The Impact of Organizational Politics Fact on the Act of Social Media Usage in Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract In today's business life experiencing unspecific, complicated and continuous changes, the climate is getting more and more political for the organizations. The employees to display behaviors after comprehending the organizational climate in a political manner are becoming one of the critical elements of the organizational climate. It is possible to say that the employees that take part in any section of the organization are interested in such activities. Within this context, the political behavior, which can be named as manipulative behaviors exhibited deliberately by individuals in order to actualize their expectations, is only a small part of the organizational politics fact. The political behaviors are explicitly exhibited in certain organizations, while they develop esoterically in other organizations. Therefore, an individual starts to exhibit political behaviors once he/she realizes that the organization is political, and then this turns into a cyclical action due to the interactions among the employees. In this context, it can be clearly set forth that the organizational politics fact redounds up the personal behaviors in an individual's life. After the massive development in technology, social media has turned into a platform on which an individual reflects his/her inner world by sharing his/her emotions, situations and thoughts on a daily basis. In this study, the objective is to reveal the importance concerning the impact of organizational politics perception on individuals' social media usage on the basis of higher education institutions, based on the current literature. The quantitative data shall

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be subjected to evaluation in line with survey study by carrying out a literature review using qualitative method in this research.

Keywords Perception of organizational politics • Social media • Higher education

1   Introduction

Being political and exhibiting political behaviors is one of the imperative facts in organizational life, just like in life itself. This is, in fact, more prominent in today's world. The climate is getting more and more political for organizations trying to continue their existences while being continuously forced to change in an environment that is becoming more uncertain and complicated day by day. Considering this uncertain and complicated climate plus the efforts of organizations trying to carry out activities with limited resources, it is now a must for the individuals to utilize the power and benefit from the manipulation tools. Each and every individual in the organization desiring to possess more resources in line with their own expectations and wishes makes the individuals confront with each other concerning the sharing of budgets, tasks and liabilities, salaries and promotions, thus creating an inevitable power struggle. Therefore, the organizations having individuals who wish to gain more power and earn more in their structure are becoming open to political processes. It is not possible to say that each and every organization or individual is political on the same level and manner though accepting that the politics is widely recognized among the organizations. It can be said that this situation shows alterations based on many factors arising from both the individual and the organization. In this manner, the individuals and organizations are either becoming politicized, or paying less concern in politics. In certain organizations, "the fact of politics" is taken quite naturally and ordinarily, thus being exposed explicitly; while it is recognized as "unacceptable" in other organizations, thus being carried out covertly. In some other organizations, the political activities are not deemed required or they are being carried out with very low frequency and level since certain regulations are fully performed in order. At this point, it can be said that the political perceptions of individuals, as well as the political behaviors they exhibit do have impacts on the formation of politics in organizations and the functioning of the politics. Because the way and the manner through which the political climate is formed in the organization, including the way of development and the manner it is being concluded are structured in line with the thoughts and behaviors of the individuals. It can be said that there is a mutual interaction between political perceptions and behaviors of the individuals towards the organization and other individuals. This situation affects the political climate in the organization, while being affected itself by this climate. In that, when the regulations and practices of the organization concerning the individuals and the organization itself, as well as the thoughts and behaviors of other individuals within the organization are perceived politically, it is possible for these perceptions to be concluded with certain

political behaviors. Similarly, it sounds meaningful to say that the political behaviors exhibited within the organizations create a political climate in the organization by affecting the perceptions of the individuals under the same manner.

2 Organizational Politics Fact

Concerning the formation of a political climate in the organization and the ongoing process, the most important point is the perception manner by the individuals or groups within the organization for the attitudes and behaviors of the organization and employees. In the process that an individual perceive the climate as political, it could have an impact on the formation of inter-organizational policies regardless of the existence of politics in the organization (Buenger et al. 2007). At this point, it is not a determinative fact to determine whether the political behaviors are efficiently exhibited within the organization, or not, since the individual would shape up his/her behaviors, thus making the climate politically, if he/she recognizes the climate as political. In conclusion, it is the situation whether the climate is recognized as political, or not, rather than the political behaviors, concerning the formation of a political climate. Perceptions of organizational politics, defined as "A subjective interpretation of the working environment as represented by the masters and colleagues exhibiting political behaviors with organizational practices incentivizing political behaviors" (Harrell-Cook et al. 1999, p. 1095).

