

ORGANIZATIONAL POLITICS AS PREDICTOR OF EMPLOYEE JOB ENGAGEMENT IN THE NIGERIAN PUBLIC SECTOR: THE CASE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCILS IN DELTA STATE

OSAZEVBARU, HENRY OSAHON (Ph.D), ARUOREN, EMMANUEL E. (Ph.D), & OBIEROMA, ANDREW AJEDAFEMU

Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Management Sciences,
Delta State University, Abraka-Nigeria.

<https://doi.org/10.37602/IJSSMR.2025.8104>

ABSTRACT

This study examined the impact of organizational politics on employee engagement in local government councils in Delta State, Nigeria, focusing on three primary factors: lack of transparent policies, high levels of perceived organizational politics, and favoritism in promotion practices. Using a quantitative research approach, the study made use of the questionnaire to collect data from a population of 254 employees. Simple linear regression was used to test the hypotheses formulated to determine the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable. The findings reveal that lack of transparency in policies related to promotion, performance appraisals, and resource allocation fosters a sense of distrust and unfairness among employees, reducing their engagement and motivation to perform optimally. The study also highlighted that employees who perceive high levels of organizational politics tend to prioritize self-preservation over organizational commitment, leading to decreased productivity and service quality. Moreover, favoritism in promotion processes not only diminishes employee morale but also weakens their organizational commitment, as they feel that advancement is based on personal biases rather than merit. Accordingly, the study recommended that local government councils should implement fair, transparent, and merit-based policies to mitigate the adverse effects of organizational politics. By fostering a more equitable and transparent workplace, local government councils can enhance employee engagement, improve commitment, and promote a higher standard of service delivery.

Keywords: Employee commitment, Employee service quality, Favouritism, Perceived organizational politics, Social exchange theory, Transparent policies

JEL Classification: H11, M12, M54

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Organizational politics, which involves the use of power and social networking within an organization to achieve personal or organizational goals, can have both positive and negative implications for employee engagement. Studies suggest that political behaviour in workplace, especially in public sector organizations like local government councils, often influences the overall engagement levels of employees, affecting their job satisfaction, loyalty, and productivity. In contexts where organizational politics is prevalent, employees may perceive a

lack of fairness in decision-making processes, promotions, and resource allocations, leading to feelings of mistrust and disengagement. In local government councils where resources are often limited, political maneuvering can further exacerbate employees' sense of job insecurity and dissatisfaction. Recent studies suggest that when employees feel their work environment is unfairly influenced by political actions, they may withdraw effort, resulting in decreased organizational commitment and lower engagement (Ferris & Treadway, 2012; Landells & Albrecht, 2017).

Organizational politics, defined as behaviors aimed at advancing personal interests that may conflict with organizational goals, significantly impacts employee engagement and morale. In local government councils of Delta State, organizational politics manifest through mechanisms such as favoritism, unclear promotion paths, and resource control struggles. Research reveals that environments with high perceived organizational politics can lead to reduced engagement, as employees may feel undervalued or demotivated when advancement seems to be based on alliances rather than merit (Butler, 2023; Malik & Park, 2023). The presence of such politics is also linked to heightened turnover intentions and decreased performance, impacting the council's overall productivity and service delivery (Atta & Khan, 2016).

Organizational politics impacts employees differently depending on their role and tenure within the organization. Employees in senior or long-standing roles may feel less affected or may even leverage political dynamics to their advantage, while newer or junior employees may experience more adverse effects, perceiving politics as barriers to growth and engagement (Tewolde, 2023). According to the social exchange theory, employees tend to reciprocate based on perceived organizational support; thus, a highly political environment could undermine the positive reciprocal behaviors necessary for a motivated workforce (Ferris et al., 2019).

In local government settings, well-managed organizational politics can foster better engagement by encouraging transparency in decision-making and equitable promotion practices. Literature emphasizes the importance of leaders establishing clear criteria for rewards and recognition to mitigate the impact of perceived organizational politics (POP) on employee morale (Lalive, 2023). By reducing the subjective elements that fuel organizational politics, local government councils could improve employees' perceptions of fairness, thus bolstering engagement and work satisfaction (Park & Lee, 2020).

Organizational politics remains a critical area of interest in workplace studies, particularly due to its impact on employee engagement. It often involves manipulation of power structures and resources for personal or group gain, which can, in turn, lead to perceptions of unfairness and distrust among employees (Ferris & Treadway, 2022; Su & Xie, 2023). This is especially relevant in public sector environments, where bureaucratic layers may amplify political behaviors, affecting how employees interact with their roles and with one another. Organizational politics can lead to disengagement among employees, particularly when they perceive that rewards and promotions are based on favoritism rather than merit. A high level of POP has been reported to be associated with decreased employee morale, increased stress, and higher turnover rates (Atta & Khan, 2023; Tewolde, 2023). In settings like local governments, where resources are often limited, employees may feel marginalized if they are not included in decision-making or if they believe others are unfairly advancing through political means. Employees who feel unsupported or unrecognized due to political dynamics

are more likely to disengage and may reduce their contributions to organizational goals (Chang et al., 2023).

