

Analyze the extent to which favoritism is present in recruiting and selection.

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Abstract

The purpose of our study was to examine the prevalence of favoritism in the recruitment and selection process from a communal perspective. Specifically, we focused on the attitudes of managers towards rational favoritism, which involves giving preference to relatives or friends in HR decision-making. To explore this topic, we utilized a factorial survey methodology, which involved constructing a questionnaire and collecting data from a sample of 50 managers working across different levels in Pakistan. The collected data was then analyzed using SPSS software. Our study findings indicate that managers tend to favor their family members and relatives when it comes to recruitment and selection. However, they tend to avoid hiring friends and unknown individuals. This trend is alarming as it suggests that meritocracy is in a state of decline in Pakistan, and favoritism has reached its peak. Moreover, this unethical behavior among managers contributes to corruption within organizations. This, in turn, can have a direct impact on the behavior of current employees. Such an environment can result in a lack of motivation, job dissatisfaction, and a diminished sense of loyalty among employees. Therefore, it is crucial to take immediate steps to address this issue to ensure fair and ethical HR practices in the workplace.

Keywords: Favoritism, Communal Ties, Coping Strategies.

Introduction

Employees play a vital role in any organization's success. When a company seeks to develop a new product, it requires highly skilled, qualified, and efficient workers to outshine its competitors and satisfy its customers. Managers are critical in establishing the right hiring practices to ensure the company hires the best employees.

Human resource managers are responsible for the recruitment and selection process. They create job descriptions and analyze job roles during the recruitment process. By advertising open positions and carefully reviewing all applications, they can select the best candidates through a rigorous screening process, which includes gathering resumes, testing applicants, conducting interviews, and checking references (Otoo et al., 2018). When a company promotes an existing employee, they follow the appropriate procedures and review the employee's file.

Organizations can also choose to hire from within the company, which can help the company grow and create more opportunities for employees. It is essential to hire based on merit, as stated in the Quran and Hadith. Employers should be selected based on their skills and abilities, not because of personal preferences. Managers should be honest and impartial in making hiring decisions. By following these guidelines, organizations can build a strong team of employees who will contribute to the company's growth and success. (Bilal et al., 2020).

Hiring family members and relatives is known as nepotism. Most of the time, relationships are used by employers to select candidates above qualifications. It is definitely unfair, and as a result, turnover rises, other employees become less motivated and loyal, and the organization's ability to expand is negatively impacted (AkgemciŃ, 2018). When hiring, choosing, and promoting staff members, managers in organisations engage in nepotism (Torun & Kawo, 2020). Bekesiene et al. (2021) state that the managers' endorsement of nepotism fosters negativity inside the company, which in turn causes emotional stress. Nepotism comes in two flavours: paired employee nepotism and cross-generational nepotism.

Nepotism has detrimental effects on the company. This results in the hiring of untrained and unqualified workers rather than competent and skilled workers, which impedes the organization's production and expansion (Karakose, 2014). Nepotism also benefits the organisation in some ways. Some choose to recruit family members because they can rely on them for loyalty and

because there is a lower turnover rate. We need to adopt more stringent hiring practices to reduce nepotism. According to Dlomo-Nwankwo (2017), all applicants need to have equal opportunity and be hired based only on their qualifications and talents. Favouritism also takes the form of cronyism. Favours are extended to friends and family in cronyism (Karakose, 2014).

To ensure the expansion and development of the business, the standard hiring procedures must be adhered to. Unfortunately, throughout the hiring process, this conventional method is disregarded, and candidates are chosen only on the basis of their personal connections, completely disregarding their qualifications, skills, and talents. This very hiring procedure needs to be made visible if the business is to expand and advance.

Objective

After analyzing previous articles, it was found that there is very little research done on nepotism and favoritism in the recruitment process in Pakistan. Therefore, there is a strong need to conduct research on how managers cope with favoritism in recruitment. The results of this research will help to improve recruitment policies and strategies in Pakistan, which can ultimately lead to the success of projects in organizations. Nepotism is a major cause of failure in many projects which leads to a lack of motivation and job satisfaction among employees. This creates a negative environment in the organization and can ultimately lead to its failure. The results of this research will help in improving the recruitment process policies and strategies in Pakistan, which can in turn improve the overall success of organizations.

Review of Literature

The authors of this study talked about how managers in organizations favor friends when it comes to hiring and promotion. They choose buddies over competent and talented applicants and disregard merit-based hiring (Khatri & Tsang, 2016). In this study, we examined how employees who show favoritism to friends and family might negatively affect the hiring process, lower employee motivation, and lead to conflict and stress at work (Ishaq & Zuilfkar, 2014).

