WORKPLACE POLITICS AND EMPLOYEEE PRODUCTIVITY IN STATE UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION BOARD, MAKURDI, BENUE STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract: Workplace politics has attracted research attention in organizational behavior studies in recent times. Research models have been developed to explore their effect on organizational outcome variables. This study is therefore an attempt to explicate the effect of workplace politics on employee productivity using a sample size of 205 employees of State Universal Basic Education Board, Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria. Employing a cross-sectional research design and multiple regression with the aid of SPSS Version 26, the study found that workplace politics dimensions (favoritism, pay and promotion, political behavior and power dynamics) have a positive significant effect on employee productivity based on our result. The study concluded that workplace politics has a positive and significant effect on employee productivity in State Universal Basic Education Board, Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria. Based on the above, it was recommended among others that management of state universal basic education board should also have a laid down rules in filling vacant positions, either by selection or by election, with explicit requirements for those positions rather than involving favoritism by establishing a standard procedure for employees irrespective of the individuals involved.

Keywords: workplace politics, workplace politics, favoritism, pay and promotion, political behavior, power dynamics, employee productivity.

1.0   **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Background to the Study

The workplace environment is very crucial for an employee to be a good performer, especially where there is a threat to perceptions and realities. This is because, organizations are viewed as complex systems of individuals and coalitions, each having its own interests, beliefs, values, preferences, perspectives, and perceptions. The coalitions continuously compete with each other for scarce organizational resources. Influence as well as the power and political activities through which this is acquired and maintained is the primary weapon for use in competition and conflict. Organizational goals change with shifts in the balance of power among coalitions. Power relations are permanent features of organizations primarily because specialization and division of labour result in the creation of many interdependent organization's units with varying degrees of importance to the well-being of the organization. The units compete with each other for scarce resources as well as with the transitory coalitions (Muiruri, 2023).

In this modern age, organizations play a significant role in the advancement of mankind (Abbas, and Awan, 2017). Therefore, accomplishing organization's goals both effectively and efficiently is pre-requisite for welfare of individuals and the society as a whole. The business world is becoming more competitive and for any organization to become successful depends on the performance of its total labour force and their attitude (Kaya, Aydin and Ayhan 2016). The labour-force is as essential as any other factor of production in an organization and their well-being must always be put into consideration. Workplace politics started getting attention when the concept of organizational rationality was challenged because of the emergence of concepts like person-organization misfit and incompatibility of personal and organizational goals. But a realistic picture of life at workplace showed the existence of conflicting goals within the organization. This existence of conflicting goals in organizations gave birth to workplace politics which has proved to be a significant part of both public and private organizations (Pfeffer, 2010; Muiruri, 2023). Workplace politics is a tool that usually use people in today's business world to influence others negatively or positively. Workplace politics are the practices that generally individuals use for the attainment of power, influencing behaviours, activities, for significant decision making (Tlaiss, 2013).

Workplace politics represent deceitful behaviour of employees toward the work environment for personal interest which may not be in harmony with group and organizational objectives and subsequently may have effect on its development. According to Ferris and Hochwarter (2011), workplace politics is a behavior that is considered as a burdening stressor observed in uncertain working environments that is focused on securing an advantage over others. Problem of workplace politics may include unqualified employees in a strategic position, wrong decision making, and waste of resources of organization, fraud and problem of sustainability. Unqualified employee may get appointed to hold a strategic position of an organization provided he/she understands the devious behaviour to get it. This will have great effect on the decision making of an organization such as effective use of available resources and other noneconomic decisions. The result of wrong decision may include fraud or misappropriation, waste of resources and retardation of organizational development (Omowunmi, 2019). According to Colquitt, Lepine et

al. (2019), workplace politics refers to the use of power and social influence by individuals to achieve their own goals within an organization, often at the expense of others or the organization.

Employee productivity refers to the measure of an employee's efficiency and effectiveness in completing tasks and achieving goals within a given period of time. According to Kahtani (2013), employee productivity refers to the endless or series of activities undergone by employees to achieve the objectives. Employee productivity entails a measure of the quantity and quality of work done by employees, bearing in mind the cost of capital used. The greater, the level of employees' productivity; the greater the competitive edge. Employee productivity is a key factor in assessing the overall performance and success of an organization, as it directly impacts the organization's ability to meet its objectives and maintain competitiveness in the marketplace. High employee productivity is often associated with effective time management, goal achievement, and the ability to contribute positively to the overall success of the team and the organization (Nomhwange et al., 2023). Employee productivity here is in two folds: effectiveness is referred to as the degree to which set objectives are accomplished and policies achieve what they were designed to achieve. It focuses on affecting the purpose that is achieving the required or projected results. A program or service is said to be effective if such a program is able to accomplish set objectives or estimated outcomes (Zheng, 2010). Efficiency is productivity of estimated effects; specifically productivity without any form of waste. This has to do with workers abilities to work productively with minimum waste in terms of energy, time and cost. Efficiency is more or less a contrast between the use of inputs in a clearly defined process and generated outputs (Nomhwange et al., 2023).

