Organizational politics and employee job performance in the tourism and hospitality industry: workplace stress and counterproductive work behavior

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Abstract

Purpose — This study aims to explore how job performance (EJP) is affected by employees’ perception of organizational politics (POP). It also investigates the mediating roles of workplace stress (WS) and counterproductive work behavior (CWB).

Design/methodology/approach — Data was gathered from employees working in category (A) travel agencies and five-star hotels in Egypt. A partial least squares structural equation modeling analysis was conducted using 468 valid responses.

Findings — The findings indicate that there is a negative correlation between POP and EJP. Additionally, there is a positive correlation between POP and CWB as well as WS. The results also demonstrate a negative correlation between WS and CWB with EJP. Moreover, the findings suggest that CWB and WS act as partial mediators in the relationship between POP and EJP.

Originality/value — The research included some ground-breaking investigations. Currently, research on the effects of POP on CWB, WS and EJP is insufficient. As well, the current study attempts to measure the mediating role of CWB and WS in the link between POP and EJP. The current study has filled a gap in the tourism and hospitality literature, human resources management literature and organizational behavior literature by empirically analyzing these links in the context of Egyptian hotels and travel agencies.

Keywords COVID-19, Crisis, Airline promotion, Message framing, Risk, Regulatory focus, Prevention focus, Promotion focus, Framing, Regulatory, Message

Paper type Research paper

酒店和旅游业的组织政治和员工工作绩效：工作场所压力和适得其反的工作行为

摘要

目的：本研究旨在探讨员工对组织政治 (POP) 的看法如何影响工作绩效 (EJP)。它还调查了工作场所压力 (WS) 和适得其反的工作行为 (CWB) 的中介作用。

设计/方法论/途径：调查收集了埃及 (A) 类旅行社和五星级酒店员工的反馈，对 468 个有效回复进行了PLS-SEM 分析。

发现：结果显示，POP 与员工工作绩效呈负相关，此外，POP 与反生产力工作行为和工作场所压力呈正相关，研究结果还表明，工作场所压力和适得其反的工作行为与员工的工作绩效之间存在负相关关系。此外，结果表明 CWB 和 WS 调节 POP 和 EJP 之间的关系。

原创性/价值：该研究包括一些开创性的调查。目前，POP 对 CWB、WS、EJP 影响的研究还不够。从上下文相关性的角度来看，无法对酒店和旅行社中这些变量之间的联系进行实证分析。当前的研究通过在埃及酒店和旅行社的背景下对这些联系进行实证分析，填补了旅游和酒店文献、人力资源管理和组织行为文献的空白。

关键词：组织政治认知，组织政治工作表现，工作压力，适得其反的工作行为，酒店和旅游业
Política organizacional y desempeño laboral de los empleados en la industria del turismo y la hotelería: Estres y conductas laborales contraproducentes

Resumen

Objetivo: Este estudio pretende explorar cómo el desempeño laboral (EJP) se ve afectado por la percepción que tienen los empleados de la política organizativa (POP). También investiga los papeles mediadores del estrés laboral (WS) y el comportamiento laboral contraproducente (CWB).

Diseño/metodología/enfoque: Se recopilaron datos de empleados que trabajaban en agencias de viajes de categoría (A) y hoteles de cinco estrellas en Egipto. Se realizó un análisis de Modelización de Ecuaciones Estructurales por Mínimos Cuadrados Parciales (PLS-SEM) utilizando 468 respuestas válidas.

Resultados: Los resultados indican que existe una correlación negativa entre POP y EJP. Además, existe una correlación positiva entre POP y CWB, así como WS. Los resultados también demuestran una correlación negativa entre WS y CWB con EJP. Además, los resultados sugieren que CWB y WS actúan como mediadores parciales en la relación entre POP y EJP.

Originalidad/valor: La investigación incluye algunas investigaciones pioneras. En la actualidad, la investigación sobre los efectos de la POP en la CWB, la WS y la EJP es insuficiente. Además, el presente estudio intenta medir el papel mediador de la CWB y la WS en el vínculo entre la POP y la EJP. El presente estudio ha llenado un vacío en la literatura sobre turismo y hotelería, en la literatura sobre gestión de recursos humanos y en la literatura sobre comportamiento organizativo al analizar empíricamente estos vínculos en el contexto de los hoteles y agencias de viajes egipcios.

