

# Navigating Workplace Dynamics: Understanding Favoritism and Organizational Politics



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## Abstract

The case highlighted the issue of favouritism and organisational politics at Swift University, based in Delhi. Dr. Mayank is the primary protagonist in this case. Dr. Mayank Sharma joined as an Assistant Professor at Swift University with the hope that his career would advance and reach new heights. It showcased how his hopes got setback due to the ongoing favoritism and organisational politics. The case discusses his various experiences in the form of narration and story. It highlighted the attitude of the top management in handling the new employee's expectations and its impact on his morale and motivation level.

It also conveyed the new hire's concerns and anxieties about his future. This case provided profound insights into the academic environment and its related challenges. It also provided fuel for thought for academicians, both current and future, as they had to deal with similar situations and the consequences that might result from them. All identities of organisation, individuals, and events mentioned in this case are altered to maintain anonymity without compromising on the integrity. Any similarity would be purely coincidental.

Without sacrificing the case's credibility, all organization, person, and event identities are changed to preserve anonymity. Any resemblance would be coincidental only.

**Key words:** - Repute, Credibility, Career Advancement, Dilemma, Indecisiveness, Favourites

## Introduction

Dr. Mayank Sharma was a young, dynamic, and aspiring professional working as Assistant Professor at Swift University, one of the top universities in India. It received a "A" accreditation mark from NAAC and was placed in the top 25 universities.

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It was a well-known name for its academic repute and credibility. It draws top talent to this prestigious university in addition to having a strong student body. Dr. Mayank Sharma was sitting in his cabin contemplating about a day when he received a call letter from Swift University for an interview and was subsequently selected in November 2014.

He was excited about this promising future job after joining Swift University. He felt his dreams had come true by getting an opportunity to work for such a prestigious university. He had high hopes of getting better career advancement opportunities with optimum utilization of his talent. He felt that all his expectations, which anyone can aspire to, would be fulfilled at Swift University.

In June 2016, Mayank had finished his first and a half year at Swift University, but things had gone against what he had anticipated. He lacked motivation and was unable to concentrate on his work. He was frustrated, dissatisfied, and considering his future at Swift University. He was torn between staying and leaving, and he was in a terrible position. He didn't know what to do.

He was in a great dilemma and indecisive, whether he should stay or leave?

## **Background of the organisation**

One of the best universities in India, Swift University was founded in Delhi in 1975. According to a 2016 survey by Hindustan Times, it was ranked 12th in the country. The National Assessment and Accreditation Council, or NAAC, awarded the university an "A" grade in 2014.

Swift University had an attractive, serene campus, located 18 kilometres away from the International Airport of Delhi. It provides just the right environment to step away from the routine world to quietly imbibe, peacefully introspect, and ultimately learn.

Swift University was an amalgamation of 18 Institutes offering 100+ programs in Engineering, Management, Medicine, Humanities and Health sciences. Their Motto is "Empowerment through Education". Swift University was known for its high standards in teaching and attracts students and faculties from all over the world. The faculty pool at Swift University comprises a good blend of people both from industry and academia.

Swift University had strategic linkages with leading premier institutions across the world. It was emerging as an education hub and destination for knowledge seekers from all over the world.

## **Incident Introduction**

The issue began with a series of incidents that happened one after another during his tenure while working with Swift University, which has crushed his expectations and put him in a state of grief and discontent. Some crucial incidents are mentioned below which land him in dilemma and indecisiveness about whether he should stay or leave.

## **Incident 1:**

It was Dr. Mayank's first day at Swift University when he was called by Director, Dr. Abhay Wadhwa and Head of Department (HOD) & Academic Head, Dr. Lata Singh for a formal interaction. The conversation started with a formal introduction and discussion about Swift University. He was intimidated about the various academic and administrative responsibilities allocated to him. During this interaction, he was told that the academic session was about to begin in the next three weeks. He was also intimidated about the subject allocated to him for the current session.

Dr. Mayank found that the subject offered to him didn't belong to his area of specialization and discussed the subjects he had taught and would like to teach in the current session. He requested Dr. Lata to change the subject, but the request was turned down, stating the reason that subjects had been already allocated and making changes at this stage was not possible.

Being a new employee, he agreed to teach the subject offered to him, but he also requested to consider his subject preference in the next academic session. He was given assurance by Dr. Wadhwa and Dr. Lata that his preference would be considered in the next academic session.

Dr. Mayank started working with full enthusiasm and tried to adapt to the work environment. While working, he observed that few faculties were on the list of 'Favourites' of Dr. Lata Singh. These faculties used to enjoy additional paybacks every time, whether it was academic or administrative work. He also felt there was inequality in the division of work. He neglected his observations and decided to focus on his work.

