

## Qualitative Inquiry Discourse: Towards A Comprehensive Understanding of Organizational Politics

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### Abstract

*Organizations are very commonly viewed as political entities and politics is inevitable and a non-evasive phenomenon, which is why organizational politics has always been a hot topic in the business world. Over the years the phenomenon of organizational politics has been used in lieu of many other negative and pessimistic ideas that its original neutral essence is gone. Now the organizational politics has been tainted with the dysfunctional subttexts and the literature is filled with its negative connotations. One cannot escape the highlighted dysfunctional side of it while reviewing the literature. Literature also suggests that organizational politics can be functional and has a huge tendency to influence the organizational productivity and efficiency. The current quantitative methodologies provide limited ways of measuring the phenomenon comprehensively and look at organizational politics through a tainted narrow lens which is why the dysfunctional side always gets acknowledged while the phenomenon is explored because of the limitation of the measuring instruments. This paper suggests why and how the qualitative inquiry can be a solution in exploring the phenomenon of organizational politics more comprehensively and why amongst other qualitative inquiry approaches, Grounded Theory is be best suited for exploration of this phenomenon.*

**Keywords:** Qualitative, Quantitative, Organizational politics, Grounded theory, Functional organizational politics, Dysfunctional organizational politics

Politics is not a recent term. The history of the word “Politics” goes back to fourth century BC when the term was first used which was derived from the Greek word Polis meaning city and Politika meaning the affairs of the state. The term’s origin has roots deep down in Aristotle’s philosophy where the term’s meaning was more than just actions or strategies of narrow specialist rather it is a very comprehensive and more inclusive system of contemplation (Stalley, 1998). It has structure and form. However, as explained earlier the term organizational politics is somewhat recent and has been described in a variety of ways by various scholars. Some believe that it is related to interpersonal relations in an organization (Vigoda, 2003; Sabir & Malik, 2022).

Most of the existing literature highlights, negative or destructive side of organizational politics (Salin, 2003, Ferris et al., 2019). Various articles and researches have missed to address the positive nature or the constructive potential of organizational politics (Hochwarter, 2012; Walsh, 2015; Landells & Albrecht, 2017; Ferris et al., 2019; Crawford et al., 2019; Guo et al., 2019; Faiz et al., 2022). The scholarly research in this area has also missed the positive outcomes of organizational politics received by the people who end up on the winning side of the table (Drory & Meisler, 2016; Guo et al., 2019; Hochwarter et al., 2020; Sabir & Malik, 2022). Due to difficulty finding literature on organizational politics’ functional and strategic impacts, Ferris and Treadway (2012) have emphasized the under-development of theory on organizational politics. The literary understanding of the phenomenon of organizational politics is insufficient or partial which is why the perceptions linked to it are also negative. Same negatively skewed trend can be seen while reviewing the literature on the said phenomenon. Hence, it implies that a strong effort is required by the new researchers and upcoming scholars to explore the complete phenomenon of organizational politics and shed light on its functional as well as dysfunctional side (Farrell & Peterson, 1982; Gotsis & Kortezi, 2010; Landells & Albrecht, 2017). The reason why more exploration is required in this area is multifold. There is lack of literature on constructive organizational politics and lack of empirical measurement of organizational politics. The relevant constructs and dimensions on which the phenomenon can be operationalized are also lacking. It’s been decades since the introduction of organizational politics to the academic world. Given the common and widespread nature of the phenomenon everywhere, idyllically, the literature should

be rich and comprehensive in addressing the whole idea of organizational politics, its types, dimensions predecessors and impacts. However, upon reviewing the literature can be proposed that the literature is still lacking and is insufficient in addressing the phenomenon of organizational politics completely or inside out. Therefore, the upcoming scholars should probe the functional and dysfunctional aspects of organizational politics and explore the reasons of the one-sided narrative.