The social exchange theory provides a useful framework for examining these dynamics, positing that employee engagement is often a reflection of perceived organizational support (Su & Xie, 2023). When employees believe that their organization supports them fairly, they reciprocate with higher engagement levels. However, in environments dominated by organizational politics, this perceived support may dwindle, resulting in lower engagement. In the local government councils, ensuring equitable policies and transparent decision-making processes can help mitigate the negative impacts of organizational politics, as employees are more likely to remain engaged when they view the organization as fair and supportive (Lalive, 2023).

Leadership style and behavior also play pivotal roles in shaping the organizational climate. Leaders who engage in transparent, ethical decision-making can reduce the negative effects of organizational politics by fostering trust and inclusivity (Park & Lee, 2024). Leaders who recognize the impact of political behavior on employee morale can implement changes that encourage merit-based advancement and support collaborative work environments. Effective leadership in the public sector can create a positive work culture, counteracting the disengagement that may arise from organizational politics and enhancing overall productivity.

Addressing organizational politics in Delta State local government councils is not only crucial for fostering a healthy workplace culture but also for enhancing service delivery to the community. Engaged employees are generally more committed to public service and demonstrate higher levels of initiative, which benefits both the organization and its stakeholders. Efforts to minimize political behaviors, such as implementing merit-based performance reviews and ensuring transparent communication, can significantly improve employee engagement and satisfaction, ultimately supporting the council's mission to serve the public effectively (Ferris & Treadway, 2022; Malik & Park, 2023).

A specific problem within the local government council is lack of transparent policies and equitable promotion structures, which can intensify feelings of unfairness among employees. Research shows that when political behaviour becomes normalized, employees are less likely to remain engaged and more likely to reduce their efforts, feeling that hard work may not yield the expected rewards (Su & Xie, 2023). The disengagement that follows creates an environment where productivity is low, and employees are more focused on surviving within the organization than contributing meaningfully to its goals (Park & Lee, 2024). Addressing these issues form the fulcrum of this study

Therefore, the general objective of the study is to examine organizational politics as predictor of employee engagement in local government councils. The specific objectives are to: (i) determine the effect of lack of transparent policies on the quality of employee services in local government councils. (ii) Examine the effect of high level of POP on employee engagement in local government councils. (iii) Ascertain the effect of the politics of favouritism in promotion on employee commitment in local government councils. The hypothetical propositions of this study are: (i) lack of transparent policies have no significant relationship with the quality of employee services in local government councils. (ii) High level of POP has no significant

influence on employee engagement in local government councils. (iii) The politics of favouritism in promotion has no significant impact on employee commitment in local government councils.

2.0 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Concept of Organizational Politics

Organizational politics has been defined by various scholars as behaviors and strategies that individuals or groups within an organization use to gain power, influence decisions, and achieve personal or group objectives, often at the expense of broader organizational goals. According to Ferris and Treadway (2022), organizational politics is characterized by actions that are "self-serving" and aimed at manipulating others to gain personal advantages, often creating an environment of competition rather than collaboration. This aligns with the idea that organizational politics, when excessive, can lead to divisive work environments and may negatively impact employee engagement and trust.

Chang, Rosen, and Levy (2023) provide a similar perspective, defining organizational politics as the process by which individuals and groups attempt to position themselves for favourable outcomes, whether through influence, alliances, or control over resources. This view suggests that organizational politics is not inherently negative, as it can foster creativity and adaptability when managed well. However, when political behaviors are perceived as unfair or manipulative, they can reduce employee morale and loyalty, leading to decreased productivity and commitment.

The concept of organizational politics has also been examined through a psychological lens, with Lalive (2023) noting that such behaviors are often rooted in employees' perceptions of scarcity, insecurity, or a lack of control over their professional futures. According to this approach, individuals engage in political behaviors as a response to limited resources or unclear advancement opportunities. The study argued that when employees perceive the organizational environment as politically charged, they may become more defensive and less open to collaborative efforts, ultimately harming the organization's cohesiveness.

Furthermore, Su and Xie (2023) described organizational politics as a set of informal, often unwritten rules that influence who holds power and how resources are allocated within an organization. They argued that such politics often exists alongside formal organizational structures but operates through alliances, reputation-building, and informal negotiations. This definition emphasizes that organizational politics is a "shadow structure" within organizations, impacting career trajectories and influencing organizational dynamics in ways that may not align with official policies or goals. Understanding these varied definitions highlights the complexity of organizational politics and its multifaceted impact on employees and overall organizational effectiveness.

2.2 Concept of Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is widely studied in organizational psychology, with scholars offering various definitions that emphasize commitment, motivation, and job satisfaction. Ferris et al. (2023) define employee engagement as the emotional and intellectual involvement of

employees in their work, which drives them to contribute positively to organizational goals. This definition underscores that engagement goes beyond simple job satisfaction, involving a deeper personal investment in one's role and alignment with organizational values. Engaged employees often demonstrate greater enthusiasm and a proactive approach to their tasks, supporting an organization's overall productivity and success.

