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An Assessment of the Factors that Affect the Level of "Perception of Office Politics"

Charles U. Phillips

Lynn University

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An Assessment of the Factors that Affect the Level of

“Perception of Office Politics”

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Global Leadership

Lynn University
Boca Raton, Florida

By

Charles U. Phillips

Dissertation Committee

Dr. Fred Dembowski, Chair
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October 20, 2004
AN ASSESSMENT OF THE FACTORS THAT AFFECT THE LEVEL OF
"PERCEPTION OF OFFICE POLITICS"

Phillips, Charles U., Ph.D.
Lynn University, 2004

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In addition, I would like to thank Gerald R. Ferris of the Florida State University for granting permission to use the POPS Scale Instrument and Ian Little of Bowling Green State University for granting permission to use the AJDI, SIG, and ITQ Instruments.

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Last but not least, a special thank you to Dr. Joan Scialli, Director, RN to BSN Program & Coordinator, PhD Program, for providing a final critique pertaining to APA format.
Dedication

This paper is dedicated to my wife, Zee and daughter, Arin for their love, support, encouragement, and unyielding belief in me.

Praise be unto God!
Abstract

The culture of an organization is often the primary indicator of the expected and accepted employee behavior. Organizations with weak directives, poor communication, and ineffectively managed cultures are breeding grounds for the negative dysfunctional interpersonal dynamics referred as “office politics.” Studies indicate that considerable time and energy are lost to solving problematic issues originating from the influences of office politics in organizations with weak cultural expectations. Therefore, it is conceivable that developing a positive organizational culture that facilitates certain values is an important step in eliminating the ill effects of office politics.

The purpose of this quantitative non-experimental study was to ascertain the degree and impact of the perceptions held by top-level fire administrators on the phenomenon of “office politics”. In addition, the role of office politics was examined as it relates to the established culture and climate of their organizations. The preliminary aspect of this investigation entailed the assessment of contemporary and classic literature of theoretical perspectives and empirical studies on “Office Politics,” “Ethics,” and “Organizational Culture.” The sample was one of convenience comprised of 155 fire chiefs of metropolitan fire rescue departments in the United States with a minimum staffing strength of 400 professional firefighters and was not generalized to any other group. The instruments chosen for this study were: (a) the Perceptions of Organizational Politics Scale (POPS; Kacmar & Ferris, 1991), (b) the Abridge Job Descriptive Index (AJDI; Bowling Green, 2000), (c) the Job in General (JIG) Scale, (d) the Stress in General Scale (SIG; Bowling Green, 1985; Parra & Smith, 1995), and (e) the Intention to Quit (ITQ) Scale. The five scale/69-item survey was supplemented with a brief 11-item personal demographic questionnaire. The collected data
was subjected to descriptive, cross tabulation, correlation, and multi-regression analyses to inquire into the affects of a set on independent variables (stress, job satisfaction, employee’s turnover/retention, etc.) on the dependent variable of the “Perception of Office Politics.” The results suggest that the independent variables with the most definite influence on the dependent variable are: (a) department size, (b) work stress (measured by the SIG), and (c) general job satisfaction (measured by the AJDI).
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background and Problem

Politics are an unavoidable part of human relations, whether on the playground or in the boardroom. It is human nature to assign or assume roles according to a “pecking order” to boost personal interests at the expense of others (Playground Politics, 2002). Whenever two or more people are involved, politics are bound to come into play, and every organization will inevitably have its share (King, 2000). Bullying, a result of interpersonal difficulty, is, in many cases, just another name for politics. Understanding that this type of divisive, often unethical, behavior appears to commence in early childhood, it would stand to reason that early intervention would be key (Steps, 2000). However, this has not traditionally been the case. To the contrary, bullying behavior has long been ignored, accepted and inadvertently encouraged (Playground Politics, 2002). This brings us to the workplace dilemma of “office politics” that many organizations are faced with today.

Office politics is “synonymous with hypocrisy, secrecy, deal making, rumors, power brokers, self-interests, image building, self-promotion and cliques” (Graham, 1998). Problems arise when the politicking becomes grossly negative and overshadows the well-being of the organization as a whole (King, 2000). A study conducted in Southern California that interviewed 174 executives of 30 organizations, yielded the following results on how managers perceive organizational politics (Allen et. al., 1979): (a) 54% of the combined group (chief executive officers, staff managers, and supervisors) felt attacking or blaming others was a normal part of succeeding in business; and (b) 54% of this same group felt that using or withholding information was a way of getting ahead.
In recent polls, 82% of workers surveyed said they had experienced stress in the workplace (Kersten, 2003). Consequently, office politics was identified as the leading cause of stress in the workplace (LifeCare, 2003). Toyne (2001) aptly describes stress as being the offshoot of bullying and harassment related to office politics. He further states that a demanding work schedule combined with caustic comments and harassing treatment can be a debilitating and psychologically distressing experience. In addition to stress and its related complications, office politics frequently leads to loss of jobs, reputation, and credibility; in some cases, the damage is too severe to recover from (Graham, 1998; Serven, 2002).

The culture of an organization is often the primary indicator of expected and accepted employee behavior (Dowling, 2001; McNamara, 1999; Reigle, 2003; Toupin, 2003). Studies indicate that considerable time and energy are lost to solving problematic issues originating from the influences of office politics in organizations with weak cultural expectations (Flashback, 2003). Therefore, it is conceivable that developing a positive organizational culture that facilitates certain values is an important step in eliminating the ill effects of office politics (Creative, 2003; Hagberg & Heifetz, 2000; McNamara, 1999; Stupak, 1997).

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this quantitative research study was to determine the degree of the "Perception of Office Politics" held by top-level administrators. In addition, the role of office politics was examined as it relates to the established corporate culture and climate of their organizations. This was a non-experimental, descriptive, multiple regression inquiry, that sought to conduct an explanatory study on the causes and effects,
correlation, and perception of office politics and how it affects/and is affected by factors attributed to organizational culture and climate. If an organization wants to maximize its potential (of both human and physical resources), it must understand the nature of the prevailing culture and the impact that office politics has on its environment (Cardillo, 2003). The scope of this investigation also includes an analysis of the contemporary and classic literature of theoretical perspectives and empirical studies on “Office Politics” and “Organizational Culture.”

**Research Questions**

Organizations with weak directives, poor communication, and ineffectively managed cultures are breeding grounds for the negative dysfunctional interpersonal dynamics referred as “office politics.” To remain healthy an organization must aggressively seek to control the negative impact of internal politics. Important questions need to be answered in implementing an ethical and viable organizational culture. It is concluded that strong organizations must seek to control the impact of internal political maneuvering (Bender, 1996; Osborn, 1998; Stupak, 1997).

The research questions addressed in this study were as follows:

1. What is the perceived level of office politics (held by top-level administrators) within the organization?
2. What are the factors that affect the level of office politics?
3. What impact does organizational culture or climate have on the political environment?
Research Design

Research Method

This non-experimental, descriptive method research sought to conduct an explanatory study on the causes and effects of office politics and it relates to the organizational culture and climate; utilizing the “Multiple Regression Analysis” model:

1. What are the factors (the independent variables) including stress, job satisfaction, employee retention, employee turnover, and loyalty; that affect the dependent variable - office politics? The following is a mathematical representation of the relationship between the set of independent variables and the dependent variable:

\[ Y = f(X_1 + X_2 + X_3 + \ldots + X_n) + e, \]

where:

- \( Y \) represents the dependent variable
- \( X_1, X_2, \ldots, X_n \) represent the independent variables
- \( n \) is the total number of variables
- \( e \) is the error term

2. How strong is the relationship between the set of independent variables and the dependent variable? (R squared)

3. Is the relationship statistically significant? (F statistic)

4. Which independent variable has the strongest/weakest effect on the dependent variable (Beta weight for each independent variable)?

5. Are these relationships statically significant (p statistic for each independent variable)?
Sample/Population

A sample of convenience was utilized in this research. The study sample consisted of 155 fire chiefs of metropolitan fire rescue departments in the United States. Metropolitan fire rescue departments are defined as relatively large departments with a minimum staffing strength of 400 professional firefighters. Subsequently, this study cannot be generalized to any other group. Introduction letters were mailed to the sample population. These letters were followed approximately one week later with survey packets; each containing a letter of consent; a demographic survey, instrument questionnaires, and a stamped, self-addressed return envelope (refer to Appendix E). One week later, final follow-up mailings were sent to all sample members, thanking those who had completed and returned the survey packets and reminding those that had not that they could still participate. Time constraints prohibited a longer interval between mailings to allow for the return of any undeliverable letters before sending the survey packets. The original intent had been to track and identify the location of the responding participants versus the non-responding participants. This notion was abandoned based on the IRB requirements that the participants be granted complete anonymity. Therefore, reasons for non-responses could not be determined.

Measures/Instrumentation

The instruments selected for this research study were: (a) The Perceptions of Organizational Politics Scale (POPS; Kacmar & Ferris, 1991), (b) the Abridge Job Descriptive Index (AJDI), (c) the Job in General (JIG) Scale, (d) the Stress in General (SIG) Scale, and (e) the Intent to Quit (ITQ) Scale.
The degree of perceived organizational politics was measured using the Perceptions of Organizational Politics Scale (POPS). The POPS scale has 15-items that measure the political climate in an organization. This instrument has been validated by 39 previous research studies and is the most widely used tool in the examination of the perception of organizational politics (Kacmar, Bozeman, Carlson, & Anthony, 1999). Ferris et al. (as cited in Kacmar & Baron, 1999) has directed most of the empirical research in their model of the “Perception of Office Politics.” In this model, job/work environment and personal factors are influences on an organizational perception of politics in the workplace. In turn, the “Perception of Office Politics” influences job stress, job satisfaction and employee turnover. Based on previous studies (e.g., Cropanzano, et al, 1997; Ferris et al, 1996) strong psychometric support has been shown for this model. This instrument uses a five point Likert type rating scale, ranging from “strongly disagreed” (one point) to “strongly agreed” (five points). The responses reflect the current organizational climate (a high score reflects a high level of office politics).

The Job Descriptive Index (JDI; Copyright 1985, 1997, Bowling Green State University) was designed to measure employee's job satisfaction. The five facets of the JDI are used in analyzing employee turnover and an employee's intent to quit. The JDI has served to analyze important areas of the job in an effort to offer insight into the health and/or profitability of an organization. Based on over 40 years of research, the JDI remains one of the most widely use instruments in measuring the different aspects of job satisfaction (Demeuse, 1985; Zedeck, 1987).

The Abridged Job Descriptive Index (AJDI) version of the JDI was developed by the JDI Research Group because of concerns that the length of the JDI could become a
detractor to its use. The AJDI is composed of 25 questions with a Yes/No/? answer format. Each of the five facets of the AJDI contains five items, reducing the overall length of the original JDI instrument greatly. The validity and reliability of the instrument remain strong.

The Intent to Quit scale (ITQ; 2000, JDI, Bowling Green State University) is often represented as an indicator/measurement of employee turnover. Presently, the ITQ scale is the only validated scale on measuring employee’s intentions to quit to be published (Balzer, et. al., 2000). The ITQ scale consists of 6 items using a 7-point Likert scale.

The Stress in General scale (SIG) consists of 15 questions with a Yes/No/? answer format. Office politics has been identified as the leading cause of stress in the workplace (LifeCare & Gallop, 2003). In a poll on workplace stress, 82% of the workers surveyed said they had experienced stress in the workplace (Kersten, 2003). High stress is [usually] connected to low job satisfaction (Balzer, et. al., 2000).

Interest, Significance, and Rationale for Research

Research shows that problems caused by political maneuvering, not skill deficiencies, are responsible for 75% of job failures (Osborn, 1998). Political maneuvering refers to the “interpersonal arm-wrestling, horse-trading and power plays that exist when individuals jockey for rewards and recognition” (¶ 2) as an outgrowth of the larger competitive nature of business (Osborn, 1998). In addition, “interpersonal difficulties can be detrimental to office productivity,” (p. 8) leading to decreased morale and work satisfaction and an increase in workplace stress (Bender, 1996). The negative psychological and physical implications induced by stress can be devastating; thus
augmenting the reduction in advantages to an organization and its stakeholders (Bender, 1996).

In a survey conducted by Office Team (Osborn, 1998), a leading staffing service, respondents were presented with the following question: “In your opinion, has the level of office politics in the workplace increased or decreased compared to five years ago” (p. 2)? Results show that 70% of lower level employees felt there had been an increase, while just a little over 40% of the executives answered this same way. This would indicate that management, as a whole, is a bit oblivious to the challenges that may exist in interpersonal relationships within an office. The results of this study also indicate the need for management to seek a better understanding of their [organizations] work environments by considering the following questions: “What challenges are the [workers] under? Is the level of internal competition healthy or detrimental to the product, [the organization, and its stakeholders]?” (Osborn, 1998, p. 3).

Organizations with high degrees of office politics and those that have good communications are direct opposites of each other. In organizations where the environment encourages and supports open communication, office politics is almost nonexistent (Lumpur, et. al., 1997). In order to decrease the risk of office politics to an organization, leaders must create an atmosphere that is conducive to growth. It is suggested that leaders must lay value foundations, cultural anchors, and behavioral guidelines so that growth and development are harmonious and congruent, and not mechanistic, haphazard, harmful, or destructive (Stupak, 1997).

Although some form of office/organizational politics has existed since the dawn of man, only in the last ten years has research focused on and developed valid and
reliable model/measurements to test the impact of office politics in relationship to organizational climate (Anderson, 1999). It is estimated that employees spend an average of 64 minutes a day engaged in office politics. When employees dedicate more time to office politics and less time to actually working, it can lead to financial loses for an organization and translate into lost opportunities for all stakeholders (McKay, 1998).

This research study sought to address these issues and to determine the relationship among internal political behavior, commitment to ethics, and organizational culture. In addition, it is suggested that future studies conduct an inquiry into determining feasible cultural and management changes necessary to rectify damaging and unscrupulous office politics. The predicted discovery resulting from this research is that there is a direct correlation between the level of office politics in an organization and such factors as: employee job satisfaction, retention/turnover, stress, and loyalty.

This research will be significant to practitioners and professional peers because it has the potential to provide a wealth of information and guidance on ways to avoid the pitfall of negative office politics. The study results can serve as a road map for creating a good working environment where open and frank communication is encouraged. This combination could thereby maximize productivity, which runs hand in hand with employee’s job satisfaction and retention.

**Conceptual Framework**

The review of literature entails the analysis of the literature of theoretical perspectives and empirical studies on “Office Politics,” “Organizational Ethics,” and “Organizational/Corporate Culture.” This analysis focused on primary literature, written principally within the last ten years, which theorizes on political behavior and the
dubious, often destructive affect it has on organizational well being. Supplemental literature on interpersonal behavior, ethics, ethics management, organizational culture, culture management, and organizational success was also reviewed in order to gain insight into the social, philosophical, and financial ramifications of politics behavior.

The literature review began with the relatively singular concept of the interpersonal difficulties of political behavior and culminated with the broader spectrum of organizational culture. The major themes expounded upon in the literature map are the:

1. Theoretical Perspectives of Office Politics
2. Empirical Studies of Interpersonal Relationships/Behavior
3. Theoretical Perspectives of Organizational Ethics and Ethics Management
4. Empirical Studies on Organization Ethics
5. Theoretical Perspectives of Organizational Culture and Culture Management

The literature research strategy was conducted with an inquiry of professional journals using “keyword” searches of office politics, organizational politics, interpersonal behavior, organizational culture, culture management, ethics, ethics management, and human resource management. Added information was obtained through Lynn University’s online services and databases from “ProQuest” and “Dissertation Abstracts,” peer review journals, academic journals, and related textbooks.
**Definition of Terms**

Office politic -- The processes by which individuals or groups within an organization use non-formally sanctioned power tactics to advance their own aims; this behavior tends to be covert (Velasquez, 1982).

Dysfunctional office politics -- Deceptive and manipulative tactics such as blaming or attacking others, controlling information, coalition, and image building based on false pretense, shameless ingratiating, creating obligations, and usurping control of scarce resources. (Velasquez, 1982). Measured by the Dysfunctional Organizational Politics Scale (DROOP Scale). (Anderson, 1999).

Workplace stress -- The harmful physical and emotional responses that can happen when there is a conflict between job demands on the employee and the amount of control an employee has over meeting these demands. (Serven, 2002).

Acute stress -- Most commonly comes from the demands and pressures of the resent past and the anticipated demands and pressures of the near future.

Job satisfaction -- Refers to an employees’ overall contentment with demands and compensation for meeting these demands (Velasquez, 1982).

Interpersonal relationship -- The knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behavior exhibited when relative to other individuals or groups (Wild, 2003).

Organizational culture -- Refers to the internal beliefs and values that are comprised of assumptions, norms, and tangible signs of organizational members and their behavior. (Dowling, 2001)
Operating culture -- Refers to the way things are typically done according to distinctive developed beliefs and patterns, i.e., the prevailing office climate (Bolman & Deal, 1997)

Machiavellianism -- A term coined after 16th century Italian political philosopher, “Niccolo Machiavelli,” used to describe the principle of power politics. The type of person who uses those principles in political or personal life is frequently described as a “Machiavellian.”

**Delimitation and Scope**

The sample was not randomly selected; it was a sample of convenience. The study sample consisted of 155 fire chiefs of metropolitan fire rescue departments in the United States with a minimum staffing strength of 400 professional firefighters. The study was limited to top-level administrators (fire chiefs) because of the wide gap found in opinions on the prevalence of office politics in the workplace between lower level employees and managers.

