

**Politics in the Government Organizations:  
The Moderating Role of Optimism to Control Deleterious Effects**

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**Abstract**

*Organizational politics severely disrupt the productivity and performance of government organizations and their employees. The prime objective of this study is to appear the vulnerabilities of politics in the outcomes of government organizations in terms of declining of affective commitment and whistle blowing, instigating to turnover intentions and counterproductive behavior towards assigned work. The moderating effect of “optimism” between the perception and adverse effects of politics has also been appraised. Employees working at managerial and executive level in federal government organization of capital territory, are treated as population. Simple random sampling and simple linear regression statistical techniques are used for data collection and data analysis. Perceived politics lessen employee’s commitment and increase counterproductive behavior as well as turnover intentions are the findings in response of 144 government employees. This is visible by this research that optimism as a psychological resource may counter the negative effects of organizational politics on various concerns and government employees are lessen involved in counterproductive activities and highly dedicated towards their job and organization.*

**Keywords:** Government Employees, Perception of Politics, Affective Commitment, Turnover Intentions, Whistle Blowing, Counterproductive Behavior

## Introduction

Employees working under government umbrella play pivotal role in managing the state affairs both at micro and macro level but politics within the organizations badly affect the organizational efficiency. Whereas the performance of public sector institutions is an indicator of compliance with government strategies and policies. Henceforth, it was a dire need of the time to explore the consequences of organizational politics among various occupational groups (Khuwaja, Ahmed, Abid, & Adeel, 2020). With the social, cultural, and technological advancement, government employees are now exposed to new challenges. The contemporary bureaucratic environment demands tacit and contextual knowledge of administrative assignments instead of solely relying at theoretical concepts inculcated through formal educational system. This shift demands more customized training opportunities and learning from the experiences of others (Dimeski, Memeti, & Bogdanoska Jovanovska, 2020). According to Lapuente and Suzuki (2020), government employees should be proficient in managing change and human resources, ethical practices, creativity and innovation as well as to craft clear vision. For strong leadership, they should have a clear understanding of the political environment. A thorough understanding of politics and relationship building help to execute administrative affairs effectively in the challenging environment. Politics in the organizational life is the common aspect hence government sector can't be exempted from its consequences in either way. Government sector is even perceived to be more vulnerable to political activities (Park & Lee, 2020).

Organizational politics is largely criticized due to negative attitudinal and behavioral outcomes associated with it. It drastically affects the performance and productivity of the organization (Hochwarter et al., 2020). Usually, venturesome, expeditious, and shrewd peoples exercise political tactics (Blickle et al., 2020) that may further lead to dampening organizational performance (Imran, Iqbal, Aslam, & Muqqadas, 2018). Organizational politics increases job frustration and stress among workers (Labrague et al., 2017). Employees may also have a cynic attitude in response to prevailing politics in the organization (Buenger, Forte, Boozer, & Maddox, 2007).

On the other hand, organizational politics is also taken positively by some experts. Buchanan and Badham (2020) characterize political behavior as necessary for change and organizational development. It may help to go beyond the established goals of the organization rather posing threat only (Maslyn, Farmer, & Bettenhausen, 2017). The adverse effects of politics can be controlled by encouraging trust and social support within the organizational climate (Vigoda-Gadot & Talmud, 2010). However, the opinion at large criticizes the prevalence of political tactics. Despite the fact that consequences of organizational politics are well documented, but various experts have contended organizational politics as contextual phenomenon and emphasized for contextual contribution to better understand the nature and outcomes of organizational politics (Drory & Vigoda-Gadot, 2010; Hofstede, 1993).

Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2005) state that theories and research findings should be treated cautiously. Research implications originating from one setting cannot be generalized to other by disregarding cultural dissimilarities (Hofstede & Bond, 1984; Hofstede et al., 2005). Therefore, this study is an attempt to know the consequences of organizational politics from a developing country to further refine the theory of organizational politics. *Hirschman's Exit, Voice, Loyalty and Neglect: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations and States.*

## Literature Review

Hirschman's EVLN (exit, voice, loyalty and neglect) theory of organizational decline (1970) proposes that an individual can exhibit four possible reactions in response to aversive situation such as exit, voice, loyalty and neglect. Hirschman's EVLN theory has wide implications therefore grounded in different settings to know the outcomes of various deplorable situations like dissatisfaction with public services (Dowding & John, 2008), voters discomfort (Feld, 1997), antigovernment swings (Weber, 2011), failed service recovery (Casado-Diaz & Nicolau-Gonzalbez, 2009), shareholders dissatisfaction (Kostant, 1999), health services dissatisfaction (Dowding & John, 2011), etc. In organizational behavior, reactions to job insecurity (Sverke & Hellgren, 2001), psychological contract breach (Si, Wei, & Li, 2008; Turnley & Feldman, 1999), and organizational cynicism (Naus, Van Iterson, & Roe, 2007) have also been examined.

Our model of the study is also based on the tenet of Hirschman's EVLN theory. For example, turnover intentions as the exit, whistleblowing as voice, affective commitment as loyalty, and counterproductive behavior as neglect were selected to know the reactions of perception of politics. In organizational politics literature, Ferris, Harrell-Cook, and Dulebohn (2000) examined turnover intentions as exit and political behavior as voice previously. Later Vigoda (2000) examined intentions of exit and neglect in addition to other variables as reactions to perception of politics. All the responses of EVLN theory (Exit, Voice, Loyalty, and Neglect) as outcomes of perception of politics have also been examined in a comparative study by (Vigoda, 2001).

