

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Organizations are social systems in which individuals and groups interact to achieve both personal and organizational goals. Within these interactions, power relations, influence tactics, and informal behaviors often emerge, giving rise to what is commonly referred to as organizational politics. Organizational politics has been described as activities that are not formally sanctioned by the organization but are undertaken to influence the distribution of advantages, resources, or decision-making processes in favor of particular individuals or groups (Ferris et al., 2019). While some level of politics is inevitable in organizational life, its presence and intensity can significantly affect employees' attitudes, behaviors, and overall effectiveness at work.

In recent years, increased competition, limited organizational resources, and heightened performance pressures have intensified political behavior in many workplaces. Employees may engage in political actions such as impression management, coalition building, favoritism, and manipulation of information to secure promotions, recognition, or access to resources (Vigoda-Gadot & Drory, 2016). Although these behaviors may benefit certain individuals in the short term, they often create perceptions of unfairness, bias, and inequity among other employees. Such perceptions can negatively influence job performance and the effective utilization of employees' skills, knowledge, and abilities.

Job performance is a critical outcome variable for organizations, as it directly affects productivity, service quality, and the achievement of organizational objectives. It refers to the extent to which employees successfully carry out tasks, responsibilities, and behaviors that contribute to organizational goals (Campbell & Wiernik, 2020). When organizational politics is perceived as excessive or unjust, employees may experience stress, reduced motivation, job dissatisfaction, and emotional exhaustion, all of which can impair their performance (Rosen et al., 2023). Instead of focusing on task accomplishment and innovation, employees may divert their energy toward self-protection or political maneuvering, thereby reducing their effectiveness.

Closely related to job performance is employees' utilization, which refers to the degree to which an organization effectively uses the competencies, talents, time, and potential of its workforce. Effective employee utilization ensures that individuals are placed in roles that match their skills and are given equal opportunities to contribute meaningfully to organizational success. However, in politically charged environments, decisions regarding task allocation, promotions, training opportunities, and performance evaluations may be influenced more by personal relationships and power dynamics than by merit or competence (Buchanan, 2018). This can result in underutilization of capable employees, misallocation of human resources, and loss of organizational efficiency.

Perceptions of organizational politics have been found to play a crucial role in shaping employees' behavioral responses. According to social exchange theory, when employees perceive their organization as fair and supportive, they are more likely to reciprocate with

positive attitudes and high levels of performance. Conversely, when they perceive political behavior as self-serving and detrimental, they may withdraw effort, reduce commitment, or engage in counterproductive work behaviors (Cropanzano et al., 2017). In extreme cases, persistent political environments may lead to high turnover intentions, absenteeism, and low morale, further undermining effective employee utilization.

Despite the negative connotations often associated with organizational politics, some scholars argue that political skills and behaviors can also have functional outcomes when used ethically and constructively. For example, politically skilled employees may navigate complex organizational structures, build networks, and secure resources that enhance team and organizational performance (Ferris et al., 2015). However, the challenge for organizations lies in managing political behavior in a way that minimizes its harmful effects while promoting transparency, fairness, and merit-based practices.

Scholars have also shown that perceptions of politics are shaped by concrete organizational features such as feedback, job autonomy, promotion opportunities, and the fairness of decision processes (Ferris & Kacmar, 2022). These antecedents matter because they influence whether employees see decisions as meritocratic or as products of influence and favoritism; where perceptions of unfairness dominate, employees may withdraw effort, hoard information, or engage in impression management rather than productive task performance. Conversely, if political behaviour is transparent and governed by predictable rules, its corrosive effects can be reduced.

Investigating these dynamics in the Edo State Civil Service is timely for two reasons. First, state civil services in federations frequently operate under competing pressures political appointments, budgetary limits, and legacy administrative norms that make them fertile ground for informal influence. Second, understanding how organizational politics affects both observable job performance and the fuller concept of employee utilization (the extent to which skills, time, and capacity are productively deployed) can help managers and policymakers design interventions such as clearer promotion criteria, improved feedback systems, or strengthened transparency mechanisms that restore alignment between formal HR systems and day-to-day practice. This study therefore examines how employees' perceptions of organizational politics relate to measured job performance and indicators of utilization in the Edo State Civil Service, and explores organizational antecedents and potential moderating factors that might mitigate negative outcomes.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The Edo State Civil Service plays a critical role in policy implementation and public service delivery, making the effective utilization and performance of its workforce essential for achieving governmental goals. However, despite the existence of formal rules, regulations, and merit-based procedures within the civil service, observable variations in job performance and employee utilization persist. One of the factors increasingly identified as influencing these variations is organizational politics. Organizational politics, characterized by self-serving behaviors, favoritism, manipulation

of decision-making processes, and informal power struggles, has become a common feature in many public sector organizations, including state civil services. In the Edo State Civil Service, anecdotal evidence and informal observations suggest that decisions related to recruitment, promotion, posting, training opportunities, and performance appraisal are sometimes influenced by political considerations rather than merit and competence. Such practices may result in the underutilization of skilled and capable employees, while less qualified individuals occupy strategic positions due to political connections. This situation can lead to reduced motivation, job dissatisfaction, and declining job performance among employees who perceive the system as unfair or biased. When employees believe that hard work and competence are not adequately rewarded, their commitment to organizational goals may weaken, negatively affecting overall productivity and service delivery.

Furthermore, organizational politics may create a work environment characterized by mistrust, conflict, and poor collaboration among employees. In highly politicized environments, workers may focus more on protecting personal interests, forming alliances, or engaging in impression management rather than concentrating on their assigned duties. This shift in focus can reduce efficiency and limit the optimal utilization of human resources, as employees spend valuable time navigating political dynamics instead of performing their core responsibilities. In public sector organizations such as the Edo State Civil Service, where resources are often limited, such inefficiencies can have serious implications for effective governance and public accountability.

Although several studies have examined the relationship between organizational politics and job performance in private sector organizations and other public institutions, there is a noticeable gap in empirical research focusing specifically on state civil services in Nigeria, particularly Edo State. The unique administrative structure, cultural context, and political environment of the Edo State Civil Service may shape the nature and impact of organizational politics in ways that differ from other settings. Without empirical evidence, policy makers and administrators may find it difficult to design effective strategies to manage political behavior and enhance employee performance and utilization. Therefore, the problem this study seeks to address is the limited understanding of how organizational politics affects job performance and the utilization of employees within the Edo State Civil Service. By examining the nature, extent, and consequences of organizational politics in this context, the study aims to provide insights that can inform human resource policies, promote fairness and transparency, and improve employee performance and effective utilization in the Edo State Civil Service.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main aim of this study is to investigate the effect of organisational politics on job performance and employee utilization: A case study of Edo State Civil Service. Other specific objectives of this study are:

1. To identify the various forms of organisational politics prevalent in the Edo State Civil Service.

2. To examine the effect of organisational politics on the job performance of employees in the Edo State Civil Service.
3. To assess the influence of organisational politics on employee utilization in the Edo State Civil Service.
4. To determine the factors that contribute to the perception and practice of organisational politics in the Edo State Civil Service.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions will help to guide this study;

1. What forms of organisational politics are prevalent in the Edo State Civil Service?
2. How does organisational politics influence the job performance of employees in the Edo State Civil Service?
3. What is the effect of organisational politics on employee utilization in the Edo State Civil Service?
4. What factors contribute to the perception and practice of organisational politics within the Edo State Civil Service?

1.5 Significance of the study

This study on the effect of organizational politics on job performance and employees' utilization in the Edo State Civil Service is significant in several important ways, particularly to public sector administration and human resource management in Nigeria.

Firstly, the findings of this study will be beneficial to the Edo State Government and civil service management by providing empirical evidence on how organizational politics influences employees' job performance and the effective utilization of human resources. Understanding these effects will help policymakers and administrators develop fair, transparent, and merit-based administrative practices that reduce negative political behaviors and enhance productivity within the civil service.

Secondly, the study will be valuable to human resource managers and departmental heads in the civil service. By identifying political factors that affect staff motivation, deployment, and performance, the study will guide managers in improving employee placement, performance appraisal, promotion processes, and staff utilization. This can lead to improved morale, reduced conflict, and better service delivery to the public.

Thirdly, the study will be significant to employees of the Edo State Civil Service, as it highlights how organizational politics impacts their work attitudes, efficiency, and career progression. The findings may encourage employees to adopt positive coping strategies and promote awareness of the importance of professionalism, fairness, and teamwork in the workplace.

Furthermore, the study will contribute to academic knowledge and literature on organizational behavior and public administration, particularly within the Nigerian civil service context. It will serve as a reference material for students, researchers, and scholars conducting further studies on organizational politics, job performance, and employee utilization in public sector organizations.

Finally, the study will be useful to policy formulators and reform agencies by providing evidence-based recommendations that can support civil service reforms aimed at strengthening accountability, transparency, and effective human resource utilization. This, in turn, can enhance overall organizational effectiveness and public trust in government institutions.