Palabras clave Percepción de la política organizacional, Rendimiento laboral, Estrés laboral, Comportamiento laboral contraproducente, Industria del turismo y la hotelería

Tipo de papel Trabajo de investigación

Introduction

Perceived organizational politics represent behavior strategically designed to be more self-serving, thus conflicting with organizational goals (Vigoda-Gadot, 2007). These politics have become a major part of the organization’s life. POPs are also related to the processes implemented to control resources to achieve organizational goals according to the power relations in the workplace (Shrestha, 2021a, 2021b).

POPs are detrimental to performance and the organization as a whole like counterproductive work behaviors. Daskin and Tezer (2012) revealed that POP among hospitality frontline supervisors had a positive influence on their intentions to leave their positions or turnover. Similarly, the study conducted by Agina and Abdelhakim (2021) discovered a noteworthy positive association between political behavior and turnover intentions among employees working in hotels and travel agencies in Egypt.

POP has negative consequences for employees in the tourism and hospitality sector (Khan et al., 2019). As well, POP has a negative impact on organizational citizenship behavior in touring companies (Khan et al., 2019).

Employees’ perceptions of organizational politics can significantly impact their job performance, leading to demotivation, disengagement and reduced effort (Zivnuska et al., 2004). Furthermore, the role of top-level management in shaping these perceptions is crucial. When senior management fails to provide clear and transparent communication about decisions and organizational changes, it creates a sense of secrecy and uncertainty among employees, fostering suspicions of political motives (Naseer et al., 2016).

POP have been extensively studied in management literature, but their exploration within the tourism industry remains limited (Elbanna, 2016). It has become crucial for organizations in the tourism and hospitality sector to understand the negative effects of POP on employees’ job outcomes. The prevalence of POP in the workplace, especially in hospitality firms, highlights the urgent need for further research in this area (Khairy, 2019).

Existing studies have demonstrated a link between POP and EJP (Shrestha, 2021a, 2021b), WS (Iqbal Khan et al., 2020) and CWB (Meisler et al., 2020) across diverse sectors. Nonetheless, there is a scarcity of research that specifically explores these connections within
the context of the tourism and hospitality industry. This research gap emphasizes the importance of investigating how POP impacts EJP, WS and CWB within this particular industry.

Workplace stress have a significant impact on EJP, particularly in the tourism and hospitality industry (Vijayan, 2017). Understanding how WS acts as a mediator between POP and EJP is essential in this context. This research can provide insights into the specific stressors triggered by POP and their effects on EJP. Additionally, CWB, which encompasses harmful actions within the workplace, is a crucial concern in travel agencies and hotels (Wallace and Coughlan, 2023). Investigating how CWB mediates the relationship between POP and EJP in this industry can shed light on the negative behaviors arising from POP and their impact on EJP.

By bridging this research gap, scholars have the opportunity to enhance the knowledge base of the tourism and hospitality industry, leading to a more holistic comprehension of the interplay among POP, WS, CWB and EJP. This understanding can serve as a valuable resource for shaping organizational policies, interventions and practices aimed at fostering positive work environments, improving job performance and mitigating the adverse impacts of POP within the industry.

Literature review and hypotheses development

Chang et al. (2009) defined POP as a set of unlawful and unacceptable behaviors in the workplace, which is based on achieving the individual's personal interests at work. POP encompass employees' individual beliefs and interpretations regarding the existence of political behaviors and actions within their organization, as noted by Naseer et al. (2016). These perceptions can differ among employees and are shaped by their experiences, observations and interactions in the workplace. Within hospitality organizations, POP forms include favoritism, nepotism, lack of transparency, information withholding, rumor mills and gossip, coalition formation, unfair resource allocation and absence of meritocracy (Khairy, 2019). POP has many negative effects in the work environment. The role of POP in increasing counterproductive work behaviors and job stress will necessarily lead to decreased employee’s performance (Khokhar and Zia-ur-Rehman, 2017). The literature describing the associations between variables (POP, CWB, WS and EJP) is reviewed in the following section. Figure 1 depicts the conceptual framework.