### *Perception of Politics and Organizational Commitment*

Affective organizational commitment refers to emotional attachment, belongings, and deep involvement of an employee with the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991, 1997). The famous model of organizational commitment presented by Meyer and Allen (1991) divided organizational commitment into three discrete components as affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuance commitment. Continuance commitment implied the social and financial cost that an individual could bear as a result of quitting the job. Normative commitment explicated the moral obligation of an employee to stay because of the investment organization made in the personal development of an employee over some time (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Affective organizational commitment represents the loyalty of individuals with their respective organizations (Klehe, Zikic, Van Vianen, & De Pater, 2011). Considering the loyalty attribute, an affective commitment was selected as a consequence. Previous studies confirmed the strong inverse association between perception of politics and organizational commitment. For example, (Vigoda, 2000) found a negative association between organizational politics and organizational commitment. Later, Vigoda and Cohen (2002) investigated opposite relationship and found organizational commitment as a predictor of perception of politics. Miller, Rutherford, and Kolodinsky (2008) in a meta-analysis also revealed inverse association between perception of politics and organizational commitment at large. Considering the local environment, Bodla and Danish (2009) have also endorsed the negative association between these two constructs. Cropanzano, Howes, Grandey, and Toth (1997) provided more relevant finding as the author analyzed affective commitment in association with perception of politics and found significant inverse relationship. Based on these arguments, the following hypothesis was developed;

*H1: Perception of politics will positively influence affective commitment.*

### *Perception of Politics and Whistle Blowing*

Whistle-blowing is defined as the disclosure by organization members (former or current) of illegal, immoral, or illegitimate practices under the control of their employers, to persons or organizations that may be able to affect their action (Near & Miceli, 1985). Whistleblowing helps to address injustice and illegitimacy by reporting to concerned authorities (Berry, 2004). Employees commonly blow a whistle in response to malpractices or inequity which they find hard to resolve through established channels (Fletcher, Sorrell, & Silva, 1998). Organizational politics is conceived to be a self-benefiting approach at the cost of the organizational interest (Ferris, Fedor, Chachere, & Pondy, 1989). Organizational politics is largely directed to gain power using immoral and unfair means (DuBrin, 1978). Do government employees blow the whistle in response to rising politics in the public sector? This study also attempts to answer this question.

Hirschman (1970) EVLN theory describes the relationship between undesirable situations and voice (whistleblowing) tendency. Previously, some attempts have been made to know the association between voice and different unsatisfactory situations like job dissatisfaction (Rusbult, Farrell, Rogers, & Mainous III, 1988), job insecurity (Sverke & Hellgren, 2001) and organizational cynicism (Naus et al., 2007). Some authors also examined voice or alternate voice as an outcome of organizational politics (Ferris et al., 1989; Ferris & Kacmar, 1992; Vigoda, 2001). According to Near and Miceli (1985), employees actively report hard issues and avoid reporting soft issues such as power and politics. Normally employees become a part of the political move due to flourishing politics (Bacharach & Lawler, 1980; Ferris et al., 2000). Nevertheless, whistleblowing is useful to report unfair, unethical, illegal, and unjust practices when no other options are available (Dozier & Miceli, 1985). Whistleblowing is like a protest against unsatisfactory conditions. But the legitimacy, as well as the tendency to blow a whistle, lies with whistleblower (Near & Miceli, 1985). These arguments provided the following hypothesis;

*H2: Perception of politics will positively influence whistleblowing.*

### *Perception of Politics and Counterproductive Behavior*

Robinson and Bennett (1995) defined counterproductive behavior as voluntary behavior that violates significant organizational norms and in so doing threatens the well-being of an organization, its members, or both. Therefore any behavior can be counted as counterproductive if it distracts smooth organizational working and has adverse effects. Counterproductive behavior always has detrimental effects on organizational well-being (Fox, Spector, & Miles, 2001; Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Keeping in view the definition of counterproductive behavior, punctuality issues, theft, alcoholism, damaging physical assets and many more can be counted as counterproductive and deviant workplace behavior. Gruys (1999) specified 87 different counterproductive behaviors and categorizes them into 11 categories. Ferris et al. (1989) and Vigoda (2001) concluded a direct positive relationship between perceived politics and absenteeism. Vigoda-Gadot and Kapun (2005) and Vigoda (2000) found a significant positive association between perception of politics and negligent behavior. Perception of politics may also cause withdrawal or aggressive behavior in the organization (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992; Spector et al., 2006; Vigoda, 2000).

According to Rosen (2006), counterproductive activities are increased as a response to rising politics in the organization. This might be due to some operational similarities of the two constructs. (Mintzberg, 1983, p. 712712) defined political behavior as unsanctioned, illegitimate, and unacceptable behavior particularly directed to satisfy personal interests. On the other hand, counterproductive behaviors comprise various types of unproductive behavior (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). This characterized political behavior itself a counterproductive behavior. The perception of politics may therefore lead towards some other kinds of counterproductive behaviors. These helped to generate the following hypothesis;

*H3:* Perception of politics will positively influence counterproductive behavior.