Next, the academic session was about to begin, and he was waiting for an academic meeting to be called for subject allocation. Unexpectedly, he received an email regarding subject allocation for the upcoming session.

He opened an email to check the subjects allocated to him. To his surprise, he saw that the subjects allocated to him were not from his area of specialization. While other faculty members have subjects of their specialization. He found despite giving his preferences for the subjects in advance, his request was not considered.

He went to Dr. Lata to discuss the matter and resolve the confusion regarding the subject allocation.

Dr. Mayank Sharma: May I come in madam?

Dr. Lata Singh: Yes, please come in and have a seat.

Dr. Mayank Sharma: I have received the list of subject allocation, and I am surprised to see that the subjects allocated to me are not from my area of specialization.

Dr. Lata Singh (Ignorant): Why are you so surprised?

Dr. Mayank Sharma: In the last academic session, I was assured that in this academic session, my preference regarding subjects would be considered.

Dr. Lata Singh: Dr. Mayank, I have allocated the subjects after the discussion with your colleagues from your area of specialization.

Dr. Mayank Sharma (Shocked): Colleagues! They do not have any authority to decide the subjects for me. You should have called me before allocating the subjects.

Dr. Lata Singh (angrily): I have the authority to decide the subjects. I know who can teach better.

Dr. Mayank Sharma: Of course, you have authority, but my question is why every time few faculties get subjects of their choice.

Dr. Lata Singh (irritated): What do you mean by 'Few' faculties?

Dr. Mayank Sharma: I am not naming anyone. You know it better, but I have observed they are getting privileged in everything.

Dr. Lata Singh (angrily): You want to say I am biased? For your information, last Monday, a meeting was called by me for subject allocation.

Dr. Mayank Sharma (irritated): Last Monday! I was not aware of any such meeting. How would I know that you have called a meeting? There was no such prior intimation for the same. You should have informed me earlier.

Dr. Lata Singh (angrily): Dr. Mayank, I have sent a person to call you, but you were not available in your cabin.

Dr. Mayank Sharma: I was busy with examination work. Moreover, how can you allocate the subjects without including all the members concerned?

Dr. Lata Singh (irritated and angry): Now, I can't make any changes. The final list has been sent to the Director. You can go and speak to him.

Dr. Mayank Sharma (Disappointed): Thank you for your time.

Dr. Mayank moved out of the cabin. He became demotivated and felt discriminated against. He continued to be mistreated and denied the subjects he wanted in the ensuing meetings. While his colleagues, who were Dr. Lata's "favourites," were enjoying their jobs.

## **Incident 2**

After joining, Dr. Mayank attended an orientation programme in which he came to know about the vision and mission of Swift University. He was fascinated to know about the career development/advancement opportunities available for faculties at Swift University. He was very much impressed by the research policy of the University which was very much in sync with UGC guidelines. The major highlight of the research policy was the special fund that was allocated for the participation in Faculty Development

Programmes (FDPs), Workshops, Seminars, and Conferences, which were very crucial for faculty development and growth. He was further motivated by the talks of top management as they spoke a lot about faculty development and encouraged everyone to participate in such programs.

Dr. Mayank was feeling happy and lucky to be a part of this leading world-class university. He thought he was at the right place, where his talent would get the right exposure. He was fully motivated and having high spirits thinking about his bright and successful career.

Having high hopes, he decided to participate in the workshop, made his proposal, and submitted it to the Research Committee (RC) for approval. The committee took his proposal and asked him to wait for the next 7 days for the decision of the committee. After seven days, he received a communication from RC that his proposal had been rejected. The reason stated was that an academic session was going on.

In this row, he applied seven to eight times but every time his proposals got rejected for any one or more reasons like examination duties schedule, shortage of staff, cultural activities going on, location of organizer, content of workshop, or any other vague reasons. The list was endless. He noticed that other faculties in the department, especially those who were on the list of 'favourites' were getting permission for participation in multiple FDPs.

With time, the academic session got over in May. Dr. Mayank decided to utilize his time by participating in some FDPs and workshops. He started looking for the options available. Meanwhile, he got an invitation to participate in the workshop organized by UGC in Delhi in June. It was a good opportunity for him to enrich his knowledge and skills in his area of his specialization. He made his proposal and submitted it to the Research Committee (RC) for approval, which was headed by Dr. Abhay Wadhwa, Director of the university.

Once again, his proposal was rejected stating that the orientation programme of the new batch had been scheduled. Although, Dr. Mayank had no role in the given program. This was high time and Dr. Mayank decided this time to discuss the matter directly with the RC Head.

Dr. Mayank: May I come in sir?

Dr. Abhay Wadhwa: Yes, please come in.

