

I'll manage myself: the moderator effect of positive framing on the relationship between organisational politics and engagement

The moderator effect of positive framing

Robinson James

Department of Human Resource Management, University of Jaffna, Jaffna, Sri Lanka

Received 25 May 2020
Revised 11 October 2020
31 January 2021
Accepted 9 March 2021

Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to investigate the influence of organisational politics on work engagement and the moderator effect of positive framing on this relationship

Design/methodology/approach – Data were collected from 241 public sector employees in Sri Lanka through a structured questionnaire and analysed with partial least square structural equation modelling (PLS_SEM).

Findings – The results indicated that organisational politics negatively influenced employees' work engagement, positive framing positively influenced engagement and weakened the negative relationship between politics and engagement.

Practical implications – This study suggests that organisation and individuals must take the necessary steps to enhance work engagement. Organisations must be transparent in all activities to avoid employees' negative perception. Also, organisations need to take steps to recruit employees with positive framing or develop this competency through training and development. Individuals also need to take necessary steps to frame the work environment positively to enhance their engagement in work.

Originality/value – This study extends the literature by being the first to examine the positive framing as a moderator in the relationship between politics and engagement. This study found that positive framing as a resource reduced the harmful effect of organisational politics on engagement and suggested positive framing can be considered as a resource in the future investigation of the job demand–resource model.

Keywords Management, HRM, Organisational politics, Engagement, Positive framing, Perception

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Employees' work engagement leads to a range of positive organisational- and individual-level outcomes, and it has become a prime measure of organisational success. It has become an exciting and vital construct in recent organisational and management research (James, 2019; Landells and Albrecht, 2019; Macey and Schneider, 2008). Extensive research has suggested that employees are highly engaged in their work when they feel that they have sufficient resources to meet the workplace demand (Harter *et al.*, 2002; Hakonen *et al.*, 2006; Kahn, 1990; Shuck, 2011). Organisational politics is a behaviour that is deliberately planned to defend and enhance self-interest without considering organisational goals (Ferris *et al.*, 2002; Guo *et al.*, 2019). It is a threatening workplace feature that negatively influences employees' workplace behaviour (Ferris *et al.*, 1989; Guo *et al.*, 2019). The harmful and adverse effects of organisational politics such as stress, burnout, work–family conflict, negative job attitudes, reduced motivation and turnover intention have been well established with theoretical and empirical evidence (Arefin *et al.*, 2020a; Chang *et al.*, 2009; Hochwarter *et al.*, 2020; Khattak and O'Connor, 2020). However, the influence of organisational politics on employee engagement has gained very little attention in the literature (Albrecht *et al.*, 2015; Barrick *et al.*, 2015). Employees who involve in political behaviour focus on maximising their



self-interest or their group interests (Cropanzano *et al.*, 1997; Vigoda, 2000) and thus, workplace with a high level of politics is perceived as an uncertain, risky, threatening and unfair phenomenon. According to the job demand–resource (JD-R) theory (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007), workplace consists of demands and resources. High job demands wear out employees' physical and mental resources that lead to loss of strength, resources and well-being (Marathe *et al.*, 2019). In a high political workplace, employees need to spend their resources for their survival, and thus, they lack resources to engage in their work.

The social cognitive theory suggests that people are not just reactive organisms shaped and guided by external and internal forces, but self-organising and proactive organisms (Bandura, 1986, 2001). Proactive employees are change-oriented and self-initiated. Positive framing is a dimension of employee's proactive behaviour (Ashford and Black, 1996). It is a cognitive self-management mechanism that helps individuals to increase learning and reduce uncertainty and stress (Ashford and Black, 1996; Owens, 2010). Also, an employee's engagement in the positive framing increases their personal resources and psychological capital that may facilitate employees to overcome uncertainty, risk and challenges created by organisational politics. However, the effect of employees' proactive engagement in positive framing on the relationship between organisational politics and engagement has not yet been investigated.

Therefore, in this study, the researcher aims to investigate the impact of organisational politics on work engagement and the moderator effect of positive framing in the relationship between organisational politics and engagement. The current study contributes to the theory and practice by relating perceived organisational politics to engagement in a new context (Sri Lanka) and being the first study to examine proactive behaviour (as a resource) as a moderator. Organisational politics is a fact of organisational life, but its consequences are harmful to both the organisation and employees. By introducing the positive framing as a moderator, this study deepens the understanding of the negative relationship between organisational politics and engagement. Both theoretical and practical contributions of this study are discussed in detail at the end of this paper.