Daud et al. (2013), suggest that workplace politics is a significant issue in today's business world because employees use this influence to maximize their profits. Employees who have much time for workplace politics might pay less attention to their work. Workplace politics can result in low organizational efficiency that affects organizational performance. Olorunleke (2015) argues that workplace politics cannot be avoided and does not always mean it is bad. Workplace politics can help influence organizational decision-making processes. Also, leaders try to influence their subordinates to support their decision-making. These influences can help speed up the decision-making process as well as work efficiency. Besides, it can focus employees in the organization (Sonaike, 2013). Politics must be used positively, not to harm others. The study of Khan and Hussain (2014), suggests that one of the best ways to stay at work is to join strong groups. If one of the members is working overtime every day, this will cause their colleague to boycott that member. Colleagues may think that they are trying to please their boss by working hard. Also, humans tend to maximize their interests; this has led to the emergence of political behaviour in the workplace.

Globalization, technology advancement and desire for human beings to excel in the field have led to significant changes in management of human behavior and channeling it into correct direction. Application of motivational theories, art of leadership and skills of redesigning jobs and modification of organizational structure is an ongoing process that facilitates positive work environment leading to raised job satisfaction of employees, greater productivity and organizational growth. Due to scientific knowledge development, managing human resources has

become more challenging according to (Kondalkar, 2007). It has been observed that everybody wants to use workplace politics for gaining personal goals. It has been widely recognized that politics is a significant part of human behavior as it affects the ability to secure one's goals and interests in a social system (Muiruri, 2023).

According to Robbins et al. (2017), favouritism in the workplace involves the unfair or preferential treatment of certain individuals or groups, often based on personal relationships rather than merit or objective criteria. It is a form of workplace politics where individuals in positions of power show bias or favour towards specific employees, potentially impacting decisions related to promotions, assignments, or other opportunities. In the context of favouritism, Cropanzano & Mitchell (2005), discusses how inequities in treatment, such as preferential treatment of certain individuals, can lead to perceptions of unfairness among employees. Pay refers to the compensation or remuneration that an individual receives for their work or services. Promotion is the advancement of an employee to a higher or more responsible position within an organization. According to Ogwuche (2014), promotion decisions have consistently been found to be one of the most political actions in organizations. Political behaviour refers to activities to influence the decision-maker to grant the request for the needed resources of the individuals or group (Taylor, 2017). Political behavior is a result of uncertainties of getting the resources that one needs to get. The uncertainty is caused by the limited resources provided by the organization to fulfil the needs of the individuals or groups within the organization. Power dynamics refer to the ways in which power is distributed, exercised, and negotiated within a social, political, economic, or interpersonal context. It involves the relationships and interactions between individuals, groups, or institutions where power is a central element. According to Farheen (2018), power dynamics play a significant role in the functioning of groups.

A study by Robbins et al. (2008), as cited in Okeke and Mbah (2020), highlighted that potential costs of politics on work outcome affects organizational processes such as decision making, promotion, rewards and among others either in a positive or negative way. Management of state universal basic education board as a human institution, have struggled with politics over years and is still striving to put necessary efforts in combating the problems created by politics so as not to affect the achievement of its goals and objectives. Managers and employees must deal with workplace politics because it is a reality that affects organisational processes and its ubiquitous nature requires that it is understood and tackled by managers (Attah, 2016).

In SUBEB, the variations of the nature of work requires management to acquire the necessary expertise, political, and personal skills to deal with workplace politics. The non-availability of adequate resources, limited number of positions and power tussle in the various departments in SUBEB has made workplace politics inevitable in these Board. Thus, employees in this board clamor for the enlargement of their job because of the added benefits like bonuses, prestige and increased experience that is ensured by it. However, most employees in this board are been hindered by favouritism, pay and promotion, political behaviour among others. While some employees also lack adequate impression management skills which is a common organizational political tactic and this limits the opportunity of enlarging their job through an increase in the responsibilities and tasks performed by these employees. These employees fail to manage their

outward appearance and style. As a result of this, they are being viewed as not been recommendable for higher responsibilities by their superiors and this limits the opportunity of enlarging their job. This had led to job dissatisfaction, low commitment of employees amounting to low productivity in carrying out the specific objectives of the board. Therefore, this study is spur to determine the extent to which workplace politics affect employee productivity in State Universal Basic Education Board in Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The body of literature on workplace politics is expanding but still the research remains distorted with respect to theory and research methodologies adopted. Despite a lot of empirical data, conceptual vagueness still exists. Regardless of the widespread acceptance of presence of workplace politics proved by empirical research, this aspect of life at workplace remains a problem. In Nigeria, however, higher educational institutions have become vulnerable to losing their highly qualified knowledge workers to well-paid offers from other organizations (Ngobeni and Bezuidenhout, 2011). Previous works conducted on job embeddedness in several industries including, healthcare, retail, banking, and sports in other countries such as China, Pakistan, India, and the United Kingdom, sought to determine whether workplace politics can predict employee retention and work engagement (Mitchell *et al.,* 2001; Holtom and O'Neill, 2004; Ramesh and Gelfand, 2010). Limited studies have been conducted concerning the role of workplace politics in primary schools in Nigeria, most especially in State Universal Basic Education Board in Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria. The present study seeks to contribute to literature by investigating the effect of workplace politics constructs on employee productivity in State Universal Basic Education Board in Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria so as to fill the gap by reducing the paucity of empirical supports as well as close the geographical divides and differences among opinion of researchers on the topic.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study was to determine the effect workplace politics and employees productivity in State Universal Basic Education Board, Makurdi Benue State, Nigeria. The specific objectives were;
  i.   To examine the effect of favoritism on employees productivity in State Universal Basic Education Board, Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria.
  ii. To examine the effect of pay and promotion on employees productivity in State Universal Basic Education Board, Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria.
  iii. To examine the effect of political behavior on employees productivity in State Universal Basic Education Board, Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria.
  iv. To examine the effect of power dynamics on employees productivity in State Universal Basic Education Board, Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria.