The position of fire chief is considered a highly political job, especially in large metropolitan areas. The position of fire chief (turnover/retention, stress, political climate) is similar to that of top executives in the private sector and a few high profile public sector positions, such as city managers, police chiefs, and transportation directors. Curiously, it has been suggested that executives may consider office politics as a normal course of business (Gettler, 2002). This is evidenced by the fact that in a study by Office Team (Osborn, 1998), 70% of lower level employees felt that office politics had increased within the previous five years, compared to only 40% of the executives surveyed.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Perspectives of Office Politics and Interpersonal Behavior

Definition of Office Politics

“For most people, the words ‘office politics’ conjure images of manipulation, backstabbing and cronyism and to be described as a political animal is rarely taken as a compliment” (Clarke, 1999, p. 3). Velasquez (1982) described office politics as the “underbelly” of the organization – informal pockets and channels of power, a covert power whose sources do not appear on organizational charts. He further defined office politics as the “processes in which individuals or groups within an organization use non-formally sanctioned power tactics to advance their own aims” (Velasquez, 1982, p. 329). Mage (2003) explains that players utilizing “negative politics get thing done at the expense of others; openly embracing a ‘Machiavellian ethic’, seeing the world through a simple-minded dialect between the weak and strong, the smart and stupid, the insiders and the outsiders” (p. 1).

Political behavior is usually “covert” and therefore prone to deception and manipulation under the guise of “overt” actions performed in the best interest of the organization (Velasquez, 1982). Office politics refer to the tactics employed by individuals or groups to enhance self-interest; these tactics can be reactive (to protect) or proactive (to promote). Some of the most common tactics are attacking or blaming others, withholding or distorting information, image building (usurping credit), and forming coalitions (Allen et. al., 1979).

Politics are the “enactment of self-serving behaviors designed to influence another party in order to obtain some personal goal or a goal not sanctioned by the organization”

Once considered a tool used only by upper management seeking to climb the corporate ladder, it is now seen as a play of leverage used by people at all levels to gain a competitive edge or simply to survive (Chase, 2002). It is widely believed that politics are an inevitable occurrence that manifests whenever two or more people interact, (e.g. human nature). In reality, political behaviors comprise a part of the human condition, and "since all companies employ humans, office politics are alive and well. It is the workplace that provides the "most fertile breeding ground, because the players all seek very similar ends – personal success, professional growth, and financial security" (King, 2000). A study conducted in Southern California in which 174 executives of 30 organizations were interviewed, yielded the following results on how managers perceive the political environment of their organizations (Allen et. al., 1979): Fifty-four percent of the combined group (chief executive officers, staff managers, and supervisors) felt that attacking or blaming others was a normal part of succeeding in business; and 54% of this same group felt that using or withholding information was a way of getting ahead.

Similar results were gathered in a Gallop Poll study conducted by Roffey Park on "Politics in Organizations." Findings from this study suggest that many executives (65%) consider office politics to be "about networking to building a power base, taking every opportunity to raise a profile, withholding useful information from rivals, passing the buck to avoid personal blame, taking credit for other people’s successes and burying bad news" (Gettler, 2002, p. 1).
Bullying and Harassment

In a recent article appearing in the “Work Relationships, Incorporated On-line Newsletter,” (2003) office politics is equated with workplace bullying and harassment. Unlike illegal forms of harassment and discrimination, bullying is not directed at a person because of religion, gender, age, ethnicity or other demographic variable. Bullying refers to the mistreatment of another person in an effort to control a perceived threat, such as preventing the exposure of inadequacy. In addition, unlike harassment and discrimination, bullying is not deemed a crime and there is no direct legal remedy against it. Bullying and general hostility is four times more prevalent than illegal discrimination and harassment. Organizations inadvertently foster bullying by encompassing a survival-of-the-fittest mode. Managers must realize that it is not possible for organizations to take a neutral stance regarding workplace bullying; to ignore it is to condone it (Flashback, 2003).

A study conducted by the British Occupational Health Research Foundation (2002) that yielded responses from 5,300 employees in 70 organizations, revealed the following results on bullying:

1. 47% reported witnessing bullying in the previous five years
2. 1 in 10 said they had been bullied in the previous six months
3. 1 in 4 said they had been bullied in the previous five years

The primary drivers of bullying are thought to be envy and jealousy; and the target is likely to be singled out because of his/her popularity and/or competence. Tactics used in bullying are petty criticism, withholding critical information or providing false information, and making allegations of under-performance. More comprehensively, the
U.S. Hostile Workforce Survey 2000 indicates that the most common tactics include (Flashback, 2003):

1. blaming others for errors
2. raising false concerns about or criticizing the work of others
3. making unreasonable demands
4. yelling and screaming
5. threats of job loss, insult, or put-downs
6. inconsistent enforcement of arbitrary rules
7. social exclusion
8. stealing credit for another's work

**Interpersonal Relationship**

Interpersonal relationship is defined as a person’s knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behavior exhibited relative to other individuals or groups (Wild, 2003). It is argued that human behavior is controlled by two kinds of personal theories for action based on assumptions that guide thoughts and responses: Espoused Theories (individuals’ behavior) and Theories-in-Use (behavior according to set rules), and that “social needs and interpersonal styles” are formulated during childhood. Bolman (1997) states that because this process is initially shaped by a “decentralized cottage industry known as family,” (p. 143) it is not established according to any formal bureaucratic specifications, and, therefore, is subject to many variables.

Group problems often result from interpersonal dynamics, but these problems can be reduced if identified and effectively managed (Bolman, 1997). Studies have shown that up to 42% of a manager’s time is spent dealing with conflict.
relationship failures may account for "80 percent of all employment related claims, 50% percent of all voluntary terminations and the vast majority of production problems" (Flashback, 2003, p. 2). "Groups operate on two different levels, an overt conscious level focused on task and a more implicit level of process emphasizing group maintenance and interpersonal dynamics" (Bolman, 1997, p. 152). People tend to skirt issues or attack others when they feel vulnerable, reverting to self-protection, and escalating games of camouflage and deception. Results obtained in the 2003 AMA Survey on Leadership Challenges indicate that, "Getting people to work together who have different agendas is among the biggest obstacles facing business leaders today" (¶1).

Conflict is defined as "a struggle over values or claims to status, power, and scarce resources in which the claims of the conflicting parties are not only to gain the desired valuables, but also to neutralize, injure, or eliminate their rivals" (Hampton, 1982, p. 634). Conflict usually takes one of four forms: (a) individual versus individual, (b) individual versus group, (c) group versus group and (d) competition. The larger and more diverse the group is, the more likely the possibility of conflict. Interpersonal conflicts are the cause of the "worst horror stories about group difficulties," blocking progress and wasting time. The potential for conflict "depends on how incompatible the goals" (Hampton, 1982, p. 634) of those involved and the amount of available shared resources.

Interpersonal group conflict "occurs even between the most reasonable and secure people, but it can be exacerbated by personal attributes" (Hampton, 1982, p. 637).

The factors that create diversity (background, education, age, and culture) lower the probability of collaboration because of their adverse impact on values, knowledge,
and communication. This becomes even more probable when one party is clearly superior in position, pay or seniority (Hampton, 1982).

Conflicts are an inevitable phenomenon in human interactions. A common response to conflict is silence, which can result in a “corrosive and harmful environment” (Perlow, 2003, ¶ 1). It is best to probe the issues and to “devise a solution that accommodates the diverse views and needs of each individual and their constituencies” (Perlow, 2003, ¶ 1). In most cases, opening the lines of communication can prevent conflict. An effective manager can create a more positive work environment by listening and responding to the workers’ concerns (Creative, 2003).

It is theorized that there are three basic interpersonal responses to conflict: (a) avoidance (aggressive or passive), (b) aggression, or (c) integration (Larson, 2003). These responses are further explained as follows:

1. Avoidance – in its aggressive form, can be used as a means of self benefit at the expense of others.
2. Aggression – is confrontational with little regard for others involved.
3. Integration – is the goal of effective teamwork.

Reasons for Political Behavior

The reasons for engaging in negative office politics are as varied as the people perpetrating the acts. However, they can be classified under one of several prevalent, negative variables: (a) limited resources and opportunities for advancement, (b) overcompetitiveness, (c) a lack of measurable job standards, (d) employees’ emotional insecurity, (e) a win-lose organizational attitude, (f) the need for personal acceptance, and (g) the most common motivator – self interest (Chase, 2002).
Osborn (1998, ¶4) suggests that “political games are sparked by survival conditions” caused by fear within an organization. There are many reasons contributing to workplace fear; for instance, fear of not being considered a team player, not fitting in, losing self-esteem, missing out on opportunities, job loss and loss of creditability and reputation (Serven, 2002).

Serven (2002) surmises that engaging in politics is a self-protective behavior that is driven by the fear of not knowing where you stand in the workplace. He iterates (from a personal interview with Jim Schadt, former CEO of “Reader Digest”) that in order to know where you stand you must know these three things: (a) the goals of the organization, (b) your role in accomplishing these goals, and (c) your compensation and benefits. Consequently, office politics are unnecessary if personal positions are in “alignment with the [organizational] goals and objectives” (Lowe, 1999, p. 1).

Politics often result from a misunderstanding or miscommunication tempered by issues of ego, esteem and self-interest (King, 2000). It is easily understood that office politics and good communication cannot co-exist in an organization. Most incidents of internal power struggles can be avoided with open and honest communication (Osborn, 1998).

Politics are also considered to be the outgrowth of the larger climate of competitive games of business (Osborn, 1998). This is fueled by the constant desire to be number-one in the quest for glory. However, Lowe (2002) contends that there is no need for sneaky political behavior if employees’ actions are directly related to fulfilling the organization’s mission and are in alignment with its objectives, goals, policies, and procedures.
Change is another common trigger for an increase in office politics. Ideally, change should encompass the meaningful involvement of everyone being affected (as much as possible). Uncorroborated change can create a “political fiefdom” (Jinkner, 1999), resulting in fear, uncertainty, and the triggering of self-protecting actions.

**Characteristics of Political Organizations**

Every organization has a political style and culture (both formal and covert). In other words, organizational culture “is its own world with its own rules and reality” (Toupin, 2003, ¶ 1). Because organizations consist of coalitions of various individuals and interest groups, the political style and informal internal culture is a complex and ever-changing web (Bolman, 1997). The momentum is sustained by “the multitude of personalities and ideals brought to the table” (Toupin, 2003, ¶ 9) by different players.

Political organizations share common characteristics; some of these characteristics are blatant and obvious such as lack of focus (by management) on personal interests, poor productivity, and inadequate recognition and compensation. However, some characteristics are subtle and less ubiquitous. Serven (2002) reasons that the characteristics found in politically dominant organizations are making tacit (implied), rather than explicit (expressed) decisions, being crisis oriented, evading responsibility, and having many “un-discuss-ables.” Instead of open, frank communication there are “interpersonal enmities and hatred, unhealthy collusion and interdepartmental conflicts” (Lumpur et. al., 1997, ¶ 3), encounters that prohibit employees from speaking out.

Management consultants ubiquitously agree that negative office politics are an “undercurrent in [organizations] with ineffective communication, poor reaction by management to employee concerns and bad examples set by company leaders” (Selvaggi,
Additionally, many political organizations are structured in a win-lose system where winning is possible only at the expense of someone else’s loss. Hence, it seems a logical perspective that instead of trying to train people to behave in an appropriate manner it would be more advantageous to design the organization so that behaving appropriately would be the “path of least resistance” (Bellinger, 2002, ¶ 3).

In conformity with the previous thought, Jinker (2003) maintains, “there are five noted uncertainties in an organization that can cause political maneuvering. These common sources of uncertainty include (a) unclear objectives, (b) vague performance measures, (c) ill-defined decision processes, (d) strong individual or group competition, and (e) any type of change. Corporations that do not have a clear hierarchical communication flow; well-defined lines of authority, or usually understood goals and objectives create uncertainty among their employees” (Jinkner, 1999, ¶ 3).

**Consequences to Employees**

In recent polls, 82% of workers surveyed said they had experienced stress in the workplace (Kersten, 2003). Office politics were identified as the leading cause of stress in the workplace (LifeCare, 2003). Stress, in turn, can cause interpersonal relationships to suffer because of the resulting psychological distress (Miller, 1997). Not surprisingly, a 2003 Canadian Mental Health Association report labels office politics as both a cause and an effect of workplace stress, explaining that stress manifests in absenteeism, illness, alcoholism, “petty internal politics,” bad or snap decisions, indifference and apathy, and lack of motivation or creativity (CCOHs, 2003). Serven (2002) states:

What’s the personal cost to you of working in a political workplace? Any cost to your organization as a whole – be it measured in dollars, productivity, or lost opportunities – is an abstraction. You will find that your cost, however, is not abstract at all. It is as real as
migraines, lowered immune systems, and early heart attacks. It's as real as life itself – in this case, your life. (p. 19).

Most workplace stress is not caused by the actual demands of work but by the work environment, and as stated earlier, a political workplace is a breeding ground for stress (Serven, 2002). The frustration triggered by the interpersonal difficulties of office politics is like an “office cancer” that can eat away at office spirit, decay work relationships, sap motivation, reduce work satisfaction and wreak physical havoc, in the forms of stress and related ailments (Bender, 1996).

Toyne (2001) describes stress as being the offshoot of bullying and harassment related to office politics. He further states that a demanding work schedule combined with caustic comments and harassing treatment can be a debilitating and psychologically distressing experience. In addition to stress and its related complication, office politics often leads to loss of jobs, reputation, and credibility; in some cases, the damage is too severe to recover (Graham, 1998; Serven, 2002).

**Consequences to the Organization**

Being involved in politics requires a lot of “mental and emotional energy” that could best be put into working (Selvaggi, 2002). It is estimated that employees spend an average of 64 minutes a day engaged in office politics. Donating less time to actually working can lead to financial loses for an organization and translate into lost opportunities for all stakeholders (McKay, 1998). As provided in Creative (2003), “Political issues take a toll on employees’ morale and can ultimately lead to higher staff turnover” (p. 2). Internal politics also consume a considerable amount of time; executives estimate that approximately nine weeks a year is spent resolving personality conflicts (Creative, 2003). In addition, it is estimated that more than $100 billion is lost
in productivity each year (due to stress-related factors) in the United States alone (Serven, 2002).

One of the most severe organizational (and personal) loses related to office politics occurred in the 1986 Space Shuttle Challenger explosion. Investigations initiated by NASA led to the discovery that, in the politically charged workplace, employees feared the possibility of “career limiting” ramifications for suggesting that the flight be delayed; even though many “felt” that the shuttle should not have been launched (Bolman, 1997, Dowling, 2001; Serven, 2002).

While most cases of organizational losses due to office politics (and related issues) are not as tragic as the Challenger example, they can nevertheless be disruptive and, in some cases, devastating. Serven (2002, p. 39) hypothesizes that the “crippling forces of office politics” contributes to an organization’s performance gap (the difference between actual and potential performance) by an increase of about 30%. In addition, office politics inhibits the consistency of profits by undermining the decision making process; corroding trust and pride in work; stifling innovation; driving employee turnover; and distorting communication.

Reducing Office Politics

A classic concept of quality management presented by W. Edward Deming, “It’s the system, not the man” (Serven, 2002, p. 8), is especially relevant in the case of office politics because of the very nature of office politics. Politics can be considered an important social influence and behavior process, capable of being constructive or disruptive to the organization and its employees. Managers should therefore familiarize themselves with the political process in order to effect necessary changes (Allen et. al.,
However, careful consideration must be taken when undertaking changes to ensure that they do not, instead, feed the dilemma. William Eddy stated (as cited in Anderson, 1999):

One of the greatest knowledge gaps in management is the belief that you can unilaterally impose change upon a segment of an organization and expect the change to be accepted and implemented. The fact is of course, that employees in most organizations have a myriad of alternative ways of sabotaging, rejecting, and redirecting such imposed changes. (¶ 3)

Several recommendations may be considered to counteract this possibility: (a) involve the change agent in the politics of the organization to facilitate the change; (b) identify possible sources of political resistance to change efforts [and remove]; and (c) apply a sequential approach to political resistance – awareness, facilitation, interventions (Anderson, 1999). Hampton (1982) recommends that a follow-up process be conducted to measure consequential behavior and performance, to see if the desired change has occurred. Management consultants agree that negative office politics are more prevalent in organizations with ineffectual communication, apathetic management, and unethical leaders (Selvaggi, 2000; Bender, 1996). Similarly concluded in the classic management text, “Managing” by Harold Geneen (1984), is that the first rule of safeguarding the policy of open and honest communication – is to not tolerate office [politics] in any shape or form (Lumpur et. al.,1997). The second rule is the practice of meritocracy – recognizing and rewarding performance and not showing favoritism.

Effectively managing office politics requires “being diplomatic, collaborating, and enhancing cooperation and confidence among employees” (Jinkner, 1999, ¶ 2).
Employees must be given a clear message that politics and analogous unethical behavior will not be tolerated in any form (Lumpur et. al. 1997). Osborn (2000) gives emphasis to removing any sense of mystery from office activities, maintaining that openness will increase communication and create a more supportive work environment. The following actions are recommended to accomplish this (Osborn, 2000):

2. Eliminate office rivalry – encourage collaboration for the good of the organization.
3. Reward team results – give public recognition to group efforts to motivate and inspire, based on performance and contributions.
4. Show empathy – watch for burnout, stress can have many unfavorable results.
5. Use humor – a little humor can ease stress and promote camaraderie.

**Implementation of “Positive” Office Politics**

“Consulting guru Peter Block coined the phrase ‘Positive Politics’ for an approach that embraces the use of power, but in a way that builds up others in the process. The positive politician talks up others to their superiors with sincerity. The positive politician negotiates with others to find mutually beneficial solutions to conflict.” (Mage, 2003, p. 2). The term “office politics” is usually applied in reference to the negative behavior of “backbiting and undercutting.” However, management consultants, human resource managers and others are increasingly using it to refer to the many unwritten rules that involve getting along with others, being noticed and appreciated, and following the protocol of the organizational culture. “It’s about understanding the rules and working within them for maximum personal benefit”, explains Cardillo (2003, ¶ 1),
recommending the following tips: (a) avoid troublemakers; (b) know and follow the chain of command; (c) be friendly, but cautious; (d) don’t gossip; (e) support your boss; and (f) socialize with co-workers.

Positive politics are thought of as the ethical actions taken to garner desired results. “Office politicians can unite people and inspire them to achieve; positive politics builds coalitions that accomplish organizational, not individual, goals” (Selvaggi, 2000, p. 1). Jinkner (1999, ¶ 8) agrees, stating that, “good organizational political skills are an essential survival tool that can have a very positive impact.” Good organizational politics can be utilized as an influential and effective management tool when dealing with people and can lead to a win/win outcome (Jinkner, 1999).