Conservation of resources theory

According to Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, individuals are driven to obtain and safeguard resources that are crucial for their well-being and success. POP can result in the depletion of resources for employees (Mao et al., 2021). For instance, if POP leads to a decrease in autonomy (Elbanna, 2016), limited access to rewards and recognition or strained relationships with colleagues or superiors (Bodla and Danish, 2009), employees may experience a loss of significant resources (Charoensukmongkol, 2023). These resource losses can contribute to heightened workplace stress (Daskin and Tezer, 2012). COR theory also underscores the significance of resource investment and compensation as coping strategies. When employees encounter resource loss attributed to POP, they may allocate additional resources, such as time, effort or emotional energy, to compensate for the loss and sustain their job performance. However, this investment might be detrimental to their well-being and could contribute to amplified levels of workplace stress (Hobfoll, 2001). COR theory places significant emphasis on workplace stress. The stress experienced by employees as a result of POP, including resource loss and heightened resource investment, can contribute to elevated stress levels (Hobfoll et al., 2018). This stress can manifest in various forms, such as emotional exhaustion, burnout and reduced motivation in tourism and hospitality industry (Chuang and Lei, 2011).

The relationship between perceived organizational politics and employee job performance. Within service industry, POP reduces job satisfaction, as employees may perceive their work environment as unfair and unpredictable, lacking transparency (Snipes et al., 2023).
Additionally, POP weakens employees’ commitment to the organization, causing a disconnect from its goals and values (Malik et al., 2019). Furthermore, POP erodes trust and confidence in the organization and its leadership, causing employees to question the fairness of decision-making processes. This loss of trust can impact employees’ confidence in the organization, its leaders and their colleagues, ultimately affecting their job satisfaction and commitment levels (Yuan et al., 2022; Camilleri et al., 2023). Also, Rosen and Levy (2013) emphasized the negative impact of POP in creating a work environment that significantly reduces employee performance. Shrestha (2021a, 2021b) and Vigoda-Gadot (2007) confirmed that employee performance is negatively affected by POP. Kalyar et al. (2019), Karatepe (2013) emphasized that a higher degree of POP has a negative impact on performance in the tourism and hospitality. So, the following hypothesis is postulated:

**H1.** Perceived organizational politics negatively correlates with employee job performance.

The relationship between perceived organizational politics and counterproductive work behaviors. Counterproductive work behavior refers to unethical and illegal behaviors and practices by employees to disrupt the work of the organization (Gruys and Sackett, 2003). POP contributes to employees engaging in counterproductive work behaviors for several reasons. In organizations where politics have a significant influence, there may be limited resources such as promotions, salary increases, appealing projects or recognition, creating unhealthy competitive environment where employees may resort to undermining colleagues or the organization to secure these resources for themselves (Buchanan and Badham, 2020). In environments with high levels of POP, employees may feel vulnerable regarding job security and career progression opportunities, leading individuals to employ counterproductive behaviors (Son et al., 2023). The positive relationship between POP and counterproductive work behaviors is confirmed by Meisler et al. (2020). Therefore, the following hypothesis is suggested:

**H2.** Perceived organizational politics positively correlates with counterproductive work behaviors.
The relationship between perceived organizational politics and workplace stress. Employee stress in hospitality workplaces is influenced by various factors, as identified by Tiyce et al. (2013). These factors include employment conditions, shift work, demanding job roles, emotional labor, interactions with patrons, uncertainty, lack of control, legal responsibilities, ethical concerns and high-pressure environments. POP contributes to different types of stress among employees. When employees perceive POP, they may experience increased role ambiguity (Bodla and Danish, 2009). Furthermore, POP fosters interpersonal conflict among employees, leading to strained relationships, trust issues and navigate tense interactions between colleagues or superiors (Tang et al., 2023). As confirmed by Chen et al. (2022), POP represents a strong stress factor on employees. Iqbal Khan et al. (2020) proved the positive effect of POP on stress. Hence, the following hypothesis is presented:


