



## An In-Depth Study on the Prevalence and Organizational Implications of Office Politics in Selected Nigerian Companies

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### ABSTRACT

Office politics is a prevalent issue in many Nigerian organizations, often manifested through favoritism, manipulation, and personal alliances that undermine merit-based systems. This study investigated the prevalence of office politics among employees of a bottling company in Lagos and Ogun States. Using Yamane's formula and stratified sampling techniques, 80 respondents were selected, with 77 valid questionnaires analyzed using descriptive statistics and Chi-square tests via SPSS version 23. The findings indicated that 54.5% of respondents perceived office politics as high, demonstrating its significant influence on workplace interactions and employee dynamics. The study concludes that unchecked office politics negatively affects fairness, transparency, and collaboration within organizations. It recommends the adoption of transparent management practices, open communication systems, equitable reward structures, and strong leadership accountability to reduce office politics and improve organizational performance and employee well-being.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Office politics broadly defined as self-serving behavior aimed at advancing personal or group interests within the workplace remains a persistent feature of organizational life. When political behavior is perceived as unfair or pervasive it undermines job attitudes, well-being, and performance; yet politics can also be a vehicle for influence and resource allocation, making its prevalence and organizational implications complex and important for managers and scholars alike (Pfeffer, 1992; Ferris & Kacmar, 1992). Large bodies of empirical work show that perceptions of organizational politics (POPs) are widespread across sectors and cultures. Early conceptual and measurement work by Ferris and colleagues established POPs as a measurable construct and sparked decades of empirical inquiry documenting that many employees regularly perceive politics in promotion decisions, resource allocations, and informal networks (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992; Ohanyere et al, 2021).

Meta-analytic evidence confirms the pervasiveness of POPs: Bedi and Schat's meta-analysis aggregated dozens of studies and tens of thousands of respondents and found consistent relations between POPs and multiple attitudinal and behavioral outcomes, indicating that perceptions of politics are commonly reported and consequential in many contexts (Bedi & Schat, 2013). Qualitative and sectoral studies (e.g., public sector research) likewise find that political activity is commonly reported where competition for scarce resources or ambiguous procedures affects organizational performance (Maduagwuna et al, 2023). Prevalence is shaped by organizational structures and individual differences. Meta-analytic and review work points to antecedents such as centralization, unclear procedures, low participation in decision making, and leader behaviors that increase perceptions of politics; individual traits (e.g., political skill, locus of control) moderate how strongly people perceive and respond to political climates (Ferris et al., 2002; Ohanyere et al, 2025b).

Negative implications are well documented. Meta-analytic evidence shows that higher POPs correlate with lower job satisfaction, lower organizational commitment, greater stress and burnout, higher turnover intentions, and more counterproductive work behavior (Bedi & Schat, 2013). Empirical studies show that POPs erode trust and perceptions of fairness (interactional and procedural justice), which in turn depress discretionary behaviors such as organizational citizenship and harm motivation and creativity (Vigoda, 2000; Rosen et al., 2014). Frontiers and occupational health research highlight POPs as a psychosocial job demand that contributes to strain and weakened engagement (Landells & Albrecht, 2019). In short, where politics is perceived as illegitimate or zero-sum, organizations pay in decreased morale, higher withdrawal, and greater incidence of deviant behaviors.

At the same time, scholars emphasize that politics can have functional components. Pfeffer (1992) argued that power and political skill are instruments for mobilizing resources and implementing change; influence tactics can be necessary for organizational adaptation and for individuals to secure resources under ambiguity. Contemporary works nuance this view by showing that political behavior that is transparent, embedded in fair-appearing procedures, or exercised by politically skilled actors may produce fewer corrosive outcomes