Dr. Mayank: Sir, I am here to discuss the issue related to my proposal for participation in the Faculty Development Programme.

Dr. Abhay Wadhwa: What do you want to discuss about it?

Dr. Mayank: I have submitted 8 proposals for participating in FDPs, but every time my proposal has been rejected by giving one or the other reason.

Dr. Abhay Wadhwa: I have seen your proposal they were not significant and relevant to the requirements of the university.

Dr. Mayank (surprised): Not Relevant! My every proposal was related to my area of specialization and other research activities.

Dr. Abhay Wadhwa: You are questioning the decision of the Research Committee (RC).

Dr. Mayank: No Sir, I am not, but I don't understand why I am not getting permission for the participation and while other faculties were getting permission to participate in various FDPs.

Dr. Abhay Wadhwa: (shouted) Dr. Mayank, I have full authority to decide to whom I should give permission and to whom I should not.

Dr. Mayank (Disappointed): Of course, sir, you have full authority. But anyway, thank you for listening to my issue.

Dr. Mayank moved out of the cabin. He was disheartened and had a feeling of discernment, thinking about the talks of the top management about faculty development and career advancement. He realized that it was mere talks nothing factual. He was annoyed and feeling discontented and thinking about his fate at Swift University.

### **Incident 3**

Dr. Mayank Sharma was looking at his coffee mug. He was thinking about the time when he joined Swift University with high hopes and aspirations. He was looking back on the hardships and efforts that were put in by him towards the larger objectives of the university.

Dr. Mayank Sharma was a dedicated hard-working employee. He always said 'Yes' to any type of work whether it was academic or administrative. He was always keen on learning and always ready to accept challenging work. He had a very hectic and tight schedule catering to teaching and administrative work which didn't leave time for doing any other activities. He was always busy catering to administrative work more than teaching.

In academic meetings with the Director, all faculty members were asked to be present in these meetings to discuss upcoming activities such as culture, sports, tours, seminars etc. In these meetings also he was assigned the maximum workload by marking false compliments that he was the best man for the job. There is always some type of work lined up for him. For any type of work, Dr. Mayank Sharma was asked to do it. As he always said 'Yes' so there was no shortage of work for him.

Many files were lying on his table which he needed to complete by the end of the day. He went to Dr. Lata to collect some documents required for completing these files. When he reached the cabin, he heard some loud voices and laughs. Before he could enter the cabin, he heard that a few faculty members were already sitting in her cabin making fun of him and discussing how all the work had been delegated to him. He even heard about the

plan and strategies for delegating work. He got hurt and disappointed at the approach of Dr. Lata and her few 'favourite' faculties.

After some days he was asked to organize a "Cultural Activity" for the students. He moved out of his cabin to meet the coordinator to get the list of new students. While walking from the faculty room to the administration room, he saw that some faculties were sitting on the sofa and were having a fun time and enjoying chit-chatting, some were busy on their mobile phones while some were just having a walk in the corridors.

Within these 100 meters of the walk, he realized how he had become a "Joker" in the organization. He took the list of new students from the coordinator and came back to his cabin. Finally, the day came when he got so frustrated and irritated that he decided to speak to Dr. Lata about his workload, hoping that his request would be considered.

Dr. Mayank Sharma: May I come in madam?

Dr. Lata Singh: Yes, please come in and have a seat.

Dr. Mayank Sharma: I need your help.

Dr. Lata Singh: Please tell me how I can help you.

Dr. Mayank Sharma: Mam, I am so overloaded with academic and administrative work that I don't get time for doing any other activity. I need someone to share the workload.

Dr. Lata Singh: Everybody is overloaded, nobody has free time, there is so much work that we all need to put in some extra effort.

Dr. Mayank Sharma: Yes Mam, I can see how busy they are sitting on a sofa, chit-chatting, busy on mobile phones, roaming in the corridors. You might not have seen that! You are so busy (*Sarcastically commented*).

Dr. Lata Singh (*angrily*): Dr. Mayank Sharma, stop comparing with others. I wouldn't say I like comparison. You better focus on your work. You may leave now.

*(Dr. Mayank Sharma came out of her cabin and saw Dr. Lata going inside the Director's cabin)*

#### **Incident 4**

It was the month of June with an end of academic session. It was a time when the Performance Appraisal Forms were distributed to all the faculty members. Dr. Mayank Sharma was holding the form in his hand, hoping that after filling in the form he would be rewarded for all his hard work, so he started filling the form. He completed the form and submitted it in a sealed envelope to Dr. Abhay Wadhwa, the Reviewing Officer, and a copy of the Performance appraisal form to Dr. Lata, the Assessing Officer. Dr. Mayank was hoping that all his hard work would be rewarded.