The study's findings indicate that the organization should adopt a new management structure, foster a culture of fairness and justice for all employees, and base recruiting decisions only on merit (Wated & Sanchez, 2015). In this study, Vveinhardt and Sroka (2020) discussed favouritism in the Polish steel sector. Interviewing both current and former employees of the company allowed them to gather data. They come to the conclusion that there is a lot of favouritism in the business sector. ... other information that can be found on websites and in

company records, but it hasn't been thoroughly verified. In their study, Uygur and Cagatay (2015) noted that favouritism causes issues in family businesses. Managers like to recruit family members because they place greater faith in them than in outsiders.

However, this practice causes issues for the company since it makes employees feel unfairly treated and discourages them from doing their jobs for the company properly. This research defined favouritism as the practice of unfairly providing advantages such as jobs, contracts, and other means of income or well-being. Research indicates that when people meet each other with extra perks, it hurts their interests. Smaller groups find it easier to hold onto the advantages. Additionally, it makes society risky even if it may benefit bigger populations (Bramoullé & Goyal, 2016). According to this study, favouritism exists in Latin American nations. Supervisors support workers who prioritise their families during the recruitment process. The study's findings indicate that the organisation should adopt a new management structure, foster a culture of fairness and justice for all employees, and base recruiting decisions only on merit (Wated & Sanchez, 2015). In their research, Vveinhardt and Sroka (2020) They talked about the steel sector in Poland being biased. He went on to explain that information gathered from industry respondents involved speaking with both active and retired staff members. They said that there is favouritism in the business community. ... other information that can be found on websites and in company records, but it hasn't been thoroughly verified. According to this study, favouritism is an unofficial means of helping friends and family. added that when managers make moral choices, favouritism in the workplace can be reduced. Supervisors provide each worker fair treatment and provide incentives based on performance (Chaput, 2012). The link between cultural norms of particularism and attitudes towards relational favouritism has been investigated by Chao C. Chen et al. (2017). Three countries are surveyed for this study: America, Brazil, and China. This demonstrates that, in contrast to American managers, managers in Brazil and China place little value on favouritism. In this study, Otoo et al. (2018) expounded on the recruitment process, which involves drawing in a wide pool of candidates for open positions. The selection stage follows, during which managers select candidates for employment, and occasionally, they resort to nepotism and favouritism to appoint their own relatives and family members.

Towards a Communal Perspective on Favoritism

Our focus in this paper is to comprehend how recruiting managers deal with a practical dilemma that arises when they face conflicting expectations from their workplace and community

regarding the recruitment process. To achieve this, we combine insights from organizational institutionalism and network studies to develop a communal perspective on favoritism.

Organizational institutionalism provides valuable insights because it considers that individuals' actions are influenced by broader societal and communal norms, which may result in conflicting demands. (e.g., Currie and Spyridonidis 2016; Giorgi & Palmisano, 2017; Pache & Santos, 2013; Smets et al., 2015; Thornton et al., 2012).

Specifically, we first draw on insights from organizational institutionalism regarding institutional logic and social cues (DiMaggio, 1997; Thornton et al., 2012; Weber & Glynn, 2006) to develop a theory about when and how recruiting managers experience communal norms towards favouritism during recruitment and selection processes. We use insights from this stream of literature to suggest that workplace exposure to community members may provide social cues that invoke the obligations, identities, and repertoires of action embedded in that community. We subsequently draw on network studies to propose that attributes of social ties with community members—especially the levels of immediacy and relatedness affect how communal norms of favouritism are handled during recruitment processes.

Communities and Social Obligations

Institutional logics are the dominant frames of reference that shape rational, mindful behavior in a social context (Thornton and Ocasio 2008). Institutional logics build on interrelated sets of symbolic meaning systems and material practices that are rooted in specific social domains, such as the family, religion, or the market (Friedland and Alford 1991). As a result, the institutional logics from different social domains can provide conflicting and incompatible rationales for decision making and identity construction (Thornton et al. 2012). For instance, many contemporary workplaces are characterized by an economic rationality that emphasizes profit maximization and professional expertise (Almandoz 2012; Thornton 2001, 2004). This market logic directs the attention of managers and employees towards resource competition and competitiveness and tends to promote relations that are relatively impersonal (Thornton and Ocasio 1999; Thornton et al. 2012). In contrast, communities are institutional orders that center on meaningful and affective relationships (Marquis et al. 2011; Thornton et al. 2012). Brint (2001, p. 8) defines communities as “aggregates of people who share common activities and/or beliefs and who are bound together principally by relations of affect, loyalty, common values, and/or personal concern.” Although communities are often closely linked to particular

geographical areas, such as neighborhoods or regions, online communities illustrate that physical proximity is not required for community ties and obligations to develop (Wasko and Faraj 2000).