There are many definitions concerning the term organizational political behavior in the literature. These definitions approach the political behavior in terms of both positive and negative aspects for individuals, groups and organizations. The essential point in this matter is the meaning as attributed to the behavior—that is the way of thinking of the individuals on this matter—rather than exhibiting the behavior. The political activities in the organization may be manifested explicitly and objectively, also sometimes, they can be formed covertly and symbolically. Therefore, the way of perception for the behavior differs from individual to individual, and situation to situation. When an activity or an event—as carried out by the organization in complete goodwill—is misperceived by an employee, after then it is his/her own reality that has the biggest impact, rather than the one which actually exists.

In some cases, It is vitally important to evaluate the behaviors diversely based on the perception of individuals, rather than the tangibility of the behaviors exhibited by individuals in the organization, in terms of understanding the organizational politics. Because, these perceptions to emerge in a positive or negative form will have an impact on the reactions of the employees to their managers, colleagues and organization, as well as the expectations towards their jobs and the organization, and the conclusions to be made concerning the job, thus having the capacity to shape them up, as well. When considered from this point of view, it is possible to say that the way of formation of an individual's political perception for the climate, would shape the behaviors of this individual, and therefore his/her working life and organizational life, as a whole.

When organizations with certain objectives, certain activities and employees to achieve these objectives exhibits political behaviors due to the fact that it prefers to achieve its goals by utilizing its resourced in the most efficient way possible, it causes them to be recognized as political organizations. On the other hand, those trying to achieve individual or organizational objectives are directing others' behaviors or turning the table on themselves via various affection tactics. In this situation, the behavior exhibited deliberately by the employees in order to gain power or to get a more powerful position within the organization forms the organizational politics. Sometimes these political matters result in positively on businesses' favor, however they may also result in negatively since they bring organizational structure's deficiencies to light. Nevertheless, it can be suggested that the organizational structures are political structures based on the aforementioned information (Stewart 1972).

2.1 *Political Behavior*

As old as organizational history, the politization and political behavior existed in each and every period, protecting its sustainability by being amended in time. For instance, the political behaviors were quashed for harmonization during the periods of time when the outer and inner cyclical situation were languished. On the other hand, the organizations with less administrative layers under today's relatively more complicated and uncertain working conditions are elasticizing its structure in order to comply with its environment, thus applying decentralization practices. In line with this aspect, the political behaviors and political climate are becoming exalted values as basic struggle line and control mechanism, as referred by Toffler (1990). In fact, many organizations carry out political action committees (PAC) or special training programs, which legalize the political behaviors and power games, as well as canalizing individuals' perceptions and impressions into this direction (Reitz 1987).

The most meaningful and important matter for organizational politics are the behaviors exhibited deliberately and in a planned way by the individuals, since the behaviors deliberately exhibited by the individuals for their own benefits in order to achieve their objectives and expectations within the organization generate the political behaviors. The fact that the political behaviors are inevitable in the organizations, as well as the desire to achieve the objectives and expectations by impressing others subsistent in the political behavior are quite significant in terms of understanding the efficiency and progress of the individuals and organizations. In that, the political actions do have importance in order to display why and how the organizational decisions are taken, how the cooperation with and support from the subordinates, superiors and colleagues are provided, the reason why certain individuals support certain individuals and groups in the organization and why they do not do the same for others, and whether the strategies and policies are applied efficiently, or not. The political behavior is defined follows: the employees to

control their prospective behaviors by prioritizing their own benefits over the organizational benefits while carrying out organizational activities, and to utilize strategically all the resources of the organization in order to result in on their own favor, as well as benefitting from impressing tactic (Ferris et al. 1989).