### ***Perception of Politics and Turnover Intentions***

Turnover intentions imply an individual's quitting probability from a job after a specific period (Tett & Meyer, 1993). Turnover intentions emerge as a result of a distasteful response for an employer. Previous studies have confirmed a strong direct relationship between perceived politics and turnover intentions (Cropanzano et al., 1997; Ferris et al., 1993; Ferris et al., 1989; Hochwarter, Perrewé, Ferris, & Guercio, 1999; Kacmar, Bozeman, Carlson, & Anthony, 1999; Poon, 2003; Randal, Bormann, & Birjulin, 1999; Vigoda-Gadot & Kapun, 2005; Vigoda, 2001). According to Poon (2003), perceptions of organizational politics may have a direct and indirect relationship with turnover intentions. Job stress and job satisfaction may mediate the relationship between perceived politics and intent to quit (Hochwarter et al., 1999). The positive link between these two constructs was also highlighted in a meta-analysis by (Miller et al., 2008). Vigoda (2000) found a strong direct link between organizational politics and intentions of exit comparing other outcomes by studying public organizations. The direct association was also confirmed in the contextual environment by (Bodla & Danish, 2008). These helped to develop the following hypothesis;

*H4:* Perception of politics will positively influence counterproductive behavior.

### ***Optimism***

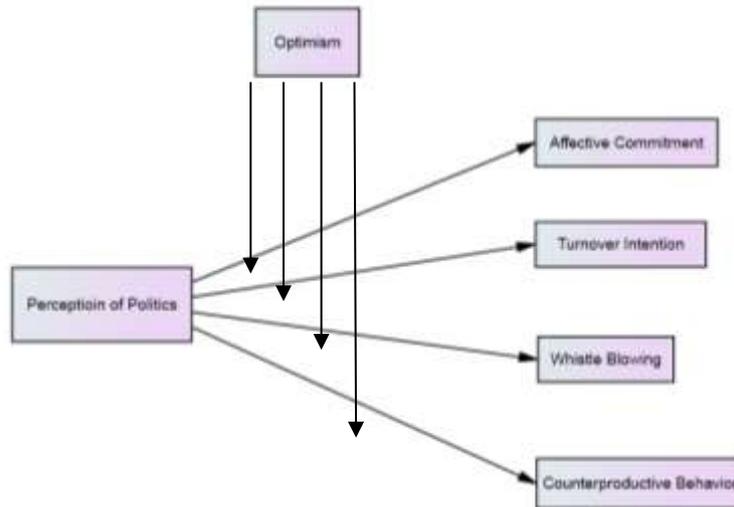
Optimism refers to the positive affective evaluation of a person about the future (Marko & Savickas, 1998). According to Scheier and Carver (1985), optimists commonly have positive expectancies for their future in contrast to pessimists (Scheier, Carver, & Bridges, 1994) and have better physiological adaptation (Lai et al., 2005; Segerstrom, Castaneda, & Spencer, 2003). Optimism helps to maintain goal-directed behavior among employees by conferring resilience under intimidating conditions (Scheier & Carver, 1985). It relates to greater psychological well-being (Carver, Scheier, & Segerstrom, 2010) which makes them persistent in adverse situations. They are less likely to experience negative emotions and remain hopeful for favorable outcomes (Carver & Scheier, 2014; Donnellan, Assad, Robins, & Conger, 2007; Grote, Bledsoe, Larkin, Lemay Jr, & Brown, 2007).

The moderating role of optimism is well documented in the existing literature (Black & Reynolds, 2013; Peterson, 2000). Various researches have proved the buffering impact of optimism on different stress-related outcomes (Britton, Sliter, & Jex, 2012; Grote et al., 2007; Scheier & Carver, 1985).

Recently, Abbas, Raja, Darr, and Bouckenoghe (2014) conducted a study to know the moderating role of psychological capital (PsyCap) on the perception of politics and various outcomes. Hope and efficacy were taken as the two dimensions of PsyCap. Except for the perception of politics to turnover

intentions relationship, PsyCap showed significant moderating effects on the assumed relationships. Considering empirical findings, the present study also tests the moderating role of optimism between the perception of politics and assumed outcomes.

*H5:* Optimism will moderate the relationship between perceived politics and its various consequences (affective commitment, turnover intentions, whistleblowing, and counterproductive behavior).



*Research Model of the Study*

**Methodology**

**Subjects/Sample**

This study strived to know the consequences of organizational politics among government sector employees working at the managerial or executive level. Researches showed that the public sector is comparatively more vulnerable to political tactics (Vigoda-Gadot & Kapun, 2005; Vigoda & Cohen, 2002). Moreover, the standard tools established to collect data about our various measures were comprehensive enough that a low level employee could find hard to comprehend the items taping different facets of organizational politics (Abbas et al., 2014). Therefore, employees working at managerial levels in different cities and government organizations were treated as the population of the study. However, the study was confined to capital territory and the government organizations under the control of the federal government were targeted for the purpose.