Community Obligations and Social Ties

Management research increasingly recognizes the relevance of the communities in which individuals and organizations are embedded (Marquis and Battilana 2009; Smets et al. 2015).

However, there has been little discussion of what drives individuals to act on community logics and communal obligations in work situations. The logics literature discusses how socialization may familiarize individuals with an institutional logic (Pache and Santos 2013), and how logics shape individuals' actions and interactions (Thornton et al. 2012).

The social cues literature highlights that interactions with network members serve as contextual cues that activate the "schemata, logics and frames" embedded in local networks (DiMaggio 1997, p. 283). When interactions take place in a certain context, such as when we meet colleagues at work or family members at home, the logics evoked by those interactions are largely congruent with the situational context and are likely to reinforce expected identities and action frames (Weber and Glynn 2006). However, when exposure is out of context and individuals associated with one sphere of life are encountered in another, logics can be activated that differ from and potentially conflict with the situational logic of the context in which the encounter takes place. In recruitment and selection processes, therefore, we expect exposure to community members in work situations to provide social cues that invoke the interests, obligations, identities, and repertoires of action embedded in that community. We use this insight to understand how managers experience and handle communal norms of favoritism during recruitment and selection processes. Specifically, in the following sections, we draw on insights from social network studies to highlight how the structural attributes of social ties with community members affect managers' experience of communal norms. We distinguish between the *immediacy* of social ties, or the structural distance to community members, and qualitative differences in social ties in terms of the *relatedness* of community members. These attributes are important because they affect the degree and permanence of the obligations managers feel towards community members. As we discuss in the next section, we expect these attributes to affect how managers handle communal norms of favoritism during recruitment and selection processes.

Immediacy

One factor likely to affect how managers experience and handle communal norms and obligations lies in the structural distance to community members, especially the immediacy of the tie. In social network analyses, immediacy is commonly captured by distinguishing between direct and indirect ties. Direct ties are direct personal relationships among members of a network (Burt 1987). Indirect ties, in contrast, are relationships among network members that are mediated by other ties (Ahuja 2000; Bian 1997; Shane and Cable 2002).

Immediacy also affects the enforcement of social norms and the threat of social sanctions (Brint 2001). The presence of a direct tie makes it possible to remind others of shared norms and obligations, to signal discontent, and to engage in forms of social punishment that can inflict significant social and emotional damage (Bastian and Haslam 2010), such as the withdrawal of support or the severing of social ties (Feldman 1984; Wiessner 2005). When ties are indirect, sanctions are likely to involve forms of reputational punishment, such as shaming and ridiculing, which require greater social coordination, are less immediate, and are less predictable in their outcomes (Posner and Rasmusen 1999). Therefore, while community members may feel a general sense of obligation to all community members, the obligation that individuals feel and their propensity to align their behaviors with community expectations are likely to be higher in the presence of direct ties than in the presence of indirect ties.

Relatedness

The obligations embedded in communal ties are also affected by whether two individuals are related. As work in social anthropology shows, the distinction between community members who are related and those who are not captures an important qualitative difference in the permanence of social obligations. As Boissevain (1966) highlights in his study on social obligation in Sicily: An individual is born into a kinship system, and there finds, ready-made so to speak, a network of persons with whom he has a series of jurally defined obligations. ... In contrast, ... the relation between patron and client, or between friends, is entered into voluntarily (Boissevain 1966, pp. 21–22). Relatedness is often taken to refer to “true” or biological kin relations in which individuals are connected to relatives through consanguineal ties (Engels 1942; Sudarkasa 1998). However, in many communities, the notion of relatedness includes “fictive” kin relations with individuals who are regarded in kinship terms even though they are unrelated by blood or marriage (Pitt- Rivers 1973). Such examples illustrate that although communities

differ in who is considered related, in most communities the notion of relatedness implies immutable obligations and trust. This is important for the purpose of our study because it suggests that relatedness is likely to affect how individuals respond to social expectations of favoritism during recruitment and selection processes.