The director had sent the peon to call Dr. Mayank Sharma in his cabin. Dr. Mayank Sharma went to his cabin.

Dr. Mayank: May, I come in sir?

Dr. Abhay Wadhwa: Yes, please come in and have a seat.

*Dr. Abhay Wadhwa handed him a letter which was sealed and confidential was written on it. Dr. Mayank Sharma took the letter, and he opened it. He became pale and his eyes got wet.*

Dr. Mayank Sharma: No Increment!

Dr. Abhay Wadhwa: I cannot help, but your performance is very poor.

Dr. Mayank Sharma: Sir, I have done all the assigned work on time, my teaching load is complete, and I have done the maximum amount of administrative work.

Dr. Abhay Wadhwa: It's part of your job, Dr. Mayank. What special you have done about it? The maximum marks are given to the research output which is negligible in your case.

*(Dr. Mayank Sharma was thinking about those 8 proposals that were rejected by the Research Committee).*

Dr. Mayank Sharma: I was overloaded with administrative work while others were enjoying leisure time.

Dr. Abhay Wadhwa: You always compare yourself with others. This is what I hate. You should focus on your work.

Dr. Mayank Sharma (*Disappointed*): Ok Sir. Thank You.

*Dr. Mayank goes back to his cabin and writes a simple resignation letter. Keeping the letter in front of him, he picks up his phone and dials a number. "Hello" .....*

## Questions

1. What were the prominent reasons you feel were responsible for the feeling of discontentment in Dr. Mayank Sharma?
2. Dr. Mayank Sharma was a victim of *Favouritism or Organisational Politics*? Comment.
3. Comment on the approach of a Director and HOD in the case.
4. What would be your approach in this case, if were in place of Dr. Mayank Sharma?
5. Discuss the various pros and cons associated with *Favouritism and Organisational Politics*.
6. Is it possible to get rid of *Favouritism or Organisational Politics*? Discuss your viewpoint.



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## TEACHING NOTE

### 1. Synopsis of the case

The case highlights the issue of Favouritism and Organisational politics at Swift University based in Delhi. The case revolves around Dr. Mayank Sharma, who joined as an Assistant Professor at Swift University with the expectation that his career will grow and reach new heights. It showcases how his expectations got a setback due to the ongoing favouritism and organisational politics. The case discusses his various experiences in the form of narration and story. It highlights the attitude of the top management in handling the new employee expectations and its impact on his morale and motivation level. It also reflects the worries and anxiety of the new employee considering his future. This case has given deep insights into the academic world and the issues about it. It also gives food for thought for present and future academicians to think about the options available to them to deal with such situations considering their repercussions.

**Keywords:** Repute, Credibility, Career Advancement, Dilemma, Indecisiveness, Favourites

### 2. Target group

The case has covered various issues related to the subject matter of Organisational Behaviour and Human Resource Management. It is intended to develop logical and analytical thinking among the students to critically appraise and apply their learned concepts. This case can be used for different levels of management education practitioners and the students of undergraduates, postgraduates, and executives working in the organisation.

### 3. Learning objectives and key issues

The case highlights the problem of favouritism and organisational politics existing in the organisation and discusses its impact on the employees in the organisation. Readers would be able to identify issues pertaining to favouritism and organisational politics and its repercussions. They will learn what kind of issues arise in the academic world. It also gives the opportunity to appraise the approach of management and employees in the case. It will help the readers to understand the various perspectives of the decision-makers and their impact on the overall functioning of the organisation.

### 4. Teaching strategy

The case should be distributed a day before in advance in the class to have a better understanding and discussion in the class. The case can be taught while discussing the

concept of favouritism and organisational politics. The learned concepts can be thoroughly discussed through the case and by enacting role-play. Readers would be able to put forward their point of view and can evaluate the same in the light of real issues.

### 5. Questions for discussion

- a) What were the prominent reasons you feel were responsible for the feeling of discontentment in Dr. Mayank Sharma?
- b) Dr. Mayank Sharma was a victim of Favouritism or Organisational Politics? Comment.
- c) Comment on the approach of a Director and HOD in the case.
- d) What would be your approach in this case, if were in place of Dr. Mayank Sharma?
- e) Discuss the various pros and cons associated with Favouritism and Organisational Politics.
- f) Is it possible to get rid of Favouritism or Organisational Politics? Discuss your viewpoint.

