

# Analyzing the Association between Demographic Variables and Perceived Organizational Politics, Political Skills, Work Performance and Stress of Faculties at Higher Education Institutions in India

Pooja Singh

Assistant Professor, Vidya Mandir Mahavidyalaya, Kaimganj, Farrukhabad, U. P

## Abstract

The study attempted to examine the association between socio-demographics, human capital variables, faculties perceived organizational politics (POPs), political skill (PS), work Performance, and stress. And, to analyze the relationship between POPs, PS, work stress and performance of faculty members at higher education institutions. Non-probability methods employed to collect data and adopted constructs from previous research tailored to the present study's needs. In addition, the study employed a t-test, one - way ANOVA and Pearson's correlation matrix to examine the relationship between variables. The results of the study indicated that the socio-demographic and human capital variables partly significantly associated with POPs, PS and job outcomes among academia in higher education institutions. Additionally, perceived organizational politics and political skills had a negative effect on work performance, while perceived organizational politics were positively linked to political skills and workplace stress among academia. The study contributes to a better understanding about the effect of workplace politics. In addition, helps the faculties, higher education authorities as well as the Government to understand the effects of POPs and simultaneously the role of PS in effectively handling workplace situations of the organizations.

**Keywords:** Perceived Organizational Politics, Political Skill, Work Stress, Work Performance, Faculty Members, Higher Education Institutions

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## Introduction:

The famous philosopher like Aristotle and scholars such as Djuric (1979) and Faber et al. (2002) argued that humans are motivated by political desires to gain power and resources, and to maximize their self-interest by influencing others. And, this may better to explain the prevalence of political activities across various social boundaries, including markets, sectors, organizations, and cultures (Vigoda & Cohen, 1998; Abun, D. et al., 2022).

Higher education institutions (HEIs), such as colleges and universities, play an undeniable role in the intellectual development of a nation and the transformation of society. However, these organizations have complex organizational structure and working on the basis of decentralized governance and delegated authority. Faculty members are encouraged to

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**Corresponding Author:** Pooja Singh, Assistant Professor, Vidya Mandir Mahavidyalaya, Kaimganj, Farrukhabad, U. P

E-mail: [poojasingh.singh24@gmail.com](mailto:poojasingh.singh24@gmail.com)

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contribute based on their interests through a fluid participation process. However, decision-making becomes centralized when faculty members are given fewer opportunities to contribute and administrators are given greater authority. This is especially true when political tactics become important in decision-making, particularly when collective choices are not clearly within the realm of administrators or faculties, and when entrenched interest groups try to establish their influence (Lawrence & Ott, 2013). In this regards, Pfeffer (1981)

argued that organizational politics (Ops) consists of combination of activities performed by individuals related to the acquisition, enhancement, and use of power and other resources. Another, Kipnis et al. (1980) said that it is an intra-organizational tactics and self-serving and interpersonal influential informal behavior (Henry Mintzberg, 1985). And, Ferris et al. (1989) stated a socially strategic influential process. Moreover, OPs at Indian HEIs are differ from those in other South Asian and Western countries. In India, particularly in Uttar Pradesh, the largest state, colleges under HEIs are categorized as Government Colleges, Government-Aided Colleges, Self-Financed Colleges, State Universities, Private Universities and Central Universities. Additionally, almost all colleges are affiliated with either state or central universities. Thus, the study aims to analyze the influence of organizational politics on the performance and stress levels of academic faculties in HEIs. In addition, to examine the impact of organizational politics on work performance and stress, and examine the linkage between socio-demographic and human capital factors of faculties on their perceived organizational politics, political skill, work performance, and stress.

### Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

According to Vigoda and Cohen (1998), OPs is directly related with power acquisition. However, in reality, power is unequally distributed among members, and those who hold power sometimes use it to influence others. In addition, it involves an influence process executed by individuals or groups, present in both vertical (supervisors and their employees) or horizontal (among coworkers and managers) relationships, having formal or informal aspects, and being analyzable as both intra-organizational and inter-organizational politics. Whereas, Ferris et al. (2002) believed that OPs are a zero-sum game in which personal interests are achieved at the expense of others. In addition, it is a subjective perception, not an objective reality" and therefore, it is better described as "perceived organizational politics (POPs)" rather than "organizational politics" (Ferris et al., 1989).

Previous studies disclosed that POPs negatively associated with employees' attitude, health and behavior (Bedi & Schat, 2013), organizational

