

ORGANISATIONAL POLITICS AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN RIVERS STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between organisational politics and employee engagement of public universities in Rivers State. The aim of the study examine the dimensions of organisational politics as coalition building and power play and the measures of the employee engagement as employee dedication and vigor. The research design adopted for this study was the cross sectional survey research. The Population of the study was 4888 lecturers from three Public Universities in Rivers State. The sample size used was 370. Descriptive statistics using mean and standard deviation was used to analyze univariate data, Spearman's rank Order correlation Statistics was used to analyze bivariate data and partial correlation was used to analyze multivariate data using SPSS version 22. The study revealed that there is a significant relationship coalition building and measures of employee engagement of public universities in Rivers State. There is a weak relationship between power play and measures of employee engagement of public universities in Rivers State. There is moderating role of organizational culture on the relationship between organisational politics and employee engagement of public universities in Rivers State. Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that organisational correlates with employee engagement in public universities. Based on the findings of this study, the study recommended among others that collation building should be encouraged in order to secure employee dedication to the organisation.

Keywords: *Organisational Politics, Coalition Building, Power Play, Employee Engagement, Employee Dedication and Vigor.*

INTRODUCTION

In the workplace, employees are highly diplomatic on how they deal with their employer in other to be favored. Organizational politics and employee engagement are two significant areas of research within the field of organizational behavior. Organizational politics refer to the use of power and influence tactics by individuals or groups within an organization to achieve their own goals or interests, often at the expense of others (Ferris, Treadway, Perrewé, Brouer, & Douglas, 2007). On the other hand, employee engagement refers to the level of commitment, passion, and enthusiasm that employees have towards their work and the organization (Saks, 2006). The study on organizational politics and employee engagement is important because it examines how organizational politics can impact employee engagement levels. It is widely recognized that high levels of employee engagement are associated with various positive outcomes for both employees and organizations, such as increased job satisfaction, higher productivity, lower turnover rates, and better organizational performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Harter et al., 2002). Therefore, understanding the relationship between organizational politics and employee engagement is crucial for organizations to create a positive work environment and enhance employee well-being. Nevertheless, coalition building as the first dimension of this study emerges as a strategic dimension where individuals or groups form alliances to navigate power dynamics, influence decision-making, and advance shared objectives. Rooted in the social dynamics of workplaces, coalition building represents a deliberate effort to create collective influence and impact within an organization. This nuanced practice is a response to the recognition that power and influence are often distributed among various stakeholders, and the ability to form effective coalitions can significantly shape the organizational landscape. Coalition in this study context consists of persons

within an organisation that influence goals via informal structure (Bernard & Augustina, 2014). The forming of coalitions in organisations is mostly activated via conflicting goals. At the group level (i.e., coalition), the expressed objectives of the organisation are not the absolute organisational objective; denoting that implicit objective of the employees who sustain informal authority structure in the organisation via forming a coalition, compliment or undermine stated goals. Hence, the complimenting or undermining of stated goals is contingent on the level of dominance possessed by the coalition, which may influence employee spiritual engagement via perceived goal complexity.

Power play as the second dimension of organisational politics used in this study refers to as the strategic maneuvers, influence tactics, and interpersonal dynamics individuals employ to gain, maintain, or enhance their power and influence within an organization. Organizational politics is an inherent aspect of workplace interactions, involving the distribution and exercise of power to achieve personal or group goals. Power play can manifest in various forms, ranging from subtle influence tactics to overt strategic moves, and understanding this concept is crucial for navigating the complexities of the organizational landscape. A power play is an attempt to gain an advantage by showing that you are more powerful than another person or organisation, for example in a business relationship or negotiation. Every organisation clamor for employee engagement in order for it to bring about favourable outcome. In this study, employee engagement is measured in terms of its vigor, dedication and absorption.

Several factors influence the relationship between organizational politics and employee engagement. The leadership style within an organization plays a crucial role in shaping the political climate and its impact on employee engagement (Eisenbeiss et al., 2008). Leaders who promote transparency, fairness, and participative decision-making are more likely to create a positive work environment that fosters engagement. Additionally, organizational culture, communication patterns, and the presence of formal and informal power structures can also influence the extent to which organizational politics affect employee engagement (Kacmar & Ferris, 1991). The study on organizational politics and employee engagement is essential for understanding how the use of power and influence tactics within an organization can impact employees' level of commitment and enthusiasm towards their work. Based on the aforementioned, this study is an attempt at investigating the relationship between organizational politics and employee engagement in public universities in Rivers state.

Statement of the Problem

Public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria, face several challenges related to employee engagement, including issues of dedication, vigor, and absorption arising from organisational politics such as coalition building, ingratiation, and power play. These challenges can significantly impact the overall effectiveness and productivity of the workforce within these institutions. Employee dedication refers to the level of commitment and enthusiasm that employees demonstrate towards their work and the organization. In public universities in Rivers State, employee dedication may be hindered by various factors such as inadequate resources, bureaucratic red tape, and a lack of recognition for individual contributions. These issues can lead to a decline in employee morale and a reduced sense of purpose among staff members (Eisenberger et al., 2001). Employee vigor pertains to the energy and resilience that employees bring to their roles within the organization. In the context of public universities in Rivers State, employee vigor may be compromised by factors such as excessive workloads, limited opportunities for professional development, and a lack of support from management. These challenges can contribute to burnout and decreased motivation among university employees. Employee absorption involves the extent to which employees are fully engaged and focused on their work tasks. In public universities in Rivers State, organizational politics such as coalition building, ingratiation, and power play can create distractions and conflicts that detract

from employees' ability to concentrate on their responsibilities. This can lead to a decline in productivity and an erosion of trust within the workplace.

Addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach that encompasses effective leadership, transparent communication, equitable resource allocation, and opportunities for professional growth and recognition. By fostering a positive work environment that values employee well-being and promotes fairness and inclusivity, public universities in Rivers State can enhance employee engagement and mitigate the negative impact of organizational politics on dedication, vigor, and absorption among their workforce. (Robbins & Judge, 2019).

Several studies have explored the relationship between employee engagement and organizational politics. For example, Eisenberger et al. (2001) conducted a study in which they found that perceived organizational support, which includes fair treatment and rewards, was positively related to employee engagement. Similarly, Macey and Schneider (2008) conducted a meta-analysis of various studies and found that organizational justice, which includes fairness in decision-making processes, was positively related to employee engagement. However, it is observed that there are scarce literatures on organizational politics and employee engagement of public universities in Rivers state, it is in the light of the above that this study is carried out to fill this lacuna.

Conceptual Framework

This is an analytical tool with several variation and context, it is used to make conceptual distinction and organized ideas. This fig 1.1 below shows the relationship, between organisational politics and employee engagement

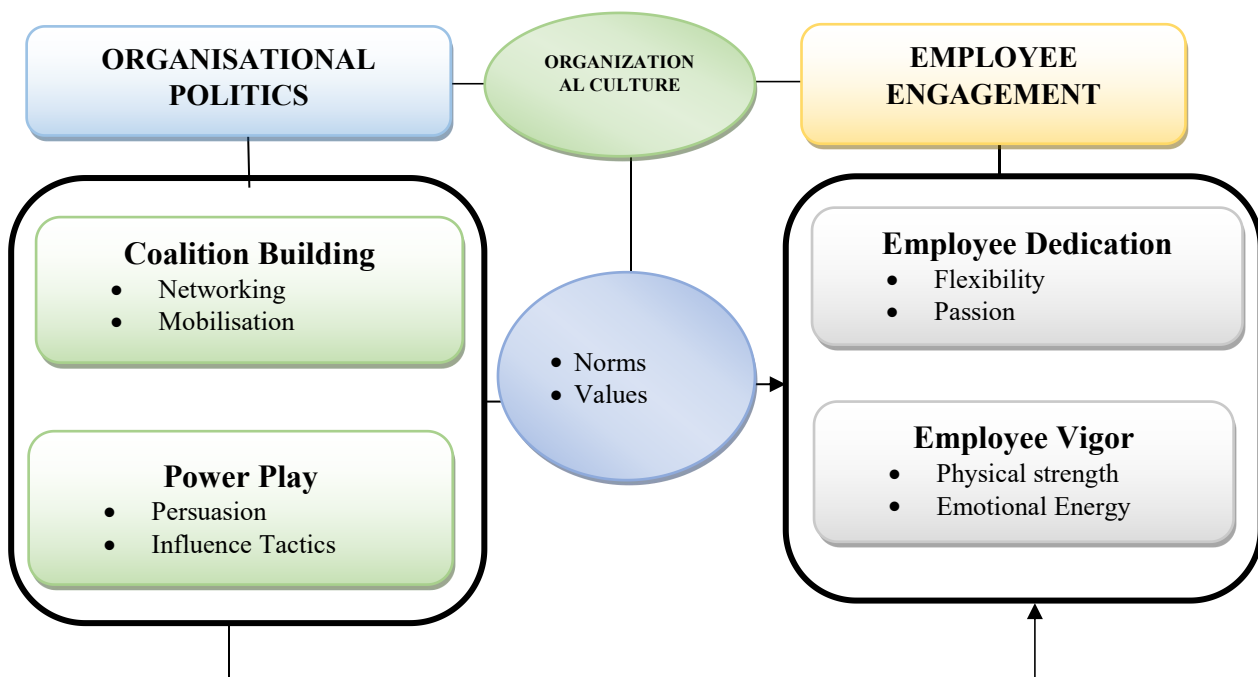


Figure 1 Conceptual framework of organisational politics and employee engagement

Sources: Adapted from the work of Robbins et al (2017); Ferris et' al (2007); Nwinyokpugi (2015)

