Measuring Political Skill – An Empirical Study in Taiwan

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Abstract: Political skill refers to the ability to influence other individuals through persuasion, manipulation, and negotiation, and is widely observed in many organizations. Both individual and organizational operations are to some extent associated with the utilization of political skill. It is necessary to understand how individuals utilize political skill. To measure political skill, Ferris et al. proposed a 40-item Political Skill Item Pool in 1999, and subsequently they shortened the item pool into an 18-item Political Skill Inventory (PSI) through item analysis. The PSI measurement consists of four dimensions: social astuteness, interpersonal influence, networking ability, and apparent sincerity. The shorten PSI has been widely used in many studies. However, the PSI was developed based on the samples drawing from a university in the south of the US. While individuals with different cultural backgrounds may exhibit different behavior, it is arguable that the shorten PSI measurement is applicable in other cultures. Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to verify whether the PSI measurement is suitable in Taiwan, a culture different from the U.S. In the study, a questionnaire was developed based on the 40-item Political Skill Item Pool. Four hundred Taiwanese samples with different kinds of occupations were selected, and 244 effective questionnaires were analyzed. Research findings reveal that the extracted items measuring political skill of Taiwanese samples are different from the shorten PSI which were developed for the U.S. samples. The study suggests that the development of political skill measurement should consider the potential influence of culture.

Keywords: political skill, scale development, Political Skill Inventory, Taiwan.