commitment, job satisfaction, individual performance and work engagement (Abbas et al., 2014; Jain & Ansari, 2018; Guo et al., 2019; Park & Lee, 2020; Rana et al., 2020; Khan et al., 2021), organizational citizenship behavior, affective commitment and job involvement (Atta & Khan, 2016), turnover intention (Adekoya, 2018). Whereas, Shrestha (2021) identified strong OPs at government offices particularly, in pay and promotion policies as compared to going along to get ahead and general political behavior. In addition, OPs negatively affect the employees' job performance. Another study of Khan & Hussain (2016) disclosed that a strong sense of politics exists in HEIs of Pakistan. Ahmed et al., (2020) revealed that in universities, faculties are more involved in creating conflicts as compared to gaining power. Additionally, female faculties perceive more politics compared to male and female faculties have higher level of stress, lesser job satisfaction, job involvement and commitment. However, OPs do not affect work performance of faculties in the universities. According to Ferris et al. (1989) female and older employees perceive more politics at the workplace, and play significant role at the higher levels of the organization. However, Randolph (1985) argued that politics are not always bad. Accordingly, it is a tactics which an individual use for own or for organization purposes such as career advancement, getting recognitions, status, power, position, fulfilling ego, control, success etc. (Vigoda, & Cohen, 1998 and references therein). Similarly, Chukwuma & Agbaeze (2019) disclosed that OPs positively related to employee engagement. Abun, D. et al. (2022) also argued that OPs are not inherently bad or negative. It positively influenced the work performance of individuals in the organization. However, Khan et al. (2021) found that POPs not significantly influenced job involvement of employees and political skills and work ethics of employees weakened the influence of POPs on their job satisfaction. Similarly, Rana et al. (2020); Bhattarai (2021) disclosed that POPs positively affected employees' turnover intention, and counterproductive work behavior but negatively employees' work engagement. Whereas, Gupta et al. (2021) found that OPs significantly affect employee turnover but not significantly affect the performance of employees at private sector bank. Landells and Albrecht (2019) identified that there are significant indirect effects of OPs on employees' engagement and stress through meaningful work. In

addition, stress significantly and directly associated with employee engagement.

On the other hand, according to Kacmar & Ferris (1991) “politics at the workplace creates uncertainty and ambiguity where favoritism and self-serving behavior prevails”. It is very common for people to become more vigilant about the others' behavior in order to protect their personal as well as organizational interest and it is called political skill (PS), a kind of personal resource that helps people to manage or reduce uncertainty, threats relating to OPs and also enhancing their positive outcome (Kacmar et al., 2013). Thus, based on the findings and discussions of above stated previous empirical evidences, author in the current study made an attempt to find out the answers of some research questions and draw the following hypotheses in this regard, which is also shown in figure (1).

#### *Research Questions and Hypotheses*

- Do the POPs of academia differ based on their socio-demographic and human capital variables?

**H1:** There is significant difference in POPs of faculties in the higher education system based on their Socio-demographic and human capital variables.

- Do the political skills of academia differ with respect to their socio-demographic human capital characteristics?

**H2:** Socio-demographic and human capital variables both significantly influence faculties' political skills.

- Are there any differences in work stress of faculty members with respect to their socio-demographics

and human capital variables?

**H3:** There is significant difference in the work stress of faculties at HEIs with respect to their socio-demographics and human capital variables.

- Are there any differences in work performance of faculty members with respect to their socio-demographic and human capital variables?

**H4:** There is significant difference in the work performance of faculties at HEIs with respect to their socio-demographics and human capital variables.

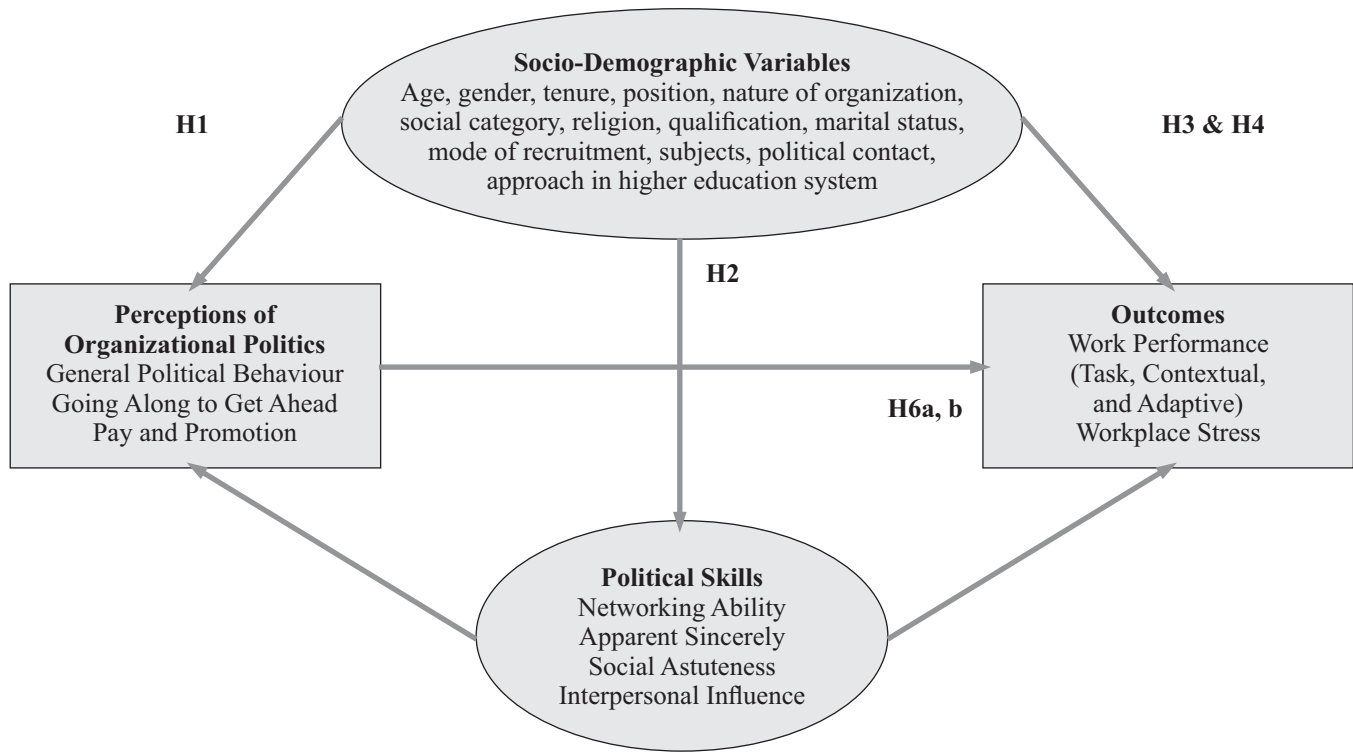
- What is the relationship between POPs, work stress, performance, and PS of faculties in the higher education system?