The relationship between counterproductive work behaviors and employee job performance. Ariani (2013) described the relationship between counterproductive work behaviors and the employee’s performance in the opposite directions, that is, the spread of counterproductive work behaviors leads to a significant decrease in the employee’s performance. These unethical counterproductive work behaviors encompass acts such as sabotage, theft or fraud, workplace bullying, harassment or discrimination, misuse of resources, data breaches or privacy violations, conflict of interest and retaliation against whistleblowers (Mercado et al., 2018). Involving employees in such unethical behavior causes many problems for the organization and its employees, reduces organizational efficiency, increases organizational costs and weakens the employee’s performance (Gulza et al., 2014). Wang and Chen (2022) and Sambung (2019) confirmed the negative effect of counterproductive work behaviors on employees’ job performance. Consequently, the following hypothesis is assumed:

H4. Counterproductive work behaviors negatively links with employee job performance.

The relationship between counterproductive work behaviors and workplace stress. The understanding of workplace stress has evolved over time. Initially, it was seen as external pressure from the environment and later as internal strain within the individual. In modern terms, workplace stress is defined as the dynamic interaction between the individual and the situation, encompassing both psychological and physical aspects. It occurs when an individual’s resources are insufficient to cope with the demands and pressures of a specific situation (Salem, 2015). Counterproductive work behaviors also led to spreading unethical behaviors at work, which made employees feel disrespected and increased stress (Baloch et al., 2017). Also, workplace deviant behaviors are detrimental to the performance of tourism firms (Shehawy, 2022). So, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5. Counterproductive work behaviors positively links with workplace stress.

The relationship between workplace stress and employee job performance. The impact of workplace stress may be positive or negative on the employee’s performance. This effect may be positive when the level of stress is low (Vijayan, 2017), and thus pushes employees to exert more efforts and motivate them to improve performance better, while this effect may be negative when the level of stress is high, and thus negatively affects their morale and job satisfaction and lower performance (Vijayan, 2017). Also, Iskamto (2021) confirmed the negative impact of stress on employees’ performance. Kalyar et al. (2019) discovered that in the tourism and hospitality industry, employees experiencing higher levels of stress exhibit lower levels of creativity and in-role performance. Thus, the following hypothesis is assumed:

The mediating role of counterproductive work behaviors in the relationship between perceived organizational politics and workplace stress. POP is a predictor of negative work outcomes, as well as unethical behaviors in the workplace, meaning that these politics may constitute organizational and functional stress that impede achieving positive work outcomes (Meisler et al., 2020). When employees realize the lack of fairness and objectivity of managers, they show anger, anxiety, tension, hatred and lack of commitment within the work environment, which affects the employees’ functional behaviors and their relationships with their colleagues and managers (Daniel et al., 2022). This affects the employees desire to engage in organizational citizenship behaviors, and they deliberately neglect work to harm the organization, which creates an atmosphere of stress in workplace (Chen and Ye, 2023; Daniel et al., 2022). So, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H7. Counterproductive work behaviors mediate the relationship between perceived organizational politics and workplace stress.

The mediating role of counterproductive work behaviors in the relationship between perceived organizational politics and employee job performance. POP weakens employees’ sense of justice and illegally exploit the organization’s resources to serve some of the organization’s employees as a result of the power relations they acquired in their positions. In addition, these politics weaken the loyalty, and the absence of human relations between management and employees, as well as between employees and each other (Cohen and Diamant, 2019). Such politics may encourage deviant behaviors at work and poor task performance (Cohen and Diamant, 2019). Meisler et al. (2020) explained that POP creates organizational pressures that push employees to destructive behaviors such as counterproductive work behaviors, whether against the organization or against colleagues who only serve their interests, which ultimately leads to job dysfunction and failure to complete work tasks. Hence, the following hypothesis is suggested:

H8. Counterproductive work behaviors mediate the relationship between perceived organizational politics and employee job performance.