Ferris and Kacmar (1992) claimed that the organizational climate to be perceived as political would cause the employees to exhibit unexpected reactions. They also argued that an employee recognizing an organization as political would prefer either to stay out of the organization, or to take part in the organization by isolating himself/herself from the political behaviors, or personally to exhibit political behaviors.

Based on this matter, it can be said that there is a mutual and bilateral relation between the organizational politics perception and political behavior. So it can be clearly said that this cyclical process effecting each other regularly to be sustainable is a sustaining element in terms of politization of organizational climates, and that both employees and the directors support the idea to turn the organizational climate into political (Bursali and Bagci 2011).

3 Social Media

We are in the era of information, communication and technology, and the innovations in this field, including their impacts comprise of the study area of the relevant sciences. Analyzing the definitions made concerning the social media, it can be defined as online interactive communication channels connecting the communities to each other (Kalafatoğlu 2011). Within the basis of the term "Social Media" can consist the terms "communication" and "sharing" (Hatipoğlu 2009). The communication in social media is through one person to another or one person to hundreds, thousands or millions. In this type of communication, it is the information interchange among such social units as individuals, groups and organizations that is in question (Sabuncuoğlu and Gümüş 2008). This media of freedom is not only for individuals' daily news, information or communication, but rather it is for the participation of those individuals in political, ideological, economic, cultural etc. It is an undeniable fact that this new media order has a structure that is an influencing and widely and quickly spread. It is a media on which there is no editor—apart from himself/herself—while publishing the news and no self-censorship is applied. A platform on which there is no possibility of denial for publishing of your written materials and you're not fired. The new media network is absolutely a movement arising from the bottom (base). It is a revolutionary fact rebelling against the dominant media conception and traditional system. Small keyboard poundings in the bottom are, in fact, enough to bother those in the top (Engin 2011).

In parallel with the increase in the number of internet users, the social media websites started to develop like a flash within the latest decade, therefore the number of their users are increasing day by day. The percentage of computer

usage are 55% and 56% among the age group 16–74, respectively, in April—2015. This ratio is 64 and 66% for men, while it is 46 and 46% for women. The computer and internet usage ratios were 53 and 54% in 2014. The percentage of buildings having internet Access in Turkey was 69% in April—2015 (TUIK 2014). According to the internet usage research published in Business Wire; the number of internet users using the social media was 373 million in 2007, while it was over 600 million in 2009. This number is equal to one-third of the whole internet users (Odabaşı and Odabaşı 2010). Taking the internet usage objectives into consideration, 81% of the internet users used the internet for creating a profile on social media, sending messages or sharing photos, etc.; 70% for online news, newspapers or journals, 66% for searching medical information, 62% for sharing their own materials like articles, images, photos, videos, music, etc. on a website, 59% for searching information about goods and services (TUIK 2014). The social media appears as the most important communication tool used today. Requiring low-budget, spreading the information fast, currency, having a warm environment, providing the opportunity to recognize the target group, as well as requiring no agent for communication makes the social media more powerful.

On the other hand, when the report concerning the damages that the organizations may be exposed to as a result of miss-use of social media regulated by Symantec with a research company named "Applied Research" is analyzed, miss-use of social media may cause more than $4,000,000 in average annually (Symantec 2011). The organizations determined the social media based risks as following:

- The employees sharing too much information (46%);
- Inter-corporate confidential being lost/disclosed (41%).
- The brand image being damaged (40%),
- Being exposed to more and more lawsuits (37%),
- Malicious software (37%),
- Violation of regulatory rules (36%),

Additionally, 28% of the companies think that the social media may cause damage on the brand image and customer loyalty according to the report. Annual average cost of brand image damage is determined as $683,496, and 27% of the companies claim to lose organizations, customers or employees because of social media, while 25% of them stated that social media causes direct revenue loss, which was determined to be $619,360 on the report. The lawsuit costs caused by social media is $650,361 on average (Symantec 2011) Hosting many events in today's world, the social media plays an active role in many of the social events. Since the social media possesses the characteristic to provide a freedom for the user, the individuals are encouraged by this to achieve their goals, as well as using having a desire to use this media more efficiently. This new media is not only bringing individuals, but it also caused the organizational communities to be formed with the same objective. It created an environment that connects social movements to each other, thus accelerating the process. These movements generated a media on which

their own news and details on what they were/are/will be doing are shared with the public (Engin 2011).