2.1 Theoretical Foundation

This study is fortified by Equity Theory propounded by Stacy Adams in 1963.

2.1.1 Equity Theory

This study is anchored is the Equity Theory promulgated by Stacy Adams in 1963. The theory emphasizes on employees' perceptions on fair and equal treatment in terms of general work

conditions compared to other organizations. According to Jones & George (2003). Equity theory being a theory motivation is mainly premised on employee's perceptions of the fairness of workers work outcomes relative to, or in proportion to their work inputs. Luddy (2005), opined that Equity theory proposes that employees have a strong desire to maintain stability between what they see their inputs or contributions to be connected to predictable rewards. Anuradha (2012), noted that Equity theory focuses on distributive and procedural justice. As a way of conceptualization, distributive justice entails the identified equity of the amount, rewards and allocation of rewards among employees. The theory states that where employees identify discrepancies between the rewards they received and their efforts, those set of employees may likely be pushed to reduce their performance. On the part of Aziri (2011), equity theory suggests that workers are interested in maintaining equal treatment in their relationships with organizations. Fairness and justice are determined by comparison based on the rate of employee's outputs and inputs. To Aziri (2011), outputs are pay, benefits, recognition and time off while inputs are employees experience, commitment, work efforts, etc. In view of the foregoing, it is crucial to mention that ET is quite suitable for this research, given its emphasis on the relationship between employees' work input and their subsequent remuneration level. Specifically, from the context of this study, some employees may not get a fair share of their work efforts especially in organization with strong political presence. In this regard, those who know or have a strong connection to the powers-that- be, are most likely going to benefit more in terms of promotion and other incentives. Hence, the suitability of the theory.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

Workplace politics and its dimensions will be explored as well as employee productivity and its associated dimensions accordingly.

2.2.1 Concept of Workplace Politics

Cacciattolo (2014), defined workplace politics as informal, parochial, typically divisive and illegitimate behavior that is aimed at displacing legitimate power in different ways. Nihat *et al.* (2016), averred that workplace politics as the application of power to get results that are either not approved by the workplace or organization or use tools that are also not approved by the organization. In addition, Nwizia *et al.* (2017), posits that workplace politics as actions that are inconsistent and conflicting with established organizational norms which are implemented to encourage personal interest, and are taken without regard for organizational goals. Workplace politics can negatively impact employees, and leaders can be selfish because they will try to pursue their interests. Examples of self-interest are promotions and salaries (Olorunleke, 2015). Besides, workplace politics also cause employees to become stressed and quit their jobs. Research by Nasurdin *et al.* (2014), shows that organizational politics is one source that causes employees to experience stress. Workplace politics affects employees to become emotionally unstable, tense, and frustrated. Employees will be exhausted because their efforts do not match the rewards they receive.

2.2.2 Dimensions of Workplace Politics

The dimensions of workplace politics employ in these study are as follow;

i. Favoritism

According to Brockhouse & Efron (2010), favoritism as the state and social life appear more often than not as to be passionate patronage of specific individual employees and their appointment

to the superior positions despite their having neither capabilities nor experiences necessary for such duties. Therefore, a favorite is an employee being in confidence of his chief and affecting his\her solutions to move up the career ladder thanks to a sense of having been chosen. Robbins et al. (2017), argued that favouritism in the workplace involves the unfair or preferential treatment of certain individuals or groups, often based on personal relationships rather than merit or objective criteria. It is a form of workplace politics where individuals in positions of power show bias or favour towards specific employees, potentially impacting decisions related to promotions, assignments, or other opportunities. In the context of favouritism, Cropanzano & Mitchell (2005), discusses how inequities in treatment, such as preferential treatment of certain individuals, can lead to perceptions of unfairness among employees. Such perceptions can contribute to feelings of dissatisfaction, reduced trust in leadership, and a decline in overall morale within the workplace which turn to affect productivity of employees in the negative direction.