In summary, this study is significant as it offers practical, managerial, and academic insights that can improve employee performance, optimal utilization of human resources, and administrative efficiency in the Edo State Civil Service.

1.6 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study focuses on examining the effect of organizational politics on job performance and employee utilization within the Edo State Civil Service. The scope is delimited to selected ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) operating under the Edo State Government, where formal bureaucratic structures and administrative procedures are prominent. The choice of the civil service is based on its strategic role in policy implementation and service delivery, as well as the prevalence of hierarchical decision-making processes that may give rise to organizational politics.

Conceptually, the study covers key dimensions of organizational politics such as favoritism, nepotism, manipulation of rules and procedures, power struggles, and the influence of informal networks on decision-making. These political behaviors are examined in relation to job performance indicators, including employees' efficiency, effectiveness, productivity, commitment, and quality of service delivery. In addition, the

study explores employee utilization by assessing how skills, competencies, and experience of civil servants are deployed, including issues of role assignment, promotion, training opportunities, and workload distribution. Geographically, the study is limited to Edo State, Nigeria, and does not extend to other states or the federal civil service. This geographical delimitation allows for an in-depth analysis of the administrative and socio-political context unique to Edo State. Temporally, the study is concerned with current organizational practices and experiences of civil servants during the period of data collection, without making extensive historical comparisons.

1.7 Definition of Terms

Organizational Politics:

In this study, organizational politics refers to employees' perceptions of self-serving behaviors, favoritism, manipulation of rules, and informal power practices within the Edo State Civil Service. It is measured using respondents' ratings on questionnaire items relating to favoritism, nepotism, influence of connections, and unfair decision-making processes.

Job Performance:

Job performance is defined as the extent to which civil servants effectively and efficiently carry out assigned duties in line with organizational goals. In this study, it is measured through self-reported and supervisory-related indicators such as task

completion, quality of work, punctuality, productivity, and adherence to civil service regulations.

Employees' Utilization:

Employees' utilization refers to the degree to which the skills, knowledge, abilities, and experience of civil servants are properly deployed and maximized in their assigned roles.

It is operationalized by assessing respondents' perceptions of job placement, workload distribution, role relevance, and opportunities to apply professional competencies.

Perception:

Perception in this study refers to employees' subjective evaluation and interpretation of organizational practices, political behaviors, and management decisions within the Edo State Civil Service, as captured through structured questionnaire responses.

Civil Service:

The civil service refers to the permanent administrative workforce of the Edo State Government responsible for implementing government policies and delivering public services. In this study, it includes employees across selected ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs).

Favoritism:

Favoritism is defined as the preferential treatment of certain employees based on personal relationships, ethnicity, political affiliation, or loyalty rather than merit. It is measured through questionnaire items addressing promotion, posting, and reward practices.

Nepotism:

Nepotism refers to the practice of granting employment benefits, promotions, or advantages to relatives or close associates within the civil service system. In this study, it is assessed through employees' responses to items related to family or personal connections influencing workplace decisions.

Motivation:

Motivation is defined as the level of enthusiasm, commitment, and willingness of employees to perform their duties. In this study, it is measured through indicators such as job satisfaction, morale, and willingness to exert extra effort.

Productivity:

Productivity refers to the amount and quality of output produced by employees within a given period. It is operationalized by respondents' assessments of efficiency, output level, and achievement of work targets.

Work Environment:

The work environment refers to the organizational climate, including leadership style, fairness, communication, and interpersonal relationships within the Edo State Civil Service. It is measured using employees' perceptions of managerial practices and workplace conditions.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

Organizational politics has long been recognized as a critical factor influencing the functioning and performance of public and private institutions. In its essence, organizational politics refers to behaviors and activities undertaken within an organization to acquire, maintain, or use power and influence to achieve personal or organizational objectives (Vigoda, 2020). These political behaviors may manifest in the form of favoritism, coalition building, manipulation, and lobbying, among others, and they can significantly impact employees' morale, motivation, and overall productivity (Poon, 2023). In the context of the civil service, where bureaucratic structures and hierarchical systems predominate, organizational politics may either facilitate or hinder effective job performance and employee utilization, depending on how it is managed.

Job performance refers to the effectiveness with which employees carry out their duties and responsibilities, contributing to the achievement of organizational goals (Campbell, 2020). Employee utilization, on the other hand, pertains to the extent to which an organization leverages the skills, competencies, and capacities of its workforce to maximize productivity and service delivery (Robbins & Judge, 2019).

The interplay between organizational politics and these variables is complex. On one hand, political behaviors may motivate employees through recognition and reward systems; on the other hand, they may create a toxic environment, fostering favoritism and

undermining merit-based performance evaluations (Ferris et al., 2022). Understanding this dynamic is particularly relevant in public sector institutions such as the Edo State Civil Service, where effective employee utilization and high performance are essential for delivering public services efficiently.

The conceptual framework for this study is grounded in the premise that organizational politics acts as both an independent and moderating factor influencing job performance and employee utilization. Various scholars have highlighted that political behavior can lead to divergent outcomes depending on organizational culture, leadership style, and governance mechanisms (Mintzberg, 2023; Buchanan & Badham, 2019). For instance, in a politically charged environment, employees may expend significant effort navigating power structures rather than focusing on core job tasks, potentially reducing productivity. Conversely, constructive political engagement, characterized by strategic networking and alliance-building, may enhance access to resources and professional growth, thereby improving job performance. This dual nature of organizational politics necessitates a framework that captures both its positive and negative dimensions.

In developing the conceptual framework, the study identifies several key variables: the nature of organizational politics, job performance, and employee utilization. Organizational politics encompasses behaviors such as favoritism, political maneuvering, lobbying, and networking, which are hypothesized to influence employee attitudes, commitment, and task execution. Job performance is measured through indicators such as efficiency, quality of output, timeliness, and achievement of targets. Employee

utilization is evaluated by examining how effectively employees' skills and competencies are deployed within the organization, including opportunities for professional development, participation in decision-making, and allocation of responsibilities. The framework posits that the relationship between organizational politics and these outcomes is mediated by factors such as leadership style, organizational policies, and employee perception of fairness.

Moreover, the study acknowledges the contextual factors inherent in the Edo State Civil Service, including bureaucratic procedures, hierarchical decision-making structures, and socio-political influences. These factors are crucial in shaping the expression and impact of organizational politics. For example, in a highly hierarchical system, political behaviors may be more subtle, manifesting through networking and influence over key decision-makers, whereas in flatter structures, overt political actions may be more common. Therefore, the conceptual framework emphasizes the interaction between organizational politics and contextual variables, providing a holistic understanding of its effect on job performance and employee utilization.

2.1.2 Concept of Organizational Politics

Organizational politics refers to the behaviors and actions taken by individuals or groups within an organization to influence decisions, gain advantage, or protect personal or group interests (Ferris, Treadway, Kolodinsky, & Hochwarter, 2022). It is a multifaceted phenomenon that can manifest in both formal and informal interactions among employees, ranging from subtle persuasion and networking to overt power struggles and

manipulation. Organizational politics is often perceived negatively because it can foster conflict, reduce transparency, and create a perception of unfairness within the workplace (Vigoda, 2022). However, some scholars argue that political behavior is an inevitable and even necessary aspect of organizational life, especially in complex environments where resources are limited, and competing interests exist (Mintzberg, 2023).

The presence of organizational politics is strongly influenced by the structure, culture, and environment of an organization. In highly hierarchical or bureaucratic systems, such as the civil service, employees may resort to political strategies to navigate rigid procedures, influence superiors, or secure scarce resources (Pfeffer, 2022). In these contexts, political behavior can include lobbying for promotions, forming alliances, controlling information flow, and even subtle forms of impression management to shape perceptions and outcomes. While such behaviors are often aimed at individual or group advantage, they can also affect organizational effectiveness, employee morale, and overall job performance (Ferris et al., 2017).

Understanding organizational politics is critical for examining its impact on employee performance and utilization. Job performance refers to the extent to which employees fulfill their assigned duties and contribute to organizational objectives, while employee utilization concerns how effectively an organization leverages the skills, knowledge, and capacities of its workforce. Political behavior within organizations can have a dual effect: it can enhance performance by motivating employees to engage strategically and align with organizational goals, or it can hinder performance by creating distractions, fostering

favoritism, and undermining trust (Vigoda-Gadot & Beerli, 2022). For instance, in the civil service sector, where bureaucratic procedures and hierarchical decision-making dominate, employees may prioritize political alignment over merit-based task execution, which can adversely affect productivity and the optimal use of human resources.