4 Objective of the Study

As in all the foundations, the existence of organizational politics fact manifests itself in higher education institutions, as well. The current literature points out that the organizational politics may direct the employees' behaviors. Therefore it can be clearly discussed that the behaviors of academic members working in higher education institutions concerning the social media usage might be affected. This situation comprises the basic hypothesis of this study. Ferris and King (1991) defined that it may create an environment for unexpected reactions by the employees in the event that the organizational climate is recognized as a political climate by the employees. They also claimed that an employee recognizing an organization as political would prefer either to stay out of the organization, or to take part in the organization by isolating himself/herself from the political behaviors, or personally to exhibit political behaviors. The objective of this study is to determine whether the social media usages of academic members are affected by the organizational politics fact in higher education institutions, or not. In line with this matter, this research is centralized on the following hypotheses (Fig. 1):

Hypothesis 1 *There is a substantive relation between the following factors: organizational political perception, and political usage of social media in higher education institutions.*

Hypothesis 2 *There is a substantive relation between the following factors: organizational political perception, and neutral usage of social media in higher education institutions.*
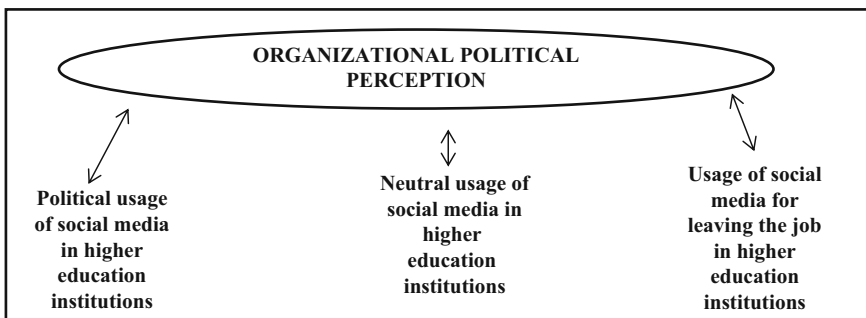

Fig. 1 Research model

Hypothesis 3 *There is a substantive relation between the following factors: organizational political perception, and usage of social media for leaving the job in higher education institutions.*

5 Sample and Methodology

In this study carried out to determine whether the social media usage of academic members are affected by the organizational politics fact in higher education institutions, or not, survey practice was chosen as quantitative method. The sample of the research comprises of academic members working in foundation universities in Turkey. Online survey method was preferred for the survey practice. 150 survey forms that are suitable to be used in the research were obtained within the framework of this scope. The information received via the survey forms was transmitted to the statistics package program "SPSS for Windows 21.0", thus being evaluated with this program.

6 Research Data and Findings

When the participant distribution by gender is analyzed, 45% of the participants is female (68 in number), while 55% is male (82 in number) in total of 150 participants (Table 1).

According to Table 2, 87 of 150 (58%) participants answered the question as "Bachelor's Degree", 34 of 150 (23%) participants answered the question as "Master Degree", and 29 of 150 (19%) participants answered the question as "Ph. D."

112 of 150 (75%) is in the age group between 25 and 29, 18 of 150 (12%) is in the age group between 30 and 39, 8 of 150 (5%) is in the age group between 40 and 49, and 12 of 150 (8%) is in the age group of 50 and older (Table 3).