### 6. Probable Solutions

#### i) Prominent reasons for Dr. Mayank Sharma's discontentment:

Dr. Mayank Sharma's discontentment can be analyzed through various organizational behavior theories:

**Subject allocation and Expectancy Theory:** Initially, Dr. Mayank was assigned subjects not aligned with his expertise, despite assurances for consideration in the next academic session. This misalignment between his expectations of subject allocation and the actual allocation impacted his motivation and job satisfaction. According to Expectancy Theory, individuals are motivated when they believe that their efforts will lead to desired outcomes. In Dr. Mayank's case, the lack of alignment between his efforts and desired outcomes (i.e., teaching subjects of his expertise) resulted in reduced motivation and satisfaction.

**Repeated rejection of proposals and Equity Theory:** Dr. Mayank's consistent rejection of proposals to participate in Faculty Development Programs (FDPs) despite meeting the necessary criteria highlights a perception of unfairness. Equity Theory posits that individuals compare their inputs (effort, performance) and outcomes (rewards, recognition) to those of others to assess fairness. Dr. Mayank perceived an inequity when his efforts were not rewarded with opportunities for professional development, contrasting with colleagues who received preferential treatment. This perceived inequity contributed to his discontentment and frustration.

**Overload of work and Job Demand-Control Model:** Dr. Mayank consistently experienced a high workload, primarily consisting of academic and administrative responsibilities. The Job Demand-Control Model suggests that high job demands coupled with low control over work decisions can lead to stress and burnout. Dr. Mayank's

situation aligns with this model, as he likely felt overwhelmed by the combination of heavy workload and limited autonomy in task allocation. This imbalance between demands and control contributed to his dissatisfaction and emotional exhaustion.

**Perceived favoritism and Social Exchange Theory:** Dr. Mayank observed favoritism towards certain colleagues, resulting in preferential treatment in subject allocation, FDP approvals, and workload distribution. Social Exchange Theory posits that individuals engage in reciprocal relationships based on perceived benefits and costs. When Dr. Mayank perceived inequitable treatment compared to his colleagues, it violated the norm of reciprocity in social exchanges within the organization. As a result, he experienced negative emotions and reduced commitment to the organization.

**Unfair performance evaluation and Attribution Theory:** Dr. Mayank's disappointment with the performance appraisal outcome despite fulfilling his duties aligns with Attribution Theory. According to this theory, individuals attribute outcomes to internal or external factors based on perceived fairness. Dr. Mayank likely attributed the lack of increment to external factors such as biased evaluation processes rather than internal factors like his performance. This attribution of blame to external factors contributed to feelings of injustice and disillusionment.

The student, by understanding these theories, provides valuable insights into organizational dynamics and leadership challenges. By discussing case studies like Dr. Mayank's, students can develop critical thinking skills and apply theoretical frameworks to real-world scenarios. Additionally, exploring strategies to address workplace issues fosters leadership development and prepares future managers to navigate complex organizational environments.

#### **ii) Dr. Mayank Sharma as a victim of Favouritism or Organizational Politics:**

Dr. Mayank's experiences highlight elements of both favoritism and organizational politics within Swift University:

**Favouritism:** Dr. Mayank's observations of preferential treatment in subject allocation, FDP approvals, and workload distribution hint at the presence of informal networks or relationships influencing decision-making within the organization. Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory offers insights into this dynamic. According to LMX Theory, leaders form unique relationships with each of their subordinates, resulting in in-groups and out-groups.

In Dr. Mayank's case, it appears that certain colleagues enjoy closer relationships with Dr. Lata Singh, possibly forming an in-group. These individuals may receive preferential treatment due to their rapport with Dr. Singh, while others are relegated to the out-group. Such preferential treatment can lead to disparities in opportunities and workload distribution, undermining fairness, and meritocracy within the organization.

Understanding these dynamics through the lens of LMX Theory highlights the importance of equitable leader-subordinate relationships and the need for leaders to

maintain fairness in their interactions with all team members. Addressing these disparities can promote a more inclusive and merit-based work environment.

**Organizational Politics:** Dr. Mayank's interactions with superiors, including Dr. Lata Singh and Dr. Abhay Wadhwa, demonstrate elements of organizational politics characterized by power dynamics and manipulation. These leaders appear to prioritize personal agendas and maintain authority without considering employee concerns. According to Resource Dependence Theory, individuals and departments within organizations compete for resources and influence to advance their interests. Dr. Mayank's exclusion from decision-making processes and lack of support suggests a power imbalance that perpetuates organizational politics.

The student, exploring cases of favoritism and organizational politics, provides valuable insights into leadership challenges and organizational dynamics. By analyzing real-world scenarios like Dr. Mayank's experiences, students can understand the implications of power dynamics, influence tactics, and informal networks in organizations. Moreover, discussing strategies to mitigate favoritism and navigate organizational politics prepares future leaders to foster inclusive and ethical work environments.