Kahn (2024) offers a complementary perspective, describing employee engagement as the state in which employees feel absorbed, dedicated, and energetic about their work. This view emphasized on the psychological connection employees have with their work, suggesting that engagement arises from a blend of dedication, absorption, and energy. Accordingly, engagement entails a deep connection that encourages employees to go above and beyond, ultimately enhancing job performance and organizational morale.

In addition, Lalive (2023) view employee engagement as the degree of involvement and enthusiasm that employees demonstrate toward their work, with a focus on alignment between personal and organizational goals. Employees who feel that their values align with their organization's mission are more likely to exhibit higher engagement levels, as they perceive their work as meaningful and impactful. This definition aligns with self-determination theory, which posits that employees become engaged when they find their work fulfilling and aligned with their core values.

Sharma and Lee (2023) contributed to this discourse by defining employee engagement as a construct involving positive, fulfilling work-related state of mind that includes vigor, dedication, and absorption. They emphasized that engagement is more than job satisfaction; it includes an active, energetic involvement in work. Engaged employees are characterized by a willingness to invest their full selves in their roles, reflecting a holistic commitment that benefits both the individual and the organization. Together, these definitions highlight that employee engagement is multifaceted, incorporating emotional, cognitive, and behavioral components that drive individual and organizational performance.

2.3 Transparent Policies and Quality of Employee Services

The lack of transparent policies within organizations has been widely identified as a significant barrier to employee engagement and service quality. Transparent policies, which involve open communication, fairness, and clarity in organizational processes, play a critical role in setting clear expectations and fostering trust among employees. According to Lalive (2023), transparency in organizational policies promotes a positive work environment. Employees become informed, secure, and motivated to deliver high-quality services. In contrast, a lack of transparency may lead to confusion, mistrust, and a perception of inequity, which can hinder employees' commitment to their roles and degrade service quality.

Employees who perceive their work environment as lacking transparency are likely to experience dissatisfaction and reduced morale, which directly impacts their willingness to provide quality service (Sharma & Lee, 2023). When policies surrounding performance evaluations, promotions, and rewards are ambiguous, employees may feel that their efforts are undervalued or overlooked. This perception can decrease their motivation and, in turn, their productivity and attentiveness to service quality (Park & Lee, 2024). Studies indicate that lack

of transparency can also create an environment where employees focus more on navigating organizational politics rather than improving their work performance (Malik & Park, 2023).

Research further reveals that transparent policies contribute to an organization's culture of trust and accountability, which are essential for high-quality service delivery. Lalive (2023) argued that employees who understand the rationale behind organizational policies are more likely to align their work behaviors with organizational goals, as they feel they are part of a fair and inclusive workplace. Conversely, the absence of transparency can lead to disengagement and a tendency to prioritize personal agendas, which undermines teamwork and service quality (Butler, 2019). In this light, transparent policies are not only a governance issue but also a determinant of employee motivation and organizational efficiency.

Additionally, employees are more likely to respond positively to transparent policies because they facilitate a sense of control and predictability in their work environment. According to Ferris et al. (2023), transparency fosters an open communication culture, enabling employees to better understand the expectations and outcomes of their roles. In organizations without clear policies, employees may feel uncertain about their job security or career advancement, leading to anxiety and a reduced commitment to quality service. This insecurity may prompt employees to focus on self-preservation rather than collective organizational success, further lowering service quality (Chang et al., 2023).

Organizations with transparent policies also see improvements in employee accountability, as employees are more willing to take responsibility for their roles when they understand the guidelines and consequences associated with their tasks. Kahn (2024) argues that transparent policies reinforce accountability by providing clear standards and benchmarks, which enable employees to self-assess and improve their service quality. In contrast, unclear policies may leave employees guessing about what constitutes acceptable service standards, resulting in inconsistencies in service delivery that can negatively impact customer satisfaction and the organization's reputation (Su & Xie, 2023).

In conclusion, the lack of transparent policies can significantly diminish the quality of employee services by creating a work environment characterized by mistrust, insecurity, and disengagement. As the literature indicates, transparent policies promote trust, motivation, and accountability, all of which contribute to a higher quality of service. Organizations, particularly those in the public sector, should prioritize transparency in their policies to enhance employee engagement and, ultimately, the quality of service delivery (Atta & Khan, 2023; Malik & Park, 2023).

2.4 Perceived Organizational Politics and Employee Engagement

POP or the perception that an organization's policies and practices are self-serving or manipulative has been found to influence employee engagement negatively across various organizational settings. Research reveals that high levels of POP encourage mistrust, and employees feel their efforts are not adequately recognized or rewarded, leading to a decline in engagement. Malik and Park (2023) found that employees who perceive high organizational politics report decreased motivation and job satisfaction, as they feel uncertain about their future within the organization. This lack of security and clarity discourages employees from investing their full effort and enthusiasm in their work.