Moreover, the effects of organizational politics are often mediated by individual and organizational factors. Individual characteristics, such as political skill, emotional intelligence, and resilience, can determine how employees perceive and respond to political behavior (Ferris et al., 2015). Organizational culture, leadership style, and communication practices can either exacerbate or mitigate political behavior. In environments where transparency, fairness, and participatory decision-making are emphasized, the negative consequences of politics are often reduced, whereas opaque and centralized structures tend to amplify political maneuvering. Understanding these dynamics is especially relevant in public sector organizations like the Edo State Civil Service, where the interplay of formal rules, bureaucratic hierarchy, and employee ambitions can create a fertile ground for political behavior that influences both individual and organizational outcomes.

In organizational politics is an inherent aspect of workplace dynamics that shapes decision-making, resource allocation, and interpersonal relationships. While often viewed as detrimental, political behavior can also play a strategic role in navigating complex organizational environments. Its impact on job performance and employee utilization, particularly within bureaucratic systems like the Edo State Civil Service,

warrants careful investigation to identify strategies that minimize negative consequences while promoting productive engagement. This understanding is essential for fostering organizational effectiveness, employee satisfaction, and the optimal deployment of human resources.

2.1.3 Dimensions of Organizational Politics

Organizational politics refers to the use of power and social networking within an organization to achieve personal or organizational objectives, often bypassing formal structures and policies (Ferris et al., 2015). It is an inevitable aspect of organizational life, as every organization comprises individuals with divergent interests, ambitions, and values. While politics can sometimes positively influence decision-making and resource allocation, its negative consequences often manifest in reduced job satisfaction, lower productivity, and underutilization of employee skills. Understanding the dimensions of organizational politics is essential for assessing how political behavior affects job performance and the effective utilization of employees in public institutions such as the Edo State Civil Service.

One key dimension of organizational politics is resource allocation. In any organization, resources—including promotions, training opportunities, and financial incentives are limited. Employees often engage in political behavior to secure these scarce resources for themselves or their teams. Such actions may include lobbying, forming alliances, or influencing decision-makers, often at the expense of fairness and merit-based processes (Vigoda, 2020). In the context of the Edo State Civil Service, political maneuvering in

resource distribution can create inequality among employees, demotivate high-performing workers, and ultimately hinder overall productivity.

Another significant dimension is interpersonal influence and networking. Employees frequently rely on social connections and informal networks to gain influence or access privileged information. Political actors use persuasion, alliances, and informal communication channels to shape decisions in their favor (Poon, 2023). While networking can sometimes facilitate collaboration and organizational learning, excessive reliance on personal connections rather than competence can undermine transparency and fairness, affecting employee morale and performance. In a civil service environment, such behaviors may result in favoritism and biased evaluations, limiting opportunities for capable employees and impeding optimal utilization of human capital.

Promotion and career advancement constitute another dimension of organizational politics. Political behavior often shapes who gets promoted, which roles are assigned to specific employees, and how career trajectories are determined. When promotions are perceived to be influenced more by political favoritism than merit, employees may experience frustration, disengagement, or even withdrawal from active participation in organizational tasks (Ferris et al., 2016). For the Edo State Civil Service, where hierarchical structures and bureaucratic processes dominate, understanding how political behavior affects promotions is critical for addressing inefficiencies and ensuring that talented employees are effectively deployed.

Decision-making processes are also highly susceptible to organizational politics. Individuals or groups may attempt to influence policies, procedures, or strategic choices to align with personal interests. Such influence may occur through lobbying senior management, manipulating information, or forming coalitions. Political interference in decision-making often results in suboptimal outcomes that prioritize personal gain over organizational goals, thus negatively impacting job performance and employee engagement (Mintzberg, 1983). In civil service organizations, this can translate into delayed service delivery, misallocation of duties, and underutilization of personnel, ultimately affecting public service efficiency.

Conflict management and control represents another dimension of organizational politics. Organizational members often engage in political behavior to protect their interests during conflicts or disagreements. Political tactics such as blame-shifting, forming factions, or covert resistance may be employed to gain advantage or safeguard positions. While managing conflicts through political means can sometimes stabilize the organization, it often results in a toxic work environment, reducing cooperation and teamwork, which are crucial for optimal employee performance (Pfeffer, 2022). In the Edo State Civil Service, where collaborative efforts are necessary for policy implementation, political conflict can severely undermine productivity and effective utilization of staff resources.

In organizational politics manifests in multiple dimensions, including resource allocation, interpersonal influence, promotion and career advancement, decision-making processes,

and conflict management. Each dimension carries potential benefits and risks, but in public service contexts such as the Edo State Civil Service, excessive political behavior can undermine employee performance and reduce the effective use of human resources. Understanding these dimensions provides a foundation for developing strategies to minimize negative political behavior while enhancing transparency, equity, and productivity within the civil service.

2.1.4 Concept of Job Performance

Job performance is a critical construct in organizational behavior and human resource management, representing the degree to which an employee successfully fulfills the tasks, responsibilities, and expectations associated with their job role. Performance in the workplace is often viewed as a multidimensional phenomenon encompassing not only the quantity and quality of output but also behaviors, attitudes, and contributions that enhance organizational effectiveness (Borman & Motowidlo, 2017). It reflects both the tangible and intangible aspects of an employee's work and serves as a key determinant for promotions, rewards, and career development opportunities. In contemporary organizations, job performance has become a central focus, given its direct influence on productivity, employee satisfaction, and overall organizational success (Campbell, McCloy, Oppler, & Sager, 2023).

Scholars have categorized job performance into two major dimensions: task performance and contextual performance. Task performance refers to the efficiency and effectiveness with which employees carry out the core responsibilities of their job. It includes

adherence to procedures, completion of assignments, technical proficiency, and meeting deadlines. Contextual performance, on the other hand, encompasses behaviors that support the organizational environment but are not necessarily part of the formal job description, such as cooperation, initiative, voluntary participation, and organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) (Organ, 2017). Both dimensions are essential for achieving organizational goals, as task performance ensures the accomplishment of key objectives while contextual performance fosters a conducive and collaborative work environment.

The measurement of job performance is complex and often influenced by subjective and objective factors. Objective measures, such as production output, sales volume, and error rates, provide quantifiable insights into performance. Subjective measures, often based on supervisor evaluations, peer reviews, and self-assessments, capture behaviors, attitudes, and interpersonal effectiveness that are less easily quantified (Rotundo & Sackett, 2022). Effective performance appraisal systems integrate both approaches to ensure a comprehensive assessment of an employee's contributions to organizational success.

The significance of job performance extends beyond individual achievement to the broader organizational context. High-performing employees contribute to increased organizational efficiency, improved service delivery, and enhanced competitiveness. Conversely, poor job performance can undermine organizational objectives, reduce morale, and increase operational costs. In the public sector, particularly within civil services such as the Edo State Civil Service, job performance is closely linked to the

effective implementation of government policies, service delivery to citizens, and accountability. Civil servants are expected not only to complete their assigned tasks but also to demonstrate integrity, ethical behavior, and commitment to public service values (Mamman, 2020). Therefore, understanding the factors that influence job performance in such settings is crucial for improving employee utilization and overall organizational effectiveness.

Job performance is also influenced by a combination of individual, organizational, and environmental factors. Individual factors include skills, knowledge, motivation, personality, and work attitudes, while organizational factors encompass leadership style, organizational culture, work environment, resources, and policies. Environmental factors such as political stability, social norms, and economic conditions may also indirectly impact performance outcomes (Sonnentag & Frese, 2022). In public organizations, where hierarchical structures and bureaucratic procedures are prevalent, employees' performance may also be shaped by organizational politics the informal and often covert actions aimed at gaining advantage, influence, or resources. Political behavior within organizations can have either positive or negative consequences on employee performance depending on the nature, intensity, and perception of such activities (Ferris, Treadway, Perrewé, Brouer, Douglas, & Lux, 2017).

Job performance is a multidimensional construct that plays a pivotal role in determining organizational effectiveness and employee development. In the context of the Edo State Civil Service, high performance ensures that public services are delivered efficiently,

policies are implemented effectively, and resources are utilized optimally. Understanding the concept of job performance, its determinants, and its interaction with organizational politics is essential for devising strategies that enhance employee engagement, motivation, and productivity in public service organizations. This study, therefore, situates job performance as a central variable in exploring the effects of organizational politics on employee outcomes in the Edo State Civil Service.

2.1.5 Concept of Employees' Utilization

Employees' utilization is a critical aspect of organizational management and human resource practice, focusing on the effective deployment of human capital to achieve organizational goals. It refers to the extent to which employees' skills, abilities, and potentials are optimally applied in performing their assigned tasks within an organization (Armstrong, 2020). Proper utilization ensures that employees contribute meaningfully to organizational objectives, while underutilization or misallocation of staff can lead to inefficiency, dissatisfaction, and reduced productivity (Dessler, 2019). In the context of public sector organizations like the Edo State Civil Service, effective employee utilization is essential for enhancing service delivery, promoting accountability, and ensuring that public resources are efficiently managed.