**H5:** The POPs will be significantly influenced the (a) work performance; (b) work stress; and (c) political skills of the faculty members.

- Are political skills play a significant role in managing work stress and enhancing the work performance of academia at HEI?

**H6:** Political skills will be significantly influenced the (a) work stress; (b) work performance of the faculty members. In other words, an increase in political skill would lead to a lower/decrease work stress and higher work performance.

Figure (1) Framework of the study



## Research Methodology

### Sample and Procedures

The perception of politics can vary considerably across organizations. In order to capture maximum variance in politics, data were collected from a variety of colleges, and universities. Data was collected from permanent faculties using non-probability sampling techniques. A survey was conducted, which assure participants to respond voluntarily and that their information kept confidential. In addition, no definition of organizational politics and political skills was given to the respondents.

### Measures

All survey items except the socio-demographics and human capital variables questionnaires were measured through self-reported scales and were quantified on a 5-point Likert-scale (from “strongly disagree = 1” to “strongly agree = 5”). The Ferris and Kacmar (1992) scale that contains 12 items on three dimensions such as general political behavior, going along to get ahead, and pay and promotion policies is used to measure the perceived organizational politics (POPs). The reliability of the scale is  $\alpha = 0.835$  which is adequate. A shortened 8 items of four subscales (such as networking ability, apparent sincerity, social astuteness, and

interpersonal influence) version of the self-reported “political skill inventory” suggested by Vigoda-Gadot and Meisler (2010) capturing the dimensions of political skill identified by Ferris et al. (2005). The scale's alpha reliability is  $\alpha = 0.751$  and is adequate. The scale of Bhat & Beri (2016) consisted of three dimensions (i) Task Performance, (ii) Contextual Performance (iii) Adaptive Performance is used to measure the work performance of academia. The Cronbach's alpha score of this scale is 0.61, which is acceptable (Hair et al., 2006). And, 7 items of workplace stressors from the Daily Stressor Scale (DSS) suggested by Naseem & Khalid (2012) is used to measure the work stress. The scale's alpha reliability is ( $\alpha = 0.792$ ) and is adequate.

### Statistical Tools

The data is analyzed by SPSS software using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation coefficient, t-test, analysis of variance (ANOVA).

## Data Analysis and Interpretation

### Demographic Characteristics of the respondents

Among the 154 total respondents, 67% were male and

33% were female faculties; 70% were assistant professor, 10% were associate professor, and 20% were professor. As per academic qualification 60% have NET and Ph. D, 18% were NET, Ph.D. & M. Phil., 19% have master degree with Ph.D. without NET, and only 3% have master degree with M. Phil. without NET. 38% of total respondents have academic experience less than 5 years, 20% have less than 10 years' experience, 16% have experience between 10 to 15 years, and 26% possess experience of more than 15 years. Further 56% were appointed through commission based direct recruitment, 10% were recruited through honorarium and regularized, 10% were hired through approved self-finance mode and 24% were recruited through direct recruitment through advertisement. 48% of participating faculties were from commerce & management 30% from humanities and social sciences, 15% from science and IT and 7% from other areas. Majority of faculties were married (80%). According to age majority of faculties were either between 30 to 40 years (38%) or between 40 to 50 years (32%), followed by 18% faculty with age more than 50 years and 12% with age less than 30 years. Majority of respondents were Hindu 90%, followed by 5% Muslims 1% Sikh and 4% belonging to other religion. Additionally, 50% of teaching faculties at HEIs belong to General category, 30% were OBC, 16% were SC, and 4% were ST.

Furthermore, 36% of them taught in Government Colleges, 35% in Government Aided Colleges, 9% each in State and Central Universities, 8% in Government Aided College with Self-Finance, and 3% in Government College with Self-Finance. Majority of teaching faculties at HEIs do not have useful contact either with higher education authority (71%) or with political party (90%). Only a minority of faculties has useful contact with higher education authority (29%) and has useful contact with political party (10%).