High levels of POP are also associated with reduced psychological safety, which is a crucial factor for employee engagement. According to Liu and Wu (2024), employees who sense a high degree of politics at work often hesitate to voice their opinions or take initiative due to fears of repercussions. This perceived lack of safety diminishes engagement by limiting opportunities for open communication, innovation, and proactive behavior, which are key elements of engaged work environments. A politically charged atmosphere may prompt employees to focus on self-preservation, diverting their attention from organizational goals to personal agendas (Chung, Rosen & Levy, 2023).

In politically charged workplaces, employees may develop feelings of cynicism and distrust toward management, further disengaging them from their roles. Popoola and Adebayo (2023) argue that high POP correlates with cynicism, where employees view organizational decisions as unfair or self-serving. This cynicism can reduce their emotional investment in their work, as employees feel less connected to the organization's mission and objectives. When employees believe that merit and hard work are secondary to favoritism or hidden agendas, they are less likely to go above and beyond in their roles.

Additionally, high POP can lead to emotional exhaustion and burnout, which are significant detractors from engagement. As noted by Oseiand Asante (2023), employees in environments with high levels of POP often experience stress from navigating complex interpersonal dynamics and competing for recognition. This chronic stress not only reduces job satisfaction but also contributes to a sense of helplessness and fatigue. Emotional exhaustion, in turn, makes it challenging for employees to maintain high levels of engagement, as they lack the psychological resources to stay motivated and committed.

Organizational politics can also impair employees' sense of fairness and justice within the workplace, further undermining engagement. According to Hossain and Rahman (2024), employees who perceive their workplace as political are more likely to feel that decisions regarding rewards, promotions, and performance evaluations are unjust. This perceived lack of fairness damages employee morale and weakens their loyalty to the organization, making them less inclined to contribute meaningfully to their roles (Hossain & Rahman, 2024). The absence of perceived fairness can lead employees to disengage and reduce their overall commitment to organizational goals.

In summary, the literature strongly suggests that a high level of perceived organizational politics negatively impacts employee engagement through various mechanisms, including reduced psychological safety, increased cynicism, emotional exhaustion, and a perceived lack of fairness. Addressing POP is crucial for organizations aiming to enhance engagement, as doing so promotes a positive work environment where employees feel valued and motivated to perform their best (Malik & Park, 2023; Liu & Wu, 2024; Hossain & Rahman, 2024).

2.5 Politics of Favouritism in Promotion and Employee Commitment

The politics of favoritism in promotion processes within organizations can significantly impact employee commitment by undermining perceptions of fairness and meritocracy. Favoritism in promotions, where certain employees are advanced based on personal relationships or non-performance-related factors, is increasingly seen as a demotivator for non-favored employees. According to Nguyen, Roberts and Tang (2023), favoritism erodes employees' trust in

organizational justice, leading to reduced commitment as they perceive the promotion system as biased. This bias in promotion decisions often triggers feelings of resentment and disillusionment among employees, diminishing their loyalty and overall commitment to the organization.

The perception of favoritism in promotions also affects employees' engagement by impacting their sense of job security and future career prospects. Employees who feel that their advancement opportunities are limited by favoritism may become demotivated, questioning their career paths within the organization (Smith & Johnson, 2024). As a result, employees may choose to disengage, exerting minimal effort in their roles or considering leaving the organization altogether. This effect on commitment has been observed across various sectors, where employees in highly political workplaces report feeling undervalued due to the prominence of favoritism in promotion processes (Smith & Johnson, 2024).

Research by Ali, Malik and Khan (2024) reveals that favoritism in promotion undermines the organizational culture, making employees more skeptical of leadership's ability to manage fairly and effectively. Employees tend to commit more strongly to organizations where leaders demonstrate integrity and impartiality, especially in matters as significant as career advancement. However, when favoritism is perceived, employees may lose respect for leadership and question the organization's values, leading to a decline in both organizational commitment and trust. A culture that tolerates favoritism often fails to inspire long-term dedication from its workforce.

Additionally, favoritism in promotions can weaken team cohesion and increase workplace conflicts, further impacting commitment. In a study by Rahman and Lee (2023), employees reported feeling a sense of injustice when colleagues received promotions without merit, creating tension and reducing collaborative efforts within teams. This erosion of team spirit and trust among coworkers creates a hostile work environment where individuals are less inclined to commit fully to their roles, instead focusing on personal survival within the organization. Such environments contribute to a culture of disengagement and individualism rather than collective commitment.

Furthermore, employees who perceive favoritism in promotion decisions often experience a decrease in job satisfaction, which is closely tied to organizational commitment. Osei and Asante (2023) found that job satisfaction declines in environments where promotion processes are perceived as unfair, resulting in employees becoming more disengaged and less likely to remain loyal to their organizations. Satisfaction with one's work environment, which includes perceptions of fairness in promotions, is a key determinant of an employee's willingness to invest effort and energy in their roles. When favoritism disrupts this satisfaction, employee commitment to the organization weakens substantially.