The mediating role of workplace stress in the relationship between perceived organizational politics and employee job performance. As a result of negative practices and behaviors in the politicized work environment, POP contributes to employees’ feelings of stress and job burnout, unwillingness to play additional roles at work, distraction of employees’ focus and job instability, which is reflected in lower performance. These politics lead to employees feeling unfair in distributing workloads, organizational constraints and job stress, which weakens their morale and motivation at work, and performance is negatively affected (Aftab and Javeed, 2012). POP also imposes a lot of organizational stress on employees, such as violation of the psychological contract, job injustice and job restrictions that impede the achievement of work goals and weaken effective performance (Meisler et al., 2020). Chang et al. (2009) used POP as a stressor to explain the relationship between stress, anxiety and job performance. So, the following hypothesis is suggested:


Materials and methods

Measures and instrument development. The survey was divided into two parts: the first, which dealt with latent variables, contained 32 items, and the second, which dealt with the characteristics of the study sample, had 5 questions: gender, age, education, work experience and work organization. POP was assessed using the 12-item scale of Kacmar and Ferris (1991). Example item: “There is an influential group that no one dares to cross.” EJP was measured by a 10-items scale adapted from Na-Nan et al. (2018). Example item: “Duties are completed carefully and accurately”. Faisal et al.’s (2019) five-items scale was used to measure WS. Example item: “I frequently become tense
and irritated while working.” A 5-items scale of Fox et al. (2012) was used to assess CWB. Example item: “Refused to assist a colleague at work.” All scale used in this study were first originated in English and then translated into Arabic using the back translation technique. The Arabic versions used in the present study were validated. With the use of a five-point Likert scale, all latent variables were evaluated.

**Sampling and data collection.** The study model was assessed using information gathered from staff members at Egypt’s category (A) travel agencies and five-star hotels during the months of December 2021 to March 2022. In Egypt, there were 158 five-star hotels and 2,222 category (A) travel agencies (Ministry of tourism and antiquities, 2018). This study’s primary sample frame is for category (A) travel agencies was Greater Cairo. Category (A) travel agencies in Greater Cairo account for approximately 85% of all Egyptian travel agencies (Al-Azab and Al-Romeedy, 2023). While the sample frame for the five-star hotels was Greater Cairo and Alexandria. Greater Cairo and Alexandria have a respectable number of five-star hotels, with about 38 hotels (Egyptian Hotel Association, 2023). The five-star hotels and travel agencies were chosen using a judgmental sample approach. This sampling strategy is especially beneficial as the researcher lacks the money and time to conduct a large-scale survey. The convenience sampling approach was also used to collect data from employees in these organizations (those who agreed to participate in the research).

The investigated enterprises were first guaranteed that the questionnaire will be completely anonymous and confidential. Around 800 questionnaires were distributed to the investigated enterprises. There were only 468 valid forms collected, which represents a response rate of 58.5%; 299 (63.9%) questionnaires were collected from 28 five-star hotels, and 169 (36.1%) questionnaires were collected from 40 category (A) travel agencies.

**Common method biases**

Prior to conducting further statistical analysis, an assessment was conducted to determine the presence of common method variance (CMV). CMV is a phenomenon that can lead to misleading correlations, particularly when cross-sectional data collection methods, such as simultaneous surveys, are used to measure constructs. In this particular study, CMV was assessed using two techniques: the Harman’s single-factor test and principal component analysis (Al-Azab and Al-Romeedy, 2023). The results of the CMV assessment indicate that none of the variables exhibit a dominant factor that accounts for more than 50% of the overall variation. Consequently, CMV does not appear to be a significant concern in this study.

**Data analysis**

The data was analyzed with partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) using WarpPLS 7.0 (Kock, 2021). PLS-SEM is widely accepted as a tool in the empirical tourism management literature (Al-Azab and Al-Romeedy, 2023). It is an appropriate approach for evaluating sophisticated structural models with direct and indirect pathways between multi-item variables (Manley et al., 2021).

**Results**

**Participant’s characteristics**

Of the 468 respondents, there were 86.5% men and 13.5% females, with 44.9% being under 30 years and 40.6% being between 30 and less than 40 years. Moreover, 77.8% of respondents had a bachelor’s degree. In addition, 33.8% had less than two years of work experience and 32.1% had 2–5 years’ experience. Additionally, 63.9% of respondents worked in five-star hotels, whereas 36.1% worked in travel agencies (Table 1).
Measurement model

Item loading that is larger than 0.5 is considered acceptable (Hair et al., 2010). For the current study, all item loadings were estimated and found to be acceptable, ranging between 0.570 and 0.883. The average variance extracted (AVE), a metric to evaluate convergent validity and the composite reliability coefficients, a metric to evaluate internal consistency in scale items, are connected to the quality of a measure (Shrestha, 2021a, 2021b). According to Table 2, composite reliability for all variables is satisfactory, as all variables are more than 0.7. Also, based on Hair et al. (2010) criteria, the scales’ convergent validity is confirmed since the AVE values are larger than 0.5.