**Procedures**

A questionnaire as a tool for data collection was used to collect responses. Initially, 300 questionnaires were sent to executives working at various managerial levels through postage service and a self-administered approach. Most of the previous researches concentrated on a heterogeneous sample because perceived politics can be held by any employee irrespective of cadre and hierarchical level (Bodla & Danish, 2009; Vigoda-Gadot & Kapun, 2005; Vigoda-Gadot, 2007). Therefore, subjects were targeted randomly. The study was delimited to officers working in the executive cadre within the vicinity of the twin city of Pakistan. The response rate was quite low therefore some reminder letters were also sent. After consistent efforts, 144 usable questionnaires were received. The sample size was low but deemed appropriate to generalize and apply inferential statistics following the recommendations of Camrey and Lee (1992) and Sample size and subject to item ratio in principal

components analysis and Costello, Osborne, and evaluation (2005). The responses were analyzed using SPSS-25.0 and AMOS-23.

Due to the cross-sectional nature of the research design, the responses could have been tainted by common method variance, therefore, standard protocols were followed to examine method variance (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Procedurally, the questionnaire contained a cover letter explaining the purpose, academic nature, and measures to uphold the anonymity of respondents. Participation in the survey was entirely at ones' own will and even they could leave the survey at any point of time if felt indecisive. Moreover, a complete profile of the research team was mentioned with contact details of the principal investigator to contact in case of ambiguity or concerns.

Statistically, Harman's single-factor test was conducted to diagnose common method variance (CMV) (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Williams, McGonagle, & Psychology, 2016). The total variance was calculated by taking all measures as a single factor without rotations. Variance extracted in this way was less than the cutoff value of 50%. Hence it was plausible to assume that the data was not affected by method biases.

### Measurements

A questionnaire as a research instrument was used. All the items were adopted from previous studies. Items were based on a five-point Likert scale where 1 represented "strongly disagree" and 5 "strongly agree". Detail about the measurements is given in table-I.

Table 1  
Scale Items and Sources

Variables	Sources	Originally Developed	Items	$\alpha$
Perceptions of Politics	Kacmar and Carlson (1997)	Kacmar and Ferris (1991)	12	0.868
Turnover Intentions	Tepper et al. (2009)	Tepper et al. (2009)	3	0.857
Counterproductive Behaviors	Jung and Yoon (2012)	Fox et al. (2001)	5	0.789
Affective Commitment	Wasti (2002)	Meyer and Allen (1991)	5	0.779
Whistle Blowing	Park and Blenkinsopp (2009)	Park and Blenkinsopp (2009)	4	0.859
Optimism	Carver et al. (2010)	Carver et al. (2010)	6	0.812
<b>Total Items</b>			<b>35</b>	

### Results

Demographical information showed that nearly 56% of respondents were aged between 31 to 40 years. Whereas 37% showed their age between 21 to 30. This shows that most of the mid-career employees took part in the survey. Considering the tenure of employment, 48% of employees had 6-10 years of working experience while 25% had 1-5 years of experience. These figures are quite aligned with the age reflected. Due to male dominance in society, 76% of male employees participated.

Income level showed that 39% of employees were earning Rs.11,000/- to Rs.30,000/-. The government had provided a significant increase in the salary of public employees due to recent inflation. Therefore employees had competitive salary packages keeping in view the economic conditions of Pakistan.

Masters level is considered as the reasonable qualification in local environment therefore 61% employees revealed master level of education and 36% were just graduates. During the last few years, the government had confirmed the status of most of the employees as “permanent”. Results showed that 84% of respondents were enjoying the permanent status.

**Table 2**  
**Demography of the Respondents**

Measures	Items	f	%age	Measures	Items	f	%age
<b>Age</b>	20 or below	9	6.3	<b>Experience</b>	Less than 1 year	8	5.6
	21-25	23	16.0		1-5 yrs.	36	25.0
	26-30	14	9.7		6-10 yrs.	69	47.9
	31-35	37	25.7		10 or above	31	21.5
	36-40	44	30.6	<b>Gender</b>	Male	109	75.7
	41 or Above	17	11.8		Female	35	24.3
<b>Income Level</b>	Below 10,000	6	4.2	<b>Education</b>	Bachelors	52	36.1
	11,000-20,000	24	16.7		Masters	88	61.1
	21,000-30,000	32	22.2		MS/M.Phil	4	2.8
	31,000-40,000	12	8.3		PhD	0	0.0
	41,000-50,000	47	32.6	<b>Employment Status</b>	Contractual	23	16.0
	Above 50,000	23	16.0		Permanent	121	84.0

**Reliability and Validity Analysis**

The reliabilities of all constructs were examined using Cronach Alpha values, which were higher than the threshold of 0.7 (Nunnally, 1994). In addition, the composite reliabilities were also higher than the acceptable range.

To test construct validities, factor analysis was performed (see table-3&4). The values of KMO and Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity (KMO= 0.851, p<0.001) suggested the sampling adequacy of data for Factor Analysis. Later, the standardized factor loadings of measurement model was examined. The values of average variance extracted (AVE) were above 0.5 indicated the construct had managed to capture more than 50% variance (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006). It helped us to ensure the convergent validities. In addition, the maximum shared variance (MSV) with respect to each construct were lower than the corresponding AVE (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Following the recommendations of Hair (2006), the inter construct correlations were also calculated which was lower than the square roots of AVE. Thus, the discriminant validity was also ensured. By determining the construct validities, we moved towards examining the hypothesis of the study.