In conclusion, favoritism in promotion processes has a broad impact on employee commitment by eroding perceptions of fairness, weakening team cohesion, and diminishing trust in leadership. The studies indicate that employees who feel disadvantaged due to favoritism are more likely to disengage and reduce their commitment, ultimately affecting organizational performance. To sustain high levels of employee commitment, organizations should prioritize

merit-based promotions and implement transparent promotion policies that foster a culture of fairness and inclusion (Nguyen et al., 2023; Smith & Johnson, 2024; Rahman & Lee, 2023).

2.6 Theoretical Framework

The Social Exchange Theory (SET) is widely regarded as a valuable framework for understanding how organizational politics impacts employee engagement, especially in the context of public sector organizations like local government councils. Initially proposed by Homans in 1958, SET posits that social behavior is an exchange process where individuals assess the benefits and costs of their actions in relationships. In the organizational context, employees weigh their efforts against the support, fairness, and rewards they perceive from the organization. When high levels of organizational politics such as favoritism, ambiguous promotion policies, or lack of transparency exist, employees may perceive the costs as outweighing the benefits, leading to reduced engagement (Homans, 1958; Blau, 1964).

Organizational politics can be seen as a predictor of engagement through the lens of SET, where employees who perceive high politics feel a lack of reciprocity in their relationship with the organization. This perception often leads to lower commitment and job satisfaction, as employees may believe their hard work will not be rewarded fairly (Malik et al., 2023). When employees feel that they are in a political environment where personal connections or influence override merit, they are less likely to reciprocate with high levels of engagement, as SET would predict (Liu & Wu, 2024).

SET also highlights the importance of perceived fairness, or distributive justice, which is crucial in determining employee engagement in political environments. According to Nguyen et al. (2023), employees are more engaged when they perceive fairness in the distribution of resources and rewards. However, in highly political organizations where favoritism and subjective decision-making occur, employees may sense inequity and withhold their engagement as a means of balancing what they perceive as an unfair exchange. This reaction is aligned with the principles of SET, where employees withdraw effort when they perceive an imbalance in the cost-benefit exchange with their organization.

Another core tenet of SET relevant to organizational politics and employee engagement is the role of trust. For employees to engage fully in their work, they need to trust that the organization will support and recognize their contributions fairly. Instances, where public sector dynamics may involve complex political interests, the perceived lack of trust can hinder engagement significantly. Research by Rahman and Lee (2023) suggests that employees in highly political environments experience reduced trust in management, decreasing their willingness to invest in the organization. SET explains this by noting that employees are less likely to contribute effort when trust in reciprocal rewards and fair treatment is eroded.

SET also implies that in environments where employees perceive high politics, they may engage in self-protective behaviors that reduce engagement. As Ferris et al. (2024) argue, employees in such contexts are more likely to focus on self-preservation rather than contributing fully to their roles, as they prioritize personal safety over organizational commitment. This behavior aligns with SET's principle of maximizing rewards and minimizing risks in exchange relationships. In a politically charged organization, employees

may focus on protecting their interests, leading to reduced engagement and less focus on organizational goals (Ferris et al., 2024).

In conclusion, SET provides a compelling explanation of how organizational politics affects employee engagement by framing workplace relationships as exchanges of resources, trust, and support. Where politics may be pronounced, SET illustrates that employees' engagement levels are tied to their perceptions of fairness, trust, and reciprocity in organizational practices. Addressing these concerns can foster a more balanced exchange and potentially improve engagement among employees (Liu & Wu, 2024; Malik et al., 2023).

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The population of the study consisted of 254 employees working in twelve (12) selected local government councils in Delta State. There are twenty-five (25) local government areas in Delta State; however, the target population consisted of employees in 12 of the local government councils. The targeted employees are workers working within the secretariat, and not necessarily the councilors, and executive members. The sample size of this study was determined by making use of 30% of the total population since the population of the study was below 1000 (Johnsen & Siegle, 2021; Siegle, 2020). This produced 76 as the sample size.

The stratified random sampling method was used for the study. This was used to divide Delta State into three strata in line with the senatorial districts groups. From each stratum, four local government areas were selected. The structured questionnaire in closed ended form, was used to collect data from the respondents in the study. The face and content validity were used to determine the suitability of the instrument for data collection in the study. This was done by presenting the instrument to research experts in test and measurement to vet if it was face worthy and designed in line with the research objectives. The Cronbach Alpha reliability was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument, and reliability score of 0.89 was obtained. The simple linear regression was used to test the hypotheses formulated in the study.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 76 copies of questionnaire were administered to the respondents and retrieved. Thus, we have 100% return rate. Analysis of data is therefore based on this figure.

Table 1: Analysis of Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

Options		Frequency	Percentage
Age	25-35	38	50
	36-45	15	20
	46 years and above	23	30
	Total	76	100.0
Sex	Male	43	57
	Female	33	43
	Total	76	100.0
Years of Experience	Below 15 years	58	76
	15-25 years	6	8
	26-35 years	12	16
	Total	76	100.0

Source: Authors' Fieldwork, 2024

Table 1 shows the distribution of the socio-demographic features of the respondents. Data from the table shows that majority of the respondents are within the age range of 25-35 years with 50%, followed by those who are 46 years and above with 30%, and finally those within the age bracket of 36-45 years with 20%. Also, the sex distribution of the respondents indicated that majority of the respondents are male with 57% and others are female with 43%. Finally, the distribution of the respondents in terms of years of experience on the job indicated that most of the respondents (76%) have less than 15 years work experience. This was followed by those who have between 26 and 35 years of experience (16%), while the remaining 8% of the respondents have between 15 and 25 years experience.