The concept of employees' utilization is closely linked with human resource planning and development. Human resource managers are tasked with assessing employees' skills, knowledge, and competencies and aligning them with appropriate job roles (Mathis &

Jackson, 2018). Utilization goes beyond mere assignment of tasks; it involves creating opportunities for employees to engage in meaningful work, participate in decision-making processes, and contribute to organizational growth. When employees are effectively utilized, they experience higher job satisfaction, motivation, and commitment, which directly impact organizational performance (Bhatnagar, 2024). Conversely, poor utilization often results in redundancy, job frustration, and high turnover rates, which can hinder the achievement of organizational goals.

In the public sector, particularly within civil services, employee utilization takes on added significance due to the bureaucratic nature of operations and the high demand for accountability in the use of public resources (Okotoni & Erero, 2016). Employees in such settings are expected to execute government policies efficiently and provide quality services to the public. However, the presence of organizational politics can distort employee utilization, leading to favoritism, nepotism, and uneven workload distribution. Employees may be overburdened or under-engaged depending on political influence rather than merit, which adversely affects performance outcomes and the overall efficiency of service delivery (Ferris et al., 2015).

Effective employee utilization also encompasses the alignment of individual goals with organizational objectives. According to Lawler and Mohrman (2023), organizations achieve high levels of performance when employees' roles are clearly defined, their competencies are matched to tasks, and their contributions are recognized and rewarded. This alignment is crucial in ensuring that employees feel valued and motivated, fostering

a sense of ownership and accountability. In contrast, when employees' capabilities are underutilized, organizations fail to leverage the full potential of their workforce, resulting in decreased innovation, stagnation, and reduced responsiveness to organizational challenges.

Moreover, employee utilization is not limited to physical or technical tasks but includes intellectual and creative capacities. Encouraging employees to participate in problem-solving, strategic planning, and policy development enhances both personal growth and organizational performance (Noe et al., 2017). In civil service settings, where hierarchical structures often limit decision-making authority, proper utilization involves providing opportunities for skill development, training, and involvement in meaningful projects. This not only maximizes productivity but also strengthens the morale and engagement of employees, creating a workforce that is adaptable, resilient, and capable of meeting the evolving demands of public administration.

Employees' utilization is a multifaceted concept that encompasses the optimal deployment of human resources to achieve both individual and organizational objectives. Its importance in the public sector cannot be overemphasized, as it directly influences job performance, service delivery, and organizational effectiveness. In the Edo State Civil Service, where organizational politics may influence decision-making and human resource management practices, understanding the dynamics of employee utilization is vital. Ensuring that employees are effectively utilized requires strategic planning, transparent policies, and a commitment to aligning employees' skills and potentials with

the needs of the organization. Ultimately, effective utilization serves as a cornerstone for achieving efficiency, productivity, and sustainable development within public institutions.

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The concept of employees' utilization is closely linked with human resource planning and development. Human resource managers are tasked with assessing employees' skills, knowledge, and competencies and aligning them with appropriate job roles (Mathis & Jackson, 2018). Utilization goes beyond mere assignment of tasks; it involves creating opportunities for employees to engage in meaningful work, participate in decision-making processes, and contribute to organizational growth. When employees are effectively utilized, they experience higher job satisfaction, motivation, and commitment, which directly impact organizational performance (Bhatnagar, 2014). Conversely, poor

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Effective employee utilization also encompasses the alignment of individual goals with organizational objectives. According to Lawler and Mohrman (2023), organizations achieve high levels of performance when employees' roles are clearly defined, their competencies are matched to tasks, and their contributions are recognized and rewarded. This alignment is crucial in ensuring that employees feel valued and motivated, fostering a sense of ownership and accountability. In contrast, when employees' capabilities are underutilized, organizations fail to leverage the full potential of their workforce, resulting in decreased innovation, stagnation, and reduced responsiveness to organizational challenges.

Moreover, employee utilization is not limited to physical or technical tasks but includes intellectual and creative capacities. Encouraging employees to participate in problem-solving, strategic planning, and policy development enhances both personal growth and organizational performance (Noe et al., 2017). In civil service settings, where hierarchical structures often limit decision-making authority, proper utilization involves providing opportunities for skill development, training, and involvement in meaningful projects. This not only maximizes productivity but also strengthens the morale and engagement of employees, creating a workforce that is adaptable, resilient, and capable of meeting the evolving demands of public administration.

In, employees' utilization is a multifaceted concept that encompasses the optimal deployment of human resources to achieve both individual and organizational objectives. Its importance in the public sector cannot be overemphasized, as it directly influences job performance, service delivery, and organizational effectiveness. In the Edo State Civil Service, where organizational politics may influence decision-making and human resource management practices, understanding the dynamics of employee utilization is vital. Ensuring that employees are effectively utilized requires strategic planning, transparent policies, and a commitment to aligning employees' skills and potentials with the needs of the organization. Ultimately, effective utilization serves as a cornerstone for achieving efficiency, productivity, and sustainable development within public institutions.

2.1.7 Organizational Politics and Employees' Utilization

Organizational politics has become an inevitable aspect of contemporary workplaces, influencing both managerial decisions and employees' day-to-day experiences. Broadly defined, organizational politics refers to the use of power, influence, and strategic behaviors by individuals or groups within an organization to achieve personal or departmental objectives, often beyond formal organizational rules (Ferris, Treadway, Kolodinsky, Hochwarter, Kacmar, Douglas, & Frink, 2015). While some degree of politics may be functional and serve as a means to navigate complex organizational structures, excessive or negative political behavior can hinder effective employee performance and utilization. In the context of civil service institutions, where adherence to rules and public accountability are paramount, organizational politics can manifest in favoritism, resource hoarding, manipulation of performance appraisals, and biased decision-making, all of which impact employees' motivation and productivity (Vigoda, 2020).

Employees' utilization, in this context, refers to the extent to which employees' skills, talents, and capabilities are effectively deployed to achieve organizational goals. High employee utilization implies that workers are engaged in roles that maximize their competencies, leading to increased productivity, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (Robbins & Judge, 2019). Conversely, poor utilization occurs when employees are either underutilized or misaligned with their tasks, often due to organizational inefficiencies, managerial biases, or politicized work environments. In civil service organizations, where employees are expected to serve the public efficiently,

ineffective utilization may result in delays in service delivery, poor policy implementation, and low morale among staff.

The interplay between organizational politics and employee utilization is complex. Research suggests that negative political behavior, such as favoritism, nepotism, or internal competition, often leads to role ambiguity, conflict, and reduced job satisfaction among employees, which in turn affects their performance and engagement (Poon, 2023). Employees in politically charged environments may experience stress, distrust, and demotivation, thereby reducing their willingness or ability to contribute fully to organizational objectives. For instance, in cases where promotions or task assignments are determined by political favoritism rather than merit, employees may feel undervalued or marginalized, resulting in disengagement and suboptimal utilization of their skills (Mintzberg, 2023).

Conversely, some scholars argue that organizational politics can have positive outcomes if channeled appropriately. Strategic networking, coalition-building, and influence can sometimes facilitate resource allocation, recognition of talent, and career progression, ultimately enhancing employee utilization and organizational effectiveness (Buchanan, 2008). However, in the public sector, including the Edo State Civil Service, excessive politicization often outweighs these potential benefits due to rigid bureaucratic structures, accountability requirements, and the high expectation of impartiality in service delivery. Employees caught in political games may find their expertise underutilized or

misdirected, which not only affects individual performance but also undermines the overall effectiveness of the organization.

Several studies have highlighted the prevalence of organizational politics in the public sector and its impact on human resource utilization. For example, research by Adeyemi and Salami (2019) in Nigerian civil service institutions indicated that political interference in administrative decisions often led to poor staff motivation, reduced productivity, and inefficient deployment of human resources. Similarly, Obaji and Ugwu (2020) noted that employees' talents were frequently underutilized in politically dominated workplaces, as task allocation often depended on allegiance rather than competence. These findings underscore the need to examine the effects of organizational politics on employees' utilization, particularly in contexts like the Edo State Civil Service, where effective public service delivery relies heavily on optimal deployment of personnel.

Understanding the relationship between organizational politics and employee utilization is therefore critical for both policymakers and managers. By identifying the ways in which political behavior influences task assignment, skill deployment, and employee engagement, organizational leaders can design strategies to mitigate negative politics, promote merit-based practices, and optimize the use of human resources. This study, therefore, seeks to explore how organizational politics affects employees' utilization in the Edo State Civil Service, shedding light on the challenges and potential interventions

that could enhance efficiency, performance, and employee satisfaction within the public sector.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory (SET) is one of the most influential theories used to explain relationships and interactions within organizations. The theory provides a useful lens for understanding how organizational politics influence job performance and employee utilization. Social Exchange Theory is rooted in the idea that social behavior is the result of an exchange process in which individuals seek to maximize benefits and minimize costs in their interactions (Homans, 1958). In organizational settings, this theory suggests that employees' attitudes and behaviors are shaped by their perceptions of fairness, support, trust, and reciprocity in the workplace.