### iii) Approach of the Director and HOD:

The approach of the Director and HOD towards Dr. Mayank's concerns reflects ineffective leadership and communication strategies:

**Lack of Transparency:** Both leaders failed to communicate effectively regarding decisions related to subject allocation, FDP approvals, and workload distribution. Transparency is essential for fostering trust and accountability within organizations. The lack of transparency contributed to Dr. Mayank's feelings of disenfranchisement and disillusionment.

**Authoritarianism:** The Director and HOD asserted their authority without considering Dr. Mayank's grievances or offering constructive solutions. Authoritarian leadership undermines employee morale and engagement by stifling communication and participation. From the perspective of Transformational Leadership Theory, effective leaders inspire and empower their subordinates, fostering a shared vision and commitment to organizational goals. The Director and HOD's authoritarian approach contradicts the principles of transformational leadership, leading to disengagement and resentment among employees.

**Inequitable Treatment:** Both leaders perpetuated favoritism and inequitable treatment by disregarding Dr. Mayank's concerns and prioritizing personal biases or agendas. Inclusive Leadership Theory emphasizes the importance of fairness, diversity, and collaboration in leadership practices. The Director and HOD's failure to address Dr. Mayank's grievances and promote fairness highlights their shortcomings as leaders and undermines organizational cohesion and effectiveness.

The students, analyzing leadership behaviors and communication styles in cases like Dr. Mayank's experiences provides valuable lessons in effective leadership and organizational behavior. By discussing the implications of authoritarianism, lack of transparency, and inequitable treatment, students can develop critical thinking skills and evaluate leadership practices in diverse organizational contexts. Moreover, exploring strategies to promote transparency, fairness, and inclusive leadership prepares future managers to address complex challenges and foster positive organizational cultures.

**iv) Approach if in place of Dr. Mayank Sharma:**

In Dr. Mayank's position, adopting a strategic and proactive approach is essential for addressing workplace challenges and advocating for fair treatment:

**Documentation and Evidence Gathering:** Dr. Mayank should document instances of unfair treatment, including subject allocation, FDP rejections, workload distribution, and performance evaluation outcomes. Gathering evidence strengthens his case and provides leverage when addressing concerns with higher authorities or HR.

**Formal Channels and Advocacy:** Dr. Mayank should utilize formal channels such as HR or grievance mechanisms to address his grievances. By articulating his concerns professionally and providing evidence, he can advocate for fair treatment and seek resolution to the issues he faces.

**Alliances and Support Networks:** Building alliances with supportive colleagues who share similar concerns can provide strength in numbers and increase visibility of the issue. Collaborating with like-minded individuals to advocate for systemic changes and fairness within the organization can amplify his voice and influence.

**Exploring External Opportunities:** If internal issues persist and impact Dr. Mayank's well-being, he may consider exploring external job opportunities. By evaluating alternative employment options, Dr. Mayank can prioritize his career growth and well-being while navigating challenging workplace dynamics.

The students discussing strategies for addressing workplace challenges and advocating for fair treatment provides valuable insights into leadership and organizational behavior. By analyzing cases like Dr. Mayank's experiences, students can develop skills in conflict resolution, negotiation, and stakeholder management. Moreover, exploring the importance of documentation, advocacy, and strategic decision-making prepares future managers to navigate complex organizational environments and advocate for ethical and inclusive practices.

**v) Pros and cons of Favouritism and Organizational Politics:**

Examining the pros and cons of favoritism and organizational politics provides a nuanced understanding of their impact on individuals and organizations:

**Pros of Favouritism and Organizational Politics:**

*Efficiency:* In some cases, favoritism and organizational politics may expedite decision-making processes and facilitate resource allocation.

*Network Building:* Individuals who benefit from favoritism or engage in organizational politics may develop strong networks and alliances that provide support and opportunities for advancement.

**Cons of Favouritism and Organizational Politics:**

*Demoralization:* Favoritism and organizational politics can erode morale and trust within the organization, leading to disengagement and decreased productivity.

*Inequality:* Unfair treatment and preferential treatment undermine meritocracy and create perceptions of injustice, fostering resentment and conflict among employees.

*Loss of Talent:* Organizations that perpetuate favoritism and organizational politics risk losing talented employees who seek fair treatment and opportunities for growth elsewhere.

The students, analyzing the pros and cons of favoritism and organizational politics offers valuable insights into leadership challenges and organizational dynamics. By exploring case studies and real-world examples, students can develop critical thinking skills and evaluate the implications of these phenomena on individual and organizational performance. Moreover, discussing strategies to mitigate the negative effects of favoritism and organizational politics prepares future leaders to foster inclusive and ethical work environments and promote organizational effectiveness.