Literature review and hypotheses development

Engagement

Engagement has been related to a range of positive individual- and organisational-level outcomes such as customer satisfaction, productivity, profit, organisational citizenship behaviours and employee retention (Christian *et al.*, 2011; Carter *et al.*, 2016). Engagement is a “positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption” (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002, p. 74). Engaged employees are in a motivational state, and they use all their resources into the work they perform (Kahn, 1990). According to Kahn (1990), employees who believe that they can express their views, and who are emotionally attached to the work, are highly engaged in their work. Meaningfulness, availability and safety are the three psychological conditions that lead to employee engagement (Kahn, 1990).

Extensive research suggested that job resources compared to the job demand are a significant predictor of work engagement (Hakanen *et al.*, 2006; Xanthopoulou *et al.*, 2007). Accordingly, when employees are provided with sufficient resources to perform their work, they are very much engaged in their work. In addition to the job resources, perceived person–organisation fit enhances employees' work engagement (Kahn, 1990). Moreover, burnout is viewed as the opposite of work engagement (Maslach and Leiter, 1997), and stress and burnout were strongly positively related to each other (Glasberg *et al.*, 2007), and thus, stress created by perceived organisational politics can lead to low work engagement.

Organisational politics

[Pfeffer \(1992\)](#) defines politics as a power in action. [Kacmar and Ferris \(1991\)](#) emphasise that organisational politics is the form of employee behaviour to maximise their self-interest at the expense of others' interests. Political behaviours in organisations are those activities that are not required as part of one's formal role in the organisation, but that influence the distribution of benefits within the workplace ([Farrell and Petersan, 1982](#)). [Ferris et al. \(1989\)](#) describe the perception of organisational politics as an employee's evaluation of the degree to which others attempt to meet their interest by involving in unlawful and self-serving activities. Individual and organisational factors contribute to the level of perceived organisational politics. [Ferris and Kacmar \(1992\)](#) found feedback, job autonomy, skill variety and opportunity for promotion contributed significantly to the explanation of variance in perceptions of organisational politics. Organisational politics is dynamic in work settings ([Hochwarter et al., 2020](#); [Kim et al., 2007](#)), and it is generally related to adverse work outcomes ([Rosen and Hochwarter, 2014](#)). [Ferris et al. \(1989\)](#) argued that the occurrence of actual politics is not a big deal, but what matters is the individuals' subjective perception of organisational politics.

Perceived organisational politics negatively affects the achievement of an organisational goal ([Ferris et al., 2002](#); [Kreutzer et al., 2015](#)) and harms the success of the organisation and individuals ([Asrar-ul-Haq et al., 2019](#); [Chang et al., 2009](#); [Drory, 1993](#); [Ferris et al., 1989](#); [Haider et al., 2020](#); [Rosen et al., 2014](#)). Perceived organisational politics is generally associated with increased psychological strain, burnout, turnover intentions and counterproductive work behaviours and low job satisfaction, organisational commitment, organisational trust, organisational justice and organisational citizenship behaviours ([Chang et al., 2009](#)). Moreover, organisational politics adversely affects organisational creativity ([Xu et al., 2020](#)) and employees' family satisfaction ([Arefin et al., 2020b](#)). [Bergeron and Thompson \(2020\)](#) found that perceived organisational politics negatively influences psychological uncertainty and employees' voice in the workplace. In general, organisational politics is related to adverse workplace outcomes because, in the workplace, political environment leads to high job demands ([Chang et al., 2009](#)). According to [Demerouti et al. \(2001\)](#), job demands are the stressors in the workplace, and it demands employees' physical and psychological effort. In the workplace, when employees perceive that they are working in a high political environment, they have to spend extra energy on observing others' behaviour and retaining their reputation.

Politics and engagement

Though the harmful and negative consequences of organisational politics have been well recorded in the literature, only a few studies have investigated the influence of perceived organisational politics on employee engagement. According to [Byrne et al. \(2017\)](#) and [Landells and Albrecht \(2019\)](#), employees' perceived organisational politics shrinks their engagement. There are only a few empirical investigations on the relationship between organisational politics and work engagement ([Karatepe, 2013](#)). Recently, [Landells and Albrecht \(2019\)](#) found that organisational politics did not have a significant direct influence on engagement; however, they found that organisational politics had a significant indirect influence on engagement through work meaningfulness.