Organizational politics is omnipresent yet an elusive phenomenon, the researchers in the recent years have called for more exploratory inquiries into it for a more complete and a thorough understanding and comprehension of the phenomenon by gathering more data and evidence (Mehl & Wrzus, 2021; Bologna et al., 2021; Sabir & Malik, 2022). Many scholars have emphasized that the data be collected from well-read and learned people as the construct needs to be critically eyed. Its dimensions and nature need a scholarly well-cultured discussion and debate. Therefore, a quantitative approach and usage of POPS to collect data and measure the response limited the in-depth inquiry required and demanded by the gap that has been seen in the present literature (Mehl & Wrzus, 2021). Therefore, the said erudite and scholarly response was gathered from the progressive and liberal executives, practitioners, managers, industrialists, and academicians having advanced knowledge, exposure, and education.

### **Theoretical Integration: A Challenge**

Many concepts are close to organizational politics; for example, organizational justice is one of them, as discussed previously. Several articles mention the procedures used to determine the rewards and the distribution of those rewards resulting in the motivation of the employees and affecting the overall perception of organizational justice. Many have termed this as a move or organizational politics as it involves decision-making and management. Another reason why qualitative inquiry is required for exploring this phenomenon further is the lack of theoretical support for the functional organizational politics. The literature does not offer any theory which completely addresses the idea of functional organizational politics, its dimensions or the predecessors and effects. Therefore, it's very challenging for the researchers to integrate or offer a theoretical framework to comprehend or explain the phenomenon of organizational politics especially its functional perspective. However, there are a few theories which address the closely related concepts and constructs. A brief account of them is given below.

#### ***Affective events theory***

There are many leadership theories, motivational theories, and other management theories, which discuss the importance of human behavior and how perceptions, emotions, and overall human behavior can affect the employee's performance, outcome and productivity. However, the most relevant to the literature and the concepts of human behavior, perceptions, and their impact on the output is the affective events theory which psychologists Weiss and Cropanzano, (1996) proposed as it links the negative and positive emotions felt by the employees to their performance, productivity and overall output. The literature confirms the impact of the negative and positive perceptions and the use of influence tactics on the organizational performance, which is reflected in the employees' performances (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996; Weiss and Beal, 2005). Therefore, it is crucial to understand the events, acts, decisions, and other constructive and destructive political activities to understand organizational politics (Reynolds et al., 2020). However, the theory's limitation in not considering the external or outside influence on the mind and behavior of employees limits its practical and full implementation here in the said context (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996).

The model that this research article calls for must provide the readers with some precedents which can influence functional organizational politics due to the positive emotions triggered by them. This concept has been discussed at length by the recent work from Diener and his colleagues (2020). If the functional side of the organizational politics has to be explored the concepts which trigger the positive emotions need to be identified. However, the theory does not provide any insight about levels of experiences like individual or group level comprehension of the subject. Therefore it cannot be solely claimed as the foundational theory of this inquiry and other theories also need to be taken into consideration.

#### ***Other theories which address organizational politics***

Some theories related to organizational politics are incorporated in the study to support the research. It includes; Pfeffer's theory of organizational politics, theory of equity, theory of social exchange, and procedural justice theory. However, it may be noted here that none of the theories described below encapsulate the postulates presented by this research. The results and the

conceptual model also confirm that the theoretical frameworks already do not sufficiently address the unique dynamics of this research inquiry.

### ***Pfeffer's Theory of organizational politics***

A renowned researcher Jeffery Pfeffer, (1992) has proposed the theory of organizational politics. According to him, power influences the decision-making process. He proposed several dimensions of power including social actor, structure, legitimacy and resource.

According to him, the social actor who possesses power does not need to intend to practice it. Likewise, in other cases, individuals or groups possess powers, but few factors are unable to practice it. For that reason, the author believes that legitimacy is a vital element of power. The author believes that legitimacy constructs social control in an organizational setting and when an individual or a group uses power, then there is a possibility that the social actor consumes resources Laswell (1936).