To confirm discriminant validity, the correlation between two latent variables must be considerably smaller than unity (Franke and Sarstedt, 2019). The results in Table 3 show that the AVE value for each variable is higher than the highest common value, confirming the discriminant validity in the study model.

Model fit and quality indices for the research model. Prior to hypotheses testing, model fit was investigated. According to Kock (2021), all model fit and quality index findings meet the requirements (see Table 4).

Multi-group analysis (MGA) was conducted to assess the moderating role of gender on the proposed relationships (see Table 5). MGA was also used to explore if there are any differences in the results of examining the proposed relationships by the difference in workplace either hotel or travel agency (see Table 6).

Structural model assessment

Findings from the hypothesis testing (see Figure 2, Tables 7 and 8) demonstrated that there is a negative relationship between POP and EJP ($\beta = -0.29$, $P < 0.01$). Thus, $H1$ is supported. Also, a positive relationship between POP and CWB ($\beta = 0.46$, $P < 0.01$) and WS ($\beta = 0.19$, $P < 0.01$). So, $H2$ and $H3$ are supported. In addition, CWB had a negative
relationship with EJP ($\beta = -0.23$, $P < 0.01$) and a positive relationship with WS ($\beta = 0.71$, $P < 0.01$). Therefore, $H4$ and $H5$ are supported. Furthermore, there is a negative relationship between WS and EJP ($\beta = -0.14$, $P < 0.01$). Hence, $H6$ is supported.

Finally, Preacher and Hayes (2008) approach was used to examine the mediation. The mediating effects proposed in this study were evaluated using the two stages described by Preacher and Hayes (2008): bootstrapping the indirect impact (total effect) and bootstrapping

Table 2
Descriptive statistics, factor loadings, reliability and convergent validity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>Item loading</th>
<th>Composite reliability</th>
<th>AVE</th>
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<td>WS.4</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>0.859</td>
<td>0.775</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WS.5</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>0.808</td>
<td>0.803</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Counterproductive work behavior (CWB)</strong></td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>0.908</td>
<td>0.665</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CWB.1</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>0.699</td>
<td>0.820</td>
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<tr>
<td>CWB.2</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>0.966</td>
<td>0.786</td>
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<tr>
<td>CWB.3</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>0.794</td>
<td>0.837</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>CWB.4</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>0.755</td>
<td>0.777</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CWB.5</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>0.749</td>
<td>0.854</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

Source: Table by authors

Table 3
Discriminant validity results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>EJP</th>
<th>POP</th>
<th>WS</th>
<th>CWB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EJP</td>
<td>0.737</td>
<td>-0.263</td>
<td>-0.083</td>
<td>-0.129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POP</td>
<td>-0.263</td>
<td>0.726</td>
<td>0.484</td>
<td>0.402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WS</td>
<td>-0.083</td>
<td>0.484</td>
<td>0.830</td>
<td>0.800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CWB</td>
<td>-0.129</td>
<td>0.402</td>
<td>0.800</td>
<td>0.815</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Table by authors
the confidence interval (see Table 8). Results showed that POP effects on WS was significant through CWB ($\beta = 0.328$, $P < 0.001$, $SE = 0.031$). Also, POP effect on EJP was significant via CWB ($\beta = -0.056$, $P = 0.044$, $SE = 0.032$) was significant. However, POP effect on EJP was not significant via WS ($P = 0.343$). Regarding CWB as a mediator in the relationship between POP and WS, the results revealed that the indirect impact' Std. $\beta = 0.328$ ($0.461 \times 0.711$) was statistically significant with a $t$-value of 10.573. Also, the indirect impact of 0.328, 95% Bootstrapped Confidence Interval: (LL $= 0.267$, UL $= 0.389$) does not straddle a 0 in between, implying that there is mediation. As a result, the mediation effect of CWB in the POP-WS relationship can be included as statistically significant. Thus, $H7$ is supported.
Concerning CWB as a mediator in the relationship between POP and EJP, the results revealed that the indirect impact' Std. $\beta = -0.104$ ($0.461 \times -0.226$) was statistically significant with a $t$-value of $-3.256$. Also, the indirect impact of $-0.104$, 95% Bootstrapped Confidence Interval: $(LL = -0.167, UL = -0.041)$ does not straddle a 0 in between, implying that there is mediation. As a result, the mediation effect of CWB in the POP-EJP relationship can be included as statistically significant. So, $H8$ is supported.