The relationship between organisational politics and engagement can be explained through the JD-R model ([Bakker and Demerouti, 2007, 2014](#); [Demerouti et al., 2001](#)). According to the JD-R model, every job includes demands as well as resources. According to [Demerouti et al. \(2001, p. 501\)](#), job demands are the "aspects of the job that require sustained physical or mental effort and are therefore associated with certain physiological and psychological costs". Job demands exhaust energy, but job resources minimise job demands. The JD-R

theory highlights that while high engagement is an outcome of the job and personal resources and low engagement is an outcome of a lack of personal and job resources. By draining the energy of an employee, job demand can adversely influence their engagement at work.

Consistent with the JD-R theory, in their meta-analysis, [Crawford et al. \(2010\)](#) found that organisational politics negatively influences engagement. According to [Crawford et al. \(2010\)](#), challenging demands foster work engagement, but hindrance demands obstruct work engagement. Employees' perceived organisational politics is one of the hindrance demand ([Karatepe, 2013](#)). In a highly political environment, employees feel uncertainty and loss of control ([Rosen and Hochwarter, 2014](#)); consequently, they perceive that people are undermining and manipulating others, allocating resources and benefits out of the organisation's formal rule and abusing authority. In such an environment, employees have to spend more energy to survive in the workplace. Thus, their energy (resources) is depleted, and they may disengage in their work.

Moreover, employees engage in their work when they feel their work is priceless and useful to the organisation and society, safe bringing their full self to work without risk of negative outcomes and mentally and physically able to harness their whole self at the particular moment ([Kahn, 1990; Shuck, 2011](#)). Organisational politics as a hindrance demand can damage these psychological conditions and thus reduce employee engagement at work. Therefore, in this study, the researcher expects that high level of perceived organisational politics will reduce engagement at work.

H1. Employees' perceived organisational politics negatively influence their work engagement.

Positive framing as a moderator

People are self-organising and proactive organisms ([Bandura, 1986, 2001](#)), and they tend to be involved in self-control or self-management to establish control in various circumstances ([Ashford and Black, 1996](#)). Positive framing is a cognitive self-management mechanism that helps individuals to increase learning and reduce uncertainty and stress ([Ashford and Black, 1996; Owens, 2010](#)). Cognitive self-management arises when individuals make an effort to change their understanding of an event by controlling the cognitive frame they placed on the event ([Ashford and Black, 1996](#)).

Employees who engage in positive framing look on the positive side of things and view situations as opportunities than threats or obstacles. Positive framing involves interpreting events in a positive manner, and such interpretations may help to reduce stress, allow employees to feel positive energy and enable them to succeed in an uncertain environment ([Ashford and Taylor, 1990; James, 2019](#)). Positive framing, in a stressful situation, as a "primary appraisal" influences subsequent coping responses ([Folkman, 1984](#)). [Taylor and Brown \(1988\)](#) noted that positive framing as positive illusion enables the individual to reduce their stress and to recover from depression, and it increases their capability of creative and productive work.

When employees engage in positive framing, they interpret the situation and events as an opportunity and support, and such interpretations give employees a sense of control by increasing their personal resources, even though the actual situation remains unchanged. Therefore, employees' engagement in positive framing increases their resources, and such resources accumulate resources. Resources increase employees' psychological capital ([Gruman and Saks, 2013](#)).

Moreover, according to the JD-R theory, resources facilitates employees to engage in their work. In a political environment that creates uncertain, ambiguous and stressful situations, employees who engage in proactive behaviour by seeing such situation as challenging and an opportunity rather than obstacles and threats convert the political environment as a

challenging demand instead of hindrance demand. Challenging demands are resources that facilitate employees to handle the pressing issues and engage in their work in a high political environment. Therefore, the negative influence of organisational politics on engagement could be reduced by employees' positive framing. Based on these facts, researchers propose the following two hypotheses:

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H2a. Positive framing moderates the negative relationship between organisational politics and engagement.

H2b. Higher positive framing levels entail a weaker relationship between politics and engagement, while lower levels of positive framing lead to a stronger relationship between politics and engagement.