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study was to examine the relationship between organisational politics and employee engagement of public universities in Rivers State. Specifically, the objective of the study was set to be achieved.

1. To examine the relationship between coalition building and employee dedication of public state owned universities in Rivers State

2. To ascertain the relationship between coalition building and employee vigor of public state owned universities in Rivers State
3. To investigate the relationship between power play and employee dedication of public state owned universities in Rivers State
4. To examine the relationship power play and employee vigor of public state owned universities in Rivers State
5. T find out the moderating role of organizational culture in the relationship between organisational politics and employee engagement of public universities in Rivers State

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions

1. Is there a relationship between coalition building and employee dedication of public state owned universities in Rivers State?
2. Is there a relationship between coalition building and employee vigor of public state owned universities in Rivers State?
3. Is there a relationship between power play and employee dedication of public state owned universities in Rivers State?
4. Does a relationship exist between power play and employee vigor of public state owned universities in Rivers State?
5. Does organizational culture moderate the relationship between organisational politics and employee engagement of public state owned universities in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

To provide tentative answers to the research questions, the following hypotheses was formulated to guide the study

- Ho₁:** There is no significant relationship coalition building and employee dedication of public universities in Rivers State.
- Ho₂:** There is no significant relationship coalition building and employee vigor of public universities in Rivers State.
- Ho₃:** There is no significant relationship between power play and employee dedication of public universities in Rivers State.
- Ho₄:** There is no significant relationship between power play and employee vigor of public universities in Rivers State
- Ho₅:** Organisational culture does not moderate the relationship between organisational politics and employee engagement of public universities in Rivers State.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Conceptual Review

This chapter focuses on the review of selected literature on organisational politics and employee engagement, it also establishes the basic theoretical review, empirical review, gap in literature and summary of literature review for the study.

The Concept of Organisational Politics

Parker, et al., (1995) define organisational politics as others (individuals) are made use of as resources in competitive situations while Pfeffer (2015) describes it as "behaviour by individuals, or in group, by subunits within an organisation that makes a claim against resource-sharing systems of the organisation. Abubakar et al (2017) see it as the activities of organisational members when they use resource to enhance or protect their share of an exchange in ways that could be resisted, or ways in which the impact would be resisted if recognized by the other party (ies) to the exchange. Maslyn and Feder (2018) looking at it from the perspective of sanctioned and non-sanctioned influences, describe organisational politics as "the management of influence to obtain ends not sanctioned by the organisation or to obtain sanctioned ends through non-

sanctioned influence means. Tushman (2017) approaches it from the viewpoint of authority and power, seeing it as "the use of authority and power to effect definition of goals, directions, and other major parameters of the organisation". Allen, Madison, Porter, Renswick and Mayes (1979) view organisational politics as intentional acts of influence to enhance or protect the self-interest of individuals or groups". Pfeffer (2015) considers organisational politics as "those activities taken within organisations acquire, develop and use power and other resource to obtain one's preferred outcome in a situation which there is uncertainty or dissensus about choice. Porter, et'al (1981) opines that organisational politics can be described as "social influence attempts that are discretionary, intended to promote or protect the self-interests of individuals and groups, and threaten the self-interests of others Mintzberg (2016) looking at it from the perspective of individual and group behaviour classified organisational politics as "individual or group behaviour that is informal, ostensibly parochial, typical divisive, and above all in a technical sense, illegitimate-sanctioned neither by formal authority, accepted ideology, nor certified expertise (although it may exploit any one of those) Ferris, et'al (1989) consider organisational politics as a social influence process in which behaviour is strategically designed to maximize short-term or long-term self-interest, which is either consistent with or at the expense of others' interest Cropanzano, Howes, Grandy and Toth (1997) describe organisational politics as "social influence attempts directed at those who can provide rewards that will help promote or protect the self-interest of the actor" Bacharach and Lawler (1981) opined that organisational politics is "the efforts of individuals or groups in organizations to mobilize support for or opposition to organizational strategies, policies or practices in which they have a vested stake or interest" After appraising the dynamics of self-interests in organizations, define organisational politics as "actions by individuals that are directed toward the goal of furthering their own self-interests or with little regard for the well-being of others within the organization (Kong, 2018).

Dimensions of Organizational Politics

Coalition Building

Robbins (2017) defines coalitions as Enlisting the aid or support of others to persuade the target to agree, while Baron (1989) describes it as "individuals seeking to exact influence by obtaining support of co-workers or outsiders to back up their requests" Nelson and Quick (1997) agrees, but adds that the individual seeks the aid of others to persuade the target to do something or uses the support of others as an argument for the target to agree. According to Inyang (2008) coalitions are much more stable repositories of sources of power. In general, a united group can acquire power more easily, use it more effectively, and make it stretch out more in time and space than separate individuals. It can use its membership individual political manoeuvres that are designed to serve the collective objectives, as well as indirect collective strategies. A political coalition will, however, not last long unless the rewards are equitably shared among the membership. Groups are more noticeable than individuals and are thus more susceptible to counter strategies such as that of "divide and rule". In organization, the head of finance may generate conflict between marketing and production in hope of getting a bigger share of the limited budget from the chief executive of the company.

According to Cacciatolo (2014) forming power coalitions with allies is a tactic which is used by individuals that associate themselves with influential persons in an organization or in social situations to gain popularity or feel important. Inyang (2008) opines that forming multiple contracts in the hierarchy within the organization helps appealing to one's immediate supervisor alone restricts the scope of organizational politics. The larger the number of contacts in the hierarchy, the more options one has in constructing a map of support for a particular influence attempt. The common tactics of walking into the office of someone with authority to seek "advice" on an "important" matter may have the desired effect of gaining the persons support. The careless use of this approach may, however, make enemies of people with authority.

Power Play

In today's organizations, career success depends more on political skill - the ability to influence, motivate, and win support from others-than on almost any other characteristic. Political Skill at Work delivers the "how" to influence at work, not just the "what." (Crant & Wright, 2010). Within the intricate tapestry of organizational dynamics, the concept of power play emerges as a pivotal force shaping interactions, decisions, and the overall culture of the workplace. Organizational politics, characterized by the strategic pursuit and exercise of power, involves a complex interplay of influence tactics, maneuvering, and strategic alliances. Power play represents the deliberate actions individuals take to navigate this political landscape, seeking to enhance their influence, achieve personal or group objectives, and secure advantageous positions within the organization. Mitra (2016) define power play in organizational politics as the strategic maneuvers, influence tactics, and interpersonal dynamics individuals employ to gain, maintain, or enhance their power and influence within an organization. Organizational politics is an inherent aspect of workplace interactions, involving the distribution and exercise of power to achieve personal or group goals. Power play can manifest in various forms, ranging from subtle influence tactics to overt strategic moves, and understanding this concept is crucial for navigating the complexities of the organizational landscape. A power play is an attempt to gain an advantage by showing that you are more powerful than another person or organisation, for example in a business relationship or negotiation. Power play often involves the use of influence tactics to sway decision-making in one's favor. Individuals may employ techniques such as persuasion, coalition-building, and networking to gain support for their ideas or initiatives (Yukl & Falbe, 2011). Individuals engage in political maneuvering to position themselves strategically within the organization. This may involve forming alliances, creating networks, and aligning with key decision-makers to enhance one's influence (Mintzberg, 1985). Power play includes the control and manipulation of information to shape perceptions and decision outcomes. Those with access to critical information can use it strategically to enhance their influence. Forming coalitions is a powerful strategy in power play, allowing individuals or groups to pool their influence and achieve common objectives. Coalition building can influence decision-making processes and counterbalance competing power sources (Knoke & Kuklinski, 2012).