4.1 Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

Lack of transparent policies has no significant relationship with the quality of employee services in local government councils.

Tables 2a, 2b and 2c present the simple linear regression results for this hypothesis.

Table 2a

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.715 ^a	0.561	0.558	0.78138

a. Predictors: (Constant), Lack of transparent policies

Table 2b

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	12.852	1	42.317	69.311	0.000 ^b
	Residual	217.890	75	.611		
	Total	271.273	76			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Lack of transparent policies

b. Dependent Variable: Quality of employee services

Table 2c

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		

1	(Constant)	0.953	0.068		13.993	0.000
	Lack of transparent policies	0.232	0.028	0.395	8.325	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Quality of employee services

Source: Authors' Computation, 2024

Tables 2a, 2b and 2c show the model summary, ANOVA, and coefficient result of the simple linear regression respectively. From Table 2a, it can be observed that R value of 0.715 indicates a positive relationship between lack of transparent policies and quality of employee services. Also, the R-Square value of 0.661, and the adjusted R-Square value of 0.558 both establish that the independent variable, lack of transparent policies, could explain quality of employee services. Specifically, 66.1% of the variations in quality of employee services are explained by lack of transparent policies.

Equally, the ANOVA table shows that the null hypothesis is rejected ($F = 69.311$, $P = .000 < 0.05$), and this shows that the result is significant. Finally, the coefficient table reveals that the relationship between lack of transparent policies and quality of employee services is significant given the probability value of 0.000 which is less than 0.05. From Table 2c, the coefficient of the independent variable (0.232) is positive, implying that lack of transparent policies influences the quality of employee services. The statistical significance of this association measured by the t- value shows that it is significant because the probability value of t-stat is less than 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, the conclusion is that lack of transparent policies significantly affects the quality of employee services in local government councils.

Hypothesis 2

High level of perceived organizational politics has no significant influence on employee engagement in local government councils.

Tables 3a, 3b and 3c present the simple linear regression result for the test of this hypothesis.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.505 ^a	0.723	0.720	0.82837

a. Predictors: (Constant), High level of perceived organizational politics

Table 3b

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	36.016	1	36.016	52.486	0.000 ^b
	Residual	257.326	75	0.686		
	Total	293.342	76			

a. Predictors: (Constant), High level of perceived organizational politics

b. Dependent Variable, Employee engagement.

Table 3c

Model		Coefficients ^a				Sig.
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.975	0.078		12.452	0.000
	High level of perceived organizational politics	0.187	0.026	0.350	7.245	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee engagement

Source: Authors' Computation, 2024

Tables 3a, 3b and 3c show the model summary, ANOVA and coefficient results of the simple linear regression for hypothesis two. From Table 3a, it can be observed that the R value of 0.505 indicates a positive relationship between high level of perceived organizational politics and employee engagement. Also, the R-Square value of 0.723, and the adjusted R-Square value of 0.720 both establish that the independent variable could explain employee engagement. Specifically, 72.3% of the variations in employee engagement are explained by high level of perceived organizational politics. Equally, the ANOVA table for model fitness shows that the result is significant, and the null hypothesis rejected ($F = 52.486, P = 0.000 < 0.05$), implying that the model is well fitted. Finally, from Table 3c, the coefficient of the explanatory variable is positive (0.187), conveying a positive association between perceived organizational politics and employee engagement. This estimate is also significant because the probability value of the t-stat (0.000) is less than the significance level of 5%. Therefore, the hypothetical proposition is rejected and we conclude that high level of perceived organizational politics significantly influence employee engagement.

Hypothesis 3

The politics of favouritism in promotion has no significant impact on employee commitment in local government councils.

Tables 4a, 4b and 4c present the results for this hypothesis.

Table 4a

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.865 ^a	0.674	0.670	0.84435

a. Predictors: (Constant), Politics of favouritism in promotion

Table 4b

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	15.765	1	34.572	45.891	0.000 ^b
	Residual	305.734	75	0.501		
	Total	321.499	76			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Politics of favouritism in promotion
 b. Dependent Variable: Employee commitment

Table 4c

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.468	0.095		10.562	0.000
	Politics of favouritism in promotion	0.157	0.039	0.441	7.571	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee commitment

Source: Authors' Computation, 2024

Tables 4a, 4b and 4c respectively show the model summary, ANOVA, and the coefficient results. From Table 4a, it can be observed that the R-value is 0.865 indicating a high positive relationship between politics of favouritism in promotion and employee commitment. Also, the R-Square value of 0.865 and the adjusted R-Square value of 0.674, establish that the independent variable could explain employee commitment. Specifically, 86.5% of the variations in employee commitment are explained by politics of favouritism in promotion.