### Hypotheses Testing

Table (1) shows that gender [ $t_{(152)} = -1.639$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ]; marital status [ $t_{(152)} = -0.871$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ]; academic position [ $F_{(2, 151)} = 0.975$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ]; service experience [ $F_{(3, 150)} = 1.011$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ]; methods of recruitment [ $F_{(3, 150)} = 1.690$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ]; subject [ $F_{(3, 150)} = 0.389$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ]; nature of the organization [ $F_{(5, 148)} = 1.698$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ]; religion [ $F_{(3, 150)} = 0.942$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ]; and social category [ $F_{(3, 150)} = 1.164$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ] have not significantly affected the POPs of the academia at the higher education system. However, useful contact in higher education system [ $t_{(152)} = -2.968$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ]; useful political contact [ $t_{(152)} = -2.272$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ]; academic qualification [ $F_{(3, 150)} = 3.750$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ]; age [ $F_{(3, 150)} = 3.724$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ] have significantly influenced the faculties' POPs. Thus, we partially accepted H1.

**Table (1) Association between Socio-Demographics, Human Capital Variables and POPs**

Socio-Demographic and Human Capital Characteristics		Means	S.D.	t-value/ and F value	P
Gender	Male [104 (67%)]	2.87	.72	-1.639	0.103
	Female [50 (33%)]	3.06	.62		
Position	Assistant Professor [108 (70%)]	2.98	.71	.975	.380
	Associate Professor [16 (10%)]	2.84	.49		
	Professor [30(20%)]	2.79	.72		
Academic Qualification	NET and Ph.D. [93 (60%)]	3.08	.73	3.750	.012
	NET, Ph.D. & M. Phil. [28 (18%)]	2.73	.39		
	Master degree with M. Phil without NET [4(3%)]	2.58	.63		
	Master degree with Ph.D. without NET [29(19%)]	2.70	.69		
Experience	0-4 years [59 (38%)]	3.03	.71	1.011	.390
	5-10 years [31(20%)]	2.93	.72		
	10-15 years [25 (16%)]	2.93	.48		
	More than 15 years [39 (26%)]	2.78	.75		

Mode of Recruitment	Commission based direct recruitment [86 (56%)]	2.99	.69	1.690	.172
	Honorarium and regularized [15(10%)]	2.71	.54		
	Approved self-finance [15(10%)]	2.64	.72		
	Advertisement based [38(24%)]	2.99	.71		
Subject	Science & IT [23(15%)]	2.85	1.04	.389	.761
	Commerce & Management [74(48%)]	2.99	.59		
	Art, Humanities and Social Sciences [47(30%)]	2.88	.65		
	Others [10(7%)]	2.88	.64		
Marital Status	Married [124(80%)]	2.91	.68	-0.871	0.385
	Unmarried [30(20%)]	3.03	.76		
Age	25-30 years [18(12%)]	2.63	.84	3.724	.013
	30-40 years [59(38%)]	3.12	.66		
	40-50 years [49(32%)]	2.93	.57		
	More than 50 years [28(18%)]	2.71	.74		
Religion	Hindu [139(90%)]	2.93	.70	.942	.422
	Muslim [7(5%)]	2.61	.35		
	Sikh [2(1%)]	2.88	.41		
	Others [6(4%)]	3.25	.73		
Category	General [77 (50%)]	2.93	.70	1.164	.326
	OBC [46(30%)]	2.82	.67		
	SC [24 (16%)]	3.14	.74		
	ST [7 (4%)]	2.96	.48		
Nature of Organization	Gov. College [56 (36%)]	3.01	.71	1.698	.139
	Gov. Aided College [54 (35%)]	2.81	.62		
	State University [14 (9%)]	3.34	.64		
	Central University [13(9%)]	2.81	.81		
	Gov. College with Self-finance courses [5(3%)]	2.77	.42		
	Gov. Aided College with Self-finance [12 (8%)]	2.81	.79		
Useful contact in Higher Education System	Yes [44(29%)]	2.67	.54	-2.968	0.003
	No [110(71%)]	3.03	.719		
Useful Political Contact	Yes [16(10%)]	2.56	.64	-2.272	0.024
	No [138(90%)]	2.97	.69		

The results from Table (2) show that no significant differences found in the political skill of the faculties with respect to their gender [ $t_{(152)} = 0.516$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ]; marital status [ $t_{(152)} = 0.893$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ]; academic qualification [ $F_{(3,150)} = 0.650$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ]; social category [ $F_{(3,150)} = 0.256$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ]; and nature of the organization [ $F_{(5,148)} = 1.973$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ]. However, there is significant difference in the political skill of the faculties with

respect to academic position [ $F_{(2,151)} = 3.672$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ]; experience [ $F_{(3,150)} = 3.353$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ]; mode of recruitment [ $F_{(3,150)} = 3.473$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ]; subject [ $F_{(3,150)} = 3.285$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ]; age [ $F_{(3,150)} = 3.477$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ]; religion [ $F_{(3,150)} = 3.571$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ]; useful contact in higher education authority [ $t_{(152)} = -2.256$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ]; and useful political contact [ $t_{(152)} = -3.349$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ]. Based on these stated findings leads to partially acceptance of H2.