Concept of Employee Engagement

Ancillary, Outcome, Psychological Construct, Traits, and even Behaviors Have All Been Used to Describe Employee Engagement (EE) (Jeve, et al., 2015). That "good, gratifying, and work-related frame of mind" (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Employee engagement may be traced back to Kahn's (1990) seminar work, in which he presented and explained how workers are personally engaged and disengaged from their job role performance (Bakar, 2013). It is the "harnessing of organization members' identities to work roles," as he puts it; this is shown in how people "present themselves physically, intellectually, and emotionally throughout role performances" (Kahn, 1990). After its first presentation, numerous researchers have expanded the body of knowledge on the construct and various alternative definitions have surfaced. According to one definition, employee engagement is "the individual's purpose and focused energy, obvious to others in the exhibition of personal initiative, flexibility, effort, and tenacity oriented towards corporate objectives" (Marcey, et al., 2009). There have been suggestions that there are three main components to employee engagement: cognitive, emotional, and social (Alfes et al., 2010). Scholars and practitioners have separated the idea of employee engagement (EE) into two distinct categories: broad engagement and in-depth personal involvement (Kahn, 1992). Employee engagement has been broken down into job engagement and organizational engagement (Saks, 2006) and has been referred to as "work engagement" (Macey & Schneider, 2008) and the "positive antithesis of burnout" (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). (Wang & Liu, 2015). Commitment is a key component of employee engagement, but at first, several skeptics doubted that it was much more than a passing trend. "Employee engagement has become for practitioners an umbrella word for encompassing the numerous techniques through which employers might extract additional or discretionary effort from employee," i.e. a desire on the side of employees to labor

beyond contract. There is a new mantra that goes "it has become a new mantra" (CIPD, 2012). When workers are invested in their jobs and the company as a whole, they are more likely to work hard and provide excellent results. According to Guest (2013), managers prefer workers who are engaged over those who are disengaged (Guest, 2013). Despite the widespread acceptance of the idea, purists point out that there is still no consensus on how to define it and that it might lead to "work intensification," which can be detrimental (Purcell, 2014). (Torrington et al., 2017). Organizational dedication is not the same as employee engagement (OC). Commitment to one's organization may be defined as an emotional investment in and dedication to one's work there. Engagement is not a state of mind but rather the degree to which workers are focused and invested in their work (Saks, 2006).

Measures of Employee Engagement

Employee Dedication

When workers are devoted to their jobs, they are passionate about what they do and take great satisfaction in their achievements. Employees that consistently go above and above for the company believe that the tasks they oversee matter and aid in achieving their ultimate goals. Schaufeli and Baker (2004) argue that cynicism is the antithesis of devotion. This aspect of employee engagement deals with a pledge of dedication. To be deeply invested in one's job and to have a deep connection to it along with a feeling of significance, passion, and challenge is what this dimension is all about. It's the kind of engagement that makes a difference and generates emotions like inspiration, meaning, pride, and passion (Gubman, 2014). A hardworking worker is a valuable asset to any company. A person's age or the length of time they've been employed by a company are not indicative of their level of commitment to their job. Dedication entails eagerness, dedication, ownership, and a never-ending quest for excellence (Schaufeli & Bakker 2013). If an employee is really invested in the success of the company, they will be familiar with the company's core principles and will work hard to uphold those values and the company's reputation. According to Schaufeli & Bakker (2013), an employer may inspire loyalty if they demonstrate interest in and concern for their customers and staff.

Employee Vigor

Putting in additional effort, or "discretionary effort" as it's called in the business world, is the hallmark of a fully invested and proactive individual. According to Richard Ryan of the University of Rochester, the crucial factor is vitality, or the energy one has at their disposal. Positivity is a magnetic force that may carry you and others around you through hurdles when you have it since it brings with it a sense of well-being, which in turn increases your interest and sense of vitality. You're prepared to channel your strength into an extra-high effort. This is in stark contrast to the primary symptom of burnout, which is tiredness on all fronts (mental, physical, and emotional). Someone who is full of life and vigor cannot tire out since there are always more reserves of energy available to replenish what is spent. A natural defense against exhaustion and resource overload is maintaining physical energy via tactics that enable minds and bodies recharge on a regular basis. Work engagement, described as "a pleasant, meaningful, work-related frame of mind that is marked by vigor, devotion, and absorption," includes employee vitality as a fundamental characteristic (Schaufeli et al., 2012). Workplace vigor is defined as "the desire to devote effort in one's job and continue in the face of adversity" as well as "high levels of energy and mental resilience while working" (Schaufeli et al., 2012). Vigor in the workplace is a subjective measure of a person's emotional state (Shriom, 2014). (Peterson & Seligman, 2014; Ryan & Frederick, 1997). It's also important because it encourages people to think outside the box and take initiative in ways that benefit the company (Sonnentag & Niessen, 2018). Furthermore, in the dimension labeled energy, staff vigor is seen as the antithesis of emotional tiredness (Schaufeli et al., 2012). (Gonzalez-Roma et al., 2016; Schaufeli et al., 2012). When employees show low levels of energy, it's likely because they're overworked, whereas when they show high levels of energy, it's likely because they're enthusiastic about their jobs (Gonzalez-Roma et al., 2016).

Moderating Variable-Organizational Culture

Organizational culture is a set of shared assumptions that guide what happens in organizations by defining appropriate behavior for various situations. It affects the way employees and teams interact with each other in an organization, with clients, and with stakeholders. Schrod (2016) said that organizational culture influences how much employees identify with their organization. Also, organizational culture is a deeply embedded set of values and beliefs that determine to a great extent and how employees react to various situations. But if an organization's culture cannot promote merit and efficiency, it can prove to be a drag on business productivity. This is the reason why organizational culture is shaped in such a way that it enhances business growth as it directs behaviors of both management and employees. Organizational culture is operationally defined as the norms and values held by an organization which shapes decisions, behavioral pattern and relationships around the workplace. Explicitly, the decisions taken by management on issues and the way employees and as well management relate amongst themselves, are guided by the organizational culture operating in such work environment. According to North (2015), culture also includes the firm's vision, values, norms, systems, symbols, language, assumptions, beliefs, and habits. Simply stated, organizational culture is the way things are done around here – the organization (O'Donohue & Torugsa, 2015). Culture gives a group its uniqueness and differentiates it from other groups. Employees in a group share common values, beliefs and assumptions about what is wrong and right, effective and ineffective (Nikandrou in O'Donohue & Torugsa, 2015).

Theoretical Review

Social Exchange Theory

Social exchange theory was developed by the American sociologist George C. Homans in the 1950s and further expanded upon by other scholars in subsequent years. Homans, who is considered the founding father of social exchange theory, introduced this perspective as a way to understand social behavior through the lens of economic principles (Homans, 1958). Social exchange theory is a sociological concept that seeks to explain social interactions and relationships in terms of the exchange of resources between individuals or groups. According to this theory, individuals engage in social interactions with the expectation of receiving rewards and avoiding costs. These rewards can be tangible (such as money or material possessions) or intangible (such as love, support, or approval), while costs can include time, effort, or emotional investment (Homans, 1958).

One of the key assumptions of social exchange theory is that individuals are rational actors who seek to maximize their own self-interests in their interactions with others (Blau, 1964). This means that individuals will weigh the potential benefits and costs of engaging in a particular social interaction before deciding whether or not to pursue it. For example, if an individual believes that the rewards of entering into a romantic relationship outweigh the costs, they are more likely to pursue that relationship. Social exchange theory offers valuable insights into these dynamics by emphasizing the concept of reciprocity. According to this theory, individuals engage in social exchanges with others based on a cost-benefit analysis, seeking to maximize their rewards while minimizing their costs. In the context of organizational politics, employees may engage in political behavior to gain access to resources, opportunities for advancement, or protection from threats. They weigh the potential benefits against potential risks or costs associated with engaging in such behavior. (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005)

Social exchange theory provides insights into the mechanisms that underlie employee engagement by highlighting the importance of reciprocal relationships between employees and their organization. According to this theory, employees who perceive that they receive fair treatment and rewards from their organization are more likely to reciprocate with higher levels of engagement. They are motivated to invest their time and effort into their work because they believe that their contributions will be recognized and rewarded. (Eisenberger et al., 2001). The application of social exchange theory to the study of organizational politics and employee

engagement has been supported by empirical research. For example, a study by Wayne et al. (1997) found that employees who engaged in political behavior perceived higher levels of organizational support when they believed that their actions were reciprocated with rewards and benefits. This finding suggests that the exchange relationship between employees and their organization plays a crucial role in shaping employees' perceptions of support and their subsequent engagement. Similarly, another study by Rhoades et al. (2001) demonstrated that perceived organizational support mediated the relationship between employees' engagement in political behavior and their subsequent engagement levels.