Positive politics can also be interpreted as a means of defense against negative intent and way of garnering support to accomplish goals (Johnson, 2002). Johnson (2002) advises that both of these goals can be attained by “developing strong relationships within your organization from senior management down to your subordinates” (¶ 3). Jordan (1997) stresses the importance of understanding that office politics is not backstabbing peers, seizing undeserved credit or starting malicious rumors. While the negative aspects of office politics (backstabbing peers, seizing undeserved credit or starting malicious rumors) may yield quick results, the long-term results can be disastrous. Instead office politics should be “used as a tool by the politically savvy to avoid the pitfalls of a company’s corporate culture” (Jordan, 1997, ¶ 2).

Accordingly, Milano (2000) theorizes that “good” office politics can serve as a grassroots effort to advance both needs and desires. The following behavior tips are suggested: (a) never publicly criticize your boss or co-workers; (b) critique ideas, not
people; (c) don’t belabor small points, pick battles carefully; (d) be a good listener, but don’t pass on what your hear; and (e) learn to address problems, go directly to the source, don’t be a victim.

King (2000) expresses a similar view, stating that while politics can potentially be abused, they can also be utilized positively to get things done, not to do someone in. Political savvy can be viewed as personal power and a career-building tool. King (2000) provides the following pointer for improving political savvy:

1. Study the human dynamics of the workplace; observe managers, colleagues, and staff.
2. Cultivate the grapevine, not all information is gossip, about 80% is business related.
3. Learn the organization’s history.
4. Build critical relationships; do not waste time on your enemies, make new allies.
5. Listen to casual conversation (in break room, restrooms, etc.), this allows you to learn of birthdays, anniversaries and the likes.
6. Communicate selectively, trade information, and refrain from gossip.
7. Link your personal goals to the strategic goals of the organization, do whatever you need to do (ethically) to advance your cause, but do not defame or injure another individual; nobody wins unless everyone wins.

It is the premise of Alan Ketchum (Selvaggi, 2000), a prominent management consultant, that positive politics can be used to build coalitions that work in the interest of the organization by uniting the workers and inspiring them to achieve common goals.
Managers must set the example for positive politics. The challenge for managers is to encourage the kind of office politics that is beneficial and curtail the type of office politics that is harmful (Selvaggi, 2000). Reardon (2002) describes office politics as a “balancing act, with formal procedures at one end and unsanctioned behavior at the other and advises that the recognition of this can be used as an advantage” (¶ 1). A schematic depicting Reardon’s model is shown in Figure 2.1; developed by this author.

**Figure 2.1 A Balance Between Good and Bad Politics.**
Theoretical Perspectives of Organizational Culture

Aiex (1988) defines organizational cultures as a collection of values and beliefs that connect people and organizations to formulate and determine core behavior. In the article “Community within Organizational Cultures”, Deal and Kennedy (as cited in Aiex, 1988) identified four key attributes of organizational cultures: (a) values, philosophies, and beliefs shared by members of the organization; (b) heroes, those who articulate the organization’s values; (c) rites and rituals; and (d) communication network. Stupak (1997) describes organizational culture as being more like a tribe or clan whose behavior and values are based on a set of scientific management systems. Schein (1985) views organizational culture in a slightly different way, a theoretical anchor; describing culture as a deeper level of basic understanding, values and communal beliefs and organization behavior as the response to a group’s survival in an external environment.

Dowling (2001) gives a good working definition of organizational culture as “the system of shared values (what is important) and beliefs (how things work) that interacts with a company’s people, the organizational structures, and the control systems to produce behavioral norms (the way we do things around here)” (p. 107). The academic definition provided by Dowling (2001) is that organizational culture is a system of basic beliefs, developed by a group to address activities within their environment; these values are taught to members as the right-way to interact within the group.

Seeger (2001) views culture as interconnecting with ethics in three areas: (a) organizational morale, (b) organizations’ brand/reputations, and (c) analysis of the culture itself. Organizations that enjoy positive reputations are the ones with strong ethical identities. This association of good ethics and organizational culture results in strong
support from the stakeholders (Seeger, 2001). According to Hagberg and Heifetz (2000), culture drives the organization and its actions. This statement is supported by Ethics Quality (2002, p. 5), which theorizes that assessing the goal of culture is to “cultivate values, beliefs and patterns of behavior” that can fully support organizational success.

A study on organizational change investigated how a business process reengineering (BPR) approach was used in the public sector Contributions Agency (Harrington, McLoughlin, and Riddell, 1998). The organization had been changing for the previous five years. Most of the staff was happy moving away from a rigid structure to one that was more flexible. Although staff was happy to move away from the rigid structure, there had been problems concerning employee empowerment and the commitment on the part of the organization.

The findings of this study showed how internal politics operated in a time of organizational change and how BPR was adopted as if office politics did not exist in the new structure. According to the author, major changes encourage intense political activity as members attempt to jockey for influence (Harrington, McLoughlin, & Riddell, 1998).

Corporate culture is fueled by the number of personalities and concepts brought into play by members of the organization. It is imperative that management has a clear understanding of its culture in order to effectively manage the organization (Toupin, 2003). According to McNamara (1999), the main reason for the failure of the vast majority of organizations that attempt to change their culture is a lack of a comprehensive knowledge of the strength of the culture. If an organization’s management expect to succeed in today’s society, it must have this knowledge as well as a clear understanding
of the things that drives the organization’s culture (Hagberg & Heifetz, 2000). Operating
culture is considered by many to be one of the main constraints to organizational
achievement. According to Ethics Quality (2002), operating culture is generally defined
as the current environment, the way things operate, and the morals of the organization.
This argument is generally supported by the other researchers in this area (Aiex, 1988;
Bolman & Deal, 1997; Dowling, 2001; Schein, 1985; Seeger, 2001).

Theoretical Perspectives of Indicators of Organizational Success

Godsey (2002) says the determination of what is “success” is based on the
cultural environment. If you ask someone in the United States to name some successful
people, you will most likely get the names of sports stars, movie stars, musicians, and
millionaires like Donald Trump, Bill Gates, and other similar personalities. Rarely will
you hear the names of firefighters, police officers, and teachers. Today’s society relates
being successful with the possession of a high profile, money, power, and name
recognition (Godsey, 2002). With this in mind, the theoretical literature differs
somewhat in defining an organization’s success from what the stakeholders (employees,
customers and stockholders) see as indicators of success (Godsey, 2002).

Companies that do extremely well financially are the ones that support and offer a
shared vision with their employees and have a climate of open communication
throughout the system (International Survey Research, 2001). Stakeholders often rely on
consistent and predictable activity in an organization (Gibson, 2000). In his exploratory
investigation, Thomas (2001) found that the higher the levels of company trust from
customers, the greater the commitment and service loyalty.
There is a direct correlation between corporate culture and financial performance (Dowling, 2001). In a longitudinal study on organizational culture, two Harvard Business School professors, Kotter and Heskett (as cited in Dowling, 2001) surveyed 207 U.S. companies to determine the correlation between a company’s financial performance and the strength of its culture. The study was done over an eleven-year period. The results showed that highly profitable companies (Wal-Mart, PepsiCo, Shell, etc.) were the businesses that emphasized the well-being of their stakeholders (customers, employees, and stockholders). The companies that did not display these three attributes had poor financial performance. The key learning of this survey and the authors’ work is that, a strong organizational culture that formulates the company’s goals and motivates employees should be established. This will result in financial success for the organization. According to Kotter and Heskett, “organizations that do not focus on stockholders, customers, and employees tend to focus on themselves” (as cited in Dowling, 2001, p. 106).

According to Ethics Quality (as cited in Bottorff, 2002), over half of all quality cost (costs of poor quality) is due to the characteristic of the operating culture. A dissertation on organizational culture assessment (Reigle, 2003) revealed that culture has sizeable effects on an organization’s employee retention, technology implementation, innovation, merger success, organizational effectiveness, and productivity. The results of this research are consistent with other research that has shown that the organizational culture has a direct bearing on the success of an organization (Toupin, 2003; Hagberg & Heifetz, 2000; McNamara, 1999; Dowling, 2001).
A study conducted on group dynamics and the role of congruence and incongruence in diverse decision-making showed that individuals react most favorably when definite opinion differences are congruent. A second part of the study showed that “out-groups” consisting of minority opinion members might be more prominent in diverse group decision making than “in-group” minority opinion members. The conclusion drawn was as follows: “Congruence occurs when in-group members agree with one another and out-group members disagree whereas incongruence occurs when in-group members disagree with a majority composed of in-groups and out-group members” (Phillips, 2003, p. 3).

**Discussion**

**Summary and Interpretations**

**Office Politics and Interpersonal Relationships**

No one would dispute that interpersonal difficulties are unpleasant, at best, and extremely damaging at their worst. Interpersonal difficulties, known by many names and taking many forms, have long been considered a natural part of human interactions and; therefore, are unavoidable. Office politics is a resulting phenomenon of this dysfunctional behavior that occurs in the workplace. It is characterized as covert, often unethical and selfishly motivated, encompassing actions that are not performed in the best interest of the organization. This self-serving and destructive nature of office politics is what makes it an important issue to business leaders, employees, and shareholders alike.

In spite of this, organizational politics has been relatively absent in “management and organizational theory and research literature” (Hampton, 1982, p. 634). Most
research and organizational attention has been placed on ethics and human resources management. As a result, most organizations have established ethics training programs and anti-harassment policies. These measures are commendable, but in most cases ineffective, doing little more than putting a Band-Aid on an “oozing wound” for two reasons:

1. most political players feel that they have integrity and consider their actions justifiable.
2. Most cases of bullying and harassment are not illegal or considered a violation of human rights.

Four research projects cited by Lawrence B. MacGregor Serven (2002) in his book “The End of Politics as Usual” revealed interesting yet unsurprising results:

1. The CEO Magazine found that approximately 66% of the respondents to a survey felt that their companies’ plans were determined by politics as opposed to strategy.
2. The Wall Street Journal reported that more than 33% of the people surveyed were willing to relocate to another state for a job that offered peace of mind, foregoing money or status for less stress.
3. A Gallop Poll, using eleven different criteria, found that fewer than 50% of the respondents said they experienced satisfaction in their workplaces.
4. The Center for Workplace Development at Rutgers University conducted a survey of 6,000 workers and found that 88% had experienced work place stress.
All of these study examples speak only of the personal consequences to the workforce. While quality of employees’ work life should be an important factor to their organization’s well being, management is usually not prompted to action until the organization as a whole is jeopardized. The much-publicized “Challenger Space Shuttle” disaster is a mammoth example of what can happen when the organization is a political breeding ground.

Ideally, interference against moral deterrence would begin much earlier than the workplace. Because the perception of integrity is shaped by so many variable (culture, experience, up bringing, etc.) it must be taken out of the individual’s responsibility to decide or interpret. The leaders of organizations must make clear directives for their organizations and enforce the implementation of these directives. The initiatives should include a viable Ethics Management program reinforced with empathy, respect, and cultural awareness enlightenment. Managers must lead by setting exemplary examples. Employees must also be aware that working in the best interest of the organization is also in their best interest. “In reality, what management pays attention to and awards is often the strongest indicator of the organization’s culture” (Hagberg & Heifetz, 2000, ¶3); However, this often differs considerably from management’s stated views. Organizational habits are often so ingrained that they escape notice (Parham, 2003). The review of literature reveals that an organizational culture assessment may be instrumental in unveiling this.

**Ethics, Organizational Culture, and Organizational Success**

Research literature has clearly shown the importance of integration of ethical compliance and commitment to the overall long-term success of the organization.
Traditionally, companies have routinely included ethical policies and guidelines on the books, but they have only recently begun to embrace the need to include ethics management as an intricate component of their organizational culture. American businesses with an established “Code of Ethics Policies” have increased from 13% to 73% in the past decade (Akhavan, 1998).

In response to recommendations made by Bottorff (2000) and McNamara (1999) on what is needed to have a good ethics policy, this reviewer agrees with most of the elements in both recommendations. However, it is felt that some of McNamara’s (1999) recommendations were excessive, redundant, and too costly. Instead of three new positions, one individual should be responsible for all three roles (ethics officer, coordinator, and ethics manager). The cost alone could put the establishment of this program out of reach for small and some mid-size businesses.

Research has shown that there are costs associated with both having a commitment to ethical behavior and continuing to harbor unethical behavior. However, the long-term costs of unethical behavior are more detrimental to a company’s internal and external outlook (International Survey Research, 2001). In the International Survey Research (2001), several indicators were identified that can be applied by most organizations in determining whether or not they are at risk or prone to unethical misconduct. This reviewer agrees with these indicators. The business scandals of Enron, WorldCom, Global Crossing and others clearly show that unethical behavior has not been the act of a few executives committing wrongdoing, but of an entire organizational culture that allows and thrives on this type of activity.
Ethical issues are not in contradiction to organizational profitability. Models of profit-making organizations, where fundamental issues or values and ethics appear to be more balanced, have few questions of economic viability. The success of these organizations clearly indicates that the broader notions of ethics and organizations are notably viable (Seeger, 2001). Stakeholders' theory seeks to broaden the definition of organization beyond the narrow economic interest to all those groups with a stake in the success of the organization (Seeger, 2001).

The contradiction of this review centers on society is morals, culture, and values. Today, with the media constantly highlighting unethical conduct across the spectrum of society, stakeholders are demanding ethical behavior and accountability by all. The question is whether the fickle stakeholder will change directions ten years from now. Will what is considered unethical today, be considered unethical tomorrow? There is too much gray area to affix a simple right or wrong answer. It is very difficult to eliminate these gray areas; the organizational culture (beliefs and values) and the individual response can interfere with making the best decision (Dawes, 2001). However, this reviewer agrees with the relativist school of thought. Relativists believe ethics can be measured based on degrees; an example would be a white lie is OK if no harm is caused or it is in the best interest of both parties to tell a lie (Daeg de Mott, n.d.).

Organizations that enjoy positive reputations are the ones with strong ethical identities. This association of good ethics and organization culture results in strong support from all stakeholders (Seeger, 2001). According to Hagberg & Heifetz (2000), culture drives the organization and its action. This statement is consistent with the
It is conceivable that management would be able to successfully rectify the disclosed problems, thereby significantly reducing the perceived necessity for dysfunctional political behavior. This would be true in the prospective that organizations are under the authority of capable leadership that has the essentials to ensure that the proper objectives are pursued (Bolman, et. al., 1997). However, because this authority is, itself composed of humans, with the same human frailties, the process requires a diligent effort.

Acumen International (2000) created a “360 degree feedback-organizational assessment, Organizational Culture Inventory (OCI),” to measure culture in terms of behavioral norms and expectations (ie. the difference between the current and ideal culture.) The study was agreed to be comprehensive in that:

1. It has well-documented reliability and validity.
2. It was developed from more than 20 years of social styles research with thousands of organizations.
3. It tells you the intensity of the culture (the degree to which organization members agree or disagree about company culture).
4. It is fully customizable, allowing for specific organizational variables
5. It provides item-level feedback and quantitative differences between current and ideal cultures.
6. It may be used to assess the gap between leadership behavior and ideal culture.

Most research conducted on “workplace behavior” has been in response to what has been coined as “Interpersonal Risk Management” (Measuring, 2002). This term
findings in the review of literature. In addition, it is suggested that organizations must reinforce these core values on a regular and continuous basis.

Conclusions

Empirical Review

Very interestingly, it was determined (from a research project the “Dysfunctional Office and Organizational Politics [DOOP]” conducted by Anderson Consulting from 1989 to 1992 to identify personality characteristics that were not “in line” with organizational change) that it was impractical to test for integrity on an individual basis. Researchers found that people act out of their beliefs of what is occurring around them, i.e. their perception of reality. This perception is not an actual measurement of “fact, but must be considered real because it is what people act on” (Anderson, 2000, Organizational Factors, ¶ 1).

The results culminating from the DOOP study were combined to form a “perceptual picture” of the highly dysfunctional political work environment:

1. There is less reward according to job performance.
2. The work role of the employee is more ambiguous.
3. There is less autonomy in the employee’s job.
4. The people with whom the employee works with are less open to change.
5. There are fewer opportunities for the employee to be creative.
6. Turnover is higher and productivity is lower.
7. The employee is less satisfied with promotion opportunities.
8. The employee is stressed and less satisfied with the job overall.
refers to employee turnover, employment-related lawsuits, low productivity, and ineffective management resulting from interpersonal relationship failures.

This reviewer feel that because of the far-reaching implications, research emphasis should be directed at the development of a "whole organization approach" similar to the "Steps to Respect Program" by Committee for Children (2003). This program emphasizes the responsibility of all stakeholders in an organization.

**Theoretical Review**

The theoretical literature obtained for review revealed that considerable interest has been directed towards identifying and understanding what is known as "office politics." Most identify the same contributing behaviors and attitudes. However much of the literature was "non-professional or non-academic" in nature. These sources are without "scientific methods to establish the observations in considered only story telling ... insofar as the validity and generalization of results is concerned" (Anderson, 2000, Research Subjects, ¶2).

This reviewer has the opinion that in spite of the lack of professional or academic augmentation; the literature provided an interesting insight into the subject for individuals and organizations seeking remedy to interpersonal difficulties on all levels.

The stakeholders of organizations demand the highest level of success. This demand encompasses all venues, from sports teams always being the best in competition to the realizing the highest return on investments. Achievements of such levels often come at a cost. Based on this critical analysis, the cost of ethical behavior is far less than that of unethical behavior. Performing ethically eliminates the possibility of embarrassment, financial burden, or scandal to society. Everyone benefits when
organizations act within the extent of morally acceptable behavior. The costs of unethical behavior are usually unfavorable for business; usually any gains or profits are short term. By all indications, stakeholders are more accepting of the cost associated with ethical practices. It appears that even as stakeholders demand maximum profits on their investments, the majority of stakeholders expects and relies on organizations to conduct business based on ethical practices (International Survey Research, 2001).

