviors, which subsequently impact employee well-being, the SSIM might overlook this indirect effect. In addition, intricate relationships necessitate further exploration to comprehend their subtleties. The SSIM served as an important launch pad to probe the potential connections among different facets of office politics. It also explored how these connections could affect employee happiness and organizational efficacy within educational establishments.

Reachability Matrix(RM)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	Driving Power
Formal Power Structures	1	1	1	0	1	1	5
Informal Coalitions	0	1	1	1	1	1	5
Role Conflict and Ambiguity	1	1	1	0	0	1	4
Employee Well-being	1	1	1	1	0	1	5
Institutional Performance	0	1	1	1	1	1	5
Political Behaviors	0	0	0	1	1	1	3
Dependence Power	3	5	5	4	4	6	

Figure- 1.2- Reachability Matrix (RM)

Final Reachability Matrix(FRM)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	Driving Power
Formal Power Structures	1	1	1	1*	1	1	6
Informal Coalitions	1*	1	1	1	1	1	6
Role Conflict and Ambiguity	1	1	1	1*	1*	1	6
Employee Well-being	1	1	1	1	1*	1	6
Institutional Performance	1*	1	1	1	1	1	6
Political Behaviors	1*	1*	1*	1	1	1	6
Dependence Power	6	6	6	6	6	6	

Figure- 1.3- Final Reachability Matrix (FRM)

In the realm of workplace dynamics within educational settings, the utilization of power and influence plays a crucial role in facilitating interdisciplinary movement. Connection shows the measure to which external variables influence several factors, for instance, the welfare of employees, conflicts in roles, and the establishment of informal cliques. Conversely, driving power signifies the sway exerted by other elements like established power hierarchies. By analyzing the data, we can pinpoint individuals of significance possessing substantial driving power and grasp how alterations in one aspect can ripple through the system, affecting others. This intricate comprehension of workplace dynamics is imperative for devising strategies aimed at fostering a healthier and more efficient environment for both staff members and the institution.
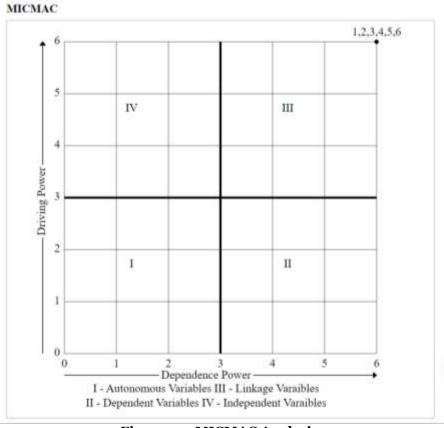

Figure-1.4-MICMAC Analysis

Identifying and categorizing key variables is crucial for developing a system under investigation (Qureshi et al., 2007). Comparing the variable hierarchies in direct, indirect, and potential classifications offers valuable insights. It reinforces the significance of specific variables and reveals others that have an indirect impact yet are crucial but may not be recognized through direct classification. MICMAC is an indirect classification technique that evaluates each variable's driving power and dependency (Mandal and Deshmukh, 1994; Ravi et al., 2005). It allows for thorough exploration of each variable's significance. In the context of MICMAC analysis, "workplace Politics in Educational Institutions" is being studied. (Figure-1.4)

The autonomous variables in the first group exhibit low driving power and low dependence which are not necessarily part of the system as they have few weak links with other variables. The dependent variables form the second cluster which has a weak driving power but has sensitivity to strong dependencies. The third cluster consists of linkage variables that exhibit strong driving power and strong dependence. This makes these variables unstable because any action taken on them would have an effect both on themselves and on other variables. The fourth cluster consists of independent variables that exhibit strong driving power but weak dependency. The driving power and the sensitivity of these variables are illustrated in the table. The display of a FRM which is a product of studying workplace politics in educational institutions through interpretive structural modeling. A matrix shows the driving power of each factor and their dependence on others. The effect of formal structures on others is significant and relates to variable driving power. Numbers are used in entries to indicate the number of steps either direct or indirect needed by one factor to affect another factor. Incorporating individuals and their impact on employees through research informs strategies for improving employee well-being. A final reachability matrix (FRM) (Figure- 1.2 & 1.3) demonstrated that evaluating the interdependence of power structures and employee welfare in an educational institution. The total number of direct or indirect actions required for a factor to affect another is indicated by numbers. A different column was dedicated to driving power where high political behavior values such as 6 indicate that they have a significant impact on other aspects of workplace politics. A potential dependence such as the significant influence of several factors on the welfare of employees indicates this. By identifying key influencers and dependent factors the FRM can help to understand the intricate interconnectedness of institutions.