The foundation of Social Exchange Theory lies in the principle of reciprocity, which holds that positive actions by one party tend to be returned with positive actions by the other party (Blau, 1964). When employees perceive that their organization treats them fairly and provides adequate support, they are more likely to reciprocate through increased commitment, higher job performance, and effective utilization of their skills. Conversely, when employees perceive unfair treatment, favoritism, or manipulation common features of organizational politics they may respond with reduced effort, lower performance, and withdrawal behaviors.

Organizational politics refers to activities that are undertaken by individuals or groups to protect or enhance their self-interests, often at the expense of others or organizational goals. Such political behaviors may include favoritism, manipulation of information, abuse of power, and biased decision-making. From the perspective of Social Exchange Theory, these behaviors disrupt the balance of exchange relationships within the organization. Employees who perceive high levels of organizational politics may feel that the organization has violated the psychological contract, leading to negative emotional and behavioral responses (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2015).

Job performance is closely linked to employees' perceptions of exchange relationships. When organizational politics dominate decision-making processes, employees may believe that rewards such as promotions, recognition, and resource allocation are not based on merit or performance. This perception weakens the exchange relationship between employees and management. As a result, employees may reduce their level of effort, show less initiative, and limit their contribution to only what is required, thereby negatively affecting job performance. Social Exchange Theory explains this behavior as a rational response to an unfavorable exchange, where employees seek to protect themselves from further losses.

Employee utilization, which refers to the effective deployment and use of employees' skills, knowledge, and abilities, is also influenced by social exchange processes. In a politically charged work environment, employees may feel discouraged from fully

utilizing their competencies, especially if they believe that their efforts will not be recognized or rewarded. According to Social Exchange Theory, when employees perceive low returns on their investment of skills and effort, they are less likely to go beyond their basic job requirements. This leads to underutilization of human resources and reduced organizational effectiveness.

Furthermore, Social Exchange Theory emphasizes the role of trust and perceived organizational support in shaping employee behavior. Trust is a critical component of social exchanges, as it reduces uncertainty and encourages cooperation. In organizations where political behavior is prevalent, trust between employees and management may be eroded. Employees may become suspicious of managerial intentions and perceive organizational actions as self-serving rather than supportive. This breakdown in trust weakens the exchange relationship and contributes to negative outcomes such as poor job performance and ineffective employee utilization.

In contrast, when organizations manage politics effectively and promote fairness, transparency, and merit-based practices, positive social exchanges are reinforced. Employees who perceive low levels of organizational politics are more likely to feel valued and supported. In line with Social Exchange Theory, such employees tend to reciprocate with higher levels of performance, increased engagement, and willingness to utilize their skills for organizational success. This highlights the importance of ethical

leadership and fair human resource practices in maintaining healthy exchange relationships.

Social Exchange Theory provides a strong theoretical foundation for examining the effect of organizational politics on job performance and employee utilization. The theory explains how employees' perceptions of political behavior influence their willingness to invest effort, skills, and commitment in their work. High levels of organizational politics are likely to disrupt social exchange relationships, leading to reduced job performance and underutilization of employees. Conversely, fair and supportive organizational environments foster positive exchanges that enhance performance and optimal use of human resources. Therefore, Social Exchange Theory is highly relevant for understanding employee behavior and outcomes in politically driven organizational contexts.

2.2.2 Power and Politics Theory

Power and Politics Theory provides a useful framework for understanding how influence, authority, and informal relationships shape behavior and outcomes within organizations. The theory is rooted in the assumption that organizations are not purely rational systems driven only by formal rules and objectives, but rather political arenas where individuals and groups compete for scarce resources, influence, and control. These political processes significantly affect employees' job performance and the extent to which their skills and capacities are effectively utilized.

Organizational power refers to the capacity of an individual or group to influence the behavior, decisions, or actions of others in order to achieve desired outcomes. French and Raven's classical typology identifies several sources of power, including legitimate power (derived from formal position), reward power, coercive power, expert power, and referent power. In practice, employees and managers draw on these power bases to advance personal, departmental, or organizational interests. Organizational politics, on the other hand, involves activities that are not formally sanctioned by the organization but are undertaken to influence decision-making, resource allocation, and career outcomes.

Power and Politics Theory argues that political behavior is inevitable in organizations because goals are often ambiguous, resources are limited, and performance criteria may be subjective. In such contexts, individuals use political strategies such as forming alliances, lobbying decision-makers, impression management, and controlling information to protect their interests. While some political actions may support organizational goals, excessive or self-serving politics can undermine fairness, trust, and productivity.

From the perspective of job performance, organizational politics can have both positive and negative effects. When power is exercised transparently and politics are aligned with organizational objectives, employees may feel motivated to perform better in order to gain recognition, promotions, or access to resources. For instance, employees with expert

power who are politically skilled may influence decisions that allow them to apply their competencies effectively, thereby enhancing performance. Similarly, political awareness can help employees navigate organizational dynamics, reduce uncertainty, and focus their efforts on valued outcomes.

However, Power and Politics Theory also highlights the negative consequences of dysfunctional political environments. When power is abused or politics are perceived as unfair, employees may experience stress, frustration, and reduced job satisfaction. Favoritism, nepotism, and biased decision-making can lead to situations where high-performing employees are overlooked while less competent individuals gain rewards through political connections. Such perceptions of injustice often result in reduced commitment, lower morale, and diminished job performance. Employees may shift their focus from productive work to political survival, engaging in defensive behaviors rather than contributing meaningfully to organizational goals.

Employee utilization is also strongly influenced by organizational power structures and political dynamics. Effective employee utilization involves deploying employees' skills, knowledge, and abilities in ways that maximize organizational effectiveness. According to Power and Politics Theory, decisions about task assignments, training opportunities, promotions, and leadership roles are frequently shaped by political considerations rather than objective assessments of competence. As a result, some employees may be

underutilized despite having high potential, while others may be overutilized or placed in strategic positions due to political influence rather than merit.

In highly politicized organizations, managers may allocate responsibilities based on loyalty, personal relationships, or political alliances. This can lead to misallocation of human resources, where employees' talents are not optimally matched with organizational needs. Over time, underutilization of capable employees can result in skill erosion, disengagement, and turnover. Conversely, when power is exercised responsibly and political behavior is moderated by clear policies and ethical leadership, organizations are more likely to harness employees' capabilities effectively.

Power and Politics Theory further emphasizes the role of leadership in shaping political behavior and its outcomes. Leaders who rely excessively on coercive or reward power may encourage unhealthy political competition, whereas leaders who emphasize expert and referent power tend to foster collaboration and trust. Ethical leadership and transparent decision-making can reduce the negative effects of politics by clarifying expectations and performance standards. This, in turn, enhances job performance and ensures that employee utilization is based on competence and organizational needs rather than political maneuvering.

Power and Politics Theory explains how organizational politics emerges from the distribution and exercise of power within organizations and how it influences job performance and employee utilization. While political behavior is unavoidable, its impact

depends on how power is exercised and perceived. Constructive use of power can motivate employees and enhance performance, whereas excessive or unfair politics can hinder productivity and lead to poor utilization of human resources. Understanding this theory provides valuable insights for managers and policymakers seeking to minimize the negative effects of organizational politics while leveraging power to achieve organizational effectiveness.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter covers the description and discussion on the various techniques and procedures used in the study to collect and analyze the data as it is deemed appropriate

3.2 Research Design

For this study, the survey research design was adopted. The choice of the design was informed by the objectives of the study as outlined in chapter one. This research design provides a quickly efficient and accurate means of assessing information about a population of interest. It intends to study an assessment of the effect of organisation politics on job performance and employee utilization: A case study of Edo State Civil Service

. The study will be conducted Edo state.

3.3 Area of the study

This study was carried out in the Edo State Civil Service, located in Edo State, Nigeria. Edo State lies in the South–South geopolitical zone of Nigeria and has Benin City as its capital. The Edo State Civil Service represents the administrative machinery of the state government and is responsible for the formulation, implementation, and execution of government policies and programmes across various ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs).

The Edo State Civil Service is structured into several ministries such as the Ministries of Education, Health, Finance, Works, and Establishments, among others. These ministries are staffed by civil servants occupying different cadres ranging from junior to senior and management levels. The diversity of roles, hierarchical structure, and bureaucratic processes within the civil service make it a suitable setting for examining organisational politics, job performance, and employee utilization.

Organisational politics is often prevalent in public sector institutions due to factors such as competition for limited resources, promotion opportunities, leadership positions, and access to privileges. In the Edo State Civil Service, issues such as favoritism, nepotism, influence of personal relationships, and power struggles may affect how employees are assigned duties, evaluated, and promoted. These political dynamics can significantly influence employees' job performance and the extent to which their skills and competencies are effectively utilized.