Research methodology and data analysis

This study adopted a quantitative approach and relied on cross-sectional and self-reported data. Cross-sectional and self-reported data are prone to common method variance (CMV). However, the researcher has made an attempt to minimise CMV in the survey design stage and the data analysis stage, as suggested by [Podsakoff et al. \(2003\)](#).

Participants

This study was conducted among permanent employees in the public sector organisation in Sri Lanka. In total, 400 employees were invited to participate in this study, but only 259 employees responded. Of those responses, 18 responses were removed from the study because of a large number of missing values (more than 15%), and only 241 questionnaires were in a useable state (effective response rate of 60%). The researcher employed the convenience sampling technique. The data were collected through a self-administered anonymous questionnaire. The researcher conducted a pilot test using ten employees to identify issues associated with the measures and questionnaire design. Then, the data were tested to ensure validity, reliability and common method bias.

Majority of the respondents were female, accounting for 54% ($n = 130$). Further, 29% of the respondents were unmarried ($n = 70$). As far as age is concerned, the majority of the respondents (41%, $n = 99$) were between the age of 36 and 50, whereas only 29% were below the age of 35. Majority of the participants (58%, $n = 140$) were between 11 and 20 years of experience, whereas only a few respondents (15%, $n = 36$) had less than ten years of experience. The high percentage of the respondents (72%, $n = 173$) were in a middle-level management position, and the same percentage of the respondents (14%, $n = 34$) were in the top- and bottom-level management positions in their respective organisations.

The relationship between the respondents' profile variables (marital status, gender, age, experience and management levels) and the three primary constructs (organisational politics, positive framing and engagement) was assessed ([Table 1](#)). The gender (1 = female, 2 = male), age and experience had a significant relationship with the primary constructs. Gender is positively related to positive framing (0.23). Age and experience are negatively related to organisational politics (-0.27 , -0.28), but they are positively related to engagement (0.24, 0.25).

Variables and measures

Engagement. The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale-9 (UWES-9) developed by [Schaufeli et al. \(2006\)](#) was employed to measure work engagement. This scale includes three dimensions: vigour, dedication and absorption. Past studies have shown UWES-9 as one factor with satisfactory reliability score ([Bakker and Xanthopoulou, 2013](#); [James, 2019](#)). By performing

exploratory factor analysis (EFA), the current study found that UWES-9 as a one-factor model. A sample item is: "I feel happy when I work intensely".

Organisational politics. In the current study, organisational politics was measured at the individual level using the six-item scale developed by Hochwarter *et al.* (2003). This scale measures the extent to which they perceived various political behaviours or activities in their organisations. Sample item includes: "People spend too much time sucking up to those who can help them".

Positive framing. In this study, positive framing was measured using a three-item scale adopted from Ashford and Black's (1996) proactive behaviour scale. This scale assesses respondents' state of cognitive self-management mechanism that they use "to alter their understanding of a situation by explicitly controlling the cognitive frame they place on the situation" (Ashford and Black, 1996). A sample item is "I tried to look on the bright side of things". In order to maintain consistency among scales, items of each construct were anchored on a five-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The previous studies and the current study have shown acceptable reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha > 0.7).

Results

Reliability and validity

Both indicator reliability and construct reliability of the three constructs: organisational politics, engagement and positive framing, have been assessed, and the results have been tabulated in Table 2. Indicator reliability (Götz *et al.*, 2010) was satisfactory; a loading of all latent variables with related factors was higher than 0.7. Construct reliability was assessed through two measures: Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR). The CR and Cronbach's alpha for each construct was satisfactory (greater than 0.7). The reliability results show that the indicators collectively gauge each construct adequately (Bagozzi and Baumgartner, 1994; Hair *et al.*, 2013).