**Table (2) Association between Socio-Demographic and Human Capital Variables and PS**

Socio-Demographic and Human Capital Characteristics		Means	S.D.	t-value/ and F value	P
Gender	Male [104 (67%)]	3.56	.67	.516	.607
	Female [50 (33%)]	3.51	.49		
Position	Assistant Professor [108 (70%)]	3.57	.58	3.672	.028
	Associate Professor [16 (10%)]	3.16	.60		
	Professor [30(20%)]	3.65	.70		
Academic Qualification	NET and Ph.D. [93 (60%)]	3.56	.60	.650	.584
	NET, Ph.D. & M. Phil. [28 (18%)]	3.43	.76		
	Master degree with M. Phil without NET [4(3%)]	3.38	.31		
	Master degree with Ph.D. without NET [29(19%)]	3.64	.58		
Experience	0-4 years [59 (38%)]	3.50	.61	3.353	.021
	5-10 years [31(20%)]	3.68	.55		
	10-15 years [25 (16%)]	3.25	.57		
	More than 15 years [39 (26%)]	3.69	.66		
Mode of Recruitment	Commission based direct recruitment [86 (56%)]	3.61	.54	3.473	.018
	Honorarium and regularized [15(10%)]	3.40	.82		
	Approved self-finance [15(10%)]	3.11	.75		
	Advertisement based [38(24%)]	3.63	.58		
Subject	Science & IT [23(15%)]	3.19	.89	3.285	.023
	Commerce& Management [74(48%)]	3.63	.51		
	Art, Humanities and Social Sciences [47(30%)]	3.59	.58		
	Others [10(7%)]	3.49	.53		
Marital Status	Married [124(80%)]	3.57	.62	.893	.373
	Unmarried [30(20%)]	3.45	.60		
Age	25-30 years [18(12%)]	3.14	.84	3.477	.018
	30-40 years [59(38%)]	3.63	.49		
	40-50 years [49(32%)]	3.52	.52		
	More than 50 years [28(18%)]	3.66	.76		
Religion	Hindu [139(90%)]	3.55	.61	3.571	.016
	Muslim [7(5%)]	3.82	.53		
	Sikh [2(1%)]	2.25	.18		
	Others [6(4%)]	3.52	.47		
Category	General [77 (50%)]	3.52	.66	.256	.857
	OBC [46(30%)]	3.61	.46		
	SC [24 (16%)]	3.54	.72		
	ST [7 (4%)]	3.46	.80		

Nature of Organization	Gov. College [56 (36%)]	3.49	.61	1.973	.086
	Gov. Aided College [54 (35%)]	3.72	.55		
	State University [14 (9%)]	3.54	.49		
	Central University [13(9%)]	3.39	.78		
	Gov. College with Self-finance courses [5(3%)]	3.35	.60		
	Gov. Aided College with Self-finance [12 (8%)]	3.22	.79		
Useful contact in Higher Education System	Yes [44(29%)]	3.37	.71	-2.256	.026
	No [110(71%)]	3.61	.56		
Useful Political Contact	Yes [16(10%)]	3.07	.82	-3.349	.001
	No [138(90%)]	3.60	.60		

The results from Table (3) show that there are no significant differences in work stress of the faculties with respect to their gender [ $t_{(152)} = -.836$ ;  $p>0.05$ ]; marital status [ $t_{(152)} = -1.828$ ;  $p>0.05$ ]; academic position [ $F_{(2,151)} = 0.716$ ;  $p>0.05$ ]; academic qualification [ $F_{(3,150)} = 2.215$ ;  $p>0.05$ ]; subject [ $F_{(3,150)} = 1.288$ ;  $p>0.05$ ]; religion [ $F_{(3,150)} = 2.319$ ;  $p>0.05$ ]; social category [ $F_{(3,150)} = 0.763$ ;  $p>0.05$ ]; and nature of the organization [ $F_{(5,148)} = 1.415$ ;  $p>0.05$ ]. However, there is significant

difference in work stress of the faculties with regards to their useful political contact [ $t_{(152)} = -4.025$ ;  $p<0.05$ ]; useful contact in higher education authority [ $t_{(152)} = -1.954$ ;  $p=0.05$ ]; experience [ $F_{(3,150)} = 2.867$ ;  $p<0.05$ ]; mode of recruitment [ $F_{(3,150)} = 4.398$ ;  $p<0.05$ ]; and age [ $F_{(3,150)} = 2.956$ ;  $p<0.05$ ]. Based on the results of table (3) of the study leads to partially acceptance of H3.