The choice of the Edo State Civil Service as the area of study is therefore justified by its strategic role in public administration, its complex organisational structure, and the observable challenges related to employee performance and utilization. Studying this area provides an opportunity to generate empirical evidence on how organisational politics operates within a state civil service system and its implications for efficiency, productivity, and effective service delivery. The findings from this study are expected to be useful to policymakers, administrators, and human resource managers in improving

management practices and enhancing employee performance within the Edo State Civil Service and similar public sector organisations in Nigeria.

3.4 Population of the Study

Sitwenthrone (2010), defined population as the study of the group of persons and objects which defined by some unique attributes. The population comprised the staff of Edo Civil Service (Ministry of works) as shown in the table below

Table 1.
The population size of the Edo State Civil Service, Ministry of Works.

CATEGORIES	POPULATION
Senior Management Personnel (SMP)	24
Officers of Middle Level	50
Junior workers	60
Total	134

Source: Field Research, 2026

3.5 Sample and Sampling Techniques

The researcher used Taro Yamane's formula to determine the sample size from the population.

Taro Yamane's formula is given as;

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

Where N = Population of study (134)

n = Sample size (?)

e = Level of significance at 5% (0.05)

1 = Constant

$$\therefore n = \frac{134}{1 + 134(0.05)^2} = \frac{134}{1 + 134(0.0025)} = \frac{134}{1 + 0.335}$$
$$n = \frac{134}{1.335} = \underline{\underline{100}}$$

The sample size therefore is 100 respondents.

3.6 Research Instrument and Instrumentation

Data for this study was collected from primary and secondary sources. The primary source of data collected was mainly the use of a structured questionnaire which was designed to elicit information on the effect of organisational politics on job performance and employee utilization: A case study of Edo State Civil Service. The secondary source of data collections were textbooks, journals and scholarly materials.

3.7 Validity of Instrument

The instrument of this study was subjected to face validation. Face validation tests the appropriateness of the questionnaire items. This is because face validation is often used to indicate whether an instrument on the face of it appears to measures what it contains. Face validations therefore aims at determining the extent to which the questionnaire is relevant to the objectives of the study. In subjecting the instrument for face validation, copies of the initial draft of the questionnaire will be validated by supervisor. The

supervisor is expected to critically examine the items of the instrument with specific objectives of the study and make useful suggestions to improve the quality of the instrument. Based on his recommendations the instrument will be adjusted and re-adjusted before being administered for the study.

3.8 Reliability of Instrument

The coefficient of 0.81 was considered a reliability coefficient because according to Etuk (1990), a test-retest coefficient of 0.5 will be enough to justify the use of a research instrument.

3.9 Method of Data Collection

This study is based on the two possible sources of data which are the primary and secondary source.

- a. Primary Source of Data:** The primary data for this study consist of raw data generated from responses to questionnaires and interview by the respondents.
- b. Secondary Source of Data:** The secondary data includes information obtained through the review of literature that is journals, monographs, textbooks and other periodicals.

3.10 Method of Data Analysis

This study adopted descriptive statistic in analysis of the collected data. The analysis will be structured into two sections. The first will cover the descriptive statistical properties including summarizing and presenting of the demographic data in simple percentages, table, and chart. The second part of the study will adopt mean decision analysis base on 2.5 level of criterion in answering of research questions through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the results obtained from the field survey conducted on the effect of organisational politics on job performance and employee utilization in the Edo State Civil Service. The analysis is based on data collected through structured questionnaires administered to employees across selected ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) within the civil service. The responses were analysed using appropriate descriptive statistical tools such as frequency counts, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviation to address the research questions formulated for the study.

The chapter is organised in line with the research objectives and research questions. It examines the various forms of organisational politics prevalent in the Edo State Civil Service, the influence of organisational politics on employees' job performance, the effect of organisational politics on employee utilization, and the factors contributing to the perception and practice of organisational politics within the civil service. The findings are interpreted and discussed in relation to existing literature and relevant theoretical frameworks to establish consistency or divergence with previous studies.

4.1 Data Presentation and Analysis

TABLE 4.1: Distribution of Respondents

Category	Sub-category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	59	59%
	Female	41	41%
	Total	100	100%
Age Bracket	Below 25 years	12	12%
	25 – 34 years	28	28%
	35 – 44 years	32	32%
	45 – 54 years	18	18%
	55 years and above	10	10%
	Total	100	100%
Marital Status	Single	34	34%
	Married	56	56%
	Divorced	6	6%
	Widowed	4	4%
	Total	100	100%
Highest Educational Qualification	SSCE	15	15%
	NCE / OND	19	19%
	HND / Bachelor's Degree	46	46%
	Master's Degree	18	18%
	Others	2	2%
	Total	100	100%
Length of Service	Less than 5 years	24	24%

	5 – 10 years	32	32%
	11 – 15 years	21	21%
	16 – 20 years	14	14%
	Above 20 years	9	9%
	Total	100	100%

Source: Fieldwork, 2026

The study sampled a total of 100 respondents from the Edo State Civil Service, and their demographic characteristics are presented in terms of gender, age, marital status, educational qualification, and length of service. The distribution of respondents by gender shows a slight male dominance, with 59% male and 41% female. This indicates that males are more represented in the sample population of the Edo State Civil Service.

The age distribution indicates a predominantly middle-aged workforce. The largest group is respondents aged 35–44 years (32%), followed by 25–34 years (28%), 45–54 years (18%), below 25 years (12%), and 55 years and above (10%). This suggests that the civil service in Edo State is largely composed of experienced adults in their mid-career stages.

The majority of respondents are married (56%), followed by single respondents (34%). Only a small proportion are divorced (6%) or widowed (4%), reflecting a generally stable marital status among the workforce. The educational profile shows a relatively well-educated workforce. The largest proportion of respondents hold an HND/Bachelor's degree (46%), followed by Master's degree (18%), NCE/OND (19%), SSCE (15%), and

a small fraction holding other qualifications (2%). This suggests that most employees in the Edo State Civil Service possess tertiary-level education.

The respondents' years of service indicate a balanced mix of experience levels. The largest group has 5–10 years of service (32%), followed by less than 5 years (24%), 11–15 years (21%), 16–20 years (14%), and above 20 years (9%). This distribution suggests a workforce that combines both relatively new and experienced staff.

Overall, the demographic data reveal a workforce that is predominantly male, middle-aged, married, well-educated, and with varied levels of service experience. These characteristics provide context for understanding patterns related to organizational politics, job performance, and employee utilization in the Edo State Civil Service.

4.1.1 Analysis of Research Questions

Research questions were answered using the statistics of mean and standard deviation as follows:

Research question 1:

What is the level of youth participation in the N-Power programme in Oredo Local Government Area

Table 4.2: response to question one

S/N	Statement	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Promotion decisions in my ministry/department are influenced by favoritism.	3.27	0.87	Agreed
2	Personal connections play a major role in work-related opportunities.	3.32	0.69	Agreed
3	Employees form alliances or groups to gain advantages at work.	2.31	0.87	Agreed
4	Information is sometimes deliberately withheld for personal or group benefit.	2.84	1.23	Agreed
5	Political patronage affects decision-making in the civil service.	3.59	0.71	Agreed
	Cluster	3.14	1.08	

Mean Value of 2.5

The data presented in Table X examines the perception of organizational politics within the ministry/department, focusing on favoritism, personal connections, alliances, information control, and political patronage. The mean scores for all five statements

range from 2.31 to 3.59, with a cluster mean of 3.14, indicating an overall agreement among respondents that organizational politics influences workplace dynamics.

Specifically, the statement “Political patronage affects decision-making in the civil service” recorded the highest mean of 3.59 (SD = 0.71), suggesting that respondents strongly perceive political patronage as a significant factor in organizational decision-making. Similarly, “Personal connections play a major role in work-related opportunities” (Mean = 3.32, SD = 0.69) and “Promotion decisions in my ministry/department are influenced by favoritism” (Mean = 3.27, SD = 0.87) indicate that favoritism and networking are considered prevalent in the workplace.

While the statement “Employees form alliances or groups to gain advantages at work” has a relatively lower mean of 2.31 (SD = 0.87), it still falls within the “Agreed” range, showing that respondents acknowledge the role of informal groups in organizational politics. Additionally, “Information is sometimes deliberately withheld for personal or group benefit” has a mean of 2.84 (SD = 1.23), reflecting a moderate but notable concern about information manipulation for personal gains. Overall, the cluster mean of 3.14 (SD = 1.08) reinforces the perception that organizational politics, characterized by favoritism, networking, alliances, and political influence, is a significant aspect of workplace operations within the civil service. This suggests that such political behaviors could potentially affect fairness, transparency, and employee morale.

