

ABSTRACT

Organizational politics has been discussed in earnest in the literature over the last two decades. The concept of organizational politics and the perceptions of organizational politics in the work place evolved during the 1990s and are considered to be a primary component in contemporary organizational context. As today's work environment has evolved, the role of the leader has to evolve as well. Today's leader has multiple roles and, much of leadership is a social influence process. This requires a broad set of skills and knowledge of when to apply them. This is also the realm of organizational politics. Therefore, it is appropriate to explore the relationships that exist between the organizational leadership and the environmental phenomenon of organizational politics in contemporary settings. The two are unavoidably linked through common work place actors, settings, and scripts. The examination of the resulting impact on leadership is the focus of this study.

The purpose of this study is to determine whether organizational politics can exist in a bureaucratic hierarchical organization: Sri Lanka Air Force, and to examine the personality characteristics and political tactics used by those leaders in the SLAF who perform effectively in that political environment to achieve organizational goals. The study logically explores the connection among leadership, power, influence and politics. The long discussion on origination, evolution of the definition and different perceptions on organizational politics in the literature lays the foundation to identify and measure politics in the SLAF. The study extends the

existing research in this area by focusing on the impact of organizational politics on military leadership. The dissertation also compares Sri Lanka Air Force leaders' perception on organizational politics. It extends the body of knowledge by focusing on the experiences of senior leaders in professional environments as they interact with and work inside political environments in an effort to achieve organizational goals.