### ***Equity Theory***

According to the theory of equity, politics, influence, and power have some impact on employees and the overall organization (Adams, 1965). Blau (1964) explained that motivation for improved performance is positively associated with constructive behavior of other employees such as colleagues, supervisors, peers, management. Likewise, improvement in employees' behavior is also positively linked with the constructive behavior of other employees.

### ***Social exchange theory***

Thorndike (1932) provided the basis of the Social Exchange theory. According to the Social exchange theory, if a person behaves in a particular way and that behavior leads him or her towards a reward, then that person will try to act that way more to get rewards more often. Conversely, when an individual gets more rewards, it will ultimately, at one point, become less valued, and he or she will try to behave otherwise to get different rewards. (Thorndike, 1935). According to Cropanzano, Prehar, and Chen (2002), the theory of social exchange can be used in an organization to promote fairness and justice. Variables of social exchange theory, i.e., assisting behavior, social reciprocity, support, and trust can be used to understand organizational politics better. It can be said that employees would perceive the organizational environment as impartial and fairer if they can achieve their ambitions and goals.

### ***Theory of Procedural Justice***

According to procedural justice theory, there is a relationship between the human resource system and organizational politics. Impartiality and injustice increase the perceptions of organizational politics, which then hinders the overall organizational performance (Folger, Konovsky, & Cropanzano, 1992). Kurt Lewin (1936) emphasized that employees react according to what they perceive and not according to reality. Therefore, to better understand organizational politics, employees' perceptions should be given more importance than reality.

Call for qualitative inquiry: As explained in the earlier section of this paper, the literature lacks in addressing the phenomenon of functional organizational politics, and the current theories also are not sufficient in addressing it completely and explaining the dynamics involved with it. Therefore, the need of the hour is to explore the phenomenon from different angles and perspectives. For this, different approaches of investigating and inquiry will be required. This paper suggests a qualitative approach for this purpose. As the quantitative methodology restricts the use of current measuring instruments like perceptions of organizational politics scale for gauging this phenomenon. The major shortcoming of the quantitative measuring instruments is that they already measure the pre-assumed dimensions and do not give room for new insight into the phenomenon. Even if a respondent wants to report the functional side of the organizational politics, she/ he might not be able to do so because the instrument does not provide any option for her/ him, to do so. This is why a new measuring instrument needs to be developed which allows the respondents to report both the functional as well as dysfunctional side of the organizational politics (Sabir & Malik, 2022). The current instruments cannot detect the functional organizational politics in any organization. They can report the presence or absence of the dysfunctional organizational politics. This creates a big gap in the area of measuring the phenomenon under discussion and opens avenues for a debate on how effective the current instruments are in measuring the phenomenon comprehensively.

This paper proposes a new methodology that the scholars and researchers might adopt to explore the phenomenon of organizational politics if they want to impartially present a comprehensive and wholesome picture of this phenomenon.

## Methodology

### Research design

Scientific research is designed and applied to find solution and answers to any particular query or a research problem (Bologna, Di Iorio, Peroni & Poggi, 2021). The scientific research can be carried out in various ways and forms. The two broader approaches used for any academic inquiry are qualitative and quantitative (Goulart & Torres, 2021). As explained earlier quantitative inquiry is more common than qualitative however; the trends of inquiry are shifting as the scholars understand the dynamics of humanistic or idealistic approach (Artioli & Sarli, 2021). The qualitative inquiry concentrates in comprehending the phenomenon which include beliefs, sociologies, cultural interpretations and meanings, experiences and interactions, attitudes and behaviors of a society or an individual (Boot & Bosma, 2021). Mostly, the data is non-numeric and is nowadays being integrated in the intervention studies as well (Bologna et al., 2021). Previously, the implication of qualitative inquiry was thought to be incongruent with the empirical experimentation due to philosophical limitations however, the contemporary researches have rectified this issue by claiming that the qualitative inquiry can add a valuable contribution which would not be possible with measuring the quantitative variables or numeric analysis alone (Goulart & Torres, 2021).