or even positive results (Rosen et al., 2014; Ohanyere et al., 2025a). Thus, the valence of politics depends on perceptions of legitimacy and whether need-satisfying psychological conditions (autonomy, competence, relatedness) are preserved even in political contexts. Perceptions of politics are common and are shaped by organizational design (formalization, decision-making participation), leader behavior, and communication. Second, politics yields predictable negative outcomes primarily because it undermines psychological needs, trust, and fairness perceptions; however, political processes that preserve procedural transparency or that are channeled through constructive influence can mitigate harm (Rosen et al., 2014; Bedi & Schat, 2013; Pfeffer, 1992).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Office politics tends to flourish where ambiguity, scarce opportunities, and weak managerial structures exist (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992; Vigoda, 2000). Its growing visibility in Nigerian workplaces has raised concerns about how it shapes employees' behaviour and decision-making. Studies increasingly show that organizational systems strongly influence the intensity of political behaviour. Weak manpower planning, for instance, creates uncertainty that fuels competitive self-interest (Anaekwe et al., 2025), while unclear digital and administrative processes heighten internal rivalry (Ohanyere et al., 2025c). Employee motivation and commitment also decline in highly politicized climates, undermining performance (Maduagwuna et al., 2023). Evidence from SMEs suggests that inadequate training systems worsen these dynamics by limiting procedural fairness (Ohanyere et al., 2021). Leadership approaches further shape whether political behaviour becomes destructive or manageable (Ikeli & Ohanyere, 2025).

Existing research has largely been conducted in Western contexts, focusing on stress outcomes, job attitudes, career mobility and turnover intentions (Bedi & Schat, 2013; Vigoda, 2000). However, organizational dynamics in Nigeria are influenced by unique socio-cultural factors such as collectivism, high power distance, scarcity mentality, informal networks, ethnic alliances, and patronage-based decision processes, which may make political behaviour more normalized and intense than in advanced economies, but these contextual variables are rarely analysed in local studies. Few Nigerian-based studies have systematically linked office politics to performance reduction, poor trust climate, reduction in psychological safety and dysfunctional competition within firms. Many existing works in Nigeria have been conceptual rather than empirical or have focused on public institutions rather than private sector organizations where competition for resources and promotion opportunities is intense. Therefore, this study is motivated by the need to generate context-specific evidence that captures the real prevalence of office politics and its implications for organizational effectiveness in selected Nigerian companies.

### *Objectives*

Find out the prevalence of office politics in Coca Cola in Nigeria.

### *Research Question*

What is the prevalence of office politics in Coca Cola in Nigeria?

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted a survey research design, which integrates various components of research in a logical manner to address the research problem effectively. The survey design was chosen because it allows the researcher to collect opinions, attitudes, and perceptions of individuals within a population. The design was appropriate for this study since it involved sampling views of employees on the impact of personnel resources management in addressing office politics in the bottling company Nigeria.

The population of the study consisted of employees of the bottling company, the bottling company franchise in Nigeria. The population included staff from various departments human resources, production, administration, finance, logistics, and sales covering both junior and senior employees. Although the bottling company has over 3,000 employees nationwide, the study focused on selected plants in Lagos and Ogun States due to accessibility, time, and resource limitations. These locations were chosen because of their concentration of operational activities and staff.

The sample size for the study was determined using Yamane's formula ( $n = N / (1 + N(e)^2)$ ), which ensures a manageable and statistically significant sample at a 5% margin of error. A total of 150 respondents were initially considered using a stratified random sampling technique to ensure that all departments and levels of staff were represented. However, due to practical limitations, the final sample comprised 80 participants selected through a convenience sampling method. This approach involves choosing respondents based on accessibility and willingness to participate, allowing efficient data collection within the researcher's constraints.

A structured questionnaire served as the main research instrument. It was divided into two sections: the first captured demographic data, while the second focused on research questions aligned with the study objectives. Respondents indicated their opinions using a four-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (4) to Strongly Disagree (1). The researcher personally distributed the questionnaires to ensure clarity and improve response rates. Both primary and secondary sources were used for data collection. The primary data came from the administered questionnaires, while secondary data were drawn from textbooks, academic journals, online publications, and government reports. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency, mean, and standard deviation, while hypotheses were tested using the Chi-square method with SPSS version 23. A mean score of 2.5 and above indicated agreement, while scores below 2.5 were rejected.

Validity was ensured through expert review by the project supervisor, who examined the content for relevance and alignment with research objectives. The reliability of the instrument, assessed using the Pearson Correlation Coefficient, produced a value of 0.68, which falls within the acceptable range of 0.67 to 0.87. Ethical considerations were strictly followed. The study received departmental approval, participants gave informed consent, and necessary permissions were obtained from relevant authorities. Visits for

questionnaire administration were scheduled in advance to maintain transparency and respect participants' rights.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the summary of the survey. A sample of 80 was calculated for this study. A total of 150 responses were received and validated. For this study a total of 77 was used for the analysis.