**Table (3) Association between Socio-Demographics, Human Capital Variables and Work Stress**

Socio-Demographic and Human Capital Characteristics		Means	S.D.	t-value/ and F value	p
Gender	Male [104 (67%)]	3.28	.77	-.836	.404
	Female [50 (33%)]	3.39	.61		
Position	Assistant Professor [108 (70%)]	3.36	.73	.716	0.490
	Associate Professor [16 (10%)]	3.28	.57		
	Professor [30(20%)]	3.19	.78		
Academic Qualification	NET and Ph.D. [93 (60%)]	3.43	.74	2.215	0.089
	NET, Ph.D. & M. Phil. [28 (18%)]	3.25	.59		
	Master degree with M. Phil without NET [4(3%)]	3.00	.26		
	Master degree with Ph.D. without NET [29(19%)]	3.07	.76		
Experience	0-4 years [59 (38%)]	3.35	.79	2.867	.039
	5-10 years [31(20%)]	3.60	.65		
	10-15 years [25 (16%)]	3.14	.56		
	More than 15 years [39 (26%)]	3.16	.72		
Mode of Recruitment	Commission based direct recruitment [86 (56%)]	3.43	0.71	4.398	.005
	Honorarium and regularized [15(10%)]	2.81	0.56		
	Approved self-finance [15(10%)]	3.02	0.77		
	Advertisement based [38(24%)]	3.38	0.70		



Subject	Science & IT [23(15%)]	3.14	1.00	1.288	.281
	Commerce & Management [74(48%)]	3.38	0.66		
	Art, Humanities and Social Sciences [47(30%)]	3.37	0.66		
	Others [10(7%)]	3.02	0.70		
Marital Status	Married [124(80%)]	3.27	.69	-1.828	0.069
	Unmarried [30(20%)]	3.53	.81		
Age	25-30 years [18(12%)]	3.30	0.97	2.956	0.034
	30-40 years [59(38%)]	3.48	0.71		
	40-50 years [49(32%)]	3.31	0.56		
	More than 50 years [28(18%)]	3.00	.76		
Religion	Hindu [139(90%)]	3.33	0.73	2.319	0.078
	Muslim [7(5%)]	3.34	0.39		
	Sikh [2(1%)]	2.00	0.40		
	Others [6(4%)]	3.40	0.70		
Category	General [77 (50%)]	3.25	0.71	0.763	.517
	OBC [46(30%)]	3.34	0.69		
	SC [24 (16%)]	3.42	0.78		
	ST [7 (4%)]	3.59	0.91		
Nature of Organization	Gov. College [56 (36%)]	3.45	0.70	1.415	0.222
	Gov. Aided College [54 (35%)]	3.21	0.67		
	State University [14 (9%)]	3.57	0.86		
	Central University [13(9%)]	3.05	0.82		
	Gov. College with Self-finance courses [5(3%)]	3.11	0.36		
	Gov. Aided College with Self-finance [12 (8%)]	3.23	0.82		
Useful contact in Higher Education System	Yes [44(29%)]	3.14	0.77	-1.954	.053
	No [110(71%)]	3.39	0.70		
Useful Political Contact	Yes [16(10%)]	2.67	0.67	-4.025	.000
	No [138(90%)]	3.39	0.69		

The results from Table (4) show that there are no significant differences in the work performance of the faculties with respect to their marital status [ $t_{(152)} = -.429$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ]; nature of organization [ $F_{(5,148)} = 1.953$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ]; social category [ $F_{(3,150)} = 1.328$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ]; religion [ $F_{(3,150)} = 1.061$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ]; age [ $F_{(3,150)} = .501$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ]; subject [ $F_{(3,150)} = 1.353$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ]; and academic experience [ $F_{(3,150)} = 2.263$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ]. However, there is a significant

difference among faculties in work performance based on their gender [ $t_{(152)} = -2.023$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ], useful contact in higher education authority [ $t_{(152)} = 3.634$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ], useful political contact [ $t_{(152)} = 2.795$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ]; mode of recruitment [ $F_{(3,150)} = 3.221$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ]; academic qualification [ $F_{(3,150)} = 2.802$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ]; and position in the organization [ $F_{(3,150)} = 11.364$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ]. Thus, we partially accepted H4.