There are various phenomenon which require an in depth inquiry from the who have experienced a phenomenon (Boot & Bosma, 2021). For instance, semantics and deeper understanding of a local language and its interpretation or the behavior of patients, prisoners, employees, cultural group and their personality changes over time (Goulart & Torres, 2021). Similarly, there are numerous constructs which are not explored in detail and require more in-depth inquiries as the dimensions are not well established and the pre-determined, verified or tested scales are not available to measure the phenomenon quantitatively (Artioli & Sarli, 2021). Sometimes, the case requires a significant detailed investigation to understand the cause and effect along with the other intervening variables which is why interviewing or observation or a document analysis is required.

A point to be noted here is that the nature of the construct, its current status in the literature, amount of information present regarding the dimensions, types, usage and other dynamics of the construct determine whether a qualitative inquiry is suitable or a quantitative inquiry will suffice (Boot, & Bosma, 2021). Due to the subjectivity of the phenomenon under study and variation of reasoning and arguments presented in the literature on organizational politics, a qualitative approach has been used for this inquiry (Goulart & Torres, 2021). The literature itself suggests a deeper understanding of the topic through a qualitative inquiry and has encouraged the scholars to come forward and present in-depth analysis from the participant's perspective, as the current literature seems to lack in this particular area (Artioli, & Sarli)

### Research approach

The phenomenon of organizational politics is more about perceptions, as discussed earlier; therefore, it is pertinent to study and appreciate organizational politics' opinions and backgrounds (Acher, Perrouin & Cordy, 2021). The phenomenon needs further exploration. Hence, exploratory approach would be best suited for its inquiry. Since, opinions of people are to be used for analysis that will be possible through detailed, in-depth interviews. Creswell (2013) has specifically emphasized the use of interviewing techniques amongst qualitative approaches in this regard. Therefore, this paper proposes that in-depth interviews should be conducted, and the people's life experiences should be interpreted with the help of relevant software to understand the reasons participants have for holding that view (Goulart & Torres, 2021).

Moreover, the researchers should also investigate how the constructive side of organizational politics can be highlighted and used in real-time organizations. While talking about qualitative research, the four philosophical assumptions of qualitative research cannot be ignored, that direct the researchers and scholars regarding the modes of inquiry of a particular phenomenon: ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology (Goulart & Torres, 2021; Boot & Bosma, 2021, Sabir & Malik, 2022). For a clearer understanding of this constructivist research design let's look at these concepts in a bit detail.

Ontology, in simple terms, deals with existence, being, and reality. In qualitative paradigm, it is assumed that since it involves people and their distinct views and varying opinions on the subject., there can be multiple facets to the nature of reality as people's experiences vary

and these multiple realities have to be unveiled by the researcher trying to seek the different foundations of reality (Maxwell, 2021; Acher, Perrouin & Cordy, 2021).

Epistemology is about how the knowledge is gathered and what counts as knowledge, how we know what we know (Boot, & Bosma, 2021). The organizational politics in this research was studied and measured through people's subjective opinions, and their actions in different situations provided empirical evidence of how that knowledge is applied and utilized in an organizational environment. According to Creswell (2003), when subjective opinions and experiences are sought from the participants of the study, the inquirer must attempt to get as close to the participants as they can. One can adopt various methodologies for the inquiry mentioned above, like in-depth interviews, triangulation, and participant observations. Axiology also plays an important role in qualitative researches as the value systems and cultural contexts vary drastically in different geographical regions (Maxwell, 2021). The beliefs and opinions, particularly the sense of right and wrong, vary with diversity (Boot, & Bosma, 2021). Something, which is considered right by one group of people, might be wrong for another group in different states and even in different groups and clans of the same state.