Table 1. Distribution of Questionnaire

Questionnaire	Frequency	Percentage
Sample size	80	100
Received	80	98
Validated	77	98

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 2. Demographic Data of Respondents

Demographic information	Frequency	percent
Gender		
Male	42	54.5%
Female	35	45.5%
Age		
20-30	15	19.5%
30-40	19	24.7%
41-50	23	29.9%
51+	20	25.9%
Marital Status		
Single	30	39%
Married	44	57.1%
Divorce\Separated	3	3.9%
Level of Education		
Basic Education	15	19.4%
Tertiary Education	51	66.2%
Advanced Degree	11	14.2%

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Question 1. What is the prevalence of office politics in Coca Cola in Nigeria?

Table 3. Respondent on the Prevalence of Office Politics in Coca Cola in Nigeria.

Options	Frequency	Percentage
High	42	54.5
Average	20	26
Low	15	19.5
Total	77	100

Field Survey, 2024

From the responses obtained as expressed in the table above, 54.5% of the respondents said high, 19.5% of the respondents said no, while the remaining 19.5% ticked undecided.

The demographic data revealed that out of 77 respondents, 54.5% were male and 45.5% were female, indicating a fairly balanced gender representation. This gender distribution suggests that both male and female employees experience office politics in similar ways. In contrast, Takeuchi et al, (2022) found that male employees were more likely to engage in organizational politics than their female counterparts, suggesting that gender perceptions of politics may differ across organizations. The age distribution shows that 29.9% of respondents were between 41–50 years, followed by 25.9% aged 51 and above, implying that mid-career and senior employees are more exposed to or aware of political behavior at work. In a related study, Rice et al, (2025) reported that older employees tend to navigate political environments more effectively due to experience and social capital, whereas younger employees often perceive politics more negatively.

Marital status data indicated that 57.1% of respondents were married, suggesting that individuals with family responsibilities may display higher tolerance for workplace politics to maintain job stability. This finding agreed with the results of Colonnelli et al, (2025), who noted that married employees are less likely to confront political situations directly due to a preference for security and stability. Educationally, 66.2% of respondents had tertiary education, showing that the workforce is well educated. In contrast, Swartz (2022) observed that lower educational levels often correlate with limited awareness of subtle political maneuvers, suggesting that education enhances one's ability to recognize organizational dynamics. Regarding the prevalence of office politics, 54.5% of respondents rated it as high, confirming that political behavior is a dominant feature of the bottling company Nigeria's organizational culture. This finding agreed with the study by Palan (2024), who found that office politics is highly prevalent in multinational firms where competition for recognition and promotion is intense. Similarly, Hochwarter et al, (2020) observed that organizations with hierarchical structures tend to exhibit stronger political tendencies due to uneven power distribution. In contrast, Guess and Munger (2023) found that flatter organizations with participatory management practices experienced less intense political behavior.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study concluded that office politics is a widespread and deeply rooted phenomenon in Nigerian organizations, significantly influencing both employee behavior and organizational outcomes. Findings revealed that office politics often manifests through favoritism, manipulation, power struggles, and biased decision-making, which collectively erode trust, reduce employee morale, and hinder effective communication. While some degree of political behavior is inevitable in workplaces, its excessive presence negatively impacts productivity, teamwork, and fairness. The study further established that office politics can create a toxic organizational climate where competence is

overshadowed by personal alliances, leading to dissatisfaction and high employee turnover. However, when properly managed, healthy organizational politics can promote strategic networking, innovation, and goal alignment.

To mitigate its adverse effects, the study recommends that management adopt transparent leadership practices, implement equitable reward systems, and promote open communication channels. Regular employee training on ethical behavior, conflict resolution, and teamwork should also be encouraged. Organizations that create an atmosphere of trust, fairness, and inclusivity are more likely to harness employees' full potential and achieve sustainable performance. Addressing the prevalence and implications of office politics is vital for Nigerian companies seeking to build resilient, productive, and harmonious workplaces that align individual aspirations with organizational goals.

### FURTHER STUDY

This research still has limitations so further research on this topic is still needed "An In-Depth Study on the Prevalence and Organizational Implications of Office Politics in Selected Nigerian Companies".

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