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Are All Dimensions of Political Skill Equally Relevant Across Industries? A Multidimensional Contextual Framework

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Abstract

Political skill is an important interpersonal competency that enables individuals to understand others effectively, influence workplace interactions, build professional relationships, and achieve organizational objectives. Although political skill is widely recognized as a valuable resource for career advancement and organizational effectiveness, its relevance may vary across industries depending on organizational culture, leadership structures, job requirements, and the nature of professional relationships. The present study aims to examine whether all dimensions of political skill are equally relevant across different industries and to develop a multidimensional contextual framework for understanding their differential effects. The study focuses on four major dimensions of political skill: social astuteness, interpersonal influence, networking ability, and apparent sincerity. It explores how these dimensions may operate differently across sectors such as manufacturing, information technology, healthcare, education, financial services, and public administration. For instance, networking ability may be particularly valuable in industries that depend on external partnerships and resource mobilization, whereas social astuteness and interpersonal influence may be especially important in leadership-intensive and collaborative work environments. Apparent sincerity may contribute to trust-building across industries, although its significance may depend on organizational norms and stakeholder expectations. Adopting a conceptual and theory-driven approach based on a review of relevant academic literature, the study proposes that the effectiveness of political skill dimensions is contingent upon industry-specific characteristics, including task interdependence, organizational hierarchy, environmental uncertainty, and relationship intensity. The framework highlights the importance of distinguishing between the general benefits of political skill and the context-dependent value of its individual dimensions. It offers theoretical implications for organizational behavior research and practical insights for human resource management, leadership development, employee selection, and professional training. The study concludes that political skill should be understood as a multidimensional and context-sensitive competency rather than a uniform capability, encouraging future empirical research to investigate how industry conditions shape the relative importance of its different dimensions.

Keywords: Political Skill, Social Astuteness, Interpersonal Influence, Networking Ability, Apparent Sincerity, Industry Context, Organizational Behavior, Leadership, Contextual Framework, Human Resource Management.