Both convergent validity and discriminant validity were assessed through widely accepted criteria (Hair *et al.*, 2011, 2017). The researcher evaluated convergent validity through the average variance extracted (AVE) of each construct. The AVE of all constructs was between 0.72 and 0.81, which was more substantial than the expected value of 0.5 (Hair *et al.*, 2011). The researcher used three criteria (Fornell–Larcker criterion, loading and cross-loading and heterorait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio) to assess discriminant validity. The Fornell–Larcker criterion requires the square root of AVE of each construct should be larger than the most substantial correlation of any other constructs, and the results satisfy this criterion (Table 3). Further, each indicator's loadings to the specific construct are significantly higher

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Gender (1)	1.46	0.49							
Marital_Status (2)	1.70	0.45	0.16						
Age (3)	1.99	0.76	-0.21	0.31					
Experience (4)	2.12	0.63	0.11	0.18	0.33*				
Management levels (5)	2.00	0.53	0.14	0.10	0.20*	0.32*			
Engagement (6)	2.49	1.13	0.21	0.18	0.24*	0.25*	0.11		
Politics (7)	2.66	1.04	0.15	0.09	-0.27*	-0.28*	0.20	-0.62**	
Positive Fram (8)	1.99	0.96	0.23*	0.22	0.14	0.19	0.22	0.27**	-0.24**

Note(s): *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Table 1.
Mean, SD and
correlations between
the variables

Constructs	Loadings	Cronbach's alpha	CR	AVE	The moderator effect of positive framing
Engagement	0.84	0.90	0.92	0.72	
	0.89				
	0.88				
	0.87				
	0.71				
	0.88				
	0.71				
Politics	0.89	0.94	0.95	0.81	
	0.87				
	0.88				
	0.91				
	0.94				
	0.88				
	0.87				
Positive framing	0.89	0.85	0.90	0.75	
	0.71				
	0.92				
	0.94				

Note(s): AVE = average variance extracted, CR = composite reliability

Table 2.
Construct reliability and validity

Constructs	Engagement	Politics	Positive framing
Engagement	<i>0.85</i>		
Politics	-0.62	<i>0.90</i>	
Positive framing	0.27	-0.24	<i>0.87</i>

Note(s): Italic diagonal figures (italic) are the square root of AVE, shaded area shows the correlation between constructs

Table 3.
Fornell–Larcker criterion analysis for checking discriminant validity

than its cross-loading (Hair *et al.*, 2013). Also, the HTMT ratio of each pair not exceeded the maximum limit of 0.90 (Henseler *et al.*, 2015). These pieces of evidence ensure the existence of adequate convergent and discriminant validity (Hair *et al.*, 2017; Henseler *et al.*, 2015).

After confirming the measurement model quality, the structural model quality was assessed through widely accepted criteria suggested by Hair *et al.* (2011, 2017): multicollinearity, significance of path coefficient, variance explained (R^2), predictive relevance (Q^2) and the effect size (f^2). And, all the criteria were at the satisfactory levels. To examine the proposed relationship, the significance of each path coefficient was assessed via the bootstrapping technique (Preacher and Hayes, 2008; Tenenhaus *et al.*, 2005). In partial least squares structural equation model (PLS-SEM) setting, 5,000 samples in the bootstrapping and 0.05 significance level were selected to produce standard error and *t*-statistics. The results are shown in Table 4 and Figure 1.

	Engagement	<i>t</i> -value	<i>p</i> -value
Politics	-0.57	9.16	00
Positive framing	0.13	2.34	00
Moderating effect	0.14	2.19	02

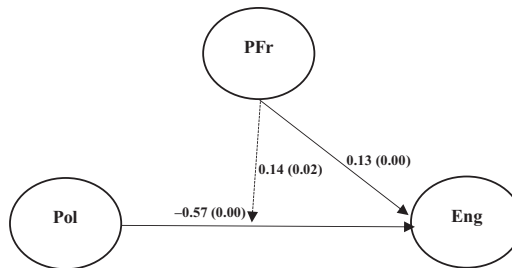
Table 4.
Path coefficients and its *t*-value and *p*-value

The results indicate that perceived organisational politics has a significant negative influence on engagement ($\beta = -0.57, p = 0.00$). The higher the level of perceived organisational politics, the lower the level of their engagement. Also, the higher the level of positive framing, the higher the level of engagement ($\beta = 0.13, p = 0.00$). Organisational politics explained 40% ($R^2 = 0.4$) variance in engagement.

Moderator effect

The model already included the main effect of positive framing, and its impact on engagement was positive ($\beta = 0.13, p = 0.00$). To examine the moderation effect of positive framing on the relationship between organisational politics and engagement, the interaction term (positive framing \times perceived politics) was developed. After introducing the interaction term, the reliability and validity of the model were assessed again, and the results were satisfactory.