Nevertheless, social exchange theory provides a valuable framework for understanding the dynamics of organizational politics and employee engagement. By emphasizing the concept of reciprocity, this theory highlights the importance of the exchange relationship between individuals and their organization. It explains how individuals engage in social exchanges based on a cost-benefit analysis, seeking to maximize rewards while minimizing costs. Applying this theory to the study of organizational politics helps us understand the motivations and behaviors underlying political behavior within organizations. Furthermore, it offers insights into employee engagement by emphasizing the reciprocal relationship between employees and their organization, suggesting that fair treatment and rewards are crucial for fostering high levels of engagement.

Assumptions of Social Exchange Theory

1. **Rationality:** Social exchange theory assumes that individuals are rational actors who make decisions based on a cost-benefit analysis. They engage in exchanges that maximize their own self-interests.
2. **Reciprocity:** The theory suggests that individuals expect reciprocity in their social exchanges. They anticipate that their actions will be reciprocated by others in a similar manner.
3. **Interdependence:** Social exchange theory recognizes that individuals are interdependent and rely on each other to fulfill their needs and goals. This interdependence forms the basis for social exchanges within organizations.
4. **Comparison Level:** Individuals have a comparison level, which is a standard against which they evaluate the fairness of an exchange. This comparison level is influenced by past experiences, expectations, and cultural norms.
5. **Trust:** Trust plays a crucial role in social exchanges. Individuals are more likely to engage in exchanges when they trust that others will fulfill their obligations and reciprocate their actions.

Implications of Social Exchange Theory

1. **Power dynamics:** Social exchange theory highlights the power dynamics inherent in organizational politics. Individuals engage in political behaviors to gain power and influence, which they can then use to negotiate favorable exchanges.
2. **Resource allocation:** The theory suggests that individuals engage in political behaviors to secure resources such as promotions, salary increases, or access to information. Organizational politics becomes a means to obtain valuable resources through social exchanges.
3. **Norms and expectations:** Social exchange theory recognizes that norms and expectations shape individuals' behavior within organizations. These norms and expectations influence the types of exchanges that occur and the perceived fairness of these exchanges.
4. **Conflict and competition:** Organizational politics often involves conflict and competition among individuals. Social exchange theory helps explain how individuals strategically engage in political behaviors to outperform their peers and gain advantages in social exchanges.

5. Organizational culture: The theory emphasizes the importance of organizational culture in shaping social exchanges. The norms, values, and practices within an organization influence the types of exchanges that are valued and rewarded.

Empirical Review

Ilesanmi and Wahab (2021) explored organizational politics and employee vigor in Nigeria: the moderating role of perceived organizational support. The aim is to investigate whether perceived organizational support buffers the negative impact of organizational politics on employee vigor. The study employed a quantitative research design with a sample size of 400 employees from various organizations in Nigeria. Data were collected using questionnaires and analyzed through hierarchical regression analysis. The study found that perceived organizational support moderated the relationship between organizational politics and employee vigor, buffering its negative effects. Perceived organizational support can act as a protective factor, mitigating the negative impact of organizational politics on employee vigor. Organizations should focus on fostering a supportive work environment to enhance perceived organizational support and mitigate the adverse effects of organizational politics on employee vigor.

Adeoye and Ogunnaike (2020) carried out a research on organizational politics, job satisfaction, and employee vigor in Nigerian universities. The aim is to explore the impact of organizational politics on job satisfaction and its subsequent effect on employee vigor. The study employed a quantitative research design with a sample size of 300 employees from various Nigerian universities. Data were collected using questionnaires and analyzed through structural equation modeling. The study found that organizational politics negatively influenced both job satisfaction and employee vigor in Nigerian universities. Organizational politics can significantly decrease job satisfaction, leading to diminished employee vigor in Nigerian universities. The study recommended that Universities should develop strategies to reduce organizational politics and enhance job satisfaction to improve employee vigor.

Adeyemi-Bello and Olawale (2020) evaluated leadership styles and organizational politics. This study aimed to explore the relationship between leadership styles and organizational politics in Nigerian firms. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining surveys and interviews to collect data from employees and leaders in selected organizations. The study revealed that transformational leadership was associated with lower levels of organizational politics, while transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles were linked to higher levels of politics. The findings suggested that leaders who adopt transformational leadership styles are more likely to create a positive work environment that discourages political behaviors. The study recommended that organizations should invest in leadership development programs to enhance the adoption of transformational leadership styles.

Akindele (2020) examined workplace politics and employee engagement: perspectives from Nigerian IT industry. This study aimed to explore the nuances of workplace politics and its impact on employee engagement within the Nigerian information technology (IT) industry. The objectives included understanding how IT-specific factors intersect with workplace politics dynamics and examining strategies for promoting positive employee engagement despite prevalent political behaviors. The research employed a qualitative approach, conducting in-depth interviews with IT professionals working in various organizations across Nigeria's IT sector. Thematic analysis was used to identify recurring patterns related to workplace politics and employee engagement. The study uncovered unique challenges posed by workplace politics within the IT industry in Nigeria, including power struggles related to project ownership and resource allocation. Despite these challenges, it also identified instances of innovative problem-solving driven by motivated employees. The findings highlighted the need for tailored interventions to address workplace politics within the context of Nigeria's IT industry. Employee empowerment and clear delineation of roles were identified as critical strategies for mitigating negative effects on employee

engagement. The study recommended that IT organizations should prioritize role clarity, provide opportunities for skill development, and establish conflict resolution mechanisms tailored to the specific dynamics of the IT sector.

Mensah and Owusu-Frimpong (2020) carried out a study on organizational politics and employee engagement in the Ghanaian mining industry. The aim of the study was to investigate the relationship between organizational politics and employee engagement in the mining industry in Ghana. Mixed-methods approach combining interviews with employees and survey questionnaires distributed to mining industry employees in Ghana. The study found a negative relationship between organizational politics and employee engagement in the mining industry. Organizational politics negatively impacts employee engagement in the Ghanaian mining industry. Mining companies should establish fair and transparent policies to minimize organizational politics and enhance employee engagement.

Ojo (2020) conducted a study on organizational politics and employee absorption: a study of telecommunication companies in Nigeria. The aim of the study was to investigate the influence of organizational politics on employee absorption in Nigerian telecommunication companies. The study used a survey questionnaire to collect data from employees working in telecommunication companies in Nigeria. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis. The study found a significant negative relationship between organizational politics and employee absorption. It also identified factors such as favoritism, lack of transparency, and unfair resource allocation as key contributors to organizational politics. The study concluded that organizational politics negatively affects employee absorption in Nigerian telecommunication companies. The study recommended that telecommunication companies should promote transparency, fairness, and meritocracy to minimize the negative effects of organizational politics. Omoniyi and Adebisi (2020) investigated the moderating role of organizational justice in the relationship between organizational politics and employee dedication in Nigeria. The aim of the study was to examine the moderating effect of organizational justice on the relationship between organizational politics and employee dedication in Nigeria. Quantitative research design using structured questionnaires. The study revealed that organizational justice moderates the relationship between organizational politics and employee dedication. Organizational justice mitigates the negative impact of organizational politics on employee dedication in Nigeria. Organizations should focus on promoting fairness, transparency, and distributive justice to counteract the negative effects of organizational politics on employee dedication.

Adeyemi (2019) carried out a study on workplace politics and employee engagement: a study of Nigerian banking sector. This study aimed to examine the influence of workplace politics on employee engagement specifically within the Nigerian banking sector. The objectives included assessing the prevalence of workplace politics, understanding its impact on employee engagement, and identifying potential strategies for managing workplace politics in the banking industry. The research utilized a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. Surveys and interviews were conducted with employees and managers from various banks in Nigeria. Data analysis involved both statistical techniques and thematic analysis. The study revealed a high prevalence of workplace politics within the Nigerian banking sector, which had a detrimental effect on employee engagement levels. It also highlighted the role of organizational policies, communication channels, and leadership behavior in shaping workplace politics. The findings underscored the need for proactive measures to address workplace politics in the banking industry, as it significantly impacts employee engagement and overall organizational performance. The study recommended that banks should prioritize open communication, fairness in decision-making processes, and training programs for managers to effectively manage workplace politics.