Table 1 Participant distribution by gender

Gender	Number	Percentage
Female	68	45
Male	82	55
Total	150	100

Table 2 Participant distribution by educational background

Educational background	Number	Percentage
Bachelor's degree	87	58
Master degree	34	23
Ph.D.	29	19
Total	150	100

Table 3 Participant distribution by age

Age group	Number	Percentage
Between 25 and 29	112	75
Between 30 and 39	18	12
Between 40 and 49	8	5
50 and older	12	8
Total	150	100

Table 4 Participant distribution by income status

Income status	Number	Percentage
Between 1000 and 2000 TRY	82	55
Between 2000 and 3000 TRY	40	27
Between 3000 and 4000 TRY	19	13
4000 TRY and higher	9	6
Total	150	100

When the participant distribution by income status is analyzed, 82 of 150 (55%) is in the group between 1000 and 2000 TRY, 40 of 150 (27) is in the group between 2000 and 3000 TRY, 19 of 150 (13%) is in the group between 3000 and 4000 TRY, and 9 of 150 (6%) is in the group of 4000 TRY and higher (Table 4).

When the data in the answers given by the research participants working as academic members in higher education institutions to the "Organizational Political Perception" scale designed by us is analyzed, it can be clearly said that majority of the participants do have a sense for the universities they're currently employed in to have a built-in political perception (Table 5).

According to Table 6, a certain percentage of the participants state that they use their social media profiles politically as per the organizational political structures of their institutions.

Table 7 presents the answers given by the research participants working as academic members in higher education institutions to the "Neutral Usage of Social Media in Higher Education Institutions" scale. A certain percentage of the participants state that they use their social media profiles neutrally as per the organizational political structures of their institutions.

When the data in the answers given by the research participants working as academic members in higher education institutions to the "Usage of Social Media for Leaving the Job in Higher Education Institutions" scale is analyzed, the certain percentage of the participants state that they would use their social media profiles in order to leave their jobs against the institution as per the organizational political structures of their institution (Table 8).

According to Table 9, there is a positive and substantive relation between the scores received from organizational political perception factor and the factor for political usage of social media in higher education institutions (r = 0.670; p < 0.05). At this stage, it is accepted as H1. By looking at the data obtained

Table 5 Frequency values of the participants as per the organizational political perception

		Strongly agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neither agree nor disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)	Average
Organizational political perception scale	I think that the University in which I'm currently working evaluates its academic members as per their private lives	6.3	17	21.3	37.3	18	3.44
	I think that the University in which I'm currently working evaluates its academic members as per their political opinions	7.7	11.7	14	39.3	27.3	3.67
	I think that the University in which I'm currently working evaluates its academic members as per their ideologies	9.7	14.7	10	37.7	28	3.6
	A new employed member can comprehend people not to contradict within only a few months in the University I'm currently working	10.3	21	27.3	22	19.3	3.19
	There is a sustainably efficient, yet not-easy-to-overcome group in the University I'm currently working	14.7	18.3	15	28	24	3.28
	In spite of the fact that the university that I'm currently working in applies in-house incentive policies fairly, the way-of-usage for these policies are manipulated by the directors, thus being, in fact, not fair	10.3	20	21.7	32.3	15.7	3.23

Table 6 The frequency values for the participants concerning the scale "political usage of social media in higher education institutions"

Political usage scale of social media in higher education institutions		Strongly agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neither agree nor disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)	Average
	Sometimes I share contents which the directors of University in which I'm currently working may like, via my personal social media profile	11.9	18.8	21.8	22.8	24.8	1.36
	I believe that the content that I share via my personal social media profile is the indicator of my future for the University in which I'm currently working; therefore I never share anything against the University, even if it is true	27.7	15.8	19.8	20.8	15.8	2.19
	I never participate in arguments via social media concerning the University in which I'm currently working, rather I share contents for the favor of University. In the end, it is the administrative board of University seeing this content, as being shared	29.7	9.9	12.9	24.8	22.8	1.99

Table 7 The frequency values of participants concerning the scale "neutral usage of social media in higher education institutions"

