

Organizational Politics and Employee Behavioral Response: A Comparative Study  
of the U.S. and Lebanon

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Abstract

Since Hofstede introduced cross-cultural study of employee work values, numerous studies have been conducted and well established work-related values and their cross-national variations. And yet, their effect on other work related behaviors have not been investigated closely. Certainly, managers of multinational corporations would like to understand how such cross-national differences of work values such as individualism, collectivism, power distance, or masculinity affect the level of work and organizational commitment and employee behavioral response to potentially stressful conflicts and office politics. This study re-evaluate the cultural differences of work values between the U.S. and Lebanon, and closely examine the employees' behavioral response to the potentially frustrating political struggles that universally exist in any and all organizations. It was proposed that employees in the high collective and high power distance culture expect higher orderliness managed by the upper level management and thereby are more perplexed or stressed out when they encounter lack of such orderliness and conflicting messages which they should sort out themselves. Reversely, employees in the high individualistic and low power distance cultural expect less of hierarchical demand and higher degree of personal discretion and accountability, and thereby are less perplexed or less stressed when they encounter conflicting messages and political dilemma in their organization. We have collected cross-sectional survey data from over 300 employees of the same bank who work in two different countries: the U.S. and Lebanon. Results of the data analyses are presented and implications of the study for the multinational corporations are discussed.