In the human resource management approach, management-oriented theories take it for granted that employees and organizations do not operate in a neo-classical workplace (Maslow, Taylor, Likert, etc.). In the view of the human relations’ school of thought, an individual is motivated by psychological needs and the social relationships that form inside and outside the workplace (Maslow). This school of thought emerged largely as a reaction to previous scientific theory of management that viewed the individual as being moved by purely physiological and material needs (Taylor).

A code of ethics should be integrated into all aspects of an organization’s structure (McNamara, 1999). Is it unethical when a company asked its employees to maximize sales/profits for the benefit of their shareholders, bordering the legal limits? Does it show a lack of ethical behavior by the company? Sometimes the question of what is ethical or unethical behavior is not as simple as it seems (Dawes, 2001). Should ethical behavior for public agencies be the same as that for private companies? Very little research has been done comparing the two; more research is needed to examine the differences and similarities. It is not just important for an organization (public or private) to establish a code of ethical behavior, but also to incorporate training/workshops into this process. Management should have open communications and discussions on
organizational values and beliefs and expected employee behavior (Bottorff, 2000). Additionally, more research is needed to examine societal morals/values from a ten-year span (starting from the 1993 to present). It would be interesting to see which, and how, outside factors (economics, technology, etc.) affect the determination of views on morals and values.

**Recommendations**

The purpose of this literature research strategy was to explore the phenomenon of office politics and to determine its influence/impact on organizational strategic success as viewed in the workplace. For the past ten years, the general public has been exposed to a multitude of unethical conduct on the part of companies, chief executive officers, and public officials (both elected and non-elected). However, nothing can compare to what has been occurring over the last two years. The lack of trust by the public/stakeholders because of this unrestrained unethical behavior is continuously having a negative effect on the nation and the economy.

Much of the theoretical literature differs somewhat in determining what organizational success is and what constitutes unethical behavior. Recent empirical studies of ethics and organizational success have shown that you can be successful and maintain ethical behavior. The following recommendations are made as a guide (based on a thorough review of the research) to having a successful organization while practicing ethical behavior:

1. Establish a code of conduct policy.
2. Establish a strategy to communicate the ethics guidelines to staff.
3. Create a believable public commitment to ethical operations, have it signed by the CEO and displayed prominently.

4. Build trust with employees and constantly monitor the ethics program.

5. Have management and employees participate in the development of policies and decisions that affect their work environments.

Future research should focus on the stakeholders and their expectations of organizations regarding their commitment to adhering to ethical standards. A comparison of private businesses and government agencies should be further investigated. Research has shown that businesses are aware of the benefits of having ethics as part of their organizational cultures. Few empirical studies have examined the impact of ethics and organizational culture in the public sector. A quantitative study should be done on organizational culture in the public sector. Research questions should be addressed on whether there is a significant difference in employees’ job satisfaction and employees’ retention (private vs. public) as it relates to ethics and organizational culture.

**Research Implications**

The findings of this review indicate a need for further empirical study into the phenomenon referred to as “Office Politics” as it relates to both individual behavior and organizational culture. Because organizations are more complex than today’s theories entail, new methods for empirical research must address this complexity. The study of office politics and its affects on an organization’s climate will require different methodologies and more complex verbal communication to characterize this area of inquiry. The methods used in assessing ethics and the many forms of harassment in the workplace do not adequately address the affects of office politics. Simply using general
communications, based on words and numbers, to characterize office politics will oversimplify this complex reality. If we are to accurately research office politics/organizational climate, research methods must conduct concise inquiry into the true nature of this organizational occurrence.

Future researchers must draw from a multitude of factors (which may include medicine and psychiatric pathology, physical sciences, archeology, and economics) to fully understand this thing called “Office Politics.” Administrators and scientists (theorists and researchers) will be required to change their concepts of organizations. A true assessment on the role of office politics, ethics, powers, and organizational cultures will need to be addressed initially -- this is an area where theory ignores reality. Previous research has shown that office politics are responsible for 75% of job failures. In addition, it is estimated that employees spend 64 minutes a day engaged in office politics. Donating less time to actually working can lead to financial losses for an organization and translate into lost opportunities for all stakeholders. Therefore, it is in the best interest of both the employee and the organization to address and study the impact of negative office politics. This reviewer recommends that additional research be conducted using a mixed methodology:

1. Quantitative method - comparing interpersonal risk factors of private and public sector organizations.

2. Qualitative method – comparing an employee’s performance in an organization with a positive political culture to one without a clear recognition of the influence of “dysfunctional office politics.”
A multiple regression analysis is suggested to address the research questions: (a) What are the factors that affect organizational (workplace) climate? (b) What is the level or tone of politics tolerable in successful organizations and (c) How does it relate to established cultural and climate of those organizations? The outcome of this research will tell us the effects (strength, relationship) of a particular set of independent variables (organizational climate, employees' retention/turnover, stress, promotion, job satisfaction, etc.) on the dependent variable (office politics).
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Purpose

The purpose of this research study was to determine the degree of the “Perception of Office Politics” held by top-level fire administrators and to investigate the role of office politics as it relates to the established cultural and climate of their organizations. This was a non-experimental, descriptive, multiple regression based research that sought to conduct an explanatory study on the causes, effects and relationship of office politics and its affect on/how it is affected by organizational culture and climate. If an organization wants to maximize its potential (both human and physical resources), it must understand the culture of the organization and the impact office politics has on the internal environment. The scope of this study included an analysis of contemporary and classic literature of theoretical perspectives and empirical studies on “Office Politics,” “Organizational Climate,” and “Organizational Culture.” It is concluded that to remain healthy an organization must seek to control the impact of internal political maneuvering (Bender, 1996; Osborn, 1998; Stupak, 1997).

Rationale and Assumptions

This study addressed the research questions posed below to determine the relationship of internal political behavior, commitment to ethics, and organizational culture. It further conducted an inquiry into determining feasible cultural and management changes necessary to rectify damaging and unscrupulous office politics. The expected discovery, as a result of this research, was that there is a direct relationship between the perceived level of office politics in an organization to employees’ job satisfaction, employee retention/turnover, stress, and loyalty.
The multiple regression analysis technique was chosen to address the questions in this study. This technique is widely used in correlational-quantitative research because of its "versatility and the amount of information it yields about relationships among variables" (Gall et. al., 2003, p. 340). More to the point, multiple regression analysis is considered the best predictor in computing the relationship between the dependent variable and a combination of two or more independent variables.

Hypothesis

Organizations with weak directives, poor communications, and ineffectively managed cultures are breeding grounds for negative dysfunctional interpersonal dynamics referred to as "Office Politics." To remain healthy an organization must aggressively seek to control the negative impact of internal political maneuvering (Bender, 1996; Osborn, 1998; Stupak, 1997). The hypothesis is that the prevalence or perception of this phenomenon is influenced by such factors as:

1. Job tenure/personal demographics (Ethnicity, Education, Years of Experience, Tenure as Director)
2. Organizational culture/climate (Department Size, Union Involvement)
3. Job stress
4. Working relationships (Immediate Supervision, People at Work)
5. Intent to quit

Research Questions

Important questions need to be answered in implementing an ethical and viable organizational culture. The research questions for this study are as follow:
Question 1: What is the perceived level of office politics, within the organizations, held by top-level administrators? Politics are the “enactment of self-serving behaviors designed to influence another party in order to obtain some personal goal or a goal not sanctioned by the organization” (as cited in Zeller, 1999, p. 234). According to Graham (1998), office politics are “synonymous with hypocrisy, secrecy, deal making, rumors, powerbrokers, self-interest, image building, self-promotion, and cliques” (p. 1). Velasquez (1982) describe office politics as the “underbelly” of the organization – informal pockets and channels of power, a covert power whose sources do not appear on the organizational charts. He furthers defines office politics as the “processes in which individuals or groups within an organization use no formally sanctioned power tactics to advance their own aims” (Velasquez, 1982, p. 329). Office politics and organizations that have good communications are direct opposite of each other. In an organization where the environment encourages and support open communication, office politics is almost non-existence (Lumpur, et. al., 1997).

Question 2: What are the factors that affect the level of “perception of office politics?” The reasons for engaging in negative office politics are as diverse as the people perpetrating the act are. However, they can be classified under several prevalent, negative variables: (a) limited resources and opportunities for advancement, (b) over competitiveness, (c) a lack of measurable job standards, (d) employees’ emotional insecurity, (e) a win-lose organizational attitude, (f) the need for personal acceptance, and (g) the most common motivator – self interest (Chase, 2002). Politics can be considered an important social influence and behavior process, capable of being constructive or disruptive to the organization and its employees. Managers should therefore familiarize
themselves with the political process in order to effect necessary changes (Allen et. al., 1979).

Question 3: What impact does organizational culture and climate have on the political environment? Corporate culture is fueled by the number of personalities and concepts brought into play by members of an organization. It is imperative that management has a clear understanding of its culture in order to effectively manage the organization (Toupin, 2003). According to McNamara (1999), the main reason for the failure of the vast majority of organizations that attempt to change their culture is due to the lack of a comprehensive knowledge on the strength of the culture. If an organization expects to succeed in today's society, its leaders must have this knowledge and a clear understanding of the things that drives their culture (Hagberg & Heifetz, 2000).

**Definition of Terms**

For this study the following will represent the operational definition of key terms and variables:

1. **Intent to Quit** – Voluntary employee turnover. Workplace stress, lack of upward mobility, poor working environment, low compensation, and a high level of office politics are common causes of voluntary employee turnover.

2. **Job Satisfaction** – Refers to an individual's general attitude or contentment about working in a particular organization.

3. **Office Politics** – The process in which individuals or groups within an organization use non-formally sanctioned power tactics to advance their own aims. (Velasquez, 1982). This includes deceptive and manipulative tactics such as blaming or attacking others, controlling information, coalition and
image building based on false pretense, shameless ingratiating, creating obligations, and usurping control of scarce resources (Velasquez, 1982).

4. Organizational Climate – The way things are typically done (day-to-day), according to distinctive, developed beliefs and patterns (Bolman, 1997).

5. Organizational Culture – The internal beliefs and values that comprise the assumptions, norm, tangible signs of the organization’s members and their behavior (Dowling, 2001).

6. Perception – How individuals view or describe their organizational climate; an attitude or understanding based on what is observed or thought.

**Research Design**

This non-experimental, descriptive method research study sought to investigate the causes and effects of office politics and its relationship to the organizational culture and climate. The study addressed the research questions by using the following method of data analyses:

1. What are the factors, the independent variables (such as stress, job satisfaction, and employee retention / turnover) that affect the dependent variable, office politics? The study will address this question by utilizing the “Multiple Regression Analysis” model below:

   \[
   Y = f(X_1 + X_2 + X_3 + \ldots + X_n) + e,
   \]

   where:

   - \(Y\) represents the dependent variable
   - \(X_1, X_2, \ldots, X_n\) represent the independent variables
   - \(n\) is the total number of variables
   - \(e\) is the error term
2. How strong is the relationship between the set of independent variables and the dependent variable? (*R squared*)

3. Is the relationship between the set of independent variables and the dependent variable statistically significant? (*F statistic*)

4. Which independent variable has the strongest/weakest effect on the dependent variable (*Beta weight* for each independent variable)?

5. Are the unique, singular effects of each independent variable on the dependent variable statically significant (*p statistic* for each independent variable)?

*Dependent Variable*

\[ Y = \text{Office Politics} \]

Political organizations share common characteristics, some of these characteristics are blatant and obvious such as lack of focus (by management) on internal personal interest, poor productivity, and inadequate recognition and compensation. However, some characteristics are subtle and less ubiquitous. Serven (2002) reasons that these characteristics of politically dominant organizations are making tacit (implied), rather than explicit (expressed) decisions, being crisis oriented, evading responsibility, and having many "undiscuss-ables." Instead of open, frank communication there are "interpersonal enmities and hatred, unhealthy collusion, and interdepartmental conflicts" (Lumpur et al., 1997, ¶3). These encounters prohibit employees from speaking out (Lumpur et al., 1997). (Measured by the Perception of Office Politics [POPS] Scale).
Independent Variables

$X_1 = Job\ Satisfaction$

Kacmar & Ferris (1992) found in their studies that the social climate in an organization has a direct relationship with employees’ job satisfaction. In addition, the “Perception of Office Politics” showed a positive relationship with employees’ job satisfaction. Effective managers can create a more positive work environment by listening and responding to their workers’ concerns (Creative, 2003). Effectively managing office politics requires “being diplomatic, collaborating, and enhancing cooperation and confidence among employees” (Jinkner, 1999, ¶ 2). Employees must be given a clear message that unethical behavior will not be tolerated in any form (Lumpur et. al., 1997). (Measured by the Abridge Job Descriptive Index [AJDI] Scale).

$X_2 = Employee\ Turnover/Retention$

Being involved in politics requires a lot of “mental and emotional energy” that could best be put into working (Selvaggi, 2002). It is estimated that employees spend an average of 64 minutes a day engaged in office politics. Donating less time to actually working can lead to financial loses for the organization and translate into lost opportunities for all stakeholders (McKay, 1998). As provided in Creative (2003), “Political issues take a toll on employees’ morale and can ultimately lead to higher staff turnover” (p. 2). (Measured by the Intent to Quit [ITQ] Scale).

$X_3 = Job\ Stress$

Most workplace stress is not caused by the actual demands of work but by the work environment and, as stated earlier, a political workplace is a breeding ground for stress (Serven, 2002). The frustration triggered by the interpersonal difficulties of office
politics is like an “office cancer” that can eat away at your office spirit, decay work relationships, sap motivation, reduce work satisfaction, and wreak havoc in your body, in the form of stress and related ailments (Bender, 1996, p. 8).

Toyne (2001) describes stress as being the offshoot of bullying and harassment related to office politics. He further states that a demanding work schedule combined with caustic comments and harassing treatment can be a debilitating and psychologically distressing experience. In a study on the perception of organizational politics and stress/anxiety, it was found that there is a positive relationship between the two (Kacmar & Ferris, 1992). (Measured by the Stress in General [SIG] Scale).

\[ X_4 = \text{Work Environment/Climate} \]

Every organization has a political style and culture (both formal and covert). In other words, organizational culture “is its own world with its own rules and reality” (Toupin, 2003). Because organizations consist of coalitions of various individuals and interest groups, the political style and informal internal culture is a complex -- and ever changing -- web (Bolman, 1997). Politics are also considered the outgrowth of the larger climate of competitive games of business (Osborn, 1998). This is fueled by the constant desire to be number-one in the quest for glory. However, Lowe (2002) contends that there is no need for sneaky political behavior if employees’ actions are directly related to fulfilling the organization’s mission and are in alignment with its objectives, goals, policies, and procedure. In organizations where the work environment/climate lacks good communications, opportunities and feedback, the perception of office politics will be strong (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992). (Measured by the Abridged Job Descriptive Index [AJDI] Scale).
Sample and Sample Plan

A sample of convenience was utilized in this research. The sample consisted of 155 fire chiefs of metropolitan fire rescue departments in the United States. Metropolitan fire rescue departments are defined as relatively large departments with minimum staffing strengths of 400 professional firefighters. Subsequently, this study cannot be generalized to any other group.

Data Collection, Procedures, and Ethical Consideration

The data collected was used for research purposes only, and was not/will not be used for any other purpose. Approval of the study was granted by the IRB on June 2, 2002. The survey/questionnaire was sent out on June 9, 2002, with a return deadline of June 30, 2002. Each questionnaire was numerically coded; to maintain anonymity no names or locales were used. In compliance with established policy, all response information will be kept in a secured lock box for a period of five years, at which time it will be destroyed. To insure a high response rate, an introduction letter was sent out to the participants one week prior to the survey, and follow-up mailings were sent to all participants, thanking those who had complied and reminding those that had not that they still had time to complete and return their survey.

Measures/Instrumentation

The instruments selected for this research study were: (a) The Perception of Office Politics Scale (POPS; Kacmar & Ferris, 1991), (b) the Abridged Job Descriptive Index (AJDI), (c) the Job in General (JIG) Scale, (d) Stress in General (SIG) Scale, and (e) Intent to Quit (ITQ) Scale. The survey consisted of five primary scales (69 items) along with an 11-item personal characteristic questionnaire to obtain general
demographic and organizational information (gender, education, tenure, ethnicity, age, and terms of employment at-will or contractual).

**Perception of Office Politics Scale (POPS)**

The perceived degree of organizational politics was measured using the “Perceptions of Office Politics” (POPS) Scale. The POPS scale has 15 items that measure the political climate in an organization. This instrument has been validated from 39 previous research studies and is the most widely used tool in the examination of the perception of organizational politics (Kacmar, Bozeman, Carlson, & Anthony, 1999).

Ferris et. Al. has directed most of the empirical research in their model of the “Perception of Office Politics” (as cited in Kacmar & Baron, 1999). In this model, work environment and personal factors are influences on the perception of politics in the workplace. In turn, the “Perception of Office Politics” has been shown to be influenced by job stress, job satisfaction and employee turnover. Based on previous studies (e.g., Cropanzano, et al, 1997; Ferris et al, 1996) strong psychometric support has been shown for this model.

**Scoring the POPS Scale**

This is a five point Likert type rating scale, ranging from “strongly disagreed” (one point) to “strongly agreed” (five points). The scale consists of 15 items. Eleven of the items are worded unfavorably; for these items, a five (5) point response would indicate a high political perception. For example, an unfavorably worded response from the POPS Scale would be scored as follows:

\[ 1 = \text{strongly disagree}, \ 5 = \text{strongly agree} \]

Sometimes it is easier to remain quiet than to fight ............... \[ 1 \ 2 \ 3 \ 4 \ 5 \]
The remaining four items are worded favorably, in which case a five (5) point response would indicate a low political perception. A favorably worded response from the POPS scale would be reversed scored as follows:

\[ 5 = \text{strongly disagree}, \ 1 = \text{strongly agree} \]

Employees are encouraged to speak out frankly ..................  5 4 3 2 1

Therefore, in order to calculate a consistent assessment of individual attitude, the favorable items were “reversed scored” for entry into the database. Final tabulated scores for this subsection can range from a high of 75 to a low of 15. The total scores reflect the respondent’s attitude on the current organizational climate (high score reflects a high perception of office politics). A median score of 45 points indicate a neutral office climate or lack of opinion or perception by the respondent.