Research Question 2:

How does organisational politics influence the job performance of employees in the Edo State Civil Service

Table 4.3: response to question one

S/N	Statement	Mean	SD	Remark
6	Organisational politics reduces my motivation to perform my duties effectively.	3.11	0.24	Agreed
7	Political interference affects how well employees carry out their tasks.	3.35	0.79	Agreed
8	Hard work is not always rewarded due to organisational politics.	2.79	0.11	Agreed
9	Organisational politics creates stress that affects job performance.	2.87	1.24	Agreed
10	Employees perform better when organisational politics is minimal.	3.51	0.72	Agreed
	Cluster	3.29	1.18	

Mean Value of 2.5

The data presented in the above table provides insights into the perceived impact of organisational politics on employee motivation and job performance. The mean scores for all statements range from 2.79 to 3.51, indicating general agreement among respondents that organisational politics negatively affects their work.

Statement 6: “Organisational politics reduces my motivation to perform my duties effectively” has a mean of 3.11 and a low standard deviation (0.24), suggesting that most

respondents consistently agree that political behavior within the organisation reduces their motivation.

Statement 7: “Political interference affects how well employees carry out their tasks” has a higher mean of 3.35 with a standard deviation of 0.79, reflecting a moderately strong perception that interference from politics impacts task performance.

Statement 8: “Hard work is not always rewarded due to organisational politics” shows a mean of 2.79 and a very low SD (0.11), indicating a strong consensus among respondents that efforts may go unrewarded in politically charged environments.

Statement 9: “Organisational politics creates stress that affects job performance” has a mean of 2.87 and a higher SD (1.24), showing agreement, but with more variation in responses, suggesting that while stress is acknowledged, its intensity may vary among employees.

Statement 10: “Employees perform better when organisational politics is minimal” scored the highest mean (3.51) with SD 0.72, emphasizing that employees perceive a direct positive effect on performance when politics is reduced.

The cluster mean of 3.29 confirms that, overall, respondents agree that organisational politics has a negative influence on motivation, stress levels, and job performance. The variation in standard deviations across items indicates that while some perceptions are widely shared (e.g., hard work not being rewarded), others (e.g., stress) show more individual differences.

Research Question 3:

What is the effect of organisational politics on employee utilization in the Edo State Civil Service

Table 4.4: response to question one

S/N	Statement	Mean	SD	Remark
11	Employees are not always assigned duties based on their skills and competence.	3.42	0.63	Agreed
12	Organisational politics leads to underutilization of capable employees.	3.31	0.71	Agreed
13	Work assignments are influenced by personal relationships rather than merit.	2.79	0.61	Agreed
14	Some employees are overloaded with work due to political considerations.	2.81	1.34	Agreed
15	Organisational politics affects fair distribution of responsibilities.	3.51	0.73	Agreed
	Cluster	3.28	1.26	

Mean Value of 2.5

The data presented in the table examines the perceptions of employees regarding the effect of organizational politics on employee utilization and work assignment practices.

The mean scores for all the statements range from 2.79 to 3.51 on a scale that likely represents levels of agreement, with higher values indicating stronger agreement. Each statement received an overall remark of “Agreed,” suggesting that respondents generally perceive organizational politics as having a notable influence on how employees are assigned duties and responsibilities.

Specifically:

Statement 11 (Mean = 3.42, SD = 0.63): Employees are not always assigned duties based on their skills and competence. This indicates a strong agreement that assignments often do not align with employees' abilities, implying inefficiency in role allocation.

Statement 12 (Mean = 3.31, SD = 0.71): Organizational politics leads to underutilization of capable employees. Respondents agreed that political factors prevent optimal use of employees' skills.

Statement 13 (Mean = 2.79, SD = 0.61): Work assignments are influenced by personal relationships rather than merit. While slightly lower than the other means, respondents still agree that favoritism plays a role in task allocation.

Statement 14 (Mean = 2.81, SD = 1.34): Some employees are overloaded with work due to political considerations. The higher standard deviation here suggests more variability in responses, meaning perceptions of work overload due to politics are less uniform among employees.

Statement 15 (Mean = 3.51, SD = 0.73): Organizational politics affects fair distribution of responsibilities. This statement has the highest mean, indicating strong agreement that political factors distort equitable workload distribution.

The cluster mean of 3.28 with a standard deviation of 1.26 suggests that, overall, employees perceive organizational politics as a significant factor in how duties are allocated, affecting both fairness and efficiency in the workplace. The relatively high cluster SD reflects some variability in individual experiences and perceptions of political influence.

The introduction of organizational politics in the workplace is perceived by employees as a key factor that undermines merit-based assignments, leads to underutilization of skills, and affects the fair distribution of work. These findings underscore the need for policies that minimize political interference in task allocation to enhance employee performance and utilization.

Research Question 4:

What factors contribute to the perception and practice of organisational politics within the Edo State Civil Service

Table 4.5: response to question one

S/N	Statement	Mean	SD	Remark
16	Lack of transparent policies encourages organisational politics.	3.44	0.12	Agreed
17	Competition for limited promotions increases political behavior.	3.467	0.11	Agreed
18	Weak leadership contributes to organisational politics in the civil service.	3.42	0.92	Agreed
19	Poor communication among staff encourages political practices.	3.51	0.61	Agreed
20	Inadequate enforcement of rules promotes organisational politics.	3.65	0.87	Agreed
	Cluster	3.29	1.71	

Mean Value of 2.5

The data presented examines factors that encourage organisational politics in the Edo State Civil Service, as perceived by employees. The study collected responses on various

statements, using a Likert scale to determine the level of agreement, with corresponding means and standard deviations (SD). Lack of transparent policies encourages organisational politics (Mean = 3.44, SD = 0.12). Respondents agreed that when policies are not transparent, it creates room for political maneuvering among employees. The low SD (0.12) indicates a strong consensus among participants regarding this factor.

Competition for limited promotions increases political behavior (Mean = 3.467, SD = 0.11)

The data suggests that limited promotional opportunities drive employees to engage in political activities to secure career advancement. The minimal variation (SD = 0.11) further emphasizes a shared perception of this challenge. Weak leadership contributes to organisational politics in the civil service (Mean = 3.42, SD = 0.92) Respondents generally agreed that ineffective leadership fosters an environment where politics thrive. The higher SD (0.92) shows some divergence of opinion, possibly reflecting varied experiences with leadership across different departments.

Poor communication among staff encourages political practices (Mean = 3.51, SD = 0.61)

The findings indicate that inadequate communication channels create misunderstandings and opportunities for political maneuvering. The moderate SD (0.61) suggests that while most respondents agree, there is some variability in perceptions. Inadequate enforcement of rules promotes organisational politics (Mean = 3.65, SD = 0.87). Respondents strongly agreed that when rules and regulations are not consistently enforced, it encourages

political behaviors. The SD of 0.87 points to some differences in individual experiences but still reflects general agreement. Cluster Analysis (Mean = 3.29, SD = 1.71). The overall cluster mean indicates that, on average, respondents perceive the identified factors as significant contributors to organisational politics. The relatively high cluster SD (1.71) suggests variability across the different factors, highlighting that while all statements relate to organisational politics, some are perceived as stronger influences than others.

Discussion of Findings

Organisational politics, often regarded as the informal, sometimes covert, maneuvers employed by individuals or groups within a workplace to gain advantage, recognition, or power, is a phenomenon present in many institutions, including the public sector. In the Edo State Civil Service, the prevalence of organisational politics has been identified as a significant factor influencing not only employee interactions but also overall institutional efficiency and productivity. The intricate dynamics of office politics are often shaped by personal interests, relationships, and informal networks, rather than strictly merit-based systems. Understanding the forms, influence, and consequences of these political behaviors is essential for developing strategies to improve employee performance and utilization in public institutions.

The first research question investigated the forms of organisational politics prevalent in the Edo State Civil Service. Literature suggests that organisational politics can manifest in several ways, including favoritism in promotions, allocation of resources, and influence in decision-making processes (Ferris et al., 2007). Such behaviors are often subtle, making it challenging to identify and address them. Preliminary findings in this study indicate that practices such as patronage, nepotism, and alliance-building are common in the Edo State Civil Service. Employees often navigate these political waters to secure better positions, gain access to limited resources, or protect their interests, reflecting a system where informal power sometimes overrides formal authority. These political behaviors can create an environment of competition, mistrust, and selective cooperation, affecting overall workplace harmony.

The second research question explored how organisational politics influences the job performance of employees. Job performance in public service is often evaluated based on productivity, quality of service, and adherence to organisational goals. The findings of this study suggest that organisational politics in the Edo State Civil Service can have both direct and indirect effects on employee performance. On one hand, employees who engage in political maneuvers may benefit from preferential treatment, which can lead to higher motivation and improved performance in certain tasks. On the other hand, those who feel marginalized or bypassed due to political considerations may experience demotivation, reduced commitment, and a decline in productivity. This dual effect aligns with previous research indicating that workplace politics can either enhance or hinder

employee performance depending on an individual's position within the political network (Vigoda, 2002).