Descriptive results (Table-5) show relatively high affective commitment hence low turnover intentions among employees of the government/public sector. Employees further have whistleblowing intentions in case of any wrongdoings going on.

Correlation analysis shows considerable high relationships among the explanatory and criterion variable except between perception of politics and whistleblowing table-5. Correlation coefficients are reported between perception of politics and affective commitment as  $r = -0.25$  ( $p < 0.001$ ), perception of politics and turnover intentions as  $r = 0.27$  ( $p < 0.001$ ), perception of politics and whistleblowing as  $r = 0.07$  ( $p > 0.05$ ), perception of politics and counterproductive behavior as  $r = 0.35$  ( $p < 0.001$ ).

**Regression Analysis**

Regression results (Table-6) provide the detail about the predicting qualities of perception of politics towards various hypothesized reactions. Perception of politics explained 6% variations in affective commitment and 6% in turnover intentions whereas accounted for 13% variations in counterproductive behavior. Perception of politics couldn't explain any significant variation in whistleblowing. Coefficient values emerged as  $\beta = -0.38$  ( $p < 0.01$ ) for affective commitment,  $\beta = 0.52$  ( $p < 0.01$ ) for turnover intentions,  $\beta = 0.10$  ( $p > 0.05$ ) for whistleblowing and  $\beta = 0.61$  ( $p < 0.001$ ) for counterproductive behavior.

**Table 6**  
**Results for Regression Analyses**

	Affective Commitment	Turnover Intentions	Whistle Blowing	Counterproductive Behavior
$\beta$	-0.38*	0.52**	0.10	0.61**
R <sup>2</sup>	0.06	0.07	0.005	0.13
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.05	0.06	-0.002	0.12
F	9.11**	10.85**	0.68	20.24***
t	-3.01	3.29	0.82	4.49

\*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Note: n = 144. Affective Commitment, Turnover Intentions, Whistle Blowing, and Counterproductive Behavior as criterion variables.

**Moderating Influence of Optimism**

Multiple regression analysis was used to test the moderating effects of optimism on various assumed relationships (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2013). In the first step, the independent variable was entered along with the moderator in the regression equation. In the second step, the interaction term of the independent and moderating variable was included in the regression equation. The significant result of the interaction term confirmed the moderation.

Results showed that by controlling the effects of POP and optimism, the product terms of POPxOpt was significant for affective commitment ( $\beta = 0.29$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ;  $\Delta R^2 = 0.31$ ), whistle blowing ( $\beta = -0.15$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ;  $\Delta R^2 = 0.06$ ), and counterproductive behavior ( $\beta = -0.28$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ;  $\Delta R^2 = 0.01$ ). However, insignificant result was obtained for turnover intentions ( $\beta = -0.30$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ;  $\Delta R^2 = 0.26$ ).

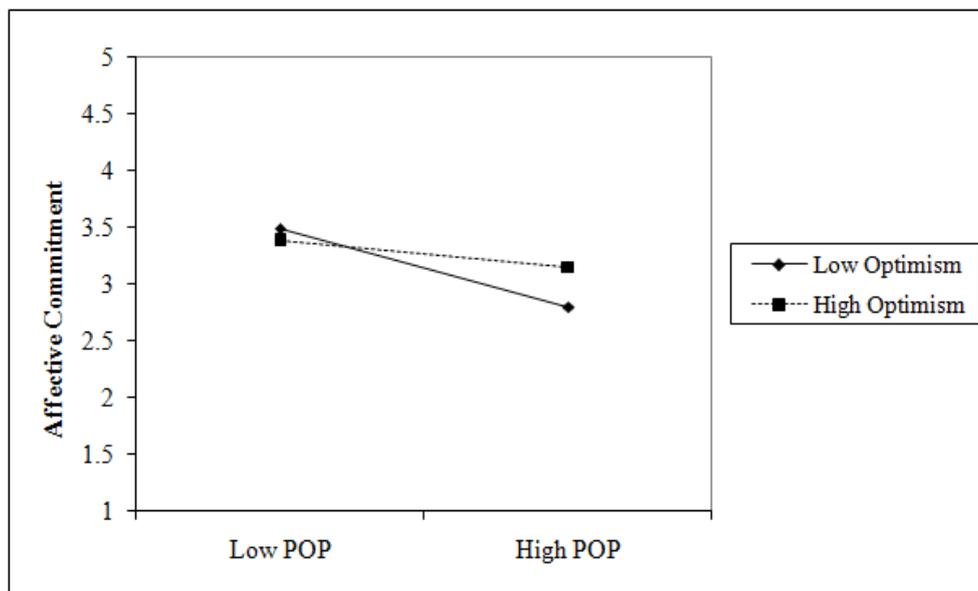
**Table 7**  
**Results for Moderated Regression Analyses**