**Job Descriptive Index (JDI) Scale**

The Job Descriptive Index (JDI; Copyright 1985, Revised 1997, Bowling Green State University) consists of five facet scales used to measure employees’ opinions on the work itself, pay, co-workers, advancement opportunity, and supervisors. This information is garnered to calculate an assessment of “strong and weak points in the principal areas of job satisfaction” (Balzer, et. al., 2000, p. 44). However, the five facet scales (job satisfactions) do not accurately depict overall job satisfaction. Overall satisfaction, according to Scarpello (1983), is distinct from facet satisfaction because is does not include key factors that are important to individuals when evaluating overall job satisfaction (as cited in Balzer, et. al., 2000). For the purpose of the JDI measure, “job satisfaction is defined as the feeling a worker has about his or her job or job experiences in relation to previous experiences, current expectations, or available alternatives”
The JDI does, however, serve to analyze important areas of the workplace that may contribute to the health and profitability of an organization. Based on over 40 years of research, the JDI scale remains one of the most widely used instruments in measuring the different aspects of job satisfaction (DeMeuse, 1985; Zedeck, 1987). Please note, the description listed below in analyzing the data (JDI), is the way it is written in the manual. The researcher will modify the way the data is analyzed.

**Abridged Job Descriptive Index (AJDI) Scale**

The Abridged Job Descriptive Index (AJDI; copyright 2000, shortened version of the 1997 JDI, Bowling Green State University) was developed by the JDI Research Group because of concerns that the length of the JDI would become a distraction in its use. The AJDI is composed of the same five (5) facet scales as the JDI, but each scale has only five questions each, reducing its overall length greatly. The validity and reliability of the instrument remain strong.

**Job in General (JIG) Scale**

The Job in General Scale (JIG, Bowling Green State University) was developed to be administered along with the JDI and AJDI and is considered by researcher to be a well constructed measure of overall job satisfaction. According to the JDI and JIG user’s manual this measure was constructed to reflect the “global, long-term evaluation” of the job (Balzer, et. al., 2000). “It was intended to reflect not only the five principal facets and the importance of each to the individual, but also their interactions and the contributions of other long-term situational and individual factors that make a person satisfied or dissatisfied with the job” (Balzar, et. al., 2000, p. 95).
Scoring the JDI, AJDI, and JIG Scales

Each of the five facets of the AJDI scale and the JIG scale are scored separately. Each instrument is presented in a “Yes/No/?” answer format. The scales are scored by assigning numerical values to the “Y”, “N”, and “?” responses. Approximately half of the items are worded favorably, so that a “Y” response would indicate satisfaction. For these items a “Y” would receive 3 points, an “N” would receive 0 points and a “?” would receive 1 point. For example, a favorably worded response from the Opportunity for Promotion facet scale would be scored as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The remaining items are worded unfavorably, where “Y” responses would indicate dissatisfaction. These items are reverse scored, a “Y” would receive 0 points, “N” would receive 3 points and a “?” would receive 1 point. (Note: “?” responses always receive 1 point, both before and after reverse scoring.) The “?” tends to relate more closely to an attitude of dissatisfaction (unfavorably), rather than satisfaction (favorable). An unfavorably worded response from the same Opportunity for Promotion facet scale would be scored as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Alternate Scoring for the JDI, AJDI, and JIG Scales

An alternate format can be used to facilitate ease of data entry and calculations. In this format, the respondent can circle 1 for “yes,” 2 for “no,” and 3 for “?”, rather than circling “Y,” “N,” or “?”. For example, both favorably and unfavorably worded responses from the Opportunity for Promotion facet scale would be presented as follows:
Yes  No  ?

Good opportunities for promotion………..1  2  3
Unfair promotion policy……………………1  2  3

However, an addition-scoring step is required prior to reverse coding and computing scale scores, responses must be converted from the 1-2-3 format to a 3-1-0 format. Responses entered as “1” must be changed to “3,” responses entered as “2” must be changed to “0,” and each “3” response must be changed to a “1”. Reverse scoring can then be applied for calculations. Any missing responses should be treated as “?” and scored a “1”.

Scores on the JDI, AJDI, and JIG scales are computed by summing the points obtained from an individual’s response to the items in each scale. Scores on the Work, Pay, Promotion, People, and Supervision (five items) facets scales have a possible range from 0 to 15. The JIG scale has eight (8) items and a possible range of scores from 0 to 24.

An “absolute level of job satisfaction” (employee’s satisfaction or dissatisfaction) can be translated to mean whether the respondent scores are above or below a neutral point on the JDI, AJDI (facets), and the JIG scale. This neutral point would represent an ambivalent feeling, a balance of positive and negative feeling about aspects of the job or the job overall. This neutral point has been found to be close to the middle range of these scales. The neutral point on the Work, Pay, Promotion, People, and Supervision (five items) facets scales is around 7. Scores well above 9 would indicate satisfaction, while those below 5 would indicate dissatisfaction. This premise can be applied to each scale; the JIG scale has eight (8) items and a neutral point of 12. *Note: Scoring instructions were obtained from the User’s Manual for JDI and JIG Scales.*
Intent to Quit (ITQ) Scale

The Intent to Quit Scale (ITQ; 2000, JDI, Bowling Green State University) is often represented as an indicator/measurement of employee’s turnover. Presently, only one validated scale on measuring employees’ intentions to quit had been published (Balzer, et. al., 2000). The ITQ scale consists of 6 items using a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 for “strongly disagree” to 7 for “strongly agree.” Four of the statements are worded unfavorably; for these items, a seven (7) point response indicated a high intent to quit. The remaining two statements are worded favorably and a seven (7) point response indicated that the respondent has no immediate plans to quit.

Scoring the ITQ Scale

Similar to the POPS scale, in order to calculate a consistent assessment of individual attitude, the favorable items must be “reversed scored” for entry into the database. Final tabulated scores for this scale can range from a high of 42 to a low of 6, with a neutral score of approximately 24. The total scores reflected the respondent’s intent or desire to quit the organizational (high score reflects a high intent to quit).

Stress in General (SIG) Scale

The Stress in General Scale (SIG; copyright 1982, 1985, Bowling Green University; Parra & Smith, 1995) consists of 15 questions with a Yes/No/? format. In a poll on workplace stress, eighty-two percent of the workers surveyed said they had experienced stress in the workplace (Kersten, 2003). High stress is often an offshoot of low job satisfaction (Balzer, et. al., 2000). The SIG was developed by JDI (2002) to measure general stress levels in two factors, a “pressure” factor and a “threat” factor. Not
surprisingly, office politics has been identified as a leading cause of stress in the workplace (LifeCare & Gallop, 2003).

**Scoring the SIG Scale**

The SIG Scale is scored in the same manner as the JDI, AJDI, and JIG Scales (refer to section above) with the exception being: a “Y” response for unfavorably worded items would receive 3 points, an “N” would receive 0 points and a “?” would receive 1 point. Favorably worded items are reversed scored with a “Y” response and would receive 0 points, an “N” would receive 3 points and a “?” would receive 1 point. For example, the favorably and unfavorably worded responses from the Stress in General scale would be scored as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nerve-racking job environment</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smooth-running environment</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The scale has a range of scores from 0 to 45, with a high score indicating a very high level of job stress. The neutral point has been established at approximately 23 points.

Note: *Scoring instructions were obtained from the User’s Manual for JDI and JIG Scales.*

**Personal Survey**

It is cautioned that asking for too much demographic information can adversely affect the respondent’s feeling of confidentiality, which could lead to dishonesty in the responses or a refusal to reply at all (Balzer, et. al., 2000). Keeping this in mind, the Personal Survey has been kept brief. The personal/demographic questions were included for determining the relationship between the variables. Previous research has shown that personal characteristics can influence the attitude towards these variables (e.g. office politics, job satisfaction, tenure, and stress).
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Purpose

The purpose of this quantitative research study was to determine the degree of "Perception of Office Politics" held by top-level fire administrators and how it relates to the strategic success of the organization. In addition, the role of office politics was examined as it relates to the established corporate culture and climate of the organization. The literature review revealed that few empirical studies have been conducted solely to examine the impact of organizational culture on the prevalence of office politics in the public sector. Accordingly, no studies were found that gave emphasis to the management of professional fire rescue departments. To expiate for the gap in research, the scope of this study was narrowed to accommodate a sample of convenience of fire chiefs of metropolitan fire rescue departments in the United States with a minimum staffing strength of 400 professional firefighters and was not generalized to any other group. This study is unique from two perspectives: (1) it entails the examination of public/governmental agencies as opposed to private organizations and, more specifically, (2) it focuses singularly on large metropolitan fire rescue departments. Because of this distinction, this study offers a rare insight into the views and perceptions from the standpoint of the leaders of the largest professional fire rescue department in the country.

Measures

The instruments selected for this study were: (a) the Perception of Office Politics Scale (POPS; Kacmar & Ferris, 1991), (b) the Abridged Job Descriptive Index (AJDI; Bowling Green, 2000), (c) the Job in General (JIG) Scale, (d) the Stress in General Scale (SIG; Bowling Green, 1985; Parra & Smith, 1995), and (e) the Intent to Quit (ITQ) Scale.
The five scales (69 items) survey was supplemented with a brief 11-item personal characteristic questionnaire to obtain general demographic and organizational information such as gender, ethnicity, tenure and department size. Questions were kept general in order to avoid jeopardizing the anonymity of the participants.

**Survey/Questionnaire Responses**

Introduction letters were mailed to 155 fire chiefs through out the United States on June 2, 2004. These letters were followed approximately one week later with survey/questionnaire packets (Appendix E); each containing a letter of consent, a demographic survey, the five instrument questionnaires, and a stamped, self-addressed return envelope. Sample participants were asked to complete and return the survey/questionnaires by June 30, 2004. Final follow-up mailings were sent to all participants, thanking those who had complied and reminding those that had not that there was still time to do so. Time restraints prohibited a longer interval between mailings to allow for the return of any undeliverable letters before sending the survey packets. The original intent had been to track and identify the location of the responding participants versus the non-responding participants to see if there was any bias. This notion was abandoned based on the IRB requirements that the participants be granted complete anonymity. Therefore, reasons for non-responses or possible bias could not be determined.

By July 5, 2004, 111 survey/questionnaires (all-usable) had been returned; this represents a 71.6% response rate. Only five (3.2%) were returned as undeliverable or with notification that the person addressed had retired. The concluding non-response rate was 25.2% (n = 39).
Analysis of Data

A descriptive analysis (Table 4.1) was conducted on all continuous variables to (a) compute central tendency of mean, median, and mode and (b) measure the variability of standard deviation, variance, and range; describing the characteristics and the possible causal relationship between variables. A correlation analysis was conducted to define the relationship between variables and to determine the strongest statistically significant relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. Only the ten most significant independent variables were entered into the regression equation because of the relatively small sample size. For the purpose of this study, the level of “statistical significance” is $p \leq 0.05$. (Table 4.8).

**Descriptive Analysis – Demographics (Table 4.1)**

**Gender**

A resounding 97.3% ($n = 108$) of the respondents were male. However, considering the history of the fire services and the relatively small number of female firefighters overall, a 2.7% ($n = 3$) female response rate would indicate that women are making strides in a traditionally male dominated industry. This is notable because women have only recently (in the last 30 years) gained access to careers in the fire service.

**Age**

The largest number of respondent 38.7% ($n = 43$) fell in the age category of 51-56 years old, followed by 30.6% ($n = 34$) for age 57 or older, 29.7% ($n = 33$) for age 50-43 and only 0.9% ($n = 1$) for age 36-41. This is consistent with the tabulation of the average age for recruits and the time required to advance through the usual line-of-promotion.
**Ethnicity**

Frequency Analysis show that 67.6% \((n = 75)\) of the respondents identified themselves as White/Caucasian, 22.5% \((n = 25)\) as Black/African American, and 9.9% \((n = 11)\) as Hispanic/Latino. No other ethnic group was represented (Table 4.2). The percentages of participants identified as Black/African and Hispanic/Latino are disproportionately high. Nationally, the percentage of higher-ranked minorities continues to lag considerably behind.

**Education**

The responses show that 29.7% \((n = 33)\) of the chiefs have obtained a master’s degree or higher, 36.9% \((n = 41)\) hold a bachelor’s degree, 24.3% \((n = 27)\) hold an associate degree and 9.0% \((n = 10)\) with only a high school diploma. Traditionally, a college degree has not been a requirement for entry employment in the fire services. The high percentage of respondents holding college degrees shows that fire administration has emerged as white collar. An Age/Education Cross tabulation did show a marked differential between the younger age categories -- 42-50 (76%) and 51-56 (72%) and that of ages 57 or older (53%). The age category of 36-41 years old was not considered because there is only one representative in that category (high school degree) responding.

**Experience in Fire Services**

A strong majority of the respondents, 82% \((n = 91)\) had over 25 years of total fire service experience. This is notable because, nationally, professional firefighters are afforded pension plans that generally provide retirement pay after 25 years of service.
Descriptive Statistics show the mean experience as 30.86 years, minimum experience as 21.42 years, and maximum experience as an astonishing 50.92 years.

**Tenure with Present Department**

Responses to this item tend to correspond to either the total years of fire service experience or to tenure as fire chief. This is a verification that firefighters usually remain with the same organization for the length of their career, leaving at retirement. This fact created a wide discrepancy in the response values, which ranged from a minimum of 0.58 years to a maximum of 46 years (SD = 12.46). The mean is 21.64 years, the median is 24.67 years, and the mode is 30 years.

**Tenure as Fire Chief**

The responses show a wide range of tenure as fire chief, from a minimum of 0.08 years to a maximum of 33.17 years. The mean tenure of leadership was 5.68 years, with a standard deviation of 5.56. A Cross tabulation Analysis between tenure as fire chief and ethnicity show that for respondents classified as White/Caucasian the mean tenure is 6.85 years, for Black/African American the mean tenure is 3.05 years and that for Hispanic/Latino the mean tenure is 3.63 years. Analysis between director's tenure and education show no discernible differences.

**Appointed Outside/Ranks**

Advancement in most departments follow a line of promotion from firefighter/paramedic, engineer (driver), lieutenant, captain, and battalion chief; positions obtained based on experience and performance on promotional examinations. Appointed positions are division chief, assistant chief, deputy chief, and finally chief/director of the department. Reflecting this tendency, 72% (n = 80) of the participant were promoted.
through the ranks of their department. Only 28% (n = 31) were hired from outside of their present departments; of these 65% (n = 20) are White/Caucasian, 23% (n = 7) are Black/African American, and 13% (n = 4) are Hispanic/Latino. These percentages are consistent with the ethnic composition of the overall sample population.

**Department Size/Staffing Strength**

To comply with increasing demands for public safety, many municipalities have combined functionality for fire prevention, fire education and safety, and emergency medical services. Additionally, many smaller local departments are being consolidated into larger countywide organizations in order to establish more consistent and efficient standards (Occupational Outlook, 2004). However, presently most departments are relatively small. This is indicated in the responses. To be considered a metropolitan organization a department must have a staffing strength of at least 400 full-time professional firefighters. 68% (n = 75) of the participants command a department with 400 to 999 firefighters, 16% (n = 18) with 1000-1499 firefighters, 9% (n = 10) with 1500-1999 firefighters, and only 7% (n = 3) with 2000 or more.

A Cross tabulation Analysis (Table 4.5) yielded noteworthy results. While only 22.5% (n = 25) of the participants classified themselves as Black/African American, 37.5% (n = 3) of the largest departments are commanded by African American chiefs. This is most probable because these departments are located in large urban areas, which tend to have large minority citizenship.

**Contractual/At-Will**

A strong majority of the participant are at-will employees, only 13.5% (n = 15) have employment contracts. Of these, 80% (n = 12) are White/Caucasian
males. Generally, contractual employees tend to have more job security and stronger political ties.

**Union’s Political Activity and Involvement**

The International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) established in 1918, is the AFL-CIO, CLC affiliated labor union for fire professionals. The IAFF has over 2,700 affiliates and represents more than 250,000 professional fire fighters and emergency medical personnel in the United States and Canada (IAFF, 2004). Most participants 73% (n = 81) reported very politically active union involvement. Only 7.2% (n = 8) expressed a low level of union involvement. Local unions frequently have a strong influence on the selection and longevity of the fire chief. Therefore, the relationship that the fire chief has with the union could have a notable impact on overall work conditions.

**Descriptive Analysis – Instrument Scales**

**Stress at Work (SIG)**

Participants were asked to measure stress by answering 15 Yes/No/? questions about their present working conditions. Reported work stress levels ranged the full gamut from an absolute low of 0 to a maximum high of 45 points. A frequency analysis delivered a mean score of 23.45, median of 24.0, and mode of 21.0 with a standard deviation of 11.631. The results indicate that, despite the high degree of responsibility and demands of the job, most participants experience only a moderate level of stress.

**Abridged Job Descriptive Index (AJDI)**

**Work on present job.** Facet 1 of the AJDI consists of 5 Yes/No/? questions measuring the quality of work experience; a score of 15 indicates the most favorable opinion. Overall, participants expressed considerable satisfaction in their jobs. A
frequency analysis yielded a range from a low of 5 to a maximum of 15. The mean was computed as 14.47, the median as 15, and the mode as 15, with a low standard of deviation of 1.747. These results reinforce the participants attitudes displayed in the SIG results above.

Present pay. Facet 2 of the AJDI Scale consists of 5 Yes/No/? questions measuring the participants' feeling about their present pay, a score of 15 indicates a relatively high satisfaction on the level of pay. Summary statistics show a range from a minimum of 0 to a maximum of 15. The mean was computed as 10.52, the median as 12, and the mode as 15, with a standard deviation of 4.773. The fire service is increasingly being recognized as a profession, and the average compensations have followed suit. In addition, fire professionals receive other benefits that complement their earnings, such as medical, dental, liability and life insurance, paid national holidays, annual vacation and sick leave, and pension plans upon retirement or disability.