**Table (4) Association between Socio-Demographics, Human Capital Variables and Work Performance**

Socio-Demographic and Human Capital Characteristics		Means	S.D.	t-value/ and F value	P
Gender	Male [104 (67%)]	1.99	.62	-2.023	.045
	Female [50 (33%)]	2.20	.58		
Position	Assistant Professor [108 (70%)]	1.97	.56	11.364	0.000
	Associate Professor [16 (10%)]	2.71	.54		
	Professor [30(20%)]	2.03	.64		
Academic Qualification	NET and Ph.D. [93 (60%)]	1.98	.56	2.802	0.042
	NET, Ph.D. & M. Phil. [28 (18%)]	2.10	.63		
	Master degree with M. Phil without NET [4(3%)]	2.82	.94		
	Master degree with Ph.D. without NET [29(19%)]	2.14	.68		
Experience	0-4 years [59 (38%)]	1.99	.55	2.263	.084
	5-10 years [31(20%)]	2.04	.71		
	10-15 years [25 (16%)]	2.34	.68		
	More than 15 years [39 (26%)]	1.98	.55		
Mode of Recruitment	Commission based direct recruitment [86 (56%)]	1.96	0.52	3.221	.024
	Honorarium and regularized [15(10%)]	2.39	0.71		
	Approved self-finance [15(10%)]	2.32	0.72		
	Advertisement based [38(24%)]	2.03	0.68		
Subject	Science & IT [23(15%)]	2.09	.66	1.353	.260
	Commerce& Management [74(48%)]	2.13	0.58		
	Art, Humanities and Social Sciences [47(30%)]	1.91	0.61		
	Others [10(7%)]	2.17	0.76		
Marital Status	Married [124(80%)]	2.05	.62	-4.29	0.669
	Unmarried [30(20%)]	2.10	.59		
Age	25-30 years [18(12%)]	2.17	0.72	.501	.682
	30-40 years [59(38%)]	1.99	0.57		
	40-50 years [49(32%)]	2.09	0.63		
	More than 50 years [28(18%)]	2.06	.63		
Religion	Hindu [139(90%)]	2.03	0.60	1.061	0.368
	Muslim [7(5%)]	2.35	0.93		
	Sikh [2(1%)]	2.57	0.61		
	Others [6(4%)]	2.10	0.58		
Category	General [77 (50%)]	2.14	0.59	1.328	.268
	OBC [46(30%)]	2.00	0.68		
	SC [24 (16%)]	1.96	0.60		
	ST [7 (4%)]	1.78	0.26		

Nature of Organization	Gov. College [56 (36%)]	2.02	0.63	1.953	0.089
	Gov. Aided College [54 (35%)]	1.94	0.56		
	State University [14 (9%)]	2.35	0.62		
	Central University [13(9%)]	2.03	0.53		
	Gov. College with Self-finance courses [5(3%)]	2.57	0.97		
	Gov. Aided College with Self-finance [12 (8%)]	2.21	0.60		
Useful contact in Higher Education System	Yes [44(29%)]	2.33	0.71	3.634	.000
	No [110(71%)]	1.95	0.54		
Useful Political Contact	Yes [16(10%)]	2.46	0.75	2.795	.006
	No [138(90%)]	2.01	0.58		

Pearson coefficient correlation was performed in order to ascertain the relationship between POPs, work stress, work performance, and political skill of the faculty members. The result shows that there is a positive relationship between POPs and work stress ( $r= 0.600$ ;  $p<0.01$ ), work performance ( $r= 0.202$ ;  $p<0.05$ ), and political skill ( $r= 0.097$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). It indicates that an increase in perceived organizational politics (POPs) leads to an increase in work stress and political skill but hampers the performance of academia. Moreover, POPs significantly affect the work stress and performance of

faculty members. However, there is no statistically significant relationship between POP and PS. Thus, we accepted H5 (a, b, c). Additionally, there is a weak positive correlation exist between stress and performance ( $r= 0.066$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). There is a negative correlation found between PS and work performance ( $r=-.327$ ;  $p<0.01$ ). Though, PS significantly affects work performance. Furthermore, there is a weak correlation exists between PS and work stress ( $r= 0.205$ ;  $p<0.05$ ), though PS significantly affects the work stress of the academia at HEIs (Table 5). Thus, we accepted H6 (a, b)

**Table (5) Correlation Matrix**

Variables	Perceived organizational politics	Work stress	Work performance	Political skills
Perceived organizational politics	1			
Stress	0.600**	1		
Work Performance	0.202*	0.066	1	
Political Skills	0.097	0.205*	0.327**	1

Note-\*\* $p<0.01$ ; \* $p<0.05$

## Discussion and implications of the study

Politics is universal in nature. Specially, organizational politics is an elusive power relation among people who directly or indirectly engaged with the organization (Vigoda - Gadot & Talmud, 2010). In other words, the relationship among employees at the workplace depicts the political atmosphere of the organization (Adekoya, 2018). HEIs are service-oriented organizations and, therefore are directly connected with society, industries, Government, political parties, and many more. Teaching faculties who worked in different HEIs

(colleges/universities) are expected to maintain and exceed the known standards and requirements of job in addition to the transformation, and growth of society and nation.

This study reveals that the perceived politics at the workplace strongly affect the work performance and stress of the academia at HEIs. Specifically, faculty members who belong to the age group of 30 to 40 years and attained their Ph.D. along with qualifying 'National Eligibility Test' (NET) for lectureship have perceived high politics at their workplace. However, academics

who have useful contact either in higher education directorate or with political parties perceive lower politics at the workplace. Whereas, gender, marital status, academic position, experience, mode of recruitment, subject, religion, social category, and nature of the organization have no impact on how an individual perceives politics at the workplace. Thus, our findings clearly support the assertion that when employees perceive politics in the workplace, it reduces their performance and increases their work stress. In other words, perceived politics is unfavorable to desired outcomes like performance at the workplace. The result of our study is contradictory to the result of the study by Ahmed & colleagues (2020) who postulated that OPs do not affect university teachers' performance. On the other hand, the results of the present study partially support the findings of Vigoda-Gadot & Talmud (2010) who disclosed that POPs significantly affect job stress. Moreover, younger employees have higher levels of job stress than veteran employees. Results of the present study concur with the above theory that academic qualification, age, and experience, place the heaviest job load and pressure on faculty members in the early stage of their careers. However, our study contradicts findings of Sultan et al. (2015) who revealed that demographics such as gender, position, and experience significantly affect POPs. Support is only found based on one variable i.e., age which affects the POPs in both studies. Similarly, the findings of current study are in line of support with the study of Nejad et al. (2011), who showed that academic qualification significantly affects the political tactics of faculties in the universities, however, there are no significant differences found with respect to gender in their political tactics.