Given the current argument of this paper, the axiological assumption, which accepts the different, unique, and rare value systems, personal backgrounds, caste divergence, and cultural contexts of the societies, should be accepted. This axiological assumption also requires bracketing, which implies that the researcher should acknowledge and report their own values, opinions, and biases as they can influence data collection and interpretation processes (Boot, & Bosma, 2021; Clarke, 2021). Finally, the methodological assumption clarifies the mode of inquiry used by the researcher, the detailed processes through which the researcher might gather, analyze and interpret the data, and suggest the study's conclusions (Maxwell, 2021). Here, as qualitative research mainly relies on the inductive reasoning approach, the researcher gathers data and observes the patterns and themes as they emerge while analyzing the data, which then serves the theoretical purpose usually done by the theory in quantitative research (Clarke, 2021).

### **Research methods**

The qualitative research begins with assumptions using a theoretical lens and investigating research queries through meanings that people assign to that societal problem and a social issue. In contrast to quantitative researchers, qualitative researchers rely on collecting data from the natural settings concerning the individuals and places under study (Corbin, 2021). For analyzing the collected data, an inductive approach is applied. It involves establishing and locating patterns and themes that emerge during the decoding of data collected from the study participants. The final report represents the opinions of the participants (Clarke, 2021). It is also mandatory that the researcher brackets her/his own opinions and ideas, reflecting in the report. The qualitative approach is complex in this regard as it interprets the participants' situations, ideas, and opinions. That is refined with the help of patterns and themes and made into a theory that calls for action.

The grounded theory approach is another method used by qualitative inquirers when no appropriate theory addresses the phenomenon sufficiently (Corbin, 2021; Lässig, 2022). Although one may find plenty of political science theories regarding politics, in general, addressing liberty, justice, property, rights, law, and the enforcement of laws, a clear, comprehensive theoretical lens through which one can see the phenomenon of organizational politics and its both sides was still missing as the literature cited above evidently explains (Corbin, 2021). In addition, theories are present, but they do not adequately explain the phenomenon or lack the addressed variables (Clarke, 2021). It indicates that the theory in use was perhaps too narrow or the phenomenon under study was beyond its scope (Shim, Johnson, Bradt & Gasson, 2021). It can be stated that there is a dire need to assess how people are experiencing the problems or the phenomenon in concern. How researchers see it as a challenge is explained in the subsequent section. It may explain why they have associated such rigid meanings to the phenomenon, which could have other possible viable dimensions (Maxwell, 2021).

### **Grounded Theory**

People actively perceive the problems which they face or the situations which they are exposed to, in life. They tend to associate a meaning to it and react according to the norms which they find fit (McCann & Polacsek, 2021). This is noted by various scholars as action interaction. The people, by virtue of their nature, are unable to isolate emotions from the whole action/ interaction phase (Lässig, 2022). Actions become prominent because of those emotional expressions and conceived as being more logical and rational (Battaglia, Kerr & Tamminen, 2021). The meanings are derived and reinforced at times through the process of action-interaction (Corbin, 2021; Lässig,

2022; Reyes, 2022). They encapsulate the contextual conditions in which the events are occurring to which one is reacting (Reyes, 2022). There are various contextual conditions such as; previous experiences, cultural aspirations and norms, intrinsic motivations, family and other social dynamics along with the societal relationships, external environment which may include economic, political, legal and technological too etc. (McCann & Polacsek, 2021; Battaglia, Kerr & Tamminen, 2021, Sabir & Malik, 2022). Strauss, (1987), has emphasized that the action/ interaction changes the dynamics of the situation or problem and as a consequence of that initial action further self and other interaction starts to occur (Haig, 1995; Clark, 2021; Lassig, 2022). This cyclic nature of the reaction to a situation, termed as action-interaction, has the potential to produce or trigger a change in the initial situation or the problem and a resolution is achieved (Haig, 1995; Lassig, 2022). This cycle however, is more complex than it looks as it involves various subjective entities and is more complex than the plain cause and effect correlations (Porr and Stern, 2021). Therefore, it's a complex methodology which is deployed to reveal the real life situations by weaving the findings and revelations together to comprehend and capture the unique, diverse and constantly changing reasons and rationales behind human actions and interactions at a deeper level (Battaglia, Kerr & Tamminen, 2021; Lassig, 2022; Reyes, 2022). As the grounded theory is not a very common method of inquiry in this area, let us go through its process to make it easier for the readers.