For WS as a mediator in the relationship between POP and EJP, the results revealed that the indirect impact' Std. $\beta = -0.027$ was statistically insignificant. Also, the 95% Bootstrapped Confidence Interval does straddle a 0 in between, implying that there is no mediation. As a result, the mediation effect of WS in the POP-EJP relationship cannot be included as statistically significant. Therefore, $H9$ is rejected. Additionally, Figure 2 showed that POP interpreted 21% of the variance in CWB ($R^2 = 0.21$). Moreover, POP and CWB interpreted 45% of the variance in WS ($R^2 = 0.67$). In addition, POP, CWB and WS explained 17% of the variance in EJP ($R^2 = 0.17$).
Discussion

The study aims to evaluate the link between POP and EJP, CWB and WS, examine the mediating role of CWB in the link between POP and WS and investigate the mediating role of CWB and WS in the relationship between POP and EJP. A quantitative technique is used in this study to achieve the study aims, with a questionnaire used to collect data from Egyptian travel agencies and hotels.

The findings highlight the negative relationship between POP and EJP. This result is in line with Rosen and Levy (2013) who confirmed the negative link between POP and EJP. As well, Kalyar et al. (2019), Karatepe (2013) agreed with this result, as they indicated that POP has a negative link with employees’ performance in tourism and hospitality industry.

The findings also indicate that there is a positive relationship between POP and CWB. This result is consistent with Meisler et al. (2020), who revealed that POP positively correlates with CWB. Son et al. (2023) explained the positive link between POP and CWB through the effect of POP on employees’ feelings of job insecurity and difficulty in career advancement, which prompts them to engage in counterproductive behaviors. Likewise, the current study’s findings demonstrate that POP correlates positively with WS. This result is agreed with Bodla and Danish (2009), who demonstrated that POP leads to workplace stress. Besides, Iqbal Khan et al. (2020) who pointed out that there is a positive link between POP and WS. Chen et al. (2022) stated that POP is a source of workplace stress.

As well, the findings depicted the negative link between CWB and EJP. This result is in line with Ariani (2013) who indicated the negative correlation between CWB and EJP. Wang and Chen (2022) and Sambung (2019) also revealed the negative effect of CWB on EJP. The findings indicate the positive relationship between CWB and WS. This result is in line with Shehawy (2022) who reported that deviant behaviors negatively affect employee performance in tourism firms. In addition, Baloch et al. (2017) added that CWB increases workplace deviant behaviors that increase stress.

The results also reveal the negative relationship between WS and EJP. This result in line with Shahu and Gole (2008) and Iskamto (2021) who clarified the negative link between WS and EJP. This result also confirmed within tourism and hospitality industry through the findings of Kalyar et al. (2019), who depicted that higher level of workplace stress leads to lower level of employees’ performance. The research findings highlight that CWB plays a partial mediating role in the connection between POP and WS. In essence, when employees engage in negative behaviors like CWB, it intensifies the impact of POP on their stress levels. The study findings suggest that CWB act as a partial mediator in the relationship between POP and EJP. In other words, when employees engage in CWB, it amplifies the negative impact of POP on their EJP.

Theoretical implications

Investigating the mediating effects of WS and CWB in the relationship between POP and EJP in the tourism and hospitality industry has important implications for the COR theory.