Level Partitioning(LP)

Elements(Mi)	Reachability Set R(Mi)	Antecedent Set A(Ni)	Intersection Set R(Mi)∩A(Ni)	Level
1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,	1
2	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,	1
3	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,	1
4	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,	1
5	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,	1
6	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,	1

Figure-1.5- Level Partitioning (LP)

Level Partitioning Iterations

Elements(Mi)	Reachability Set R(Mi)	Antecedent Set A(Ni)	Intersection Set R(Mi)∩A(Ni)	Level
1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,	1
2	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,	1
3	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,	1
4	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,	1
5	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,	1
6	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,	1

Figure- 1.6- Level Partitioning Iterations

The Figure 1.5 & 1.6 indicated how strongly interrelated were various aspects of the job market from the power structures to the employee benefits. The number of direct or indirect steps required by one factor to affect another. These numbers determined this. It could be used as an illustration to indicate an indirect effect. Driving power was highlighted in another section where a considerable number like 6 for political behaviors implies, they have broader implications for other aspects of workplace politics. This helped in recognizing potential triggers such as employee well-being being highly influenced by multiple variables. The FRM identified the most significant factor and secondary factors that impact the institution while also providing insight into the intricate interdependence of the institutions.

Conical Matrix(CM)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	Driving Power	Level
1	1	1	1	1*	1	1	6	1
2	1*	1	1	1	1	1	6	1
3	1	1	1	1*	1*	1	6	1
4	1	1	1	1	1*	1	6	1
5	1*	1	1	1	1	1	6	1
6	1*	1*	1*	1	1	1	6	1
Dependence Power	6	6	6	6	6	6		
Level	1	1	1	1	1	1		

Figure- 1.7-Conical Matrix (CM)

Reduced Conical Matrix(CM)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	Driving Power	Level
Formal Power Structures	1	1	1	1*	1	1	6	1
Informal Coalitions	1*	1	1	1	1	1	6	1
Role Conflict and Ambiguity	1	1	1	1*	1*	1	6	1
Employee Well-being	1	1	1	1	1*	1	6	1
Institutional Performance	1*	1	1	1	1	1	6	1
Political Behaviors	1*	1*	1*	1	1	1	6	1
Dependence Power	6	6	6	6	6	6		
Level	1	1	1	1	1	1		

Figure 1.8-Reduced Conical Matrix

This visual representation is a Final Reachability Matrix (FRM) that delves into the functioning of workplace politics within a specific educational institution. It unveils the interconnectedness of several factors, such as power dynamics and employee well-being. Numerical values, such as "2," indicate the proximity between several factors in terms of their impact. The "driving power" column highlights the influential elements, wherein political behaviors with a value of "6" appear to exert considerable influence on other aspects. This analysis allows for the identification of interdependent factors, such as the potential high susceptibility of employee well-being to multiple forces. By discerning the primary influence (political behaviors) and the dependent factors, the Conical Matrix (Figure 1.7 & 1.8) illuminated the intricate network of influences present within the institution. This comprehension is essential for devising strategies aimed at fostering a healthier work environment, benefiting both employees and the overall success of the institution.

Figure 1.8 showed the relationship between different elements, such as power relations and worker well-being, and how they influence one another. Figure 1.1 showed the steps, which can be direct or indirect, for one factor to affect the other. The driving power column highlighted the top contributors. Notably, values with the score of 5 seem to have powerful impact on other categories. That would bring out factors that were dependent which may affect the employee's well-being through a lot of components thus making it prone to many forces. Through identification of the predominant influence and the components under its control, the FRM reveals the secret of workings within the organization. Such knowledge allowed the development of tactics that promote a healthier workplace where employees and the organization are more productive in achieving its goals.

Result & Discussion

For educational institutions which are frequently thought of as the custodians of knowledge and academic pursuits, human interaction can sometimes bring up its messy complexity. The underside of academic rigor