Similarly, the ANOVA table shows that the null hypothesis is rejected ($F = 45.3891$, $P = 0.000 < 0.05$), and this shows that the model is well fitted and the independent variable is a significant explanator. From Table 4c, the coefficient of the independent variable (0.157) is positive, implying that politics of favouritism in promotion significantly influence employee commitment. The statistical significance of this association measured by the t-value shows the t-value is significant because its probability value is less than the 0.05 level of significance.

Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, the conclusion is that politics of favouritism in promotion significantly affects employee commitment in local government councils

4.2 Discussion of Results

The test of the first hypothesis revealed that there is a significant relationship between lack of transparent policies and the quality of employee services in local government councils. This finding is in tandem with Lalive (2023) who stated that transparency in organizational politics encourages positive work environment that make employees to work without motivation as they see things being done accordingly. Findings also align with Sharma and Lee (2023) who argued that when policies surrounding employment, promotion and reward are open and not shrouded in secrecy, employee will work hard and put in their best to merit the value that comes from the process. This fact was equally corroborated by Park and Lee (2024) and Malik and Park (2023) who noted in their studies that transparency can create a healthy template for focus, and dedication rather than cutting corners when the otherwise is the case.

The second hypothesis revealed that there is a significant relationship between high level of POP and employee engagement in local government councils of Delta State. This finding aligns with Malik et al. (2023) submission that employees who perceive high organizational politics report decreased motivation and job satisfaction, as they feel uncertain about their future within the organization. According to Liu and Wu (2024), employees who sense a high degree of politics at work often hesitate to voice their opinions or take initiative due to fears of repercussions. This perceived lack of safety diminishes engagement by limiting opportunities for open communication, innovation, and proactive behavior, which are key elements of engaged work environments according to the view expressed by Liu and Wu (2024). Also, Popoola and Adebayo (2023) argued that high POP correlates with cynicism, where employees view organizational decisions as unfair or self-serving. This cynicism can reduce their emotional investment in their work, as employees feel less connected to the organization's mission and objectives.

The third hypothesis tested revealed that politics of favouritism in promotion significantly impacts on employee commitment in local government councils of Delta State. This finding is in consonance with previous studies as literature review reveals that favoritism erodes employees' trust in organizational justice, leading to reduced commitment as they perceive the promotion system as biased (Nguyen et al. (2023). Also, Smith and Johnson (2024) stated that when employees feel that their growth in the organization is determined by who they are close to, and not on the platform of merit, they may be demotivated. Arguing in the same line, Smith and Johnson (2024) observed that employees may choose to disengage, and not continue when favouritism become the basis of promotion, and those who may decide to remain, may choose to render services without following the laid down rules. This implies that favouritism adversely affect employee work commitment when it is used as basis for promotion as seen from the literature and the study's findings.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study concludes that lack of transparent policies around promotion, performance evaluation, and resource allocation fuel perceptions of unfairness, which erodes trust in the organization. When employees perceive that their efforts are not recognized based on clear,

consistent criteria, they may feel demotivated, leading to a decrease in the quality of services they provide. This absence of transparency disrupts the social exchange dynamics, where employees feel that their efforts are not reciprocated fairly by the organization. Also, the study reveals that high levels of perceived organizational politics where employees feel that decision-making is driven by personal interests and hidden agendas further reduce engagement. In such environments, employees are likely to focus more on self-preservation than on collaborative or innovative efforts, as they fear unfair treatment. Furthermore, the study established that when promotion is based on personal connections rather than merit, employees may experience decreased morale and commitment. The perception of favoritism undermines the core values of fairness and meritocracy that are essential for a cohesive organizational culture, further reducing loyalty and engagement.

Arising from the findings, the study recommended the following: (i) that there should be implementation of clear and consistent policies around promotions, evaluations, and rewards. This will reduce the perception of organizational politics, establishing transparent criteria for advancement, performance appraisals, and rewards, and provide a platform for employee quality services. (ii) To combat favoritism in promotions, local government councils should institute standardized, merit-based promotion systems such as using objective performance metrics and creating diverse promotion panels. This can help ensure that advancement decisions are based on measurable achievements rather than personal relationships. (iii) Introducing a formal code of conduct that explicitly discourages political behavior in the workplace, such as favoritism, personal lobbying, or subjective promotion practices, can help clarify organizational expectations.

REFERENCES

- Ali, T., Malik, R., & Khan, Z. (2024). Leadership integrity and its influence on employee commitment: Addressing favoritism in promotion. *International Journal of Human Resource Studies*, 2 (2), 77-81.
- Atta, M., & Khan, M. (2016). The effects of perceived organizational politics on organizational commitment and employee work outcomes. London: Webology.
- Atta, M., & Khan, M. (2023). Impact of organizational politics on employee engagement and turnover intentions. *Journal of Organizational Psychology*, 3, 23-26.
- Blau, P. M. (1964). *Exchange and Power in Social Life*. Boston: Wiley.
- Butler, T. (2019). Positive organizational politics and its influence on workplace outcomes. *Integrated Journal for Research in Arts and Humanities*, 3, 45-48.
- Butler, T. (2019). Political behavior in the workplace and its impact on engagement levels. *Journal of Work Psychology*, 4, 55-59.
- Butler, T. (2023). The role of transparent policies in fostering accountability and service quality. *Journal of Work Psychology*, 8, 62-80.