	Affective Commitment		Turnover Intentions		Whistle Blowing		Counterproductive Behavior	
	$\beta$	$R^2$	$\beta$	$R^2$	$\beta$	$R^2$	$\beta$	$R^2$
<b>Step-1</b>								
Perception of Politics (POP)	-0.45**		0.56**		0.13		0.60**	
Optimism (Opt)	0.08		0.04		-0.03		0.01	
<b>Step-2</b>								
Perception of Politics (POP)	NA	0.31*	NA	0.005	NA	0.06**	NA	0.26*
Optimism (Opt)	NA		NA		NA		NA	
POPxOpt	0.29*		-0.15		0.38**		-0.30*	

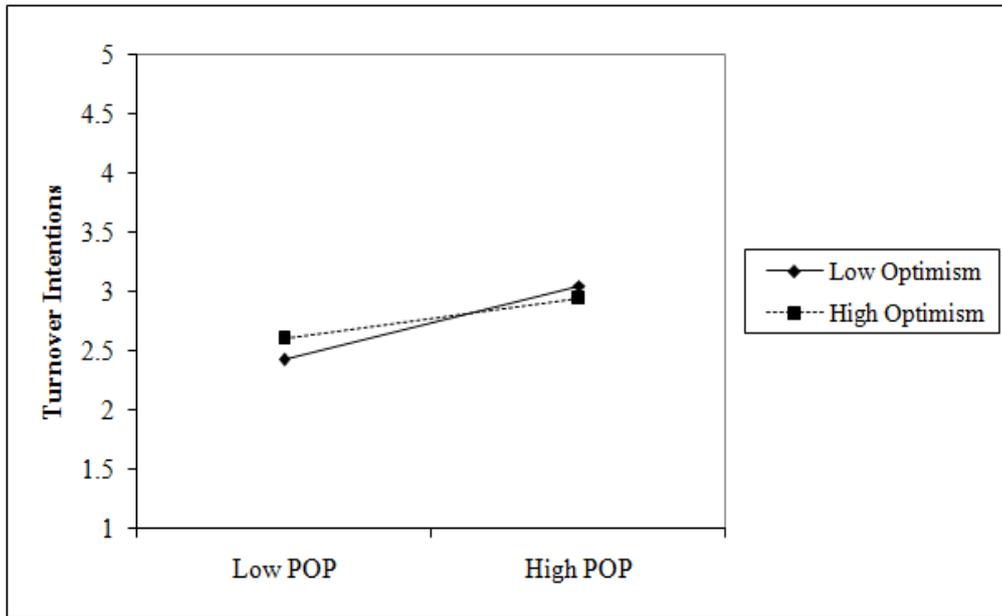
Notes: \*p<0.01; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.001

The interactions of the moderator for high and low values are plotted and given in figure 1 through figure 4. Figure 1 shows the negative relationship between POP and affective commitment which is steeper when optimism is high. Figure 2. shows that the positive relationship between POP and turnover intentions is alleviated for highly optimistic individuals. Figure 3. reveals an inverse buffering effect of optimism between POP and whistleblowing. The relationship is negative at a low level of optimism. But high optimism changes the nature of the relationship into positive. This implies that optimistic employees blow the whistle expecting fruitful changes in the conditions. Figure 4. shows the positive relationship between POP and counterproductive behavior which is negative for high optimism.

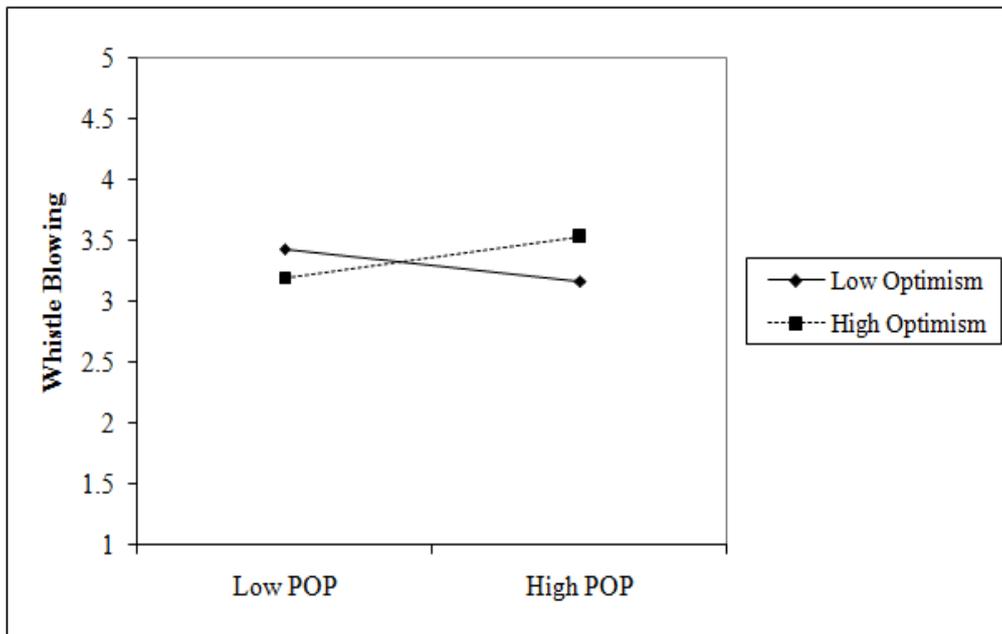
Figure 1  
Interactive Effects of Optimism and Perceived Organizational Politics (POP) on Affective Commitment