The third research question examined the effect of organisational politics on employee utilization. Employee utilization refers to the effective deployment of human resources in alignment with their skills, competencies, and roles. In the context of the Edo State Civil Service, the study found that organisational politics often results in the underutilization of capable employees. Assignments may be influenced by personal relationships rather than professional qualifications, leading to inefficiencies and the suboptimal use of talent. For instance, highly skilled employees may be overlooked for critical projects or promotions in favor of individuals with stronger political connections. This misuse of human resources not only affects organisational productivity but also contributes to employee dissatisfaction and high turnover rates.

Finally, the study addressed the factors contributing to the perception and practice of organisational politics within the Edo State Civil Service. Several socio-cultural, structural, and individual factors appear to shape the political landscape. These include hierarchical organizational structures, limited transparency in decision-making, competition for scarce resources, and cultural norms emphasizing loyalty and patronage. Additionally, personal ambition, desire for recognition, and the need for job security often motivate employees to engage in political behaviors. The interaction of these

factors creates a work environment where political skill is sometimes as critical as technical competence for career advancement.

The findings underscore that organisational politics is a multifaceted phenomenon with significant implications for job performance and employee utilization in the Edo State Civil Service. Recognizing the forms and drivers of such politics is essential for developing policies and practices that foster fairness, enhance productivity, and ensure that employee skills are optimally utilized. The following sections provide a detailed analysis of each research question, integrating empirical data from the study with existing literature to highlight patterns, consequences, and recommendations for mitigating the adverse effects of organisational politics.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Summary

This study examined the effect of organizational politics on job performance and employee utilization in the Edo State Civil Service. Organizational politics manifested through favoritism, personal relationships, and non-merit-based decisions—was investigated to understand its impact on employees' efficiency and optimal use within the civil service.

The study addressed four key research questions:

1. What forms of organizational politics are prevalent in the Edo State Civil Service?
2. How does organizational politics influence the job performance of employees?
3. What is the effect of organizational politics on employee utilization?
4. What factors contribute to the perception and practice of organizational politics?

Through survey data collected from civil service employees, it was observed that organizational politics in the Edo State Civil Service is largely characterized by favoritism, nepotism, personal biases in work assignments, and manipulation of resources for personal gain. The study also revealed that such political behavior negatively affects job performance, as employees may feel demotivated, experience job dissatisfaction, and fail to meet organizational goals effectively.

Additionally, the findings indicated that employee utilization is significantly affected by political practices. Capable employees are sometimes underutilized due to assignments being influenced by personal relationships rather than competence or merit. Factors contributing to these practices include weak enforcement of human resource policies, lack of transparency in promotions and appointments, and the prevalence of hierarchical power dynamics. The study concluded that organizational politics in the Edo State Civil Service has a substantial impact on both the performance and optimal utilization of employees, thereby affecting the overall efficiency of the civil service system.

5.2 Conclusion

The present study set out to investigate the effect of organizational politics on job performance and employee utilization within the Edo State Civil Service. Specifically, it examined the forms of organizational politics prevalent in the civil service, how these political practices influence employee performance, their impact on the utilization of staff, and the factors that contribute to the perception and practice of organizational politics within the service. From the findings, it is evident that organizational politics is a significant feature of the Edo State Civil Service. Employees reported that decisions regarding work assignments and promotions are often influenced by personal relationships, favoritism, and other non-merit factors rather than skills and competence. This practice has a direct impact on both job performance and employee utilization, as

capable employees may be underutilized, demotivated, or denied opportunities to contribute effectively to organizational goals.

The study further revealed that the perception and practice of organizational politics are influenced by several factors, including competition for scarce resources, lack of clear policies, personal ambitions, and inadequate accountability structures. These political dynamics create an environment where employees' performance is not solely determined by their competence or efforts, thereby reducing overall organizational efficiency.

In conclusion, the study confirms that organizational politics negatively affects both job performance and employee utilization in the Edo State Civil Service. Employees' skills and potentials are often under-leveraged due to biased decision-making and favoritism. Addressing these political practices is critical for enhancing employee motivation, fairness, and the overall effectiveness of the civil service. Implementing transparent policies, merit-based promotions, and accountability mechanisms can significantly reduce the adverse effects of organizational politics and improve both individual and organizational performance.

5.3 Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study on the effect of organizational politics on job performance and employee utilization in the Edo State Civil Service, several recommendations are made to improve employee productivity, enhance fair utilization, and minimize the negative impact of organizational politics.

1. The study revealed that personal relationships and favoritism often influence work assignments and promotions. It is therefore recommended that the Edo State Civil Service implement strict merit-based policies for recruitment, promotion, and task allocation. Employees should be assigned duties based on their skills, qualifications, and experience to ensure optimal performance and fair utilization.
2. To reduce ambiguity and minimize political behavior, the Civil Service should develop clear, transparent policies regarding job roles, responsibilities, and evaluation criteria. This will help in creating an environment where employees can perform without fear of bias or undue influence from political considerations.
3. Employees and management should receive regular training on ethical conduct, organizational justice, and conflict resolution. Equipping staff with skills to navigate workplace politics positively can reduce negative outcomes and foster a culture of professionalism.
4. The Civil Service should establish an effective and confidential mechanism through which employees can report unfair treatment, favoritism, or undue political interference. A transparent grievance system will discourage exploitative political practices and ensure employees feel valued and fairly treated.
5. Management should foster a culture of open communication and collaboration. By encouraging teamwork and sharing of responsibilities, employees are less likely to engage in counterproductive political behavior, which can negatively affect performance and utilization.

6. Periodic audits and evaluations should be conducted to monitor the impact of organizational politics on employee performance and utilization. These evaluations will help identify problematic areas and ensure that interventions and policies are effective in promoting fairness and productivity.
7. Leaders and managers should serve as role models in exhibiting ethical behavior and fairness. Leadership accountability is crucial in reducing political interference and ensuring that organizational goals are prioritized over personal interests.
8. Employees should be rewarded and recognized based on objective performance metrics rather than personal affiliations. A well-structured reward system will motivate employees to focus on achieving organizational goals, thereby improving overall job performance and utilization.

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QUESTIONNAIRE
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICS SCIENCE,
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES,
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN,
BENIN CITY

I am a MPA student of the above named institution; I conducting research on " **THE INFLUENCE OF ORGANIZATIONAL POLITICS ON EMPLOYEE JOB PERFORMANCE AND UTILIZATION IN THE EDO STATE CIVIL SERVICE** ." in fulfillment of the requirements for the award of a B.Sc Political Science.

Please be free to respond as your company will be ensured and your response will be strictly confidential. I wish to indicate that the purpose of this greatly to the success of study.

Thanks.

Yours faithfully,

Section A: Demographic Information

Please tick (✓) the option that best describes you. All information provided will be treated with strict confidentiality and used strictly for academic purposes.

1. **Gender:** Male () Female ()
2. **Age Bracket:** Below 25 years () 25 – 34 years () 35 – 44 years () 45 – 54 years () 55 years and above ()
3. **Marital Status:** Single () Married () Divorced () Widowed ()

4. **Highest Educational Qualification:** SSCE () NCE / OND () HND /

Bachelor's Degree () Master's Degree () Others (please specify):

5. **Length of Service in the Edo State Civil Service:** Less than 5 years () 5 – 10

years () 11 – 15 years () 16 – 20 years () Above 20 years ()

SECTION B:

Keys: strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D) "**The effect of organizational politics on job performance and employee utilization: A case study of Edo State Civil Service**"

S/N	Questionnaire Items	SA	A	D	SD
	Forms of Organisational Politics				
1	Promotion decisions in my ministry/department are influenced by favoritism.				
2	Personal connections play a major role in work-related opportunities.				
3	Employees form alliances or groups to gain advantages at work.				
4	Information is sometimes deliberately withheld for personal or group benefit.				
5	Political patronage affects decision-making in the civil service.				
	Organisational Politics and Job Performance				
6	Organisational politics reduces my motivation to perform my duties effectively.				
7	Political interference affects how well employees carry out their tasks.				

8	Hard work is not always rewarded due to organisational politics.				
9	Organisational politics creates stress that affects job performance.				
10	Employees perform better when organisational politics is minimal.				
	Organisational Politics and Employee Utilization				
11	Employees are not always assigned duties based on their skills and competence.				
12	Organisational politics leads to underutilization of capable employees.				
13	Work assignments are influenced by personal relationships rather than merit.				
14	Some employees are overloaded with work due to political considerations.				
15	Organisational politics affects fair distribution of responsibilities.				
	Factors Contributing to Organisational Politics				
16	Lack of transparent policies encourages organisational politics.				
17	Competition for limited promotions increases political behavior.				
18	Weak leadership contributes to organisational politics in the civil service.				
19	Poor communication among staff encourages political practices.				
20	Inadequate enforcement of rules promotes organisational politics.				