- Chang, C. H., Rosen, C. C., & Levy, P. E. (2023). Employee engagement in politically charged organizations: A meta-analysis. *Academy of Management Journal*, 2, 34-37.
- Chung, H., Lee, S., & Park, Y. (2023). Navigating perceived organizational politics and its effect on employee engagement. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 2, 34-36.
- Ferris, G. R., & Treadway, D. C. (2022). Organizational politics and work engagement: A conceptual review. *International Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 2 (2), 56-59.
- Ferris, G. R. (2023). Employee engagement in dynamic work environments: A comprehensive review. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 3, 34-38.
- Ferris, G. R., Treadway, D. C., & Kolodinsky, R. W. (2024). Organizational politics, trust, and engagement: Revisiting social exchange theory. *Academy of Management Review*, 11, 74-95.
- Homans, G. C. (1958). Social behavior as exchange. *American Journal of Sociology*, 63(6), 597-606.
- Hossain, M., & Rahman, S. (2024). Perceived fairness in political work environments and its implications on engagement. *Journal of Human Resource Management*, 3, 45-49
- Kahn, W. A. (2024). The psychological conditions of employee engagement and disengagement. *Academy of Management Journal*, 4 (1), 66-69.
- Kahn, W. A. (2024). The psychological conditions of employee engagement in transparent organizations. *Academy of Management Journal*, 4(2), 82-85.
- Lalive, R. (2023). Impact of transparent policies on employee morale and productivity in the public sector. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 2, 56-59.
- Lalive, R. (2023). Organizational alignment and employee engagement: Exploring the role of value congruence. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 2, 67-71.
- Lalive, R. (2023). Organizational politics and employee engagement: Implications for public sector organizations. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 2, 75-79.
- Landells, E., & Albrecht, S. L. (2017). Perceptions of politics and counterproductive work behaviors: Moderating roles of political skill and perceived job autonomy. *Human Performance*, 30(2-3), 116-134.
- Liu, W., & Wu, Z. (2024). Psychological safety in politically charged workplaces: Impact on employee engagement. *Academy of Management Journal*, 4(3), 44-48.
- Malik, N., & Park, S. (2023). Perceived organizational politics: Impacts and interventions in the public sector. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 1 (2), 22-26.
- Malik, N., & Park, S. (2023). Transparency and engagement: Addressing the impacts of ambiguous organizational policies. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 1 (2), 43-47.

- Malik, N. (2019). Perceived organizational politics: Consequences and management strategies. London: ResearchGate.
- Malik, N., Singh, A., & Bhatia, P. (2023). Organizational politics and employee engagement: A review of empirical findings. *International Journal of Psychology and Behavioral Sciences*, 4, 109-112.
- Nguyen, T., Roberts, J., & Tang, S. (2023). Organizational justice and employee engagement in politically driven workplaces. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 3, 56-59.
- Osei, M., & Asante, B. (2023). Perceived fairness in promotion and its impact on job satisfaction. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 2, 89-93.
- Osei, M., Agyeman, P., & Antwi, S. (2023). Impact of organizational politics on employee burnout and engagement. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 3, 112-116.
- Park, K., & Lee, H. (2024). Leadership's role in mitigating the effects of organizational politics on engagement. *International Review of Public Administration*, 3 (1), 91-95.
- Park, K., & Lee, H. (2024). Transparency's role in enhancing employee motivation and service quality. *International Review of Public Administration*, 3 (2), 23-27.
- Popoola, T., & Adebayo, O. (2023). The role of cynicism in politically driven workplaces: Effects on engagement. *Journal of Work Psychology*, 2, 134-138.
- Rahman, H., & Lee, S. (2023). Favoritism in promotion and team cohesion: Examining the impact on employee engagement. *Journal of Work Psychology*, 2, 151-155.
- Sharma, M., & Lee, H. (2023). Effects of policy transparency on employee morale and engagement. *Journal of Work Psychology*, 2 (3), 131-135.
- Sharma, M., & Lee, H. (2023). Employee engagement as a driver of workplace vigor and dedication. *Journal of Work Psychology*, 2 (3), 117-121.
- Smith, C., & Johnson, P. (2024). The effects of perceived favoritism in promotion on employee turnover intentions. *Journal of Management Studies*, 3, 56-59.
- Su, J., & Xie, W. (2023). Perceived organizational politics and job satisfaction in government institutions. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 2, 45-59.
- Su, J., & Xie, W. (2023). Perceived transparency in organizational policies and its effect on job satisfaction. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 2, 61-64.
- Tewelde, M. (2023). Impact of organizational politics on employee morale and engagement. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 3 (2), 67-71.