ii. Pay and Promotion

Pay refers to the compensation or remuneration that an individual receives for their work or services. This can include salary, wages, bonuses, and other forms of financial compensation provided by an employer to an employee in exchange for their time, skills, and contributions to the organization. Promotion is the advancement of an employee to a higher or more responsible position within an organization. This elevation in job status is often accompanied by increased responsibilities, authority, and, in many cases, a higher level of compensation. Promotion policies mean the way to which employees in an organization behave politically on policies formulation and implementation. According to Ogwuche (2014), promotion decisions have consistently been found to be one of the most political actions in organizations. The opportunity for promotion or advancement encourages people to compete for limited resources and try to positively influence the decision outcome. According to Robbins and Judge (2013), pay and promotion decisions have consistently been found to be one of the most political actions in organizations. The opportunity for promotion or advancement encourages people to compete for limited resources and try to positively influence the decision outcome. The pay structure of the employees is very well structured. Employees' productivity is reduced in organization where staff perceive an unfavorable promotion policy formulated and implemented. Promotional activities largely impact on employees' job satisfaction because it stimulates and fuel negative reactions. When employees perceive politics in how salary increase and payment are allocated to workers, their feeling about work environment will change dramatically. Politics in salary decision and promotion policies will reduce the level of employee satisfaction.

iii. Political Behavior

Political behaviour refers to activities to influence the decision-maker to grant the request for the needed resources of the individuals or group (Taylor, 2017). Political behavior is a result of uncertainties of getting the resources that one needs to get. The uncertainty is caused by the limited resources provided by the organization to fulfil the needs of the individuals or groups within the organization. Godin (2017), identified give possible sources of political behaviour such as ambiguous goals, scarcity of resources, non-routine technology and complex external environment, non- programmed decisions and organizational changes. Political behaviour can also be triggered by other factors such as interdepartmental coordination, promotions and transfer, and delegation of authority. It is contended that reasons for political behaviour that are

identified are existing in the current organizations and therefore, they concluded that organization is highly political. Reducing political behaviour is important through the establishment of the standard operating procedure through clear policy guidelines (Abun, 2022).

iv. Power dynamics

Power dynamics refer to the ways in which power is distributed, exercised, and negotiated within a social, political, economic, or interpersonal context. It involves the relationships and interactions between individuals, groups, or institutions where power is a central element. According to Farheen (2018), power dynamics play a significant role in the functioning of groups. They refer to the distribution of power and influence among group members, and can greatly affect how decisions are made, how conflicts are resolved, and how group tasks are accomplished. Power dynamics can significantly impact work relationships and productivity by either fostering or hindering collaboration. Workers with more power can influence decisions, creating either a positive or negative environment. Power imbalances can lead to conflict and reduced productivity. According to (Campbell, 2023), power dynamics in the workplace play a crucial role in shaping the overall work environment, relationships, and individual experiences. Understanding and navigating these power dynamics can significantly impact productivity, employee engagement, and overall organizational success.

2.2.3 Employee Productivity

According to Sharma & Sharma (2014), employee productivity is the general measurement to see if employees are achieving their set targets by accomplishing tasks they have been assigned in a desired manner by the assigning authority and this can be measured in terms of quality, timeliness, quantity and efficiency with which it is completed. It has been debated that improving productivity is one of the fundamental objectives of several organizations. This is in line with several efforts by management to enhance employee productivity as this will lead to organizational profitability. The authors were also of the view that higher productivity tends to maximize organizational competitive advantage through cost reduction and improvement in quality of output. Agnes (2009), asserts that productivity is the quantity of work that is achieved within a period of time by means of the factors of production. The author further mentioned that productivity is a measure of performance that encompasses both efficiency and effectiveness. It is the correlation that exists between the quantity of inputs and outputs from a clearly defined process. Kahtani (2013), argued that employee productivity refers to the endless or series of activities undergone by employees to achieve the objectives. Employee productivity entails a measure of the quantity and quality of work done by employees, bearing in mind the cost of capital used. The greater, the level of employees' productivity; the greater the competitive edge.

2.2.4 Measures of Employee Productivity

In this study, employee effectiveness and employee efficiency as adopted as measures of employee productivity as used by Zheng (2010); Nomwhange et al (2023).

i. Employee effectiveness

In general, effectiveness is referred to as the degree to which set objectives are accomplished and policies achieve what they were designed to achieve. It focuses on affecting the purpose that is achieving the required or projected results. A program or service is said to be effective if such a program is able to accomplish set objectives or estimated outcomes (Zheng, 2010). As regards workers, it is a measure of how well workers productivity levels meet set goals and objectives of

the organization (Yesufu, 2000). Therefore an employee is said to be effective when he/she is able to achieve desired results in line with organizational goals and objectives.

ii. Employee efficiency

Efficiency is productivity of estimated effects; specifically productivity without any form of waste. This has to do with workers abilities to work productively with minimum waste in terms of energy, time and cost. Efficiency is more or less a contrast between the use of inputs in a clearly defined process and generated outputs. For instance, given a specified number of input or resources, a decision making entity be it individual, corporate, administrative institution, or a state realizes a level of output considered to be the maximum achievable based on the present conditions, and then such an entity is assumed to be efficient. However if it generates lesser than what it is estimated to generate it is said to be inefficient. As such efficiency stems from the correlation between inputs and outputs, and is referred to basically as the degree to which outputs are produced while minimizing manufacturing costs (Harris, 2001).