Opportunities for promotion. Facet 3 of the AJDI Scale consists of 5 Yes/No/? questions measuring the possibility for advancement; a score of 15 indicates optimum conditions. Summary Statistics show a range from a minimum of 0 to a maximum of 15. The mean was computed as 8.77, the median as 7, and the mode as 15, with a standard deviation of 5.150. In most organizations, fire chief is the top ranking position; therefore, the participant would have to transfer outside of their present department for promotion. In addition, the probability of transferring to another department may be limited because of the specialized expertise of the profession. Customarily fire chiefs retire from public service after their tenure and many enter the private sector as consultants.
Immediate supervision. Facet 4 of the AJDI Scale consists of 5 Yes/No/? questions measuring the participant’s opinion of his/her immediate supervisor(s); a score of 15 indicates a favorable opinion. Immediate supervision for a fire chief may be one individual such as an assistant county manager, a county manager, or city mayor or a group of individuals such as a board of fire or county commissions. Fire chiefs are usually granted a large degree of autonomy, due in part to the same specialized expertise that limits opportunities for promotion. Summary statistics show a range from a minimum of 0 to a maximum of 15. The mean was computed as 11.48, the median as 15, and the mode as 15, with a standard deviation of 4.734

People at work. Facet 5 of the AJDI Scale consists of 5 Yes/No/? questions measuring the participant’s opinion of his/her co-workers and subordinates; a score of 15 indicates a favorable opinion. Summary statistics show a range from a minimum of 3 to a maximum of 15. The mean was computed as 11.23, the median and mode as 12, with a standard deviation of 2.396. Overall, the participants indicated a high degree of satisfaction in their interaction with employees.

Job in General (JIG)

Supplement to the AJDI Scale consists of 8 Yes/No/? questions measuring the participant’s overall opinion of work; a score of 24 indicates a favorable opinion. Summary statistics show that scores ranged from a minimum of 8 to a maximum of 24. The mean was computed as 20.75, the median as 22, and the mode as 24, with a standard deviation of 4.343. These results indicate that the participants have high overall opinion of their work in general. This is in-line with the scores for the SIG and AJDI scales.

Intent to Quit (ITQ)
This Likert type scale consists of 6-items scored from 1 to 7 based on the participant’s level of agreement with each statement. The highest possible score is 42, which indicates a clear intent to quit the present organization. Analysis shows a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 42. The mean was computed as 18.02, the median as 18, the mode as 24 with a standard deviation of 8.311. Several respondents noted that their intentions were influenced by plans to retire, not lack of job satisfaction. This is also evident by the scores for the SIG and AJDI scales. This is noteworthy because in the private sector, employees’ turnover/intent to quit is directly related to job satisfaction.

**Perceptions of Office Politics (POPS)**

The POPS is a 15-item Likert type scale used to measure the “Perception of Office Politics.” The items are scored from 1 to 5 based on the participant’s level of agreement with each statement. A score of 45 or greater would indicate a political work environment. The highest possible score of 75 would indicate an extremely high perception of the phenomenon. Summary Statistics show a minimum of 17 and a maximum of 65. The mean was computed as 38.79, the median as 40, and the mode as 29, with a standard deviation of 10.326. The results obtained here show that even though a sizable majority of participants indicated a highly involved labor union, it didn’t translate to a higher perception of office politics. This was unexpected based on previous research findings (the review of literature) that a highly political work environment, equates to a high perception of office politics.
Table 4.1
Descriptive Statistics for Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15.45</td>
<td>1.559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yrs. Exp.</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>21.42</td>
<td>50.92</td>
<td>30.8579</td>
<td>5.69542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dept. Tenure</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>46.00</td>
<td>21.6367</td>
<td>12.49502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director Tenure</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>33.17</td>
<td>5.6771</td>
<td>5.55811</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIG Scale</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>23.45</td>
<td>11.631</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Facet</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14.47</td>
<td>1.747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay Facet</td>
<td>111</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>10.52</td>
<td>4.773</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity Facet</td>
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<td>8.77</td>
<td>5.150</td>
</tr>
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<td>Supervision Facet</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>11.48</td>
<td>4.734</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People Facet</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>12.16</td>
<td>2.318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JIG Scale</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>20.75</td>
<td>4.343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITQ Scale</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>18.02</td>
<td>8.311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AJDI Scale</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>78.35</td>
<td>13.560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POPS Scale</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>38.79</td>
<td>10.326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>111</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

72
Table 4.2

Frequency Statistics for Discrete Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White/Caucasian</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>67.6</td>
<td>67.6</td>
<td>67.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>90.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>9.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 (High School)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 (Associate Degree)</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 (Bachelor Degree)</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>70.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 (Masters/Above)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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</table>
Table 4.2, Continued

Frequency Statistics for Discrete Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department Size</th>
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<th>Cumulative</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department Size</th>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Cumulative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 4.1. POPS vs. Department Size: A marked difference exists between the mean POPS (M = 39) of departments less than 2,000 and the mean POPS (M = 50) for those of 2,000 or more.

Figure 4.2. POPS vs. Education: The education level of the participants showed no relationship to their perception of office politics.
Figure 4.3. POPS vs. Ethnicity: The mean POPS (M = 38) for White/Caucasian is slightly lower than the mean POPS (M = 41) for both Hispanic/Latino and Black/African American. The Black/African American category also shows a wider range of scores.

Figure 4.4. POPS vs. Age: Although, the age groups from 42 – 56, shows slightly higher levels of POPS (M = 39.50) compared to the group 57 or older (M = 37.50), this difference does not appear to be significant or noteworthy.
### Table 4.3

**Ethnicity vs. Appointed/Ranks Crosstabulations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Appointed/Ranks</th>
<th>Outside</th>
<th>Ranks</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>White/Caucasian</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>31</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Only 28% of the participants were promoted from the outside, reflecting that organizations customarily promote from within. The ethnic composition percentages is consistent with the overall sample population.

### Table 4.4

**Ethnicity vs. Education Crosstabulations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>16</th>
<th>17</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>White/Caucasian</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Over 65% of the participants had obtained a bachelor’s degree or higher, reflecting the emergence of fire chiefs’ as white collar jobs. Hispanic/Latino showed a higher percentage of participants with master’s degrees (55%) than the other groups (White/Caucasian-25%, Black/African Americans-32%).
Table 4.5

Ethnicity vs. Department Size Crosstabulations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Department Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>400-999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White/Caucasian</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The results yielded by this analysis are noteworthy because even thought only 22.5% of the participants classified themselves as Black/African American, 37.5% of the largest department are commanded by African American chiefs. This is most probably because large urban areas tend to have large minority representation.

Table 4.6

Ethnicity vs. Union Activity Crosstabulations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Active Labor Union</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White/Caucasian</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Seventy-five percent of the participants reported a very politically active union. This was expected because over the past twenty years, the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) has become one of the most dominant politically active forces within the United States and Canada. There was no difference in views expressed across ethnic lines.
Figure 4.5. POPS Histogram (Standard Deviation and Mean): The results of the POPS are well distributed indicating a Normal Distribution.
Correlation Analyses

Correlation analyses were conducted on two separate sets of variables. The first set included 13 variables: Education, Experience in Fire Services, Tenure with Present Department, Tenure as Fire Chief, Department Size, Union Involvement, Work Stress, AJDI Scale (a total tabulation of scores from all 5 facets), JIG Scale, ITQ Scale, Black (ethnicity subgroup), White ethnicity subgroup), and the POPS Scale. The second set of data was analyzed by correlating scores of the same variables, but the 5 facets of the AJDI Scale (Work on Present Job, Present Pay, Opportunity for Promotion, Immediate Supervision, and People at Work) were each considered separately. The results of the correlation analysis provided directionality, strength, and statistical significance (Table 4.7).

Bivariate Correlations

Bivariate correlations between independent variables produced the following results:

1. Education/Tenure with Present Department – negative moderate correlation of -.340 with a statistical significance at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). This is an indication that participants with higher levels of tenure had lower levels of education. This may be in part due to the blue collar history of the fire services, and understandably, there would be less motivation to pursue higher education if you have reached the apex of your profession.

2. Department Size/Tenure with Present Department – positive moderate correlation of .276 with a statistical significance at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). This is an indication that participants on larger departments have a slightly
longer retention. Firefighters/fire chiefs tend to migrate to larger fire departments because these departments offer higher wages and benefits, better job security, and more opportunities for promotion/advancement.

3. SIG Scale/Tenure as Fire Chief – negative moderate correlation of $-0.243$ with a statistical significance at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). This indicates that the stress level goes down as the tenure increases, perhaps due to a higher degree of comfort in the factors that contribute to job security.

4. SIG Scale/Union Involvement – positive moderate correlation of $0.245$ with a statistical significance at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). This indicates that the stress level increases as union involvement increases. This is consistent with previous findings regarding highly political environments.

5. JIG Scale/Work Facet – positive high correlation of $0.527$ with a statistical significance at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Reasonably, the greater the sense of approval, fulfillment and accomplishment in the job, the higher the level of job satisfaction.

6. JIG Scale/Supervision Facet – positive moderate correlation of $0.383$ with a statistical significance at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). A good working relationship with your supervisor increases the probability of having a good work environment.

7. JIG Scale/People Facet – positive moderate correlation of $0.419$ with a statistical significance at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). As mentioned above, positive working relationships increase the probability of having a good work
environment. Most negative political behavior stems from dysfunctional interpersonal relationships.

8. JIG Scale/ITQ Scale – negative moderate correlation of -.238 with a statistical significance at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). This obvious indication is that higher satisfaction of the job reduces the intent to leave the job.

9. ITQ Scale/Years Experience – positive moderate correlation of .224 with a statistical significance at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). This correlation may be due to the participants’ plans to retire.

10. ITQ Scale/Supervision Facet – negative moderate correlation of -.220 with a statistical significance at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). This is an indication that the intent to quit increases when there is a negative opinion of the supervision.

11. Black (ethnicity) Subgroup/Tenure of Director – negative moderate correlation of -.256 with a statistical significance at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Indicating that participants classified as Black/African-American have a lower overall tenure as department directors.

12. Black (ethnicity) Subgroup/Opportunity Facet – negative moderate correlation of -.231 with a statistical significance at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). Indicating that participants classified as Black/African-American have a more limited opportunity for advancement.

13. White (ethnicity) Subgroup/Tenure as Director – positive moderate correlation of .307 with a statistical significance at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Indicating that participants classified as White/Caucasian have a higher overall tenure as department directors. The average tenure of White/Caucasian fire chiefs is

82
(6.885 years) compared to that of 3.05 years for Black/African American chiefs and 3.63 years for Hispanic/Latino chiefs.

**Correlations with POPS Scale (Dependent Variable)**

Correlations of scores on the POPS Scale with scores on the first set of independent variables show that statistical significance of $p \leq 0.05$, results were established for Tenure as Director, Department Size, SIG, and AJDI. When the 5 facets of the AJDI Scale was analyzed separately People at Work and Immediate Supervision showed statistical significant. Bivariate correlations between variables produced the following results (Table 4.7):

1. POPS Scale/Tenure as Director – negative moderate correlation of $-0.207$ with a statistical significance at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). This indicates that the level of “Perception of Office Politics” decreases for directors with longer tenure.

2. POPS Scale/Department Size – positive moderate correlation of $0.193$ with a statistical significance at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). This indicates that larger departments are more prone to the phenomenon. Big city with more employees, normally equates to more problems and political pitfalls to avoid.

3. POPS Scale/SIG Scale – positive high correlation of $0.441$ with a statistical significance at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). This supports the premise that high stress has a direct influence on the perception of politics.

4. POPS Scale/AJDI Scale – negative moderate correlation of $-0.226$ with a statistical significance at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). This is an indication that
participants with lower levels of perception of office politics enjoys higher levels of job satisfaction.

5. POPS Scale/Supervision Facet – negative moderate correlation of \(-0.294\) with a statistical significance at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). This correlation suggests that a negative opinion of the immediate supervision coincides with a higher perception of office politics.

6. POPS Scale/People Facet – negative moderate correlation of \(-0.211\) with a statistical significance at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). The results indicate that an organizational environment where co-workers and subordinates have a favorable opinion of each other would not be conducive to negative office politics.
Table 4.7

Correlation Matrix – Coefficients Among Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Education</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>-0.100</td>
<td>-0.340**</td>
<td>0.073</td>
<td>0.014</td>
<td>0.015</td>
<td>-0.72</td>
<td>0.118</td>
<td>0.093</td>
<td>-0.004</td>
<td>-0.022</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Years Experience</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.210*</td>
<td>0.578**</td>
<td>0.177</td>
<td>-0.044</td>
<td>-0.173</td>
<td>-0.068</td>
<td>0.224</td>
<td>-0.111</td>
<td>-0.144</td>
<td>-0.175</td>
<td>0.251**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Department Tenure</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.290**</td>
<td>0.276**</td>
<td>0.023</td>
<td>0.109</td>
<td>0.048</td>
<td>0.127</td>
<td>0.019</td>
<td>-0.089</td>
<td>-0.006</td>
<td>0.100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Director Tenure</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.121</td>
<td>-0.094</td>
<td>0.243*</td>
<td>0.064</td>
<td>0.113</td>
<td>0.098</td>
<td>-0.207**</td>
<td>-0.256**</td>
<td>0.307**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Department Size</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.034</td>
<td>0.096</td>
<td>0.019</td>
<td>0.042</td>
<td>0.026</td>
<td>0.193*</td>
<td>0.164</td>
<td>-0.081</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Union Involvement</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.245**</td>
<td>0.045</td>
<td>0.083</td>
<td>0.059</td>
<td>0.128</td>
<td>0.076</td>
<td>0.079</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. SIG (Work Stress)</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>-0.117</td>
<td>0.170</td>
<td>0.022</td>
<td>0.441**</td>
<td>0.128</td>
<td>-0.061</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. JIG (Work Satisfaction)</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>-0.238*</td>
<td>0.540**</td>
<td>-0.150</td>
<td>0.096</td>
<td>-0.076</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. ITQ (Work Retention)</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>-0.226*</td>
<td>0.128</td>
<td>0.017</td>
<td>0.120</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. AJDI (Work Climate)</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>-0.226*</td>
<td>0.206*</td>
<td>-0.154</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. POPS (Perception of Office Politics)</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.107</td>
<td>-0.078</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Black (Ethnicity Sub-group)</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>-0.778**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. White (Ethnicity Sub-group)</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The numbers shown horizontally in the top row correspond to the numbered variables shown vertically in the first column.

* Correlation is significant at the 0.005 level (2-tailed)

** Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed)

There is no inter-correlation among the independent variables above 0.80; hence, there is no problem with multi-co-linearity.
Multiple Regression Analysis

An initial multiple regression analysis was conducted to establish a set of independent variables and their relative importance to the dependent variable of "Perception of Office Politics" at a significant level by comparing their beta weights. For the purpose of this study, the level of statistical significance is $p \leq 0.05$. The ten strongest independent variables: Age, Education, Years of Experience, Tenure as Director, Department Size, Union Involvement, SIG, AJDI, ITQ, and the Black (ethnicity) subgroup, were entered into the regression equation. The analysis determined that Department Size ($p = 0.044$), the SIG Scale ($p = 0.000$), and the AJDI Scale ($p = 0.009$) showed a strong statistical significance to the POPS Scale (Table 4.5). The elevated level of perception of office politics in larger departments can be attributed to information brought about in the literature review. As stated in Chapter 2, the potential for conflict “depends on how incompatible the goals” of those involved and the amount of available shared resources (Hampton, 1982, p. 634). Larger departments are also more diverse and it is reasonable that the factors that create the diversity (background, education, age, race, and culture) would lower the probability of collaboration because of their adverse impact on values, knowledge, and communication. Conversely, an organization that fosters a low level of perception of office politics is apt to be less stressful (SIG) and its participants would generally enjoy higher job satisfaction (AJDI).

A second analysis was done substituting the AJDI Scale as the dependent variable with the independent variables: Age, Education, Years of Experience, and Tenure as Director, Department Size, Union Involvement, SIG, ITQ, POPS, and the Black (ethnicity) subgroup. Of these variables, Years of Experience ($p = 0.052$), Tenure as
Director ($p = 0.022$), ITQ ($p = 0.020$), POPS ($p = 0.009$), and the Black (ethnicity) subgroup ($p = 0.010$) showed a statistical significance to the AJDI Scale (Table 4.6). This analysis was conducted to reaffirm previous research findings that job satisfaction (AJDI) has a direct bearing in relationship to employee turnover (ITQ) and years of experience. Firefighters, overall, enjoy a high level of job satisfaction and tend to have long job tenure.
### Table 4.8

Regression Analysis for Dependent Variable – POPS Scale

**Model Summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.549&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.301</td>
<td>.231</td>
<td>9.055</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: a. Predictors: (Constant), Black/American, Education, ITQ Scale, Union Activity, Department Size, SIG Scale, AJDI Scale, Years Experience, Director Tenure, Age.