### **Grounded Theory Process**

Grounded theory aims at breaking the data coding them by categorizing at different levels and then weaving them back together to give a logical explanation or resolution around one core category of the phenomenon (Adu, 2021; McCann & Polacsek, 2021). There are various methods to administer a grounded theory approach and all have their definitive processes, however, the end product or the resultant theories are quite similar (Corbin, 2021; Lassig, 2022).

The process of grounded theory has been proposed by various researchers however, it was first developed by two sociologists, Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss. Since then, various other researchers have also proposed new approaches to conduct grounded theory or the constant comparison technique which was developed by Glaser and Strauss in 1967. The main steps of the process are listed below:

1. Theoretical sampling
  - i. Literature review
  - ii. Sampling
  - iii. Data collection
  - iv. Coding (Open, Axial and Selective)
  - v. Interpretation and analysis
2. Substantive theory
3. Proposing formal theory or a theoretical model
4. Constant comparison of integrating categories along with their properties
5. Delimiting the theory
6. Writing the theory

When applying grounded theory, the concept is found in terms of properties, dimensions or critical factors, order and ranking, and an overarching core concept that encapsulates the bits and pieces to form a theory. At the end, theoretical sampling is conducted to provide some degree of validation of the results and framework which has been proposed (Battaglia, Kerr & Tamminen, 2021). Another important thing to be considered here is that every researcher approaches the data differently (McCann & Polacsek, 2021; Reyes, 2022). One can never find two scholars who will explain the methodology or the process in same way because there are various choices available, the data richness, depth, familiarity and understanding of the method and research approach, sources of inspiration, values and beliefs and other scholarly work with which they are working (Partridge, 2021).

The analysis of the data starts with the interaction of the researcher or the interpreter and the data (Adu, 2021). The field notes and memos play a key role during the analysis (Corbin, 2021). It is advisable by many scholars to break down the field notes into relevant sections and examine the sections in a greater detail (Battaglia, Kerr & Tamminen, 2021; Landon, Ganong and Sanner, 2022). Some ethical considerations are taken into consideration when decisions regarding the data inquiry are made. Like, how much probing is done to get the information from the participant, or where to stop, or how to make the participants feel comfortable in sharing the private information in sensitive cases (Clarke, 2021). The challenge is to get the information without hurting the feelings of the participants and doing so without making them uncomfortable (McCann & Polacsek, 2021). The information collected is then categorized in the relevant

categories or sections which are broadly termed as coding. Coding has been explained in detail in the later sections of this chapter.

Codes are then broken down into concepts which convey the meaning in the data (Adu, 2021; Landon, Ganong & Sanner, 2022). There are various common approaches used for validating the interpretations however, as the researcher is the key player in the research the accuracy of interpretations is still a challenge the validation cannot be guaranteed (Battaglia, Kerr & Tamminen, 2021; Clarke, 2021). The efforts to improve the reliability and validity of this research are explained in the later sections. The next section explains how the interview questions can be designed using constructivist framework.

### ***Constructivist framework***

The research questions in this framework mainly centered on personal experience. It involves identifying the order and sync of the process involved and exploring the issues; at times, the inquirer might have to return to the study participants and make a more detailed inquiry to finalize the axial coding (Acher, Perrouin & Cordy, 2021). It requires insights into the central events, which result or influence this phenomenon, the possible strategies and resolutions that can be employed to solve it, and the consequences or effects occurring later in the process (Shim et al., 2021).