Akanbi and Ogunnaike (2019) examined organizational politics and employee engagement. This study aimed to investigate the relationship between organizational politics and employee engagement in Nigerian organizations. The study utilized a survey design, collecting data from employees in various organizations across Nigeria. The data were analyzed using statistical techniques. The study found a negative relationship between organizational politics and employee engagement, indicating that higher levels of politics were associated with lower levels of engagement. The findings suggested that organizations need to address political behaviors within their workplaces to foster higher levels of employee engagement. The study recommended that organizations should establish transparent and fair processes, promote ethical behavior, and provide opportunities for employee participation to reduce political behaviors.

Ahmad et al., (2019) examined the impact of organizational politics on job performance: mediating role of perceived training opportunities in Jordanian Public Services. The objective of the study was to examine the effects of the perception of organizational politics (POP) on job performance and the mediating role of Perceived Training Opportunities (PTO) on the POP job performance relationship. The study adopted the survey research design. Purposively, a sample size of 344 employees located in 22 regions in the Greater Amman Municipality (GAM), Jordan Questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. PLS-SEM was used to test the research hypotheses. Results revealed that POP negatively affected job performance, and PTO partially mediated the relationship between POP and job performance. Based on these findings, this study recommends that the Jordanian Government and GAM should eliminate or reduce POP practices as much as possible in their organizations as well as improving PTO, which has a positive and significant impact on Job Performance.

Gap in Literature

The main objective of the study was to ascertain the relationship between organisational politics and employee engagement of public owned state universities in River State. Over the year several, empirical studies have been investigated on the relationship between the predictor's variable and other criterion variable reviewed in the research works of Ilesanmi and Wahab (2021), Adeoye and Ogunnaike (2020), Adeyemi-Bello and Olawale (2020), Akindele (2020), Mensah and Owusu-Frimpong (2020), Ojo (2020), Omoniyi and Adebisi (2020), Adeyemi (2019), Akanbi and Ogunnaike (2019), Ahmad et al., (2019), Appiah-Adu and Owusu-Frimpong (2019), Ojedokun and Adeyeye (2019), Okafor and Esiobu (2019), Okeke, and Mbah (2019), Oladipo (2019), Agyemang-Mintah and Ofei-Manu (2018), Ahmed (2018), Ogbo and Amaeshi (2018), Ogunnaike and Ogbonna(2018), Olaniyan (2018), Owoyemi and Elegbede (2018), Ramen and Syed (2018), Taiwo (2018), Abubakar et al., (2017), Adeyemi-Bello and Adeniji (2017), Ajibade and Akanbi (2017), Akinboye and Adeyeye (2017), Olalekan (2017), Onyeizugbe (2017), Owoyemi (2017), Yara (2017), Adebayo and Adeyemi-Bello (2016), Adeyinka (2016), Asamoah and Ankomah (2016), Okonkwo (2016), Oladipo and Adeyemi-Bello (2016), Onyishi and Nnenna (2016), Adaramola and Obasan (2015), Adeniyi (2015), Narteh (2015), Olorunleke (2015), Olowookere and Bello-Mojeed(2015) and Ugwu et al., (2014). However, their empirical studies unveiled that no research work has been investigated on the relationship between the three dimensions of organisational politics such as (coalition building, ingratiation and power play) on the measures of employee engagement such as employee vigor, employee dedication and employee absorption) of public owned state universities in River State. This has resulted in a dearth of research evidence on the relationship between the predictor and criterion variable under study and a gap in knowledge that the study intended to fill.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research design adopted for this study is the cross-sectional survey research design. The design allows the collection of data using the questionnaire at a given point in time. Secondly,

cross-sectional survey research design enables researchers to explore relationships between variables at a specific point in time.

Population of the Study

The Population of the study is 4888 lecturers from three Public Universities in Rivers State. The Public Universities under study and population of Lecturers includes: University of Port Harcourt Choba (2571), Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni (739) and Rivers State University Nkpolu (1578) sourced from establishment unit (2023).

Table 1 Population of the Study

S/N	Names of Public Universities in Rivers State	Sample size distribution
1	Ignitus Ajuri University of Education Rumuolumeni, (IAUOE)	739
2	Rivers State University, Port-Harcourt (RSU)	1578
3	University of Port-Harcourt, Choba (UNIPORT)	2571
Total		4888

Source: Establishment Departments of Universities (2024).

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The sample size is a representative unit drawn from the overall population with common characteristics. The Taro Yamane sampling formula was used to determine the appropriate sample size from the given population especially infinite. The formula is stated below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e^2)}$$

Where:

n = sample size

N = population size

e = desired level of precision (expressed as a decimal)

Using the formula:

$$n = 4888 / (1 + 4888(0.05^2))$$

$$n = 4888 / (1 + 4888(0.0025))$$

$$n = 4888 / (1 + 12.22)$$

$$n = 4888 / 13.22$$

$$n \approx 369.96 = 370.$$

After arriving at number of 370 lecturers, it was considered necessary to employed the Bowley's proportional allocation formula to ensure that the sample characteristics are harmonious with that of the population. Thus employing the Bowley's (1937) formula, we have the population characteristics and sampling errors are reduced because of the samples typicality. The proportionate stratified random samples are computed using Bowley (1937) proportionate allocation formula. Bowleys' proportional allocation formula is given thus:

$$N_h = \frac{n N_h}{N} \quad (i)$$

Where

N_h: proportion of sample size sought for each stratum

n: sample size

N_h: number of the element of the population in the stratum

N: population size

Table 2 Summary of the proportionate stratified sample

S/N	Names of Higher Education Institutions	Sample Size Distribution
1	Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Rumuolumeni, (IAUOE)	56
2	Rivers State University, Port-Harcourt (RSU)	119
3	University of Port-Harcourt, Choba (UNIPORT)	195
Total		370

Source: Bowley (1937)

Nature/Sources of Data

Data for the study were generated through the primary and secondary sources. The process of generating data that was not in existence makes up what is called primary sources and required the sourcing of such from the primary referents or participants for the study. Nachmias and Nachmias (2006) stated that primary data involves raw and crude data collated normally through the questionnaire, interviews or observation. In this study primary data was collected through the structured questionnaire. The secondary sources requires the source of journals, magazines and books.

Method of Data Analysis

The analysis was undertaken in three phases beginning with the demographic characteristics of the population using frequency and percentage distributions in the assessment of the demographic categories for the study. Second, the univariate analysis in which the central tendency and dispersion of the variables are described through mean scores and standard deviations, third; the bivariate analysis, in which all previously hypothetical statements of bivariate relations was tested using Spearman's rank Order correlation Statistics and finally the multivariate analysis in which the moderating roles of the dimensions of organizational culture – (a) beliefs, and (b) norms were assessed in the relationship between organizational politics and employee engagement using the partial correlation technique for moderation. All analysis for this study was carried out using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.0.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter is centered on the presentation and analysis of the data collected for this study. The primary source of data was questionnaires distributed by the researcher, which were used to identify trends, understand the nature of, and establish interrelationships between the variables used in the study.

Data Presentation

Table 3 Total Questionnaire Distribution Statistics

Questionnaire	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Administered	370	100
Retrieved	350	95
Unretrieved	20	5
Utilized	334	95
Retrieved unutilized	16	5

Source: Researchers Field Work (2024)

Table 1 clearly shows that out of the 370 research questionnaires distributed, 350 (95%) were retrieved. However, 20(5%) were not returned due to errors and incomplete information. Out of the 350 retrieved questionnaires, 334(95%) were properly filled out and thus formed the basis for this study's analysis and 16 (5%) were not properly filled.