2.3 Review of Related Empirical Studies

Abbas & Awan (2017), investigated the impact of organizational politics on employee performance in the public sector organizations. The study developed a framework on the basis of an extensive literature review which was then tested to provide an empirical insight about the proposed relationships. The data were collected from the employees of 15 public sector organizations in Pakistan. The data was statistically analyzed using regression analysis. The results revealed that organizational politics have a significant impact on employee performance. The findings of the study reinforce that the management needs to understand the perception of employees about the organizational politics prevailing in their organizations and have to adopt strategies that would minimize the perception of organizational politics and enhance employee performance. The present study has been conducted in a developing economy; therefore, the findings of the present study are partially generalized able to other developing economies as well. The future researchers can also perform the studies in other settings.

Omowunmi (2019), examined the effect of politics on workplace relationship vis-à-vis effective and efficient service delivery in various organizations. It is imperative for strategic positions to be occupied and decisions to be made that will drive the affairs of an administrative system amidst interpersonal relationship, lobbying and interference of different phases. The internet, theses, journals, archival materials and the vast expanse of literature assisted in no small measure in sourcing for relevant information to distil the subject matter of this paper. The author found evidences of pervasive tendencies for fleece behaviors among administrative officials despite standard rules and regulations guiding all activities. The study concluded among others that politics influenced strategic and tactical decisions as well as organization development.

Kwesi, Belinda and Addai (2020), examined the impact workplace politics on employee output of employees at Capital Group Limited in this research study. The target populace for the research work comprised of employees (management, administrative and general staff) Capital Group Limited. In selecting both the management, administrative and general staff simple random sampling technique was utilized. In gathering data, questionnaires as well as structured interviews were utilized to collect data from respondents. Frequencies and percentages were statistical tools utilized to evaluate the data gathered from respondents. The results of the study discovered that unclear job descriptions, struggle/battle for power, discrimination, rivalry and lack of information were the causes for perceive

workplace politics existence in Capital Group Limited. Finally, it was concluded that, if not properly controlled, organizational politics would establish a contradictory organization, hindering the organization's growth. It was also recommended that managers and staff make a concerted effort to put aside their individual interests and work hard to achieve the organization's specified mission, objectives, and vision.

Okeke and Mbah (2020), investigated the effect of cultural animosity, pay and promotion, religious diversity and power tussle on employee performance. Relevant literature on organizational politics and employee performance was reviewed under conceptual framework, theoretical framework, and empirical review. The research work was anchored on Just World Theory. Survey research design was implemented. The population of the study was 5403. The statistical formula devised by Fawett (1997) and Nwana's (1992), was employed to arrive at a sample size of 540. Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA) method was used in testing the hypotheses. The study discovered that there is a positive relationship between Cultural animosity and organizational performance in tertiary institutions under study. Pay and promotion has a positive relationship on employee performance in tertiary institutions under study. Religious diversity has a positive relationship on employee performance in tertiary institutions under study.

Akinnuoye and Onuoha (2021), investigated the relationship between workplace politics and employee performance of telecommunication firms in Rivers State. The study used descriptive survey design in structured questionnaire to collect data from 400 employees of telecom firms. A total of 4 hypotheses were proposed and statistically tested with Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient. Results revealed that the promotional policy has a positive and weak correlation with employee productivity. It was further revealed that favoritism has a positive and significant correlation with turnover intention. In conclusion, promotional policy in a highly tensed political arrangement tends to reduce employee productivity and at the same time, increase turnover intention that telecom firms who want to improve employee performance should have a standard procedure promoting employees irrespective of the individual involved. This will help improve employee productivity. They should also ensure level playground for all qualified employees that are due for promotion to avoid high employee turnover, which may affect possibility of achieving performance.

Abun *et al*. **(2022), examined the effect of organizational politics on the individual work performance of employees. To support the study, literature was reviewed and theories were identified and explained. It was carried out following research methodology in terms of research design, population, the locale of the study, research instruments, and statistical treatment of data. The study found that the organizational politics of the institution is at a moderate level and the individual work performance was also at a moderate level. It is further found that there is a significant correlation between organizational politics and individual work performance. Thus, it is concluded that organizational politics is a significant predictor of organizational performance. The study found that a moderate level of organizational politics affects individual work performance positively and therefore it confirms the finding of other studies that organizational politics is not inherently bad or negative.**

Oladejo et al. (2022), examined the effect of perceived workplace politics on performance of employees of infant firms in Southwest Nigeria. The study's specific objectives were to gauge the correlation between perceived workplace politics and employee performance and analyse the effect of workplace politics on employee performance. Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire. One hundred twelve employees of infant firms participated in the study. The study adopted mean, standard deviation, correlation, and regression statistics for data analyses. The study found that perceived workplace politics relates to employee performance and concludes that perceived workplace politics affect employee performance. The study recommends that infant firms in Southwest Nigeria that desire improved employee performance should treat and compensate employees fairly. Moreover, infant firms in Southwest Nigeria should enforce rules and regulations guiding contractual agreements entered with employees without prejudice.