**vi) Possibility of mitigating Favouritism or Organizational Politics:**

Addressing favoritism and organizational politics requires leveraging contemporary OB theories alongside practical strategies aimed at promoting fairness, transparency, and ethical leadership:

**Transparent Policies and Procedures:** Drawing from Contemporary OB perspectives such as Social Identity Theory, organizations can develop transparent policies and procedures that acknowledge and accommodate the diverse needs and perspectives of employees. By emphasizing inclusivity and fairness in decision-making processes, organizations can mitigate biases and reduce opportunities for favoritism.

**Leadership Development:** Applying Transformational Leadership Theory, organizations can invest in leadership development programs that cultivate ethical leadership practices and empower managers to inspire and motivate employees towards shared goals. By fostering trust, transparency, and integrity, leaders can mitigate the negative impact of organizational politics and create a culture of accountability and collaboration.

**Conflict Resolution Mechanisms:** Incorporating insights from Conflict Management Theory, organizations can establish effective conflict resolution mechanisms that

encourage open communication, active listening, and constructive problem-solving. By providing employees with accessible and impartial avenues for resolving disputes, organizations can address grievances promptly and prevent the escalation of conflicts stemming from favoritism or perceived injustices.

**Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives:** Building upon Diversity and Inclusion Theory, organizations can implement initiatives that promote equity and representation across all levels of the organization. By embracing diversity and creating an inclusive work environment where all voices are heard and valued, organizations can minimize the influence of favoritism and foster a sense of belonging among employees.

**Organizational Culture Change:** Leveraging insights from Organizational Culture Theory, organizations can initiate culture change efforts that prioritize transparency, fairness, and accountability. By encouraging shared values and norms that reject favoritism and promote meritocracy, organizations can create a positive organizational culture that aligns with the aspirations and expectations of employees like Dr. Mayank.

Integrating contemporary OB theories into discussions on favoritism and organizational politics offers a holistic understanding of leadership challenges and organizational dynamics. By examining how theories such as Social Identity Theory, Transformational Leadership Theory, Conflict Management Theory, Diversity and Inclusion Theory, and Organizational Culture Theory apply to real-world scenarios like Dr. Mayank's experiences, students can develop critical thinking skills and apply theoretical frameworks to practical situations.

Moreover, discussing the practical implications of these theories in addressing favoritism and organizational politics prepares future managers and executives to navigate complex organizational environments with sensitivity, empathy, and strategic acumen. By equipping students with both theoretical knowledge and practical strategies, MBA and executive education programs can empower future leaders to promote fairness, transparency, and ethical behaviour within their organizations.

#### **vii) Analysis:**

The case of Dr. Mayank Sharma presents a prime opportunity for analysis through various mediums such as written assessments, oral presentations, and group discussions, complemented by role plays. Central to the case are the concepts of favoritism and organizational politics, which manifest in Dr. Mayank's experiences of unequal subject allocations and repeated rejections of his proposals. These occurrences shed light on potential power dynamics and personal biases within the organization, shaping Dr. Mayank's professional journey and overall satisfaction. Analyzing these concepts within the context of the case enables deeper exploration of organizational behavior dynamics, leadership implications, and their impact on individual experiences within the workplace. Through interactive sessions and role plays, students can dissect the nuances of favoritism and organizational politics, critically evaluate their implications, and propose strategies for addressing such challenges in organizational



settings. This holistic approach fosters a comprehensive understanding of the complexities inherent in workplace dynamics and equips students with valuable insights for navigating similar situations in their future careers.

### **Favoritism and Organizational Politics:**

These concepts are central to the case as Dr. Mayank experiences favoritism through unequal subject allocations and rejections of his proposals, indicating potential organizational politics at play.

**Written assessment:** Students can analyze how favoritism and organizational politics impact Dr. Mayank's job satisfaction, motivation, and career advancement prospects, supported by relevant theories and examples.

**Oral presentations:** Presentations can focus on identifying specific instances of favoritism and organizational politics in the case, discussing their implications for individual and organizational outcomes, and proposing strategies to address these issues.

**Group discussions:** Students can engage in group discussions to explore different perspectives on favoritism and organizational politics, debate their ethical implications, and brainstorm potential solutions to mitigate their negative effects.

**Role plays:** Role plays can simulate scenarios where students take on the roles of Dr. Mayank, other faculty members, and organizational leaders to understand the dynamics of favoritism and organizational politics firsthand and practice conflict resolution and negotiation skills.

### **Leadership and Power Dynamics:**

The case highlights leadership decisions by the Director and HOD, showcasing power dynamics within the organization.

**Written assessment:** Students can analyze the leadership styles exhibited by the Director and HOD, evaluating how their actions contribute to or mitigate favoritism and organizational politics.