Table 8 Mediation analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Path</th>
<th>Path a</th>
<th>Path b</th>
<th>Indirect effect</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>95% LL</th>
<th>95% UL</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H7</td>
<td>POP-CWB-WS</td>
<td>0.461</td>
<td>0.711</td>
<td>0.328</td>
<td>0.031</td>
<td>10.573</td>
<td>0.267</td>
<td>0.389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H8</td>
<td>POP-CWB-EJP</td>
<td>0.461</td>
<td>-0.226</td>
<td>-0.104</td>
<td>0.032</td>
<td>-3.256</td>
<td>-0.167</td>
<td>-0.041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H9</td>
<td>POP-WS-EJP</td>
<td>0.188</td>
<td>-0.143</td>
<td>-0.027</td>
<td>0.033</td>
<td>-0.815</td>
<td>-0.092</td>
<td>0.038</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Table by authors
The study enhances COR theory by identifying the specific resources that are crucial in the tourism and hospitality industry, highlighting how POP threatens job security, trust and fairness in this context. It also provides empirical evidence of the role of WS in the resource depletion process, showing that stress is a mechanism through which resource losses affect EJP. By considering CWB as a mediator, the study aligns with the central principles of COR theory, illustrating how employees may engage in such behavior to protect their remaining resources after experiencing losses and stress owing to POP. The study also reveals a resource loss spiral initiated by POP, where initial resource losses lead to stress and counterproductive behaviors, potentially resulting in further resource depletion. The findings emphasize the importance of interventions aimed at resource restoration, such as communication enhancement and addressing inequities, in disrupting the spiral and facilitating resource recovery in line with COR theory's focus on resource gain.

Practical implications

The study’s findings highlight the importance of creating a culture of fairness, transparency and open communication in hospitality and tourism organizations. Managers should encourage respectful and ethical behavior while discouraging negative political behaviors to mitigate perceived organizational politics (POP) and its negative impact on employee well-being and job performance. It is crucial to recognize and enhance employee resources through providing necessary tools, training and resources, as well as implementing policies that support work-life balance, autonomy and career development. To address POP, managers should involve employees in decision-making processes and promote their participation to reduce perceptions of unfairness and power imbalances. This fosters empowerment, ownership and a positive work environment that contributes to high job performance. Open communication channels should be established, providing a safe space for expressing concerns, ideas and feedback without fear of negative consequences. Transparent communication about organizational decisions, changes and challenges helps alleviate uncertainties and minimize the negative effects of POP on workplace stress. Promoting fairness and consistency in policies, procedures and decision-making is crucial to address POP. Supervisors should ensure equitable application of rules and guidelines to prevent favoritism or unfair treatment. Leading by example and demonstrating ethical behavior contribute to a positive work environment and mitigate the negative effects of POP on employee performance.

Limitations and direction for future research

Even though this study adds to the existing body of knowledge in various ways, there are still opportunities for further research. First, the findings of this study reveal that the relationship between the POP and employee job performance of travel agencies and hotel employees is mediated by work stress and the counterproductive behavior. These two aspects emerged as negative consequences of POP, and they have a negative impact on employee job performance. Therefore, it would be beneficial to look into elements like benevolent leadership that might mitigate the negative impacts of POP because the fact that there are no politics-free organizations to develop new strategies for better managing political behavior in the workplace. Second, it should be noted that this study examined how POP was perceived, as well as their detrimental effects on work stress and counterproductive behavior. As the perception of reality does not always mean it is the reality itself, POP was an issue of employees’ subjective evaluation. So, future research that evaluate POP objectively and look at all of its facets will help us understand it better. Third, the relationships proposed in our model were evaluated using cross-sectional data collected over a given time period. This does not allow for causal conclusions. Therefore, other longitudinal studies, based on gathering data over a longer time span, should be conducted so that causal conclusions can be made.
References


Ministry of tourism and antiquities (2018), Tourism in Figures, General department of information and statistics, The ministry of tourism, Egypt.


Further reading

About the authors
Bassam Samir Al-Romeedy is an associate professor at the Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, University of Sadat City – Egypt. He works as an external auditor in the National Authority for Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation – Egypt, in addition to working as a reviewer in some prestigious international scientific journals. He has published 86 papers in international and local indexed journals. His research interests are human resources management in tourism, knowledge management, tourism management, sustainable tourism, tourism marketing, competitiveness in travel agencies, leadership in tourism and organizational behavior in tourism. Bassam Samir Al-Romeedy is the corresponding author and can be contacted at: bassam.samir@fth.usc.edu.eg

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