		Strongly agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neither agree nor disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)	Average
Neutral usage scale of social media in higher education institutions	I deliberately do not share any content via my personal social media profile (due to the directors of University in which I'm currently working)	13.3	22.3	28.7	22.3	13.3	3
	I only use the social media to check other profiles based on the negative situations my colleagues experienced in the University in which I'm currently working	8.7	24	28.7	21.7	17	3.14
	I only use the social media to check other profiles based on the negative situations my colleagues experienced in the University in which I'm currently working, thus not sharing any content	18	30.6	12.0	25.3	12.0	3.15

Table 8 The frequency values of participants concerning the scale "usage of social media for leaving the job in higher education institutions"

		Strongly agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neither agree nor disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)	Average
Usage scale of social media for leaving the job in higher education institutions	If, one day, I decide to change my job I'm going to share any and all the deficiencies of the University via my personal social media profile	9.7	52.3	7.7	6	4.3	4.18
	If, one day, I decide to resign, I'm going to share any and all the deficiencies of the University via my personal social media profile	27.7	34	24	10	7.3	3.59
	If, one day, I realize that I'm going to be fired I'm going to share any and all the deficiencies of the University via my personal social media profile		19.3	11.3	8	9.3	3.87

from the survey study, the more the organizational political perception raises, the more the political usage of social media gets.

There is a positive and substantive relation between the scores received from organizational political perception factor and the factor for neutral usage of social media in higher education institutions (r = 0.760; p < 0.05). At this stage, it is

Table 9 Pearson product moment correlation analysis results in order to determine the relation between the scores in organizational political perception and the factor "political usage of social media in higher education institutions"

Organizational political perception	N	r	p
Political usage of social media in higher education institutions	150	0.670	0.000

Table 10 Pearson product moment correlation analysis results in order to determine the relation between the scores in organizational political perception and the factor "neutral usage of social media in higher education institutions"

Organizational political perception	N	r	p
Neutral usage of social media in higher education institutions	150	0.760	0.000

Table 11 Pearson product moment correlation analysis results in order to determine the relation between the scores in organizational political perception and the factor "political usage of social media for leaving the job in higher education institutions"

Organizational political perception	N	r	p
Political usage of social media for leaving the job in higher education institutions	150	0.580	0.000

accepted as H2. By looking at the data obtained from the survey study, the more the organizational political perception raises, the more the neutral usage of social media gets (Table 10).

According to the analysis results (Table 11), there is a positive and substantive relation between the scores received from organizational political perception factor and the factor for neutral usage of social media in higher education institutions ($r = 0.580$; $p < 0.05$). At this stage, it is accepted as H3. By looking at the data obtained from the survey study, the more the organizational political perception raises, the more the neutral usage of social media gets political usage of social media for leaving the job gets.

7   Conclusion

When the current data is analyzed, it can be interpreted as following: The social media has both positive and negative aspects on the organizations. The ethical fact is the basis for negative aspects. The findings obtained thanks to the research data set forth the following for higher education institutions:

- The more the organizational political perception raises, the more the political usage of social media gets,
- The more the organizational political perception raises, the more the neutral usage of social media gets,

- The more the organizational political perception raises, the more the neutral usage of social media gets political usage of social media for leaving the job gets.

Based on the data emerged from this study, it can be clearly said that the term "organizational politics fact" is of vital importance for higher education institutions. The results obtained from this study reveal that it is a must to destroy the negative organizational political perception that may be formed on the academic members in the institution, thus becoming the most important matter for increasing the quality in the universities. Otherwise, it can be clearly said that the academic members will turn into human communities, with no freedom of thought and speech, feeling an obligation to be on the institution's directors' board side—even currently being on their side, or with the thought of the possibility to be fired after speaking against the institution, becoming introverted, with no capacity to produce anything apart from starting and ending the working day.

This is a massive obstacle against the development of higher education institutions, improving the educational standards, carrying out scientific studies, etc. Naturally, it can be clearly said that it is a must for administration models of the higher education institutions to possess a structural characteristic, which differs it from the other business management models. Therefore, we confront with an incontrovertible fact of the necessity to re-approach to the term "organizational political perception" in higher education institutions for positivization, as well as analyzing the communication practices of universities' board of directors with the academic members.

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