Figure 1.
Research model with path coefficient and its significance (in parentheses)



The interaction term was significant ($\beta = 0.14, p = 0.02$). The simple effect of organisational politics on engagement ($\beta = -0.57$) indicates a medium effect size. When positive framing becomes higher (i.e. when positive framing is increased by one standard deviation point), the relationship between politics and engagement reduces to $\beta = -0.43$ (i.e. $-0.57 + 0.14$). Conversely, at a lower level of positive framing, the influence of perceived politics on engagement is increased ($\beta = -0.71$ (i.e. $-0.57 - 0.14$)). Therefore, when employees engage in a high level of positive framing, organisational politics becomes a less influential variable on employees' engagement. When positive framing is lower, organisational politics becomes more important in explaining engagement. In other words, the negative relationship of perceived politics to engagement becomes weaker for employees with high positive framing than for employees with low positive framing.

Moreover, one of the indicators of the effect of the moderator variable is the percentage of variance explained in the dependent variable by the interaction term. It can be assessed by comparing the percentage of variance explained with the interaction term included, and the interaction term excluded (Henseler and Fassott, 2010). In other words, the effect size (f^2) of the interaction term can demonstrate the size of the moderator effect. In this study, the interaction term ($\beta = 0.14, p = 0.02$) and changes in R^2 was significant (3% variance). Moreover, the interaction term explained 7.5% variance of total variance explained in engagement ($3/40 \times 100$). Therefore, the moderating effect of perceived positive framing can be crucial in this study, even though the effect size is small (3%).

Discussion

The current research assessed the influence of perceived organisational politics on engagement. Also, it investigated the moderator effect of "positive framing" in the relationship between perceived organisational politics and engagement. The results

demonstrated that perceived organisational politics negatively influences engagement as expected. This finding is consistent with previous studies in politics and engagement relationship (Byrne *et al.*, 2017; Karatepe, 2013; Mayuran and Kailasapathy, 2020). While challenging demands foster the work engagement, hindrance demands obstruct it (Crawford *et al.*, 2010). Organisational politics as a hindrance demand (Karatepe, 2013) could reduce employee engagement. In a highly political environment, employees perceive that people are undermining and manipulating others, allocating resources and benefits out of the formal rule of the organisation and abusing authority. In such an environment, employees have to spend extra energy for their survival and safety, and thus, their energy (resources) is depleted, and they may engage less in their work.

Further, the results of the current study indicated that positive framing had a positive influence on the engagement. As a negative moderator, it weakens the negative relationship between politics and engagement. In other words, higher positive framing levels entail a weaker relationship between politics and engagement, while lower levels of positive framing lead to a stronger relationship between politics and engagement. Individuals who engage in positive framing look at the positive side of the situation, and perceive the circumstances as an opportunity rather than a threat or obstacles (Ashford and Black, 1996; James, 2019). Such positive interpretations enable individuals to reduce stress, allow them to feel positive energy to manage uncertain and ambiguous situations created by the high level of organisational politics.

Moreover, employees who engage in proactive behaviour by seeing such a situation as challenging and an opportunity they could convert the political environment as a challenging demand instead of hindrance demand. Challenging demands as resources, facilitate employee to handle the situation and engage in their work in a high political environment. Therefore, positive framing reduces the negative impact of politics on engagement. The current study is the first that examined the positive framing as a moderator in the relationship between politics and engagement and found a significant moderator effect.

Theoretical implications

The findings of the study suggest several contributions to the literature. The negative influence of perceived organisational politics on engagement has been reported in a different study context (Byrne *et al.*, 2017; Crawford *et al.*, 2010; Karatepe, 2013). The current study also found the same relationship among public sector employees in the Sri Lankan context where a few studies have been done on politics and engagement. This study reported that although organisational politics has a significant negative effect on engagement, positive framing weakens the negative effect of organisational politics on engagement. Given the large number of studies showing the significant impact that engagement has on a range of positive individual and organisational level outcomes (Barrick *et al.*, 2015; Harter *et al.*, 2002; Hochwarter *et al.*, 2020; Macey and Schneider, 2008; Crawford *et al.*, 2010), this finding is significant. Further, the current study also extends the literature by being the first to examine the positive framing as a moderator on the relationship between politics and engagement.