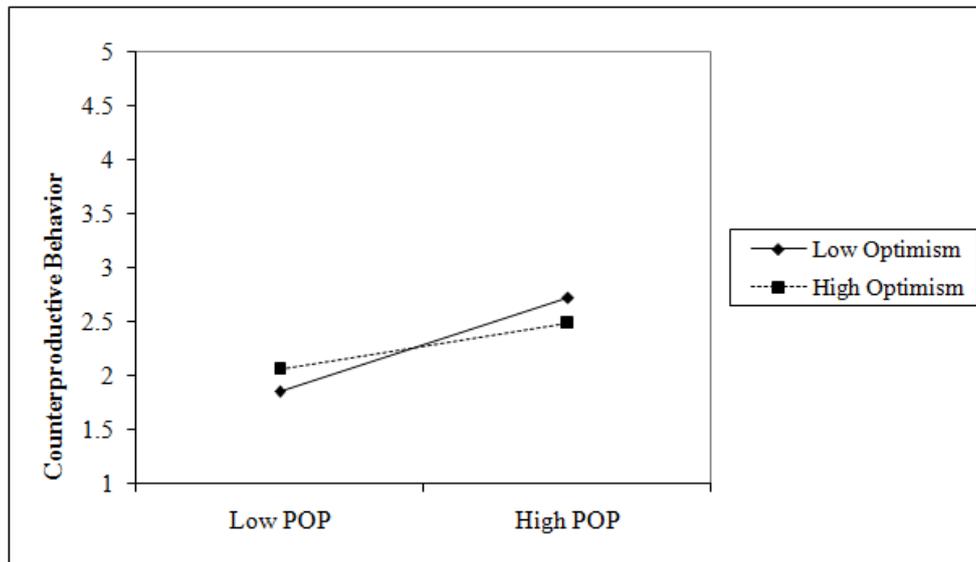
**Figure 2**  
Interactive Effects of Optimism and Perceived Organizational Politics (POP) on Turnover Intentions



**Figure 3**  
Interactive Effects of Optimism and Perceived Organizational Politics (POP) on Whistle Blowing



**Figure 4**  
**Interactive Effects of Optimism and Perceived Organizational Politics (POP) on Counterproductive Behavior**



**Discussion and Findings**

The findings of the study unfolded some interesting facts about government employees working in different capacities. Largely, the study confirmed that predicting qualities of perception of politics towards affective commitment, turnover intentions, and counterproductive behavior. Nearly all relationships were in the hypothesized direction. Government employees were commonly viewed as more involved in workplace deviance comparing their private coequals. But our analysis provided encouraging findings. Generally, employees working at the managerial level and particularly in administrative capacities have to be very responsible. They are associated with key administrative responsibilities which hardly allow them to spare time for other activities. Therefore, they have to be punctual and spend stipulated time in the office. On the other hand, growing political activities may encourage antisocial behavior in the organization. When government employees perceive ripening politics in the organization then it may dampen their morale and pace of work.

Another encouraging feature is observed about government employees who are found less interested to leave the job. The government has provided significant pay raises to all the employees working in the public sector to meet the consistently rising inflation. The salaries of government officers are quite competitive in addition to other privileges like the number of leaves allowed, working hours, medical and transportation facilities, insurances, etc. Therefore, employees are found with minimum turnover intentions. However, political perception showed a direct and significant relationship with turnover intentions which implied that flourishing politics may give rise to turnover intentions.

About affective commitment, employees are found duly loyal with their respective organizations and wish to stay on long term basis. In addition to financial and non-financial rewards offered to public employees, government employees also enjoy the authority conferring additive satisfaction. Precisely, they have all the reasons to stay committed to their job and organization. But the fact remains,

perceived politics may negatively impact the commitments and employees may lose interest in their jobs. In sum, we got support for H1, H2, H3, and H4.

Employees also showed high whistleblowing intentions. But the fact remains, government sector of Pakistan lacks specific channels to report wrongdoings or illegal behaviors. The survey reveals the interesting fact (through an open-ended question) in the majority of government offices about anonymous reporting. Since employees do not find any appropriate way to report illegitimate practice, therefore, they usually go to send anonymous letters and emails to higher authorities or anyone in command. This strategy ensures confidentiality and protection against likely victimization. Surprisingly, organizational politics failed to show any influence towards whistleblowing. Though employees were of the view that they would surely report any unlawful activity or behavior to concerned authorities but reporting political activities specifically not appreciated by the respondents. Generally, employees are away from political manipulation and are less concerned about such kinds of behaviors. Secondly, employees at higher positions commonly report hard issues like embezzlement, kick-offs, theft, etc. Reporting general political tactics are not much severe to be voiced as conclude from our result.

In nutshell, this study confirmed the adverse effects of organizational politics on some key outcomes confirming the findings of previous studies (Gandz and Murray, 1980). To counter the detrimental effects, the moderating role of optimism was also investigated on various hypothesized relationships. Optimism buffers the negative impact of POP towards affective commitment, whistleblowing, and counterproductive behavior. This implied that the detrimental effects of POP can be countered by optimism. Optimistic employees working in government capacities may not have any negative attitudes and behavior. The findings reveal cautions for employees with low psychological resources, who may be more susceptible to negative outcomes. Whistleblowing which had a weak association with POP become a significant outcome in the presence of optimism. It implies that employees blow a whistle when they are optimistic about the impact of raising voice or when favorable changes are expected. However, the moderating role of optimism on the relationship between POP to turnover intentions couldn't be proved. Previously, Abbas et al. (2014) found a more strengthened relationship between POP–turnover intentions in the presence of psychological resources. In this case, though optimism changed the nature of the relationship between POP and turnover intentions the effect of interaction term was insignificant.