The results of our study supported the assumption i.e. political skills reduces work stress. However, it is contrary to our expectations i.e. there is a negative relationship found between PS and work performance. In addition, the current study also revealed that there is a strong correlation between POPs and PS. Thus, these finding supported the work of Singh (2024) who disclosed that POPs, PS, work stress and work performance significantly associated with each others. Such a scenario can be explained using the following explanation. A person with good political skills uses most of their time managing and improving their social

status by developing new relationships with people in influential positions. And they are unable to focus on their work performance due to their time investment in developing such relations. Since their career progress is not dependent only on their work performance but rather on their political skill.

Therefore, those faculty members who have used their personal and social resources, have found lower levels of stress, but also have lower work performance. Thus, the results of our study stand in partial contradiction to the finding of Syed & Khan (2015) and García-Chas et al. (2019) who revealed that PS is positively related to job performance.

Our findings revealed that the faculty members, who are more than 50 years old, as well as who belongs to the age group of 30 to 40 years and are a professor or senior lecturer about to become associate professor, have experience of more than 15 years or 5 to 10 years respectively, taught the subject like humanities and social sciences including commerce and management and recruited through commissioned based or advertisement, have higher political skill. Moreover, faculties who are 'Muslim' by religion have higher political skills. Interestingly, faculty members who do not have any useful contact at HES or with political parties tend to have higher political skills.

The professors are generally older and more experience, and due to this, their political skill is obviously higher. The assistant professors who are about to become associate professors show higher political skills because it is an important tool to get timely promotion and other benefits. In this regard, the researcher cites Park & Lee, (2020) and references therein “Younger employees can perceive organizational politics as an opportunity rather than a threat, and the impact of organizational politics on them is limited”.

Additionally, our study identified that the academia from humanities and social sciences backgrounds tend to have better political skills than faculties of other areas due to their direct and frequent interaction with society. The faculties recruited through direct mode, either advertisement or commission based, are subjected to personal interviews which aim to assess their subject expertise as well as their social skill, including political

skills as well, and that is the reason such faculties tend to have better political skills than others.

Most of the higher education institutions like state or central universities, and degree colleges, both Government and Government aided is directly or indirectly funded by the Government, which exposes their faculties to undue political exposure and negatively affects their work performance.

The 'Muslim' faculties being a religious minority tend to have better political skills because they need support from others to perform their work and progress in their career. In this regard, Brass & Krackhardt (2012) argued that the social structure and pattern of relationships among them play a very critical role in providing opportunities as well as constraints to the individuals in the acquisition of power in the organization.

Academics that do not have any outside support from influential people (HES and political parties) depend on support from their colleagues and higher authority within the organization for their career enhancement and performing duties, and hence they may have better political skills. However, the rest of the parameter has little significant role in influencing the political skill of academia.

Furthermore, this study has identified that the faculty members who become to be an associate professor and belongs to the age group of 30 to 40 years have high political skill and work stress. It is because promotion and performance evaluation in Government institutions including the education system, are often based on seniority and time-bound, rather than according to a merit-based performance appraisal. Specifically, there is a discrepancy in becoming an associate (in time) between college and university. In college, it is 10 years, whereas, in university, it is 8 years. As a result, faculties can rely more on organizational politics than formal systems to get their preferred outcomes. Therefore, it is important to establish a uniform and quality/performance-based promotion system to reduce the work stress and unnecessary engagement of political behavior in HEIs.

## Conclusion, Limitations and Direction for Future Work

The data used in this study are survey data of a small sample size, and there may be limitations in generalizing the research results to the entire HES of India. In the next study, the analysis needs to be done using the large sample data. Besides, we also used non-probability sampling methods such as convenience, and snowball for populations dominated by faculties at HES of north Indian states like UP, Bihar, and MP, and as a result, there is a limitation to generalizing the results of this study. In the next study, we need to confirm the results of this study with more representative samples. In addition, the participant data collected were assumed to be unbiased and accurate. However, there is no guarantee that respondents have answered truthfully to any or all survey responses. The study used a self-report questionnaire via Google Forms that have already been used in research by experts in their respective studies. Although the cross-sectional survey was anonymous, participants may have been hesitant to respond to the survey items that were sensitive to their position at their institutions. Thus, we acknowledge that this study has methodological limitations in research design. It is necessary to more precisely infer the causality of the organizational politics on the outcome variables through longitudinal research design. Lastly, we suggest that there should be made a direct comparison of South Asian and Western samples to explore the moderating influence of discrete cultural contextual factors (e.g., cultural values) on POPs and work-related outcomes.

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