Çakır and Doğantan (2023), examined the effect of favouritism on competencies through employee silence. The phenomenon of employee silence has been defined as a mediating variable that is affected by favouritism, and which affects employee competencies. Data collected from 420 employees working in hotels in the Thrace Region based on a face-to-face survey method were used to test the research hypotheses with partial least square structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM). The results reveal that favoritism is an obstacle that causes employee silence and, more importantly, reduces the competencies of employees, as they are not treated fairly in terms of their skills, experience, knowledge, and abilities. In addition, it may be concluded that employee silence is a factor that directly reduces competencies. While there is some discussion about the possible impacts of obstacles such as favouritism and employee silence on competencies, it can be observed that there are few studies that address their relationship separately. This research is among the first to empirically reveal employee silence as the mediator between favouritism practices and employee competencies, expanding the understanding of how silence can work as a mediator in the hospitality businesses.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

Survey research design was applied due to it ease and the speed with which its results are made. The population of study comprises employees of State Universal Basic Education Board, Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria. A census sampling technique was implemented giving the small nature of the population which was 205 employees in both the administrative and academic cadres within the office (Planning, Research and Statistics Department, 2024). Simple random sampling technique was thereafter adopted in selecting the sample of the study with data collected using questionnaire. 205 questionnaires were retrieved and finally used in the analysis. Variables were reported to be highly significant by KMO and Bartlett's test, and principal component analysis was appropriate at 0.865, which is over the 0.70 criterion with a reliability index of 0.802. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences was used to perform multiple regression analysis and Pearson's correlation statistics on the participant data, which were displayed as mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis in tables (SPSS 26). Hypotheses were evaluated at a significance level of 0.05. Employee productivity was the response variable, and favouritism, pay and promotion, and political behaviour are the explanatory variables. The model for the study is specified as follows.

EMP = β0 + β1FRT + β2PAP+ β3POB + β4POD + *ε.*

Where,

EMP= Employee productivity

FRT= Favouritism

PAP = Pay and promotion

POB = Political behavor

POD = Power dynamics

ε = Error term β0 = Intercept,

β1, β2, β3 = Coefficients of the explanatory variables.

In answering the research questions, the real limits of numbers were used for decision making as follows; 3.50 - 4.00 = very high extent; 2.50 – 3.49 = high extent; 1.50 – 2.49 = low extent; 1.00 – 1.49 = very low extent. The decision rule for testing the hypotheses was based on the p-value and alpha value. A hypothesis of no significant effect was not rejected for any cluster of items whose p-value was equal to or greater than (≥) the alpha value of 0.05 while it was rejected for any cluster of items whose p-value was less than (≤) the alpha value of 0.05. To check the level of skewness and kurtosis for the variables, if skewness is less than -1 or greater than 1, the distribution is highly skewed. If skewness is between -1 and -0.5 or between 0.5 and 1, the distribution is moderately skewed. If skewness is between - 0.5 and 0.5, the distribution is approximately symmetric. To check the level of kurtosis, if the value of kurtosis is greater than 3, then the dataset has heavier tails than a normal distribution. If the kurtosis is less than 3, then the dataset has lighter tails than normal distribution.

4.0   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In presenting data using descriptive statistics, mean, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis were used to explain where most of the responses fall and how much data is skewed or symmetric.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics Analysis

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	Remarks
Favouritism	3.50	.695	1.456	2.205	Very high extent
Pay and promotion	3.56	.632	1.366	1.776	Very high extent
Political behaviour	3.52	.727	1.637	2.541	Very high extent
Power dynamics	3.51	.695	1.504	2.321	Very high extent
Employee productivity	3.62	.629	1.814	3.703	Very high extent

Source: Authors' Computation from SPSS Output, 2024

The outcome as shown in Table 1 along with explanatory variables and response predictors. The mean and standard deviation demonstrates the respondents' level of agreement with the statements that the employee productivity has improved. In Table 1, all the variables have skewness values above 1, which indicates that they are all severely skewed. Finally, Table 1's kurtosis data demonstrates that the closer a value is to 0, the better the data distribution and all kurtosis values exhibit a significant correlation.

4.1 Regression Analysis Result

The model is confirmed to be a good predictor by the model summary in Table 2, which displays an R^2 value of.593 implying that 59.3% of the variation in the response variable is explained by

the explanatory variables while 40.7% is explained by other variables outside the model. The R-value of.827 demonstrated that there is a significant positive connection between the predictor factors and the response variable (employee productivity) and explanatory variable (favouritism, pay and promotion, political behaviour, power dynamics).

Table 2: Model Summary

R	R^2	Adjusted R ^{2}	Standard Error of the Estimate	Durblin-Watson
.827ª	.593	.580	.549	1.656

a. **Predictors (Constant),** favouritism, pay and promotion, political behaviour, power dynamics
b. **Response Variable:** Employee productivity

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

The analysis of variance result in Table 3 demonstrated that the model is statistically significant in predicting the effects of favouritism, pay and promotion, political behaviour, power dynamics on the response variable (P =.000; F = 32.531).