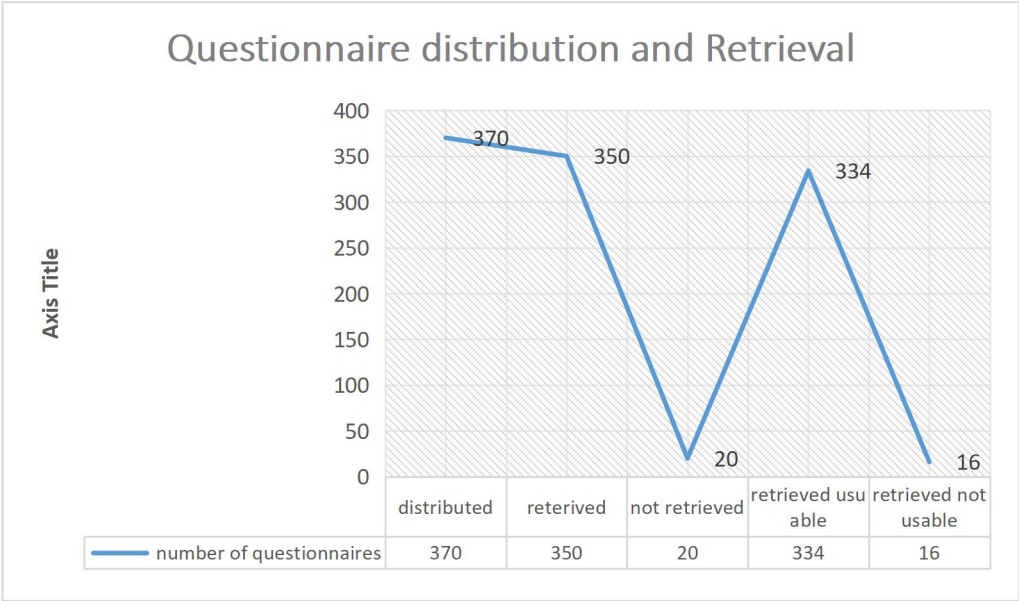


Fig 2 Questionnaire Distribution and Retrieval Data Analysis

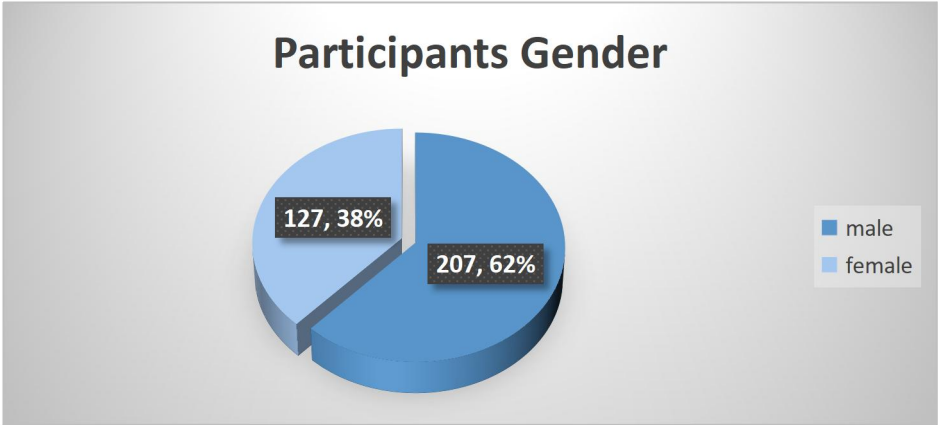


Figure 3: Participants Gender

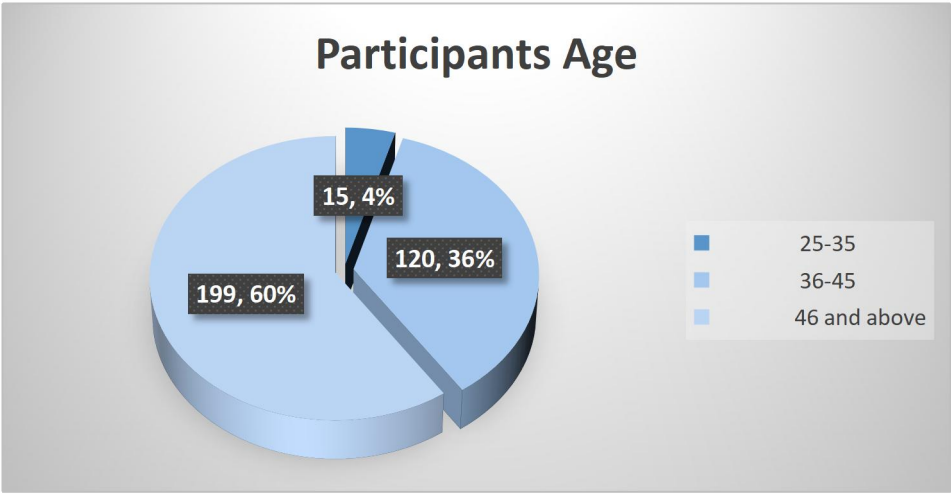


Figure 4: Participants Age

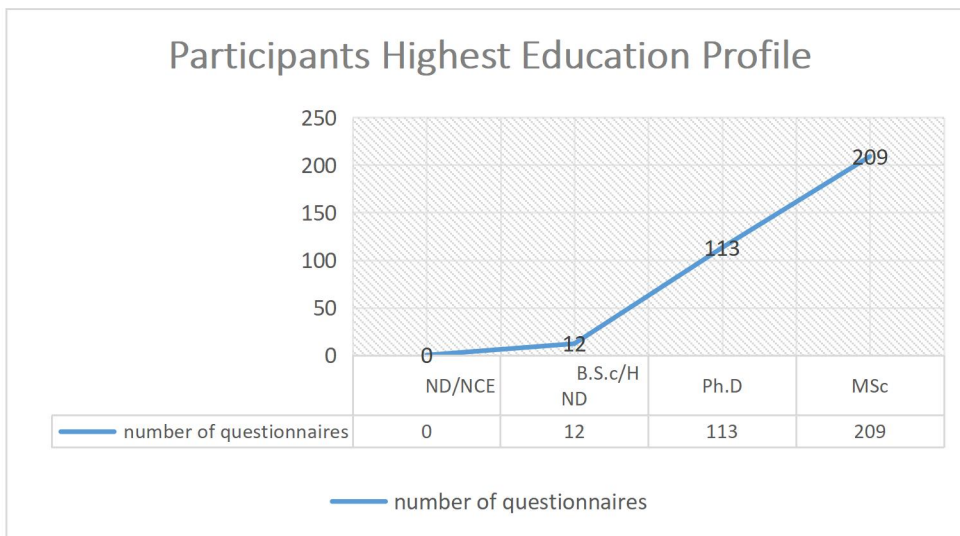


Figure 5 Participants Highest Education Profile

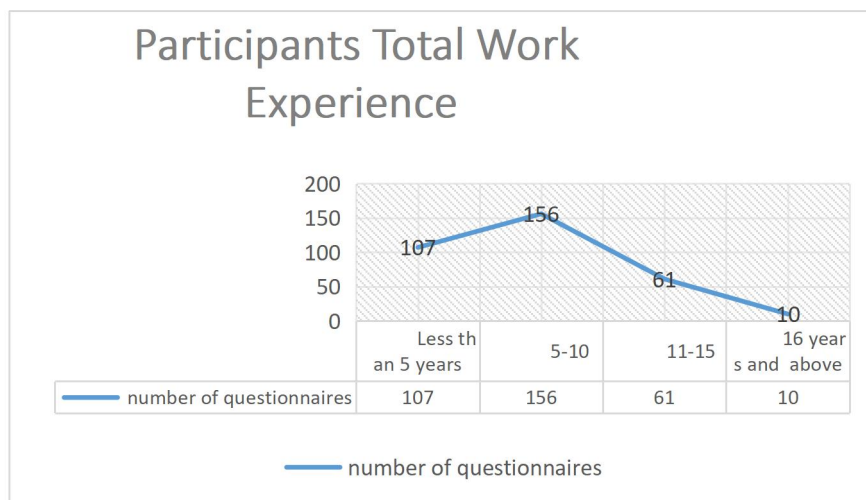


Figure 6: Participants Total Working Experience

Univariate Analysis

The items for each variable in the conceptual framework were analyzed using simple arithmetic mean and standard deviations. The study employed the five-point Likert in which Strongly Agreed (SA) = 5; Agreed (A) = 4; Moderately Agreed (MA) = 3, Disagreed (D) = 2; and Strongly Disagreed (SD) = 1. In light of this, the study ranks all employed items on a five-point scale. A mean score of 3 and above is seen to fall within the agreement scale therefore showing that respondents collectively agree to that item, while a mean value of less than 3 shows those respondents are in the disagreement range, and significantly disagree to that indicator or question item.