**ANOVA**<sup>b</sup>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>3529.496</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>352.950</td>
<td>4.305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>8198.738</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>81.987</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11728.234</td>
<td>110</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: a. Predictors: (Constant), Black/American, Education, ITQ Scale, Union Activity, Department Size, SIG Scale, AJDI Scale, Years Experience, Director Tenure, Age.

b. Department Variable: POPS Scale
Table 4.8, Continued

Regression Analysis for Dependent Variable – POPS Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coefficients(^a)</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (Constant)</td>
<td>33.284</td>
<td>15.968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.356</td>
<td>1.729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>.735</td>
<td>.562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years Experience</td>
<td>-.146</td>
<td>.257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director Tenure</td>
<td>-8.034E-02</td>
<td>.205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department Size</td>
<td>2.000</td>
<td>.980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union Activity</td>
<td>.205</td>
<td>.821</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIG Scale</td>
<td>.331</td>
<td>.081</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITQ Scale</td>
<td>4.963E-02</td>
<td>.118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AJDI Scale</td>
<td>-.186</td>
<td>.070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>2.257</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: \(a\). Dependent Variable: POPS Scale
Table 4.9

Regression Analysis for Dependent Variable – AJDI Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model Summary</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td>.480\textsuperscript{a}</td>
<td>.154</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: a. Predictors: (Constant), Black/American, Education, ITQ Scale, Union Activity, Department Size, SIG Scale, AJDI Scale, Years Experience, Director Tenure, Age.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANOVA\textsuperscript{b}</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1 Regression</td>
<td>4662.001</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>466.200</td>
<td>.002\textsuperscript{a}</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>15565.297</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>155.653</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20227.297</td>
<td>110</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: a. Predictors: (Constant), Black/American, Education, ITQ Scale, Union Activity, Department Size, SIG Scale, AJDI Scale, Years Experience, Director Tenure, Age.

b. Department Variable: AJDI Scale
Table 4.9, Continued

Regression Analysis for Dependent Variable – AJDI Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unstandardized</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (Constant)</td>
<td>98.054</td>
<td>20.222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-2.517</td>
<td>2.370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>.920</td>
<td>.776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years Experience</td>
<td>-.689</td>
<td>.348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director Tenure</td>
<td>.633</td>
<td>.275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department Size</td>
<td>.337</td>
<td>1.378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union Activity</td>
<td>.911</td>
<td>1.128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIG Scale</td>
<td>.122</td>
<td>.120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITQ Scale</td>
<td>-.374</td>
<td>.156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AJDI Scale</td>
<td>-.353</td>
<td>.133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>7.875</td>
<td>3.014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: a. Dependent Variable: AJDI Scale
Discussion of Hypothesis and Research Questions

It was proposed that strong organizations must seek to control the impact of internal political maneuvering (Bender, 1996; Osborn, 1998; Stupak, 1997). The initial hypothesis was that the “Perception of Office Politics” would be influenced by such factors as:

1. Job tenure/personal demographics (Ethnicity, Education, Years of Experience, Tenure as Director)
2. Organizational culture/climate (Department Size, Union Involvement)
3. Job stress
4. Working relationships (Immediate Supervision, People at Work)
5. Intent to quit

The hypothesis was partially upheld; the exceptions to this were job tenure and intent to quit. Despite working in politically charged environments, the participants were not conventional in their attitudes towards job tenure or intent to quit. These results are contrary to findings in previous research involving participants in private sector organizations that show a direct negative correlation between office politics and these variables (intent to quit and job tenure).

In view of this, there are important questions that need to be answered in implementing an ethical and viable organizational culture. The research questions for this study are as follows:

Question 1: What is the perceived level of office politics, within the organizations, held by top-level administrators? This question was addressed by the POPS Scale Scores; analysis outcomes show that 36.9% of the participants perceive their
organizations as being political (scores of 45 or higher). Overall, this suggests that the “Perception of Office Politics” of the public fire service industry is in line with that of the private sector. In the literature review, it was noted that previous research conducted by Office Team (Osborn, 1998) demonstrated that management often had a lower “Perception of Office Politics” (40%) than lower level employees (70%) did.

Question 2: What are the factors that affect the level of office politics? The results of the regression analysis suggest that the biggest influences on the level of perception of office politics are Tenure as Director, Department Size, SIG, and AJDI (People at Work, Immediate Supervision) all showing statistical significance of $p \leq 0.05$. Larger departments are more diverse and would likely have more interpersonal conflicts. Consistent with previous research finding, as the level of “Perception of Office Politics” increases, so does the level of stress; while reversely, job satisfaction decreases.

Question 3: What impact does organizational culture and climate have on the political environment? As stated in the preceding chapters, corporate culture is fueled by the personalities and concepts brought into play by members of the organization. Hence, to be effective, it is imperative that management has a clear understanding of its organization’s culture. (Toupin, 2003). Results of the data analysis support this thought. The most influential variables utilized to measure culture and climate all demonstrated a statistical significance. These variables were Department Size ($p = 0.044$), the SIG Scale ($p = 0.000$), and the AJDI Scale ($p = 0.009$) (Table 4.7).

**Summary of Results**

Most of the investigation analysis yielded anticipated results, congruent with the study’s hypothesis and consistent with findings in the literature review. However, some
of the findings were unexpected. For instance, many participants that rated their stress level as being high conflictingly expressed substantial job satisfaction. This discrepancy can most likely be contributed to the fact that the participants view their jobs as providing an essential service to the community and therefore find it highly rewarding. Similarly, dissatisfaction with present pay did not translate into dissatisfaction with present job or an increased intent to quit. These results suggest that, for many participants, position and job performance encompass much more than solely the employment factors examined in this study.
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

The primary purpose of this quantitative research study was to conduct an inquiry into the factors that affected the “Perception of Office Politics” of top-level fire administrators and how those factors relates to the strategic success of the organization. The literature review revealed that few empirical studies have been conducted solely to examine the impact of organizational culture on the prevalence of office politics in the public sector. Accordingly, few studies were found that gave emphasis to the management of professional fire rescue departments. The scope of the study was therefore refocused to accommodate a sample of convenience of fire chiefs of metropolitan fire rescue departments in the United States. Metropolitan fire rescue departments are defined as relatively large department with a minimum staffing strength of 400 professional firefighters. Subsequently, this study cannot be generalized to any other group. This final chapter will present a summary of introduction, a discussion and interpretation of findings, a discussion of conclusions drawn from those findings, recommendations for further research on related subjects, implications for concerns broached during the research and suggestions for future research in related areas of inquiry.

Summary of Findings

The research sample (a sample of convenience) was composed of 155 fire chiefs/directors of metropolitan fire rescue departments in the United States. Survey/Questionnaires were mailed (following initial introduction letters) to all 155 sample members. Of those, 111 survey/questionnaires (all usable) were returned by the due date (approximately 21 days after receipt); five of the mailings were returned as

95
undeliverable or with notification that the person addressed had retired. The instruments
selected for this study were:

1. Perception of Office Politics Scale (POPS; Kacmar & Ferris, 1991) -- a 5-
point Likert type rating scale with 15 items that measure the political climate
in an organization.

2. Abridged Job Descriptive Index (AJDI; Bowling Green, 2000) -- a five-facet,
25 item scale used to measure employees' opinion on the job itself, pay,
supervisors, co-workers, and advancement opportunities.

3. Job in General (JIG) Scale -- an 8-item scale, developed to supplement the
five principal facets of the AJDI by accessing the importance of each aspect to
the individual and the contributions of other long-term situational and
individual factors that make them satisfied or dissatisfied with the job
(Ironson, et. al., 1989).

4. Stress in General Scale (SIG; Bowling Green, 1985; Parra & Smith, 1995) --
consists of 15 items with a Yes/No/? format, developed to measure general
stress levels in two factors, a “pressure” factor, and a “threat” factor.

5. Intent to Quit (ITQ) Scale -- a 7-point Likert type-rating scale with 6 items
used as an indicator of employee turnover.

Previous research has shown that personal characteristics can influence attitude towards
these variables (office politics, job satisfaction, stress, etc.); therefore, the five measures
were supplemented with a brief 11-item personal characteristic questionnaire to obtain
general demographic and organizational information such as gender, ethnicity, tenure,
and department size. Demographic queries were kept general to avoid jeopardizing the anonymity of the participants.

The collected data were analyzed using the Student Version 11.0 of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, 2003). A descriptive analysis was conducted to determine frequency counts for discrete variables and (a) compute central tendency of mean, median, and mode; and (b) measure the variability of standard deviation, variance, and range on continuous variables. A correlation analysis was conducted to define the relationships between variables and to determine the strongest statistical significance between the independent variables and the dependent variable. An initial multiple regression analysis (level of “statistical significance $p \leq 0.05$) was conducted to establish a set of independent variables and their importance to the dependent variable of “Perception of Office Politics.” A second analysis (level of “statistical significance $p \leq 0.05$) was performed substituting the AJDI Scale as the dependent variable and injecting POPS Scale as one of the independent variables.

The analyses were utilized to address the hypothesis presented in the research proposal and to answer the research questions put forth for this study:

Question 1: What is the perceived level of office politics, within the organizations, held by top-level administrators?

Question 2: What are the factors that affect the level of office politics?

Question 3: What impact does organizational culture and climate have on the political environment?
Interpretations of Findings

**Literature Review**

The review of literature substantiates that for top executives and senior managers, survival is often dependent on their ability to understand and master office politics. In addition, these leaders must have an understanding of the cultural and management changes needed to rectify unscrupulous office politics in the workplace. According to a survey on organizational politics (Gandz & Murray, 1990), 89% of executives interviewed stated that in order to be successful, you must become a good politician. Once considered a tool used by upper management seeking to climb the corporate ladder, political behavior is now often seen as a ploy used by people at all levels to gain a competitive edge or simply to survive (Chase, 2002). Top executives and senior managers can increase their survival in a political work environment by:

1. Establishing a power base, forming coalitions, and building networks – executives and managers must develop their power bases by uniting employees and inspiring them to accomplish organizational, not individual goals. Logically, office politics are unnecessary if personal positions are in “alignment with the [organizational] goals and objectives” (Lowe, 2003, ¶ 4).

2. Understanding the environment – managers must be aware and understand all the players involved in the political arena. Open channels of communication should be established. Organizations with weak directives, poor communication, and ineffectively managed cultures are breeding grounds for the negative dysfunctional interpersonal dynamics referred to as “office politics” (Bender, 1996; Osborn 2001; Stupak, 1997).
3. Maintaining credibility and reputation – organizations that enjoy positive reputations are the ones with strong ethical identities. This association of good ethics and organizational culture results in strong support from the stakeholders (Seeger, 2001).

**Research Data**

Although the research sample members’ responses were anonymous, demographic information provided distinct insight into individual experiences and characteristics; and overall similarity and diversity of the group. This is noteworthy because in authoritarian organizations (for example, military and para-military), senior leadership can dramatically influence culture. It is argued by Beitz and Hook (n.d.), that “senior leader’s characteristics are always a prime determinant of culture, regardless of the setting” (p. 3). According to O’Neil, et al (2001), if an organization is to direct behavior toward the accomplishment of a strategic mission and present itself to stakeholders as a unified form, procedures must be put into place for reducing the variability and focusing efforts on the accomplishment of strategic success.

The fact that the participants were overwhelmingly male was not unexpected or surprising. The fire service industry is historically an Anglo/Caucasian-male dominated venture. Women have only recently (within the last 30 years) gained access to careers as professional firefighters. According to the U.S Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, in the first quarter of 2004, there were 283,000 professional firefighters in the United States. Of this total, 271,000 were men and 12,000 were women, which accounts for only 4.2%. Although measurable changes in laws and attitudes have taken place over the last 30 years, there are still many adversities that women must transcend. This is due in
part to the following: resistance from some elements of the workforce, institutional barriers, effects of the male firefighting tradition, and of social beliefs about women and men, and the obvious obstacles that are not gender-specific that all firefighters face (WFS, Inc., 2004). The first woman to head a career fire department was appointed in 1993; there are currently (at the time of writing) 20 fire departments headed by female fire chiefs/directors. However, only 3 or 4 of these organizations can be classified as metropolitan departments having over 400 fully paid professional firefighters (WFS, 2004). Three of the participants in this study classified themselves as female; this number was not sufficient to enter into analysis as an independent variable. It was noted, however, that the “Perception of Office Politics” scores did not show a discernible difference for the female respondents.

There was a relative congruency of representation in each of the three upper age categories: 42 to 50 (n = 33), 51 to 56 (n = 43), and 57 and older (n = 34). As expected, the younger age categories were not as large. Age, however, did not prove to be a factor in their “Perception of Office Politics.”

The ethnic categories specified by the respondents were White/Caucasian (n = 75), Black/African-American (n = 25), and Hispanic/Latino (n = 11); indicating that measurable strides are being made by minority career firefighters in large metropolitan departments. However, this is perhaps a distorted impression, considering that the fire industry as a whole is still vastly White/Caucasian. Hiring of minorities came only as the result of court orders for many departments and their admission continues to lag due to various factors. Information compiled on fire personnel by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics for 2002, states that 9.6% were Black/African American and 9.4% were Hispanic/Latino. For the first quarter in 2004, while the total number of firefighters had
increased by approximately 35,000, the percentage of Black/African American decreased to 8.4%, with 9.3% of Hispanic/Latino origin, and 0.5% of Asian descent. The low, median, and high scores of the POPS vs. Ethnicity plot were White/Caucasian 19-39-61, Black/African-American 23-42-65, and Hispanic/Latino 17-42-50 (Figure 4.3). These scores indicate that Black/African American experience a slightly higher level of the phenomenon than do the other ethnic groups.

Overall, the participants are well educated with an average of 15.45 years of formal education; this was an unexpected finding in view of the blue-collar history of the fire industry. According to a report compiled by Women in the Fire Service, Inc. (2003) for the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s U.S. Fire Administration … the field has changed considerably since the 1960’s when “most firefighters had a high school diploma at best; college and specialized fire service education were unheard of and promotion to officers’ and chiefs’ position came largely through seniority or through [successful results on multiple choice] tests” (WFS, 2003, Recent Changes, ¶ 2). At that time firefighters’ duties entailed fighting fires and caring for the gear and equipment. Now most fire department are also responsible for fire safety/public education, fire inspection, arson investigation, fire code enforcement, emergency medical/paramedic care, hazardous materials incidents, water rescue, dive rescue, and patient transport (FEMA/USFA, 2002). These services require specialized training and a higher level of formal education. It is becoming increasing common for even entry firefighters to have at least 2-year degrees and to continue their education through “specialized training programs [that] provide ongoing education in command and management” (WFS, 2003, Recent Changes, ¶ 4).
On an average, the participants each had over 25 years of experience ($M = 30.8579$) with 5 years as Chief ($M = 5.6771$), most with only one department. One respondent, who registered an impressive history of almost 51 years total experience, serving 20 of years as Chief and another with only 37.6 years of total experience, serving 33.17 years as Chief, skewed these results. Longevity in the fire service is uniquely different from private industries. This is due, in part, because of the nature of job. Although competition for available openings is fierce, once hired and successfully completing probation, firefighters can expect unparalleled job security. Fire departments provide essential services that the public supports against budget cut and downsizing, making layoffs highly uncommon (U.S. Department of Labor, 2004). In addition, in most departments firefighters are guaranteed a pension at retirement after 20 years. Noticeably, while tenure was not a key dependent variable, the level of “Perception of Office Politics” registered a clear decrease as tenure increased.

Most participants expressed an actively involved/political labor union. The International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF), an AFL-CIO affiliated labor union, has traditionally stressed the importance of involvement in the political arena, locally and nationally. Consequently, this political involvement translates into considerable clout and political strength. Local unions frequently have a strong influence on the selection and longevity of the fire chief. Therefore, the relationship that the fire chief has with the union could have a notable impact on overall work conditions. In spite of this, union involvement did not prove to be a factor in the participants’ “Perception of Office Politics.”
Conclusion

Primarily, the findings support the hypothesis of the study. The final computations show that there is a definite correlation between the “Perception of Office Politics” and three of the independent variables (a) department size \( (p = 0.044) \), (b) work stress \( (p = 0.000) \) and (c) the 5-facets AJDI Scale -- work on present job, present pay, opportunities for promotion, immediate supervision, and people at work \( (p = 0.009) \).

Department Size

The POPS vs. Department Size plot showed a substantial difference between the POPS score of size categories less than 2,000 and those of 2,000 or more. The median level of POPS for the smaller departments was computed to be 39, compared to the median score of 50 for those with 2,000 or more (Figure 4.1).

Consequently, department size proved to be a decisive factor, its significance being influenced by the expression of a higher “Perception of Office Politics” in the larger departments. This can most likely be contributed to the fact that larger departments are more diverse, less accepting, less respectful, and have more interpersonal conflicts. As stated in the literature review: conflict is defined as “a struggle over values or claims to status, power, and scarce resources in which the claims of the conflicting parties are not only to gain the desired valuables, but also to neutralize, injure, or eliminate their rivals” (Hampton, 1982, p. 634). Conflict usually takes one of four forms: (a) individual versus individual, (b) individual versus group, (c) group versus group and (d) competition. The larger and more diverse the group is, the more likely the possibility of conflict... “it can be exacerbated by personal attributes” (Hampton, 1982, p. 637). The factors that create the diversity
(background, education, age, and culture) may also lower the probability of collaboration because of their [undesirable] impact on values, knowledge, and communication (Hampton, 1982, p. 637).

**Immediate Supervision and People at Work**

Within the five facets of the AJDI, Immediate Supervision and People at Work show the most significance to POPS. These findings fortify the theory of the literature review... organizations with weak directives, poor communication, and ineffectively managed cultures are breeding grounds for the negative dysfunctional interpersonal dynamics referred to as “office politics” (Bender, 1996; Osborn 2001; Stupak, 1997).

**Work Stress**

Work stress, thought to be one of the most potent factors associated with job dissatisfaction, was seemingly not the attitude of the participants. Many expressed very high work stress while expressing high work satisfaction. This could be unique to the fire service (and similar humanitarian professions) due to the overwhelming sense of gratification that comes from performing an essential function.

Stress was the factor registering the highest statistical significance to the “Perception of Office Politics.” In the literature review it was found that according to a poll on workplace stress, eighty-two percent of the workers surveyed said they had experienced stress in the workplace (Kersten, 2003). Office politics has been identified as a leading cause of stress [and conversely stress further generates political behavior] in the workplace (LifeCare & Gallop, 2003).
Research Questions

Question 1: What is the perceived level of office politics, within the organization, held by top-level administrators? Overall, this study shows that 36.9% of the participants perceive their organization as being political (scores of 45 or higher). This suggests that the “Perception of Office Politics” of public fire service industry is in line with that of the private sector. In the literature review, it was noted that previous research conducted by Office Team (Osborn, 1998) demonstrated that management often had a lower “Perception of Office Politics” (40%) than lower level employees (70%) did. If this holds true, then lower level fire administrators would hold a higher perception of office politics, especially in departments where there is little room for advancement.