Table 3: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	28.891	4	7.222	32.531	.000ᵇ
Residual	44.688	201	.222		
Total	73.579	205			

a. **Response Variable:** Employee productivity
c. **Predictors (Constant),** favouritism, pay and promotion, political behaviour, power dynamics

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

The result in Table 4 shows the regression coefficient, which explained the effect of workplace politics on employee productivity in State Universal Basic Education Board, Makurdi Benue State. The Beta coefficients showed that all the independent variables had a significant effect on the dependent variable (employee productivity). The result shows that favouritism had β=0.206, t=6.669, P=0.000; pay and promotion β=0.213, t=5.781, P=0.000; political behaviour had β=0.270, t=7.199, P=0.000 and power dynamics β = 0.102, t=2.893, P=0.004. The result shows that if all the variables (favouritism, pay and promotion, political behaviour, power dynamics) are held constant employee productivity would be 0.806. The result further indicates that if all the other factors were held constant a unit change in favouritism would increase employee productivity by 21.5%. Also, a unit change in pay and promotion would increase employee productivity by 20.1 %. For political behaviour, a unit increase holding other factors constant would result to 27.8% increase in employee productivity while a unit change in power dynamics would result to a change in employee productivity by 10 %. The result therefore shows that political behaviour has the highest effect on employee productivity in State Universal Basic Education Board, Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria.

Table 4: Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.806	.158		5.106	.000
Favouritism	.215	.032	.206	6.669	.019
Pay and promotion	.201	.035	.213	5.781	.000
Political behaviour	.278	.039	.270	7.199	.000
Power dynamics	.100	.034	.102	2.893	.004

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Productivity

Source: Researcher's Computation from SPSS Output, 2024

4.2 Hypotheses Testing

All four of the study's assumptions were shown to be unfounded, indicating that the favouritism, pay and promotion, political behaviour as well as power dynamics all significantly and positively affect employee productivity in State Universal Basic Education Board, Makurdi Benue State. Table 5's summary of the results for the tested hypotheses reveals that all of the variables had p-values less than 0.05.

Table 5. Summary of Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	Result	Decision
H0₁: Favouritism has no effect on employee productivity in State Universal Basic Education Board, Makurdi Benue State.	.019 < 0.05	Significant
H0₂: Pay and promotion has no effect on employee productivity in State Universal Basic Education Board, Makurdi Benue State.	.000 < 0.05	Significant
H0₃: Political behaviour has no effect on employee productivity in State Universal Basic Education Board, Makurdi Benue State.	.000 < 0.05	Significant
H0₄: Power dynamics has no effect on employee productivity in State Universal Basic Education Board, Makurdi Benue State.	.000 < 0.05	Significant

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

Favouritism was found to have a significant positive effect on employee productivity in State Universal Basic Education Board, Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria. This findings of this study is in consonance with that of Egwuonwu (2023), whose study confirm that favouritism is prevalent in the Nigerian banking industry and arises from factors such as nepotism, cronyism, tribalism, gender, religion, and performance. The findings show that favouritism can be regarded as a non-financial incentive which acts as an extrinsic motivator for employee performance. It also demonstrates that favouritism based on performance can be employed as a non-financial incentive even if other forms are discouraged. The findings of this study disagrees with that of Akhand (2021), whose findings indicate that favoritism have adverse effects on employees and those advantages arising from nepotism and favoritism are only in favor of the privileged person and favoritism damages the team spirit on the way to success. The findings of this study is at variance with that of Çakır and Doğantan (2023), who discovered that favouritism is an obstacle that causes employee silence and, more importantly, reduces the competencies of employees, as they are not treated fairly in terms of their skills, experience, knowledge, and abilities.

Pay and promotion was also found to have a significant positive effect on employee productivity in State Universal Basic Education Board, Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria. This finding tallies with the findings of Ahmed and Sadia (2017), whose result revealed that incentive, bonus, and promotion significantly affected the employee performance than recognition, job autonomy, and career development and work itself. The result is in conformity with **Oladejo *et al.* (2022), whose study established that firms that treat and compensate their employees fairly will always enhance their performance. The result of the findings concord that of** Samad and Amri (2011), averred that pay and promotion policies had significant influence on job performance in their study.

On Political behavior, a significant positive effect on employee productivity in State Universal Basic Education Board, Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria was ascertained. The findings of the study is in agreement on one side with that of Muiruri (2023), whose study found that political behavior has both good and bad implications in the organizational productivity. Good political behaviors are those that enhances the achievement of personal, group and organizational goals. The emphasis on personal and group goals becomes necessary because all must be carried along. The findings of this study disagrees with that of Jovanović (2019), whose study revealed that the excessive use of the tactics of political behavior, especially the illegitimate ones, will have important negative outcomes in the end from both the aspect of the organization and individual as well. Ariza (2023), found that a politicized workplace can create a toxic environment that decreases morale, trust, and productivity. By focusing on transparency, communication, and collaboration, organizations can mitigate the negative effects of political behavior and create a culture of success that attracts employee for higher productivity.