### **Implications and Future Directions**

Theoretically our study validates the existing studies by highlighting the adverse nature of conflict that not only reduces employees' commitment but also motivates individuals towards counterproductive activities and even intends to leave the organization. Employees may also take passive position and blow whistle against illegitimate behaviors of few employees. In nutshell, our study complements the role of EVLN (exit, voice, loyalty and neglect) model (Hirschman, 1970). Employees may follow any of undesirable behavior as a response to politicized environment or even lessen their loyalties with organization. In addition, our study extends the existing literature by contributing the moderating role of optimism to buffer the adverse effects of perceived politics. Employees high on optimism face the challenging situation caused by organizational politics in pragmatic way.

For practicing managers, our study guides managers to be vigilant about the adversities caused by politics. Any illegitimate or unsanctioned behaviors of few employees may cause to politicize entire work environment which further lessen the loyalties of others and stimulate different types of undesirable behaviors. In the same vein, managers may consider the role of optimism that has emerged as threat neutralizer.

For future researchers, the same model may be replicated in other settings to see the differences. Cross sectional data limits the generalizability of the findings, hence longitudinal research design may also be opted to see if the results show any time sensitivity. Moreover, we strongly encourage future researchers to examine other psychological reservoirs that may also help to face challenging situations. For example, self-esteem, GRIT (Gumption, Resilience, Integrity, Tenacity), mindfulness to name a few, may also be tested as optimizing factor.

## Conclusion

The results of the study show that government employees working at different positions in government organizations are less involved in counterproductive activities. They are found highly committed to their organizations with minimum turnover intentions. Perceived politics showed direct and positive relationships with turnover intentions and counterproductive behavior. An affective commitment was also found to be significantly and negatively related to organizational politics. Perception of politics couldn't show any relationship with whistleblowing. Optimism emerged as a key moderator between POP to affective commitment, POP to whistleblowing and POP to counterproductive behavior.

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**Appendices**

**Table 3**  
**Pattern Matrix**

	1	2	3	4	5	6
POP1	0.65					
POP2	0.77					
POP3	0.78					
POP4	0.65					
POP5	0.80					
POP6	0.94					
POP7	0.69					
POP8	0.75					
POP9	0.70					
POP10	0.51					
POP11	0.73					
POP12	0.73					
AC1			0.80			
AC2			0.85			
AC3			0.73			
AC4			0.71			
AC5			0.59			
TI1						0.70
TI2						0.91
TI3						0.92
WB1					0.78	
WB2					0.81	
WB3					0.80	
WB4					0.82	
CWB1				0.72		
CWB2				0.84		
CWB3				0.65		
CWB4				0.64		
CWB5				0.71		
OP1		0.74				
OP2		0.71				
OP3		0.69				
OP4		0.74				
OP5		0.84				
OP6		0.84				

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.  
Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.

**Table 4**  
**Construct Validities Analysis**

Variables	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>1 TI</b>	0.887	0.724	0.114	0.904	<b>0.851</b>					
<b>2 POP</b>	0.940	0.568	0.462	0.941	0.259	<b>0.754</b>				
<b>3 OP</b>	0.903	0.610	0.462	0.913	0.147	0.680	<b>0.781</b>			
<b>4 WB</b>	0.878	0.644	0.122	0.879	-0.064	0.086	0.027	<b>0.802</b>		
<b>5 AC</b>	0.864	0.559	0.122	0.868	-0.338	-0.266	-0.116	0.349	<b>0.748</b>	
<b>6 CWB</b>	0.843	0.522	0.166	0.862	0.102	0.408	0.258	0.036	-0.057	<b>0.722</b>

POP=Perception of Politics, AC=Affective Commitment, TI=Turnover Intentions, WB=Whistle Blowing; CWB=Counter Productive Behavior, OPT=Optimism; Reliability estimates in parentheses.

Table-III Reliabilities and Validities of Constructs

**Table 5**  
**Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations, and Reliabilities**

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>1 POP</b>	3.15	0.52	(0.94)					
<b>2 AC</b>	3.46	0.80	-0.25**	(0.86)				
<b>3 TI</b>	2.71	1.04	0.27**	-0.31	(0.88)			
<b>4 WB</b>	3.42	0.80	0.07	0.30**	-0.06	(0.88)		
<b>5 CWB</b>	2.20	0.91	0.35**	-0.03	0.09	0.06	(0.84)	
<b>6 OPT</b>	3.22	0.74	0.63**	-0.10	0.17*	0.03	0.22**	(0.91)

\*p<0.05; \*\*p<0.01; \*\*\*p<0.001

POP=Perception of Politics, AC=Affective Commitment, TI=Turnover Intentions, WB=Whistle Blowing; CWB=Counter Productive Behavior, OPT=Optimism; Reliability estimates in parentheses.