and teaching pedagogics is hidden - the existence of work politics in universities. This complex matrix of power dynamics, unspoken allegiances and constant strategic play, though indiscernible, strongly influences the quality of life of the employees and the efficiency of the institution. This research focuses on this quite common but highly ignored aspect of these settings, which utilizes Interpretive Structural Modeling (ISM) to look at the different dimensions of office politics and how it impacts employees and their performance. The research brought forth the intersection of multiple factors that play a significant role in the health of people and the success of the organization. At the core lie three independent variables: Formal power structures comprising of hierarchical systems and procedures defining who has what authority are one source of power. Networks formed by informal coalitions through personal ties and shared interests are influencers beyond the formal structure. Uncertainty and conflicting demands in roles are also a source of power. Such variables jointly behave in a complicated drift of work politics. While formal power structures may improve processes and make things more efficient, they can also be bad for employee well-being and limit creativity if too much rigidity in the hierarchy results in people feeling woefully disempowered and having too little individual agency. On the contrary, informal coalitions work towards enhancing collaboration and sharing of knowledge. However, they can turn towards breeding grounds for favoritism, exclusion and unethical conduct which leads to the compromise of employee's welfare and organizational performance. Furthermore, role conflict and role ambiguity can precipitate stress, anxiety, and dissatisfaction, adversely affect health. But, with this uncertainty comes the catalyst for change: individuals may start to ask questions, improve their communication, and eventually lead to the betterment of the group. Political attitude is a major and integral part of the total system that contains all those interactions. The people involved in this process are using different methods and tactics. The role of outside powers varies, it may be information spreading, cooperation or use of specific tools of manipulation. The former are beneficial while the latter are disruptive. Practices like playing favorites and unfairness in general not only create a negative atmosphere at the workplace, but they also reduce collaboration and later influence organizational performance. Occasionally those who are using strategic and ethical political actions would solve complex problems, implement improvements and build cooperation which would have positive effects on the efficiency of the institution and employees' health. On the other hand, there are especially noticeable limits to this investigation as well. Unlike indifferent analysis of one organization, all educational institutions may have different problems. In fact, narrowing the research to specialists only would not provide enough explanation about the feelings of the students within the campus. However, this research also has some limitations. Notwithstanding this. It still gives major lessons to educators in the process of creating a better working environment. Staff trust can grow by reducing, or at least lessening, the negative aspects of authoritarian leadership on the part of staff. A transparent culture encourages open communication; with such culture, the airing of issues here is made easy thus laying the foundation of the feeling of fairness and acceptance. Teamwork between private and public networks can bring out innovations, and members of the informal networks would also become a part of one community. For example, by building linkages between different units and putting together various competencies and knowledge, institutions provide an avenue where they can disclose fresh insights and techniques. Role clarity and managing conflict in the workplace would lead to stress reduction while on the other hand, employee wellness would be increased. Job descriptions with elaborate explanations of what is expected in the given job as well as responsibilities and duties can increase the confidence of the workers. As a result, they work in a better performance and job satisfaction mood. The formation of precise principles of ethics can hinder foul play and reduce the side effects of political maneuvering. When the policies are in place for conflicts like favoritism, nepotism, and unethical communication, it defines the expectations and levels of the playing field for the employees. In this way, the organization can prevent worsening of the situation by providing safe areas where employees can bring their complaints and take part in productive conflicts. Support free communication and conversations for complaints to gain trust, cooperation, and therefore, institution prosperity.

With these strategies, educational institutions can create an environment that makes individuals feel respected, influential and encouraged. This, therefore, can pave a way to improve employees' morale, a higher level of job satisfaction and eventually, a more result-oriented and efficient institution conducting its core objective of facilitating learning and growth of all its stakeholders. Finally, no matter if you could see it or not, behind the mask of politics is the true power of educational institutions. When leaders recognize its existence and familiarize themselves with the complexity surrounding it, they can oversee its multiple layers and design a workplace that is indeed conducive to wellness, cooperation and achievement of educational objectives.

Conclusion

The political network in educational institutions that is difficult to unravel and deserves responsible processing is the most complicated. This research, exploiting ISM, has shown the presence of relational variables such as the formal power structures, the informal coalitions, role conflicts, and the institutional behavior which all crucially affect the well-being of employees besides the organizational performance. The study found out that, often, these factors have both positive and negative effects on the overall situation, giving rise to a constantly changing landscape which requires incredibly careful maneuvering. Though hierarchical structures and favoritism in informal groups can lead to stiffer innovation and rich environments of both amicability and hostility, transparency and collaboration that emanates from ethical political behaviors offer potential for

successful change and improved performance. It is necessary to simultaneously recognize the boundaries of this study, as the outcome may not be generalizable to all the educational contexts from the diverse contexts. In addition, using expert opinions only may not involve specific individual affairs. Nevertheless, the implications of these findings are significant and could be used by educational managers who intend to build better software and working conditions. Promoting transparency and open communication contributes a great deal to the elimination of negative effects of informal power structures. Shaping collaborative environment stimulates knowledge sharing and applies various look points, and as a result, outcomes the better problem-solving and innovation. Closely spelling out roles and responsibilities implies clarity leading to empowerment which ends with job satisfaction and amplification of performance. Setting up a code of conduct and procedures that are clear helps to deal with multiple issues arising from unethical practice: the level playing field is maintained, and potential ethical problems related to the behavior are mitigated. Eventually, promoting open dialog and conflict resolution platforms create opportunities for people to convey issues and be able to do so through constructive conversation. Therefore, trust and collaboration are enhanced. By implementing these strategies, educational institutions can embark on a transformative journey. As they navigate the complexities of workplace politics, their efforts would be rewarded with a work environment that prioritizes the well-being of their employees. This, in turn, would cultivate a sense of ownership, collaboration, and dedication, leading to a more successful and thriving institution. Ultimately, acknowledging and addressing the realities of workplace politics is not a surrender to its complexities but rather an opportunity to create a thriving learning environment where all stakeholders, faculty, staff, and students, can flourish. These strategies have shown themselves to be the possible solution to bridge the gap between the present and the future. This approach allows higher education institutions to shift into the transformative path. Albeit their awareness and consideration regarding business politics would be affected by the work environment conditions that employees thrive in. This would cause the feeling of a true quality of being which would let everybody feel at home, won together and being devoted, consequently the end product would be the most effective institution. Others may not agree with this approach as they believe that accepting and giving in to politics in the work field would yield better results. However, this is not the clarion call as there are possibilities that faculty, staff, and students would form a strong bond to create a conducive learning environment where all stakeholders can thrive.

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