Table 4 Descriptive Statistics on Coalition Building as a Dimension of Organizational Politics

	N	Min	Max	Sum	Mean	Std. Dev
Coalition building affect political stability in your organisation	334	1	5	1305	3.91	1.155
Coalitions adapt to changing political landscapes	334	1	5	1260	3.77	1.226
Coalitions can be effective in achieving long-term goals	334	1	5	1275	3.82	1.139

Coalitions influence policy-making processes	334	2	5	1290	3.86	.992
Interest groups play in coalition building	334	1	5	1304	3.90	1.024
Valid N (listwise)	334					

Source: Researcher Field Computation (2024) via SPSS Output Version 22

Table 4 revealed descriptive Statistics on coalition building as a dimension of organizational politics. Coalition building affect political stability in your organization have a mean score of 3.91, Coalitions adapt to changing political landscapes have a mean score of 3.77, Coalitions can be effective in achieving long-term goals have a mean score of 3.82, Coalitions influence policy-making processes have a mean score of 3.86, Interest groups play in coalition building have a mean score of 3.90. Based on our criterion mean of 3.0 and since our respective mean score is above 3.0, this implies that respondent agreed on the items of coalition building as a dimension of organizational politics.

Table 5 Descriptive Statistic son Power Play as a Dimension of Organizational Politics

	N	Min	Max	Sum	Mean	Std. Dev
I feel pressured to engage in power plays in order to protect your own interests	334	1	5	1306	3.91	1.162
I believe that power plays are necessary for career advancement in your organization	334	1	5	1267	3.79	1.221
I have seen individuals use their authority to intimidate or bully others within your organization	334	1	5	1279	3.83	1.141
I have witnessed instances of favoritism or nepotism within your organization	334	1	5	1295	3.88	1.010
there certain individuals within your organization who hold significant power and influence over others	334	1	5	1306	3.91	1.027
Valid N (listwise)	334					

Source: Researcher Field Computation (2024) via SPSS Output Version 22

Table 5 revealed descriptive Statistics on power play as a dimension of organizational politics. I feel pressured to engage in power plays in order to protect your own interests have a mean score of 3.91, I believe that power plays are necessary for career advancement in your organization have a mean score of 3.79, I have seen individuals use their authority to intimidate or bully others within your organization have a mean score of 3.83, I have witnessed instances of favoritism or nepotism within your organization have a mean score of 3.88, there certain individuals within your organization who hold significant power and influence over others have a mean score of 3.91. Based on our criterion mean of 3.0 and since our respective mean score is above 3.0, this implies that respondent agreed on the items of power play as a dimension of organizational politics.

Table 6 Descriptive Statistics on Employee Vigor as a Measure of Employee Engagement

	N	Min	Max	Sum	Mean	Std. Dev
I feel physically energized and ready to take on challenges at	334	1	5	1313	3.93	1.162
I rarely feel physically exhausted or drained at work.	334	1	5	1274	3.81	1.228
I feel enthusiastic and passionate about my job.	334	1	5	1287	3.85	1.141
I am excited about the opportunities for growth and development in my role.	334	1	5	1305	3.91	1.017

I genuinely enjoy the tasks and responsibilities assigned to me.	334	1	5	1313	3.93	1.021
Valid N (listwise)	334					

Source: Researcher Field Computation (2024) via SPSS Output Version 22

Table 6 revealed descriptive Statistics on employee vigor as a measure of employee engagement. I feel physically energized and ready to take on challenges at have a mean score of 3.93, I rarely feel physically exhausted or drained at work have a mean score of 3.81, I feel enthusiastic and passionate about my job have a mean score of 3.85, I am excited about the opportunities for growth and development in my role have a mean score of 3.91, I genuinely enjoy the tasks and responsibilities assigned to me have a mean score of 3.93. Based on our criterion mean of 3.0 and since our respective mean score is above 3.0, this implies that respondent agreed on the items of employee vigor as a measure of employee engagement.

Table 7 Descriptive Statistics on Employee Dedication as a Measure of Employee Engagement

	N	Min	Max	Sum	Mean	Std. Dev
I am willing to put in extra effort to help the organization succeed.	334	1	5	1303	3.90	1.170
I am dedicated to achieving the goals and objectives of this organization.	334	1	5	1266	3.79	1.227
I feel a strong sense of belongingness to this organization.	334	1	5	1279	3.83	1.133
I am willing to volunteer for additional responsibilities.	334	1	5	1296	3.88	1.027
I actively participate in activities that benefit the organization.	334	1	5	1303	3.90	1.034
Valid N (listwise)	334					

Source: Researcher Field Computation (2024) via SPSS Output Version 22

Table 7 revealed descriptive Statistics on Employee Dedication as a measure of employee engagement. I am willing to put in extra effort to help the organization succeed have a mean score of 3.90, I am dedicated to achieving the goals and objectives of this organization have a mean score of 3.79, I feel a strong sense of belongingness to this organization have a mean score of 3.83, I am willing to volunteer for additional responsibilities have a mean score of 3.88, I actively participate in activities that benefit the organization have a mean score of 3.90. Based on our criterion mean of 3.0 and since our respective mean score is above 3.0, this implies that respondent agreed on the items of employee dedication as a measure of employee engagement.

Table 8 Descriptive Statistics on Organizational Culture as a Moderating Variable

	N	Min	Max	Sum	Mean	Std. Dev
The organization has clear mission that gives meaning and direction to employee’s performances.	334	1	5	1293	3.87	1.182
Cooperation across departments or functions is highly encouraged that build efficient organizational reputation	334	1	5	1256	3.76	1.255
My organization is flexible in its approach to management. The employees are highly committed to the success of the organization.	334	1	5	1270	3.80	1.159
We have a unique culture that encourages the growth of our firm	334	1	5	1285	3.85	1.067

Our firm values employee productivity to the growth of the firm.	334	1	5	1294	3.87	1.058
Valid N (listwise)	334					

Source: Researcher Field Computation (2024) via SPSS Output Version 22

Table 8 revealed descriptive Statistics on organizational culture as a moderating variable. The organization has clear mission that gives meaning and direction to employee's performances have a mean score of 3.87, Cooperation across departments or functions is highly encouraged that build efficient organizational reputation have a mean score of 3.76, My organization is flexible in its approach to management. The employees are highly committed to the success of the organization have a mean score of 3.80, We have a unique culture that encourages the growth of our firm have a mean score of 3.85, Our firm values employee productivity to the growth of the firm have a mean score of 3.87. Based on our criterion mean of 3.0 and since our respective mean score is above 3.0, this implies that respondent agreed on the items of organizational culture as a moderating variable.

Bivariate analysis

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship coalition building and employee dedication of public universities in Rivers State.

Correlations

			coalition building	employee dedication
Spearman's rho	coalition building	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.790**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	334	334
	employee dedication	Correlation Coefficient	.790**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	334	334

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Hypothesis one result reveals that there is a significant relationship between coalition building and employee dedication of public state owned universities in Rivers State (where rho = .790 and p = 0.000) and based on the decision rule of $p < 0.05$ for null rejection; we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis: that there is a significant relationship between coalition building and employee dedication of public state owned universities in Rivers State.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship coalition building and employee vigor of public universities in Rivers State.

Correlations

			coalition building	employee vigor
Spearman's rho	coalition building	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.682**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	334	334
	employee vigor	Correlation Coefficient	.682**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	334	334

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Hypothesis two result reveals that there is a significant relationship between coalition building and employee vigor of public state owned universities in Rivers State (where $\rho = .682$ and $p = 0.000$) and based on the decision rule of $p < 0.05$ for null rejection; we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis: that there is a significant relationship between coalition building and employee vigor of public state owned universities in Rivers State.

Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between power play and employee dedication of public universities in Rivers State.

Correlations

			power play	employee dedication
Spearman's rho	power play	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.124*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.023
		N	334	334
	employee dedication	Correlation Coefficient	.124*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.023	.
		N	334	334

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Hypothesis three result reveals that there is a weak significant relationship between power play and employee dedication of public state owned universities in Rivers State (where $\rho = .124$ and $p = 0.000$) and based on the decision rule of $p < 0.05$ for null rejection; we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis: that there is a weak significant relationship between power play and employee dedication of public state owned universities in Rivers State.

Ho₄: There is no significant relationship between power play and employee vigor of public universities in Rivers State.

Correlations

			power play	employee vigor
Spearman's rho	power play	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.146**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.008
		N	334	334
	employee vigor	Correlation Coefficient	.146**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.008	.
		N	334	334

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Hypothesis four result reveals that there is a weak significant relationship between power play and employee vigor of public state owned universities in Rivers State (where $\rho = .146$ and $p = 0.000$) and based on the decision rule of $p < 0.05$ for null rejection; we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis: that there is a weak significant relationship between power play and employee vigor of public state owned universities in Rivers State.