**Oral presentations:** Presentations can focus on the influence of leadership on organizational culture, employee behavior, and decision-making processes, exploring strategies for promoting ethical leadership and reducing power imbalances.

**Group discussions:** Students can discuss the role of leadership in fostering a fair and inclusive work environment, share examples of effective and ineffective leadership practices, and debate the ethical responsibilities of leaders in addressing favoritism and organizational politics.

**Role plays:** Role plays can simulate interactions between leaders and employees, allowing students to explore different leadership approaches to managing conflicts, addressing employee concerns, and promoting transparency and fairness.

### **Employee Engagement and Job Satisfaction:**

Dr. Mayank's experiences reflect challenges with employee engagement and job satisfaction due to perceived unfair treatment.

**Written assessment:** Students can assess the factors influencing Dr. Mayank's job satisfaction and engagement levels, considering the role of organizational culture, leadership, and perceived fairness.

**Oral presentations:** Presentations can explore the impact of favoritism and organizational politics on employee morale, motivation, and performance, discussing strategies for enhancing job satisfaction and fostering a positive work environment.

**Group discussions:** Students can discuss the importance of employee engagement for organizational success, share strategies for improving employee morale and satisfaction, and brainstorm initiatives to promote a culture of fairness and inclusivity.

**Role plays:** Role plays can simulate scenarios where employees' express concerns about favoritism and organizational politics to their supervisors, allowing students to practice active listening, empathy, and conflict resolution skills in addressing employee grievances.

Overall, the case provides a rich context for analyzing key organizational behavior concepts and their implications for individual experiences and organizational outcomes. Through written assessment, oral presentations, group discussions, and role plays, students can deepen their understanding of these concepts and develop critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving skills in addressing real-world workplace challenges.

#### **viii) Background Reading:**

Before delving into the case analysis, it's crucial for readers to have a solid understanding of the concepts of favoritism and organizational politics.

**Favoritism:** Favoritism refers to the practice of showing preferential treatment to certain individuals or groups within an organization, often based on personal biases, relationships, or connections rather than merit or performance. This can manifest in various forms, including unfair allocation of resources, opportunities, or rewards, and can have significant implications for employee morale, motivation, and organizational culture.

**Organizational Politics:** Organizational politics involves the use of power, influence, and manipulation to advance personal interests or agendas within an organization. This can include actions such as forming alliances, lobbying for resources or promotions, and engaging in backstabbing or sabotage. Organizational politics can create a toxic work environment characterized by distrust, competition, and conflict, ultimately undermining organizational effectiveness and employee well-being.

By understanding these concepts, readers can better appreciate the dynamics at play in the case and analyze how favoritism and organizational politics impact the lives of employees like Dr. Mayank Sharma.

### **Implications of Favoritism and Organizational Politics:**

Readers can further explore the implications of favoritism and organizational politics on employees' lives and organizational outcomes. This may include:

**Impact on Employees:** Favoritism and organizational politics can lead to feelings of demotivation, disillusionment, and discontentment among employees who perceive themselves as being unfairly treated or disadvantaged. This can result in decreased job satisfaction, engagement, and commitment, ultimately affecting individual performance and well-being.

**Organizational Consequences:** Favoritism and organizational politics can have detrimental effects on organizational culture, morale, and productivity. They can erode trust, cohesion, and collaboration among employees, leading to increased turnover, absenteeism, and conflict. Moreover, they can impede organizational performance and innovation by stifling creativity, dissent, and constructive feedback.

### **ix) Experience in Using the Case:**

The case has been successfully employed in classroom settings, particularly in courses such as Organizational Behavior and Human Resource Management.

**Identification of Issues:** Students were able to identify key issues such as favoritism, organizational politics, unequal work distribution, demotivation, discontentment, career advancement, and job satisfaction. Through critical analysis of the case, students gained insights into the complexities of organizational dynamics and their impact on individual experiences within the workplace.

**Generation of Options:** Students engaged in lively discussions and debates, drawing upon their knowledge, and understanding of organizational behavior concepts to propose various options for addressing the issues presented in the case. This encouraged creative thinking, problem-solving, and consideration of multiple perspectives.

**Debate and Discussion:** The case stimulated debate and discussion among students, allowing them to explore different viewpoints and evaluate the approaches of key stakeholders such as the Director, HOD, and employees in the department. By considering the merits and demerits of each perspective, students gained a deeper appreciation for the complexities of organizational decision-making and leadership.

Overall, the case provided a rich learning experience that enabled students to apply theoretical concepts to real-world scenarios, develop critical thinking skills, and engage in collaborative problem-solving. It served as a valuable tool for enhancing students' understanding of organizational behavior and HRM principles in practice.