Along with previous studies (Crawford *et al.*, 2010; Mayuran and Kailasapathy 2020), the current study is showing that organisational politics, as a hindrance demand, reduces engagement. Therefore, this study also suggests that organisational politics could be considered as an organisational-level demand in the JD-R model (Landells and Albrecht, 2019). The JD-R model acknowledges the positive influence of personal resources (e.g. self-efficacy) on employee engagement. The findings of this study suggest that positive framing that gives energy and helps individual to accumulate more resources to overcome workplace demands created by organisational politics can be considered as an individual-level resource in the future investigation of the JD-R model. Moreover, this study has found that personal

resource (e.g. positive framing) influence the relationship between job demand (organisational politics) and engagement. Therefore, this study suggests that personal resource in the JD-R model (positive framing) not only functions as a predictor variable but also as a moderator variable and weakens the direct influences of job demand on its adverse outcomes.

Practical implications

As organisational politics is related to negative consequences, management must understand the causes and consequences of organisational politics and how it can be effectively handled (Hochwarter *et al.*, 2020). The findings of the current study suggest that employees perceived organisational politics as a hindrance demand negatively influences their work engagement. Therefore, the organisation should be vigilant about a high level of perceived organisational politics that can damage the positive outcomes of both organisation and employees. As perceived organisational politics is an essential matter than the actual organisational politics (Ferris *et al.*, 1989), management should keep the workplace politics-free and must be transparent in all activities to avoid employees' negative perception on day-to-day activities. Also, management could enhance the ability of employees to cope with politics by establishing and adopting formal policies and procedures (Arefin *et al.*, 2020a, b). As positive framing reduces the effect of politics on engagement, the organisation should take steps to recruit employees with this competency or develop this competency through training.

Further, as job and personal resources lead to engaged workforces, who could mobilise additional resources (Xanthopoulou *et al.*, 2007), management should focus on creating resourceful work environments and training programmes that enhance employees' positive framing mind-set. In Sri Lanka, we can find the characteristics of collectivistic cultures, such as high power distance and paternalistic workplace communication, which could promote the political behaviour in the organisation. In such cultures, an organisation needs to impose close monitoring and control over the process than control over the outcome to reduce organisational politics.

As positive framing is a resource that enables individuals to mobilise more resources (Hobfoll *et al.*, 1990), individuals can enjoy several benefits by engaging in positive framing, and thus, they also should take necessary steps to enhance their positive framing competency. Individuals have to take necessary steps to frame the work environment positively, to avoid negative consequences. Individuals could manage the high political environment by enhancing their resource in the form of getting organisational support and/or increasing their psychological capital thorough engaging in positive framing.

Avenue for further research and limitations of the study

Further research can be directed towards deducting individual and organisational-level predictors of perceived organisational politics. There is a need for more research to be done on politics–engagement relationship to find out the moderator variable on these relationships (Atinc *et al.*, 2010). Future studies could also be directed towards identifying the role of employees' three psychological conditions: psychological meaningfulness, psychological safety and psychological availability (Kahn, 1990; Shuck, 2011), as moderators in the relationship between perceptions of organisational politics and its outcomes. The current study found that males are more engaged in positive framing than females, but further investigations are needed to confirm this relationship. Further studies can be directed to investigate the individual- and organisational-level factors that influence the positive framing that increases work engagement

Limitations of the current study need to be acknowledged. As it is cross-sectional research, it limits the interpretation of causality. Longitudinal research is required to determine the

cause and effect relationship. The current study demonstrates organisational politics as a hindrance demand by reporting the negative influence of politics on engagement. Moreover, this study has found that positive framing reduces the negative effect of politics. Byrne *et al.* (2017), in their study, reported the positive outcomes of organisational politics. Therefore, further studies could be directed to identify personal and individual factors that make individuals perceived organisational politics as a hindrance appraisal or challenging appraisal. For example, the inner-circle members in a high political environment may be less likely to see politics as a hindrance demand.

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About the author

Robinson James received his PhD in Management from the University of Auckland, New Zealand. His research interest includes career management, expatriation, repatriation, organisational politics and organisational socialisation. He has published his work in *Journal of Career Management*, *Management Research Review*, and *South Asian Journal of Human Resource Management*. He is currently a Senior Lecturer of Department of Human Resource Management in University of Jaffna Sri Lanka. Robinson James can be contacted at: robinson435@gmail.com

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