Power dynamics was found to have a significant positive effect on employee productivity in State Universal Basic Education Board, Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria. The findings of this study is consistent with McGroarty (2023), who established that power dynamics influences how decisions are made, how resources are allocated, how goals are set and achieved, and how relationships are formed and maintained. Findings of the study is in alliance with CIPD (2024), who asserts that power dynamics significantly impact work relationships and productivity by either fostering or hindering collaboration. Workers with more power can influence decisions, creating either a positive or negative environment, noting that power imbalances can lead to conflict and reduced productivity. The findings of this study corresponds that of Campbell (2023), whose study found that power dynamics in the workplace play a

crucial role in shaping the overall work environment, relationships, and individual experiences. Understanding and navigating these power dynamics can significantly impact productivity, employee engagement, and overall organizational success.

5.0   CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

Arising from the findings of this study, it is safe to conclude that workplace politics has a significant positive effect on employee productivity in State Universal Basic Education Board, Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria. This is because, workplace politics has the potentials of motivating employees or facilitating decision-making in organizations if properly managed, otherwise it can lead to negative effects, such as reducing morale and increasing stress organizations if not properly adopted and managed. The effect of workplace politics on employee productivity largely depends on how it is perceived and managed within the context of organizations. Ideally, organizations should strive for a balanced environment where positive political behaviors are encouraged, and negative ones are minimized to maintain a healthy and productive workplace environment. Therefore, the adoption of workplace politics in organizations makes some employees feel motivated to perform better when they are engaged in organizational politics, especially if they perceive that their efforts will lead to recognition, promotions, or other rewards. This could drive them to work harder, be more innovative, or take on additional responsibilities.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the above, it is recommended as follows;

i. Favouritism was found to have a significant positive effect on employee productivity in State Universal Basic Education Board, Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria. Management of State Universal Basic Education Board, should always be encouraging factors that stimulates favouritism in their organization such as nepotism, cronyism, tribalism, gender, religion, and performance so as to enhance employee productivity. This will go a long way in improving employee productivity, since favouritism is regarded as a non-financial incentive which acts as an extrinsic motivator for employee productivity in organizations.

ii. Pay and promotion was also found to have a significant positive effect on employee productivity in State Universal Basic Education Board, Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria. Management of State Universal Basic Education Board, should regularly review compensation and promotion policies, create a positive work environment, offer professional development opportunities, develop clear promotion pathways and implement competitive compensation packages. By focusing on these areas, they will create a positive cycle where fair pay and clear promotion pathways lead to increased employee productivity, which in turn can contribute to the overall success and growth of the organization.

iii. Since promoting and managing political behavior in organizations is crucial for maintaining a healthy organizational culture and ensuring that decisions are made in the best interest of the organization. Management of State Universal Basic Education Board should foster an environment where employees feel comfortable expressing their opinions and

concerns without fear of retribution. By focusing on transparency, communication, and collaboration, organizations can mitigate the negative effects of political behavior and create a culture of success that attracts employee for higher productivity. This will help management of of State Universal Basic Education Board in discouraging negative political behaviours and promotes a culture focused on collaboration, transparency, and ethical conduct as well as improve an employee productivity level.

iv. Finally, power dynamics play a crucial role in shaping the culture and functioning of an organization. Management of State Universal Basic Education Board should effectively manage power dynamics so as to maintain a healthy and productive work environment. This is because organizations that create a more balanced and equitable power dynamic, fostering a work environment where individuals feel empowered, respected, and motivated will also contribute to their best efforts thereby increasing employee productivity in organizations.

5.3 Implications and contribution of the study

This study contributes to our understanding of the theory organizational performance as well as the general theoretical discourse on workplace politics that support employee productivity and success. The study has also established the powerful role that workplace politics has in the effective management of organizations most especially, the educational sector. The study was able to establish that political behaviour has the most contribution (27.8%), as against favouritism (21.5%), pay and promotion (20.1%), and power dynamics (10.0%). Indeed, workplace politics has the capacity to help or mar employee productivity as the results of this study depicts. Lastly, the study was able to show which dimension of workplace politics has the most effect on employee productivity in the State Universal Basic Education Board. This would help policy makers to focus on managing workplace politics in order to help improve the level of employee productivity in their organizations. This study is timely and relevant to scholars who are desirous of pursuing future research studies on the effect and/or relationship between workplace politics and employee productivity.

5.4 Limitations and Suggestions for Further Studies

This study is without its limitations. The most noticeable limitation is the cross-sectional nature of the research design. Cross-sectional research design does not have the capacity to explore longitudinal relationships between variables; that is establishing the causal effect of the variables. This study therefore, suggests that future studies could explore this relationship using a longitudinal research design. Other dimensions of workplace politics such as equity, organizational culture, conflict resolution as well as networking among others could be used in future studies and moderators and mediators such as the moderating or mediating effect of organizational culture on the relationship between workplace politics and employee productivity as well as the mediating or moderating effect of government assistance and firm size and their influence in the relationship between strategy and successful turnaround could also be introduced in future studies to enable a nuanced understanding of the phenomenon of workplace politics and employee productivity among others. Lastly, the present study has been conducted in a developing economy; therefore, the findings of the present study are partially generalized to other developing economies as well. The future researchers can also perform the studies in other settings such as banking sector, manufacturing industries among others.

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