Multivariate analysis

Ho5: There is no moderating role of organizational culture in the relationship between organisational politics and employee engagement of public universities in Rivers State.

Correlations

Control Variables			organisatio nal politics	employee engagemen t	organizatio nal culture
-none- ^a	organisational politics	Correlation	1.000	.923	.815
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
		df	0	332	332
	employee engagement	Correlation	.923	1.000	.871
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
		df	332	0	332
	organizational culture	Correlation	.815	.871	1.000
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.
		df	332	332	0
organization al culture	organisational politics	Correlation	1.000	.750	
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	.000	
		df	0	331	
	employee engagement	Correlation	.750	1.000	
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.	
		df	331	0	

a. Cells contain zero-order (Pearson) correlations.

From the output of the correlation matrix, organizational culture bears a significantly moderate the relationship between organizational politics and employee engagement of public universities in Rivers State. It means that organizational culture influences the interplay of organisational politics and employee engagement of public universities in Rivers State as depicted by the probability level of .815 which is higher than the chosen alpha level of 0.05, thus leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis and accepting the alternative hypothesis: organizational culture moderates the relationship between organisational politics and employee engagement of public universities in Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

Coalition Building and Employee Dedication

Hypothesis one result reveals that there is a significant relationship between coalition building and employee dedication of public state owned universities in Rivers State (where $\rho = .790$ and $p = 0.000$) and based on the decision rule of $p < 0.05$ for null rejection; we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis: that there is a significant relationship between coalition building and employee dedication of public state owned universities in Rivers State. Similarly, Akindele (2020) examined workplace politics and employee engagement: perspectives from Nigerian IT industry. This study aimed to explore the nuances of workplace politics and its impact on employee engagement within the Nigerian information technology (IT) industry. The objectives included understanding how IT-specific factors intersect with workplace politics dynamics and examining strategies for promoting positive employee engagement despite prevalent political behaviors. The research employed a qualitative approach, conducting in-depth

interviews with IT professionals working in various organizations across Nigeria's IT sector. Thematic analysis was used to identify recurring patterns related to workplace politics and employee engagement. The study uncovered unique challenges posed by workplace politics within the IT industry in Nigeria, including power struggles related to project ownership and resource allocation. Despite these challenges, it also identified instances of innovative problem-solving driven by motivated employees. The findings highlighted the need for tailored interventions to address workplace politics within the context of Nigeria's IT industry. Employee empowerment and clear delineation of roles were identified as critical strategies for mitigating negative effects on employee engagement. The study recommended that IT organizations should prioritize role clarity, provide opportunities for skill development, and establish conflict resolution mechanisms tailored to the specific dynamics of the IT sector.

Coalition Building and Employee Vigor

Hypothesis two result reveals that there is a significant relationship between coalition building and employee vigor of public state owned universities in Rivers State (where $\rho = .682$ and $p = 0.000$) and based on the decision rule of $p < 0.05$ for null rejection; we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis: that there is a significant relationship between coalition building and employee vigor of public state owned universities in Rivers State. Similarly, Ilesanmi and Wahab (2021) explored organizational politics and employee vigor in Nigeria: the moderating role of perceived organizational support. The aim is to investigate whether perceived organizational support buffers the negative impact of organizational politics on employee vigor. The study employed a quantitative research design with a sample size of 400 employees from various organizations in Nigeria. Data were collected using questionnaires and analyzed through hierarchical regression analysis. The study found that perceived organizational support moderated the relationship between organizational politics and employee vigor, buffering its negative effects. Perceived organizational support can act as a protective factor, mitigating the negative impact of organizational politics on employee vigor. Organizations should focus on fostering a supportive work environment to enhance perceived organizational support and mitigate the adverse effects of organizational politics on employee vigor.

Power Play and Employee Dedication

Hypothesis three result reveals that there is a weak significant relationship between power play and employee dedication of public state owned universities in Rivers State (where $\rho = .124$ and $p = 0.000$) and based on the decision rule of $p < 0.05$ for null rejection; we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis: that there is a weak significant relationship between power play and employee dedication of public state owned universities in Rivers State. Similarly, Akanbi and Ogunnaiké (2019) examined organizational politics and employee engagement. The study found a negative relationship between organizational politics and employee engagement, indicating that higher levels of politics were associated with lower levels of engagement. The findings suggested that organizations need to address political behaviors within their workplaces to foster higher levels of employee engagement. The study recommended that organizations should establish transparent and fair processes, promote ethical behavior, and provide opportunities for employee participation to reduce political behaviors.

Also, Ahmad et al., (2019) examined the impact of organizational politics on job performance: mediating role of perceived training opportunities in Jordanian Public Services. Results revealed that POP negatively affected job performance, and PTO partially mediated the relationship between POP and job performance. Based on these findings, this study recommends that the Jordanian Government and GAM should eliminate or reduce POP practices as much as possible in their organizations as well as improving PTO, which has a positive and significant impact on Job Performance.

Power Play and Employee Vigor

Hypothesis four result reveals that there is a weak significant relationship between power play and employee vigor of public state owned universities in Rivers State (where $\rho = .146$ and $p = 0.000$) and based on the decision rule of $p < 0.05$ for null rejection; we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis: that there is a weak significant relationship between power play and employee vigor of public state owned universities in Rivers State. Similarly, Appiah-Adu and Owusu-Frimpong (2019) investigated organizational politics and employee engagement: evidence from Ghana's public sector. The study revealed a negative relationship between organizational politics and employee engagement within Ghana's public sector. Organizational politics has a detrimental effect on employee engagement in Ghana's public sector. Public sector organizations should promote a culture of fairness, transparency, and open communication to reduce organizational politics and enhance employee engagement.

Also, Ojedokun and Adeyeye (2019) investigated organizational politics and employee vigor in Nigeria: the mediating role of psychological empowerment. The study found that organizational politics negatively influenced psychological empowerment, which, in turn, negatively affected employee vigor. Organizational politics can diminish employee vigor indirectly through its negative impact on psychological empowerment. Organizations should focus on reducing organizational politics and promoting psychological empowerment to enhance employee vigor.

Organizational Culture moderate the relationship between Organisational Politics and Employee Engagement

From the output of the correlation matrix, organizational culture bears a significantly moderate the relationship between organisational politics and employee engagement of public universities in Rivers State. It means that organizational culture influences the interplay of organisational politics and employee engagement of public universities in Rivers State as depicted by the probability level of .815 which is higher than the chosen alpha level of 0.05, thus leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis and accepting the alternative hypothesis: organizational culture moderates the relationship between organisational politics and employee engagement of public universities in Rivers State. Similarly, Oladipo (2019) examined the impact of organizational politics on employee performance in selected banks in Nigeria. The study aimed to investigate the relationship between organizational politics and employee performance in Nigerian banks. The study used a structured questionnaire to collect data from employees working in selected banks in Nigeria. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis. The study found a significant negative relationship between organizational politics and employee performance. It also identified factors such as power struggles, lack of transparency, and unethical behavior as key contributors to organizational politics. The study concluded that organizational politics adversely affects employee performance in Nigerian banks. The study recommended that banks should establish clear policies, promote ethical behavior, and encourage open communication to minimize the negative effects of organizational politics.

Agyemang-Mintah and Ofei-Manu (2018) examined perceived organizational politics and employee engagement in Ghana. The aim of the study was to investigate the impact of perceived organizational politics on employee engagement in Ghanaian organizations. Quantitative research design utilizing self-administered questionnaires distributed to employees from various industries in Ghana. The study revealed a negative relationship between perceived organizational politics and employee engagement. Perceived organizational politics has a detrimental effect on employee engagement in Ghanaian organizations. Organizations should promote transparency, fairness, and open communication to reduce perceived organizational politics and enhance employee engagement.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of this study, the study concluded that organizational politics correlate with employee engagement in public owned universities in Rivers state. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Management of public universities in Rivers State should focus on fostering coalition building among employees as it has been shown to have a significant positive impact on both dedication and vigor levels of employees.
2. Management of public universities in Rivers State should prioritize strategies that promote a sense of belonging and integration among employees.
3. Management of public universities in Rivers State should discourage manipulative behaviors aimed at gaining favor or recognition rather emphasis should be placed on authentic relationships, merit-based recognition, and fair reward systems to foster a positive work environment.
4. Management of public universities in Rivers State should implement training and development programs that focus on enhancing coalition building skills that will be beneficial for improving employee dedication, vigor, and absorption levels
5. Management of public universities in Rivers State should pay attention to their organizational culture as it can moderate the relationship between organizational politics and employee engagement.

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