The questions may be inquired in the form of an interview, or the data can be collected and gathered in various other forms like audio/ videotapes, visuals, graphics, direct observations, or document analysis (Corbin, 2021; Shim et al., 2021).

Various researchers have applied this methodology for the data collected via interviews (Hoda, 2021; Porr and Stern, 2021). In this process, interviews are the constructions which are extracted from the participants and the researcher prepares the manuscripts (Yao, 2021; Momeni, 2021). This is also referred to as the raw products of constructivist approach in the scientific research (Momeni, 2021). As the results in the form of theory are constructed, there is a lot of information embedded in the manuscripts, which is why, it is then analyzed and categorized through various systematic stages (Clarke, 2021; Momeni, 2021). The analysis process involves various stages (Deterding & Waters, 2021). The first stage is open coding, where the data is gathered and categorized in major segments, and then subcategories are formed in the second stage. After the operationalization of the responses, the data is arranged around a continuum to study the data's properties further (Clarke, 2021). After open coding, axial coding occurs, and the data is rearranged to answer set questions, as explained earlier. The second stage of the analysis is selective coding, where the researcher tries to form a story around the patterns discovered through the open coding of the responses. The last stage involves coming up with a conditional matrix that visually portrays the core phenomenon (Corbin, 2021; Hoda, 2021).

As a result of this data analysis, the researcher reaches a tentative explanation or a substantive theory to explain the particular problem. That is also known as the evolving stage of the theory that is later tested for empirical verification.

### ***Proposed Participants for the study***

The study required an insight into organizational politics from knowledgeable participants who have a well-thought opinion on the subject. According to Pakistan's Bureau of Statistics, 76% of the people who have completed advanced studies work in academia. Therefore, academicians from the higher education institutes of Pakistan can serve as the main participants of the study. However, it is also noted by the scholars and various researchers that the senior executive members of the organizations in both the service and manufacturing industry are highly qualified and should be taken into consideration while taking an insight into any phenomenon relevant to their fields (Acher, Perrouin & Cordy, 2021). As explained in earlier chapters, organizational politics is omnipresent and is present everywhere, which is why this study can also undertake participants from the services and manufacturing industry, including banking and finance, oil and gas, agriculture, electricity and gas distribution, public administration, and defense, private industries and textile. The purpose is to bring insight from the people who have a clear understanding of the subject and have experience to speak for them. They can differentiate or at least give an insight to whether functional organizational politics is possible or present in any form in Pakistani organizations.

### ***Qualitative inquiry – Grounded theory: Coding and Thematic analysis***

In qualitative research, the first stage is familiarization which includes, reviewing the interview transcripts and transcribing them carefully for further analysis. At this stage, the researcher gets aware of the data and the scope of the responses. After the familiarization, the next stage is coding. It is considered the most critical stage of the thematic analysis as it leads to

the generation of themes and theory which the researcher is seeking. Coding refers to breaking and tagging the data that the researcher has been gathering and transcribing. Basically, according to the study conducted by Williams and Moser (2019), it is a procedure to identify a passage in the content or other items of data that can be a photograph, image, or a mere interview transcription. The research tends to identify the concepts while finding the relations among them. According to Watkins (2017), giving codes to the words and phrases in every response lets the researcher capture the reply. That, in return, lets the researcher have a better analysis with the summarization of the full survey results.

Therefore, following the new approach and methodology, as explained earlier, to inquire the phenomenon of organizational politics, this paper suggests the researchers might be able to present new findings and insights into this phenomenon which might present a complete and wholesome picture rather than a partial and skewed understanding of the phenomenon of organizational politics.

### **Significance**

This article provides a foundation for the qualitative inquiry which can not only broaden the depth of knowledge that we already have about the phenomenon but also explore different avenues through which we can operationalize and objectively measure the phenomenon in any organization and apply the same to bear the benefits of the functional organizational Politics. Its practical implications can benefit the employee and organizations as a whole to work as a synergetic unit.

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