Question 2: What are the factors that affect the level of office politics? The results of the regression analysis suggest that the biggest influences on the level of office politics are Tenure as Director (fire chiefs with lower tenure have a higher perception of office politics), Department Size, SIG, and AJDI (People at Work, Immediate Supervision) all showing statistical significant of $p \leq 0.05$. Other factors were ethnicity (Black/African-Americans and Hispanic/Latino registered a slightly higher level of perception) and the terms of employment, contractual or at-will (with contractual employment showing a higher perceived level of office politics).

Question 3: What impact does organizational culture and climate have on the political environment? As stated in the preceding chapters, corporate culture is fueled by the personalities and concepts brought into play by members of the organization (Toupin, 2003). Results of the data analysis support this thought. The most influential variables utilized to measure culture and climate all demonstrated a statistical significance. These
variables were Department Size with a positive correlation of 0.441**, the SIG Scale with a negative correlation of -0.228**, and the AJDI Scale facets, Immediate Supervision and People at Work, with negative correlations of -0.294** and -0.0210*, respectively (Table 4.7). (p ≤ 0.05, p ≤ 0.01)

**Implications of the Study**

It was originally thought that this research would yield pertinent information of particular interest and benefit to fire administrators by providing insight and guidance on avoiding the pitfalls of negative political behavior in the fire service workplace. However, the implications rendered by the findings are not wholly beneficial in accurately portraying the culture and climate of individual organizations. It was discovered during the computation of data that the instruments used are better suited to measuring the attitudes of a number of individuals within the same organization. This study administered the measures to only one individual, the lead administrator (fire chief/director) of each organization. This tends to limit the characterization of the findings. Even though some restrictions were presented due to the compatibility and adaptability of the instruments/measurements used, much of the information garnered can serve as a guide for creating optimum working environments where open communication, efficiency, productivity, and job satisfaction are maximized.

It is highly perceivable that individuals in leadership positions can shape the culture of their organization to fit their own personal preference (Barkdoll, n.d.), thereby reducing their personal "Perception of Office Politics.” Their attitudes may or may not reflect that of their subordinates. For that reason, it is important that management
develop policies outlining organizational values and the expected workplace culture and employee behavior.

Negative political behavior occurs when there are insufficient resources, inconsistent decision-making, and lack of clear published organizational goals. Top administrator must be able to distinguish between the negative and positive effects of political practices. Steps that can be taken to facilitate this process are:

1. Recognizing and understanding the culture of the organization -- an organization’s culture consists of shared values, belief and assumptions that guide employee behavior; these factors determine the climate of the workplace.

2. Encouraging an open, ethical and supportive environment -- the fear of retaliation and being ostracized can prevent employees from acting in the best interest of the organization; this can be detrimental to all stakeholders.

3. Sharing information about the organization’s goals and visions with subordinates on a regular basis – a major factor in a political environment is the lack of shared information and resources; when employees understand and identify with the organization’s goal they are less prone to negative behavior and have a lower intent to quit.

4. Recognizing and rewarding performance -- when employees jockey for rewards and recognition, productivity suffers due to interpersonal difficulties; this can lead to decreased morale and job satisfaction and an increase in workplace stress (Bender, 1996).
5. Minimizing work place stress -- the negative psychological and physical implications induced by stress can be devastating; programs designed to augment the reduction of stress (such as stress management training, diversity training and ethics training) are advantageous to an organization and its stakeholders (Bender, 1996).

Limitations of the Study

Most empirical studies and theoretical literature on the subject of “Office Politics” has been from the perspective of private entities. Very little research has been conducted to access this phenomenon in the public sector. Subsequently it was difficult to find appropriate established measures to apply to the study. The narrowed scope of the study, focusing on metropolitan fire departments, presented even more of a challenge because of the unique characteristics of the fire service industry. Moreover, the nature of the job of a public executive, from reporting to elected officials to being open to public scrutiny, is considerably different from that of his/her private sector equivalent. For these reasons there are several limitations of study that warrant mentioning:

1. The sample was not randomly selected, but a sample of convenience. In addition it involved only one individual from an organization. It is foreseeable that having several employees from each organization or a larger number of employees from one organization would establish more conclusive results.

2. The study was limited to a population of fire chiefs of metropolitan fire rescue departments in the United States with a minimum staffing strength of 400 professional firefighters and can not be generalized to any other group.
Consequently, caution should be used in comparing the results of this study to non-metropolitan fire department, other public sector or private sector administrators.

3. IRB requirements that the participants be granted complete anonymity prevented the tracking the responding participants versus the non-responding participants. Thus, the reasons for non-responses or possible biases could not be determined.

4. Because of the relatively small sample size a factor analysis was used to decrease the amount of independent variables; only the ten most significant independent variables were entered into the regression equation.

Recommendations for Future Research

For future inquiries into the phenomenon of office politics in metropolitan fire department it is proposed that more extensive (multiple individuals/single organization/multiple settings) research be conducted utilizing a more specialized instrument tailored to the unique organization features of the fire service. Factors that should be taken into consideration when accessing suitable construct are: (a) organizational chain of command, (b) demographics of the service community, (c) past hiring practices, (d) demographics of the department personnel, (e) the various workplace settings, (f) the influence of the local union, (g) the participant’s relationship with the union and (h) the status and electoral classification of the person or governing body in control of hiring/firing the fire chief.

To validate the findings that department size impacts the degree of office politics, a comparative study should be conducted on sample departments based on staffing
strength categories, including those with less than 400 members, utilizing the same constructs. In addition, a contrasting study (using present measures) should be conducted where the sample population consists of groups of lower-level employees within the same organizations. For further clarity, a qualitative study may provide a more in-depth and personal prospective of this area.

**Final Summary**

Review of literature revealed that there is a direct correlation between the level of “Perception of Office Politics” and factors such as job satisfaction, job stress, and job retention. Although most previous studies were conducted in the private sector, it was assumed that general rules could be applied to the investigation of the phenomenon in large metropolitan fire departments. The instruments used for this study were selected based on this assumption and on their reputation for reliability and validity.

The findings of this study were mixed and were not consistent with those of previous studies explored in the review of literature. Previous studies repeated showed a direct correlation between job satisfaction and the “Perception of Office Politics.” In this study, participants expressed great job satisfaction regardless of their level of “Perception of Office Politics.” Similarly, a high “Perception of Office Politics” did not perpetuate the intent to quit. While the resulting data analysis did not produce anticipated results, there is evidence to warrant attention in several areas. The independent variables that were found to have significant impact on the “Perception of Office Politics” are indicators of the organization’s overall strategic health.

It is interesting to note that while the data analyses produced a relatively low scope of “perception of office politics,” correspondence (emails, letters, phone calls, and
news articles) to the researcher suggests otherwise. Perhaps this political behavior is so ingrained in the fire service culture that its veritable level of existence is cloaked. The requests for confidentiality necessitates that this researcher must draw his own conclusion based on personal experiences as a firefighter. In fact, this researcher recently retired from the position of fire chief/director of the seventh largest fire department in the United States, after being assaulted by a barrage of tactics employed in highly political work environments. Hence, the reason this subject was chosen was to find how prevalent this kind of political behavior is in the fire service nationwide.
Appendix A

Letter from Gerald R. Ferris, Florida State University,

granting permission to use the POPS Scale Instrument.
Subject: Re: Request for permission to use “POPS”
From: “Gerald R. Ferris”
Date: Thu, 04 Mar 2004 08:13:50 -0500
To: Charles U Phillips

Dear Mr. Phillips,

Yes, you have my permission to use the POPS scale.

GRF

At 04:01 PM 3/3/2004 -0500, you wrote:

Dear Mr. Ferris,

I am presently enrolled at Lynn University, working towards my Ph.D. in Global Leadership. My planned topic of research for my dissertation is “Office Politics”. The exact title submitted for my proposal was: The Influence of Ethics and Cultural Management on Office Politics. I am writing to request your permission (as the copyright owner) to reproduce the “POPS” – Perception of Office Politics Scale as one of the instruments for my research measures. I eagerly await your consent.

Respectfully yours,
Charles Phillips

Gerald R. Ferris
Francis Eppes Professor of Management and Professor of Psychology
Department of Management
College of Business
Florida State University
Tallahassee, FL 32306-1110
Ph: 
Fax: 
E-mail:
Appendix B
Letter from Ian Little, Bowling Green State University
granting permission to use the JDI, AJDI, JIG, SIG, and ITQ Instruments.
Dear Charles,

Your non-commercial data sharing agreement has been received. This email grants you copyright permission to use the AJDI, SIG, and ITQ with up to 155 people. As per the non-commercial agreement, if your data is not sent back to the JDI Research Group, we have the right to charge you full-price. The password for your manual is "cphillips" with no caps or quotes.

Thanks for using the JDI,
Ian Little

Ian Little
JDI Research Assistant
Department of Psychology
Bowling Green State University

www.bgsu.edu/departments/psych/JDI
Appendix C

Cover Letter, Initial Mailing to all sample members
MEMO

Date: June 1, 2004

Re: Dissertation Study on The Assessment of Factors that Influence the Level of “Perception of Office Politics”

I am currently working towards my Ph.D. in Global Leadership at Lynn University in Boca Raton, Florida. The proposed topic for my culminating dissertation is “The Assessment of Factors that Influence the Perceived Level of Office Politics”. More, specifically, I plan to conduct a study of “workplace attitudes” and the “Perception of Office Politics” of fire chiefs of major metropolitan fire departments in the United States with a minimum staffing strength of 400 fully paid career firefighters. The purpose of the study is to determine the degree to which top fire administrators experience or observe political behavior within their organizations and how it relates to the organizations’ established culture and climate.

My aim is to collect data via a 69-item survey to be submitted to all sample members. The survey is non-intrusive and the entire form should require no more than 10 minutes to complete. Anonymity is assured and all responses will be held in the strictest confidence, making participation of infinitesimal or no risk.

This research could be of significant interest and benefit to fire administrators because it can provide a wealth of information and guidance on avoiding the pitfalls of negative political behavior in the fire service workplace. The study results could service as a road map for creating optimum working environments where open communication, efficiency and productivity, and job satisfaction are maximized.

For the success of this study, as with any study, data collection is imperative. Therefore, I am requesting your cooperation and participation in this advantageous endeavor.

The survey forms will be mailed within the next 7-10 days. Please complete the forms by responding thoroughly and honestly to each item and return both in the self-addressed stamped envelope I have provided.

Please contact me at [email] or by email at [email] if you have any questions. You may also contact my Dissertation Chair, Dr. Fred Dembowski, Associate Dean College of Education and Human Services, Lynn University at [email] or by email at [email]. Please accept my gratitude in advance for your assistance in this matter.
Appendix D
Letter of Consent, Demographic Questionnaire, Abridged Job Description Index,
Job in General Scale, Stress in General Scale, Intent to Quit Scale,
and Perception of Office Politics Scale.
INFORMED CONSENT TO BE A RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

Dear Fellow Fire Chiefs,

The study in which you are being asked to participate is an inquisition into “workplace attitudes” such as job satisfaction, job stress, and job retention as they relate to the “perceived level of office politics” in public organizations; more specifically major metropolitan fire departments in the United States. Your participation in this research project will help garner a greater understanding of the affects and impact of “Office Politics” in relationship to organizational culture and climate. Your voluntary participation will assist me (retired Fire Chief Charles U. Phillips, a doctoral candidate at Lynn University) in executing my dissertation. This study is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Fred Dembowski, Associate Dean, College of Education and Human Services, Lynn University

Attached is a questionnaire that centers on some of the factors that affect the level of “Perception of Office Politics” in the workplace. Your responses are critical to this project. The questionnaire is short and should take less than 10 minutes to complete. Please complete the form by responding thoroughly and honestly to each item. Please return the completed form in the (provided) self-addressed envelope by June 30, 2004. The proposed period of research is from June 10, 2004 through August 31, 2004.

While participation in this survey is ardently solicited, it is strictly voluntary. Please be sincere and honest and answer all questions. To maintain anonymity, do not put your name or any identifying marks on the questionnaire or envelope. Your participation in this study and your answers to the questionnaire will be kept in the strictest anonymity. In compliance with established policy, all response information will be kept in a secured lock box for a period of five years, at which time it will be destroyed. The data collected will be used by the original researcher for research purposes only. There is no anticipated risk or benefit in your participation in this study.

Should you have any questions, you may contact me, Chief Charles U. Phillips, at [Contact Information] or e-mail me at [Contact Information]. You may also contact Dr. Fred Dembowski, the dissertation chair for this study, at [Contact Information] or by e-mail at [Contact Information]. I am sincerely grateful for your support, thank you.
### DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

#### PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. Sex (Circle one): Male Female

2. Age (Circle one):
   - 35 or younger
   - 36 to 41
   - 42 to 50
   - 51 to 56
   - 57 or older

3. Race/Ethnic Group (Circle all that apply):
   - White/Caucasian
   - African American/Black
   - Hispanic/Latino
   - Asian American/Asian
   - Middle Eastern American
   - Native American
   - Other (Please specify): 

4. What is your highest level of education completed? (Please circle appropriate response.)
   - High School
   - Associate Degree
   - Bachelor Degree
   - Graduate Degree (Please specify): 

5. How long have you served in the Fire Service?
   - Years ________ Months ________

6. How long you served in your present/most recent organization?
   - Years ________ Months ________

7. Were you appointed from outside the organization or promoted through the ranks? (Please specify last position held.)
   - Outside Ranks ________

8. How many employees serve under you in your current organization? (Circle appropriate category.)
   - 400 to 999
   - 1,000 to 1,499
   - 1,500 to 1999
   - 2,000 or more

9. Are you a contractual employee or an employee-at-will?
   - Contractual ________ At-will ________

10. How actively is your organization’s Fire Union(s) involved in local politics? My Fire Union is very active politically, on a scale on 1 to 5. (Circle appropriate response.)
    - (1) Strongly disagree
    - (2) Somewhat disagree
    - (3) Undecided/No opinion
    - (4) Somewhat Agree
    - (5) Strongly Agree
STRESS IN GENERAL (SIG) SCALE

YOUR STRESS AT WORK

Do you find your job stressful? For each of the following words or phrases, circle: 1 for "Yes" if it describes your job, 2 for "No" if it does not describe it, or 3 for "?" indicating that you cannot decide.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Irritating</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under control</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nerve-racking</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hassled</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More stressful than I'd like</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smooth-running</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overwhelming</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demanding</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressured</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hectic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calm</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many things Stressful</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pushed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABRIDGED JOB DISCRIPITION INDEX (AJDI) SCALE

FACET 1: WORK ON PRESENT JOB

Think of the work you do at present. How well does each of the following words or phrases describe your work? Circle: 1 for "Yes" if it describes your work, 2 for "No" if it does not describe it or 3 for "?" indicating that you cannot decide.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satisfying</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gives sense of accomplishment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenging</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dull</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uninteresting</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FACET 2: PRESENT PAY

Think of the pay you get now. How well does each of the following words or phrases describe your present salary? Circle: 1 for "Yes" if it describes your salary, 2 for "No" if it does not describe it or 3 for "?" indicating that you cannot decide.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income adequate for normal expenses</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insecure</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well paid</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underpaid</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FACET 3: OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROMOTION

Think of the opportunities for promotion that you have now. How well does each of the following words or phrases describe your opportunities for promotion? Circle: 1 for "Yes" if it describes your opportunities, 2 for "No" if it does not describe it or 3 for "?" indicating that you cannot decide.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good opportunities for promotion</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion on ability</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dead-end job</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good chance for promotion</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfair promotion policy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**FACET 4: IMMEDIATE SUPERVISION**

Think of your supervisor (s) and the kind of supervision that you get on your job. How well does each of the following words or phrases describe your supervision? Circle: 1 for "Yes" if it describes your supervision, “No” if it does not describe it or 3 for "?" indicating that you cannot decide.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Praises good work</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tactful</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up-to-date</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annoying</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FACET 5: PEOPLE AT WORK**

Think of the majority of people that you work with now or the people you meet in connection with your work. How well does each of the following words or phrases describe these people? Circle: 1 for "Yes" if it describes these people, “No” if it does not describe them or 3 for "?" indicating that you cannot decide.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boring</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpful</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsible</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lazy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligent</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**JOB IN GENERAL (JIG) SCALE**

**SUPPLEMENT TO AJDI: JOB IN GENERAL**

Think of your job in general. Overall, what is it like most of the time? For each of the following words or phrases, circle: 1 for "Yes" if it describes your job, “No” if it does not describe it or 3 for "?" indicating that you cannot decide.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undesirable</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better than most</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagreeable</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makes me content</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoyable</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### INTENT TO QUIT (ITQ) SCALE

#### JOB RETENTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements?</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Circle the appropriate number:</strong></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Somewhat Disagree</td>
<td>Neither Agree/Disagree</td>
<td>Somewhat Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. I plan to leave this organization within the next year.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I will quit this organization as soon as possible.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I do not plan to leave this organization soon.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I may leave this organization before too long.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I plan to stay with this organization as long as possible.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I intend to leave this organization soon.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**PERCEPTION OF OFFICE POLITICS (POPS) SCALE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements. Circle the appropriate number:</th>
<th>1 Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>2 Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>3 Undecided</th>
<th>4 Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>5 Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. People in this organization attempt to build themselves up by tearing others down.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. There has always been an influential group (in this department) that no one ever crosses.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Employees are encouraged to speak out frankly even when they are critical of well-established ideas.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. There is no place for yes-men around here; good ideas are desired even when it means disagreeing with superiors.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Agreeing with powerful others is the best alternative in this organization.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. It is best not to rock the boat in this organization.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Sometimes it is easier to remain quiet than to fight the systems.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Telling others what they want to hear is sometimes better than telling the truth.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. It is safer to think what you are told than to make up your own mind.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Since I have worked (in this department), I have never seen the pay and promotion policies applied politically.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I cannot remember when a person received a pay increase or promotion that was inconsistent with the published policies.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. None of the raises I have received is consistent with the policies on how raises should be determined.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. The stated pay and promotion policies have nothing to do with how pay raises and promotions are determined.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. When it comes to pay raises and promotions, policies are irrelevant.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Promotions around here are not valued much because, how they are determined is so politically.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kacmar and Ferris, 1991
REFERENCES


BIBLIOGRAPHY