Give preference to family, relatives, and friends (Favoritism, Cronyism, Nepotism)

Chukwuma et al. (2019) In this study they explained that it is not necessary that nepotism have negative impact on organization because sometimes managers hire qualified relative or friend for organization. In this study they described that nepotism, favoritism is like dishonest dealing and it create friction in organization (Tyto et al., 2020). Pearce (2015) described in his study that nepotism means hire from family members and cronyism means give importance to friends. Sometimes it create problem for managers when their family member or friend make mistake. Calick and Calik (2015) they said in this study that nepotism means give preference to relatives during recruitment, rewarding and promoting. Managers give advantages to relatives and ignore well performance of other employees. Chenwei liu et al. (2015) In this study they described that in organization mostly output reduces due to family replacement in the small organizations, studies explained that it is also considered as a form of favoritism. In that type of situations owners of businesses always assume that family members are best suitable for business as compared to external industry experts, while fact is completely opposite. In this study he described that nepotism is available in every country, organization and culture and it is like a injustice and unfairness activity (Hudson & Claasen, 2017). Duran and Morales (2009) In this study they explained that for vacant position or for promotion managers give importance to friends instead of unknown employees. It means social connection have more importance in organization. Janoff-Bulman and Leggatt (2002) said on getting or providing help done by different groups through lengthy questionnaire. Respondents from various cultures thinks that providing help is mandatory for relatives or friends. Furthermore, results shows that native white people are less helping as compared to those with different races. Helping others seems more common in collectivists culture as compare to individualist cultures.

Cronyism

Teixeira da Silva et al. (2019) In this study they explained nepotism is like a fraud. Cronyism is also form of favoritism. In cronyism managers give importance to their best friends without

checking their cv or qualification and ignored qualified candidates cv. It is amoral behavior and cause of conflict in organization. Erdem and Karatas. (2015) In this study they explained cronyism in hotel. Survey were conduct from employee who working in three, four, five hotel. The results show that cronyism is available in hotel in a sense of some employees have flexible hours for work and some have full time off work. Bilal et al. (2020) In this study he described that cronyism effects on both in group employees and out group employees. This study is about Pakistan's small and medium organizations. Further he said that managers give more importance to in-group employees than out-group employees.

Social Connection and Indirect social ties

Duran and Morales (2009) In this study they explained that for vacant position or for promotion managers give importance to friends instead of unknown employees. It means social connection have more importance in organization. Janoff-Bulman and Leggatt (2002) in this he said that study for getting or providing help done by different groups through lengthy questionnaire. Respondents from various cultures thinks that providing help is mandatory for relatives or friends. Furthermore, results shows that native white people are less helping as compared to those with different races. Helping others seems more common in collectivists culture as compare to individualist cultures. They have studied that cultural combined model were studied with separate and combine ways. Individual were basic units for individualist however social personnel units were used for basic units of collectives. The results found collective groups seems more responsible for others as compared to individuals (Oyserman et al., 1998). Hotho et al. (2020) in this study they put forward that indirect social ties effected by local relationships. During recruitment and selection candidates effected Due to indirect relationships between managers and candidates.

Research Methodology

The study aimed to collect data from managers operating at different levels. The research approach involved a factorial survey, which consisted of presenting randomly generated short stories or vignettes to managers. The survey focused on examining how managers handle favoritism in recruitment and selection. Each vignette had three questions, and the responses were collected using a 7-point Likert Scale. The questionnaire consisted of 54 questions, all written in English, and the first section included demographic questions such as gender, age, and experience.

A total of 52 managers participated in the survey, and the responses were analyzed using the SPSS software. The study employed Correspondence Analysis (CA), a multivariate statistical technique that applies to categorical data for which no specific hypothesis has been made. The technique provides a way of representing data in a two-dimensional graphical form, thereby revealing any structure hidden in the multivariate data table. The results from the study will be useful in providing insights into how managers handle favoritism in recruitment and selection processes.

Data Analysis

Table 1

Dimension	Singular Value	Inertia	Proportion of Inertia		Confidence Singular Value	
			Accounted for	Cumulative	Standard Deviation	Correlation ²
1	.133	.016	.727	.697	.027	.219
2	.063	.006	.271	.997	.015	
3	.005	.000	.002	1.000		
Total		.020	1.000	1.000		

It is always expected from CA results that category taken in rows and columns should represent their inter- relationship in as few as dimensions possible. Nevertheless the maximum number of dimensions could easily be checked for the purpose from the summary table. The maximum number of dimensions could be assessed by knowing the active rows or columns and subtracting 1 from it whichever is the lowest among both rows and columns result after subtracting 1 from their numbers. In my study and reading from summary table. The maximum number of dimensions is 3 which is the result of calculation for minimum 4 Communal Ties or 4 Coping Strategies. Next, we must evaluate we must evaluate and interpret the meaning of inertia accounted by each dimension. From the table given below we can identify that there are 4 columns of (Coping Strategy) and 4 rows (communal Ties).

Table 2

Coping Strategy

UNAL TIES	Acquiescence	Compromise	Avoidance	Defiance	Active Margin
Consanguineal Ties)	69	18	8	5	100
(Immediate Ties)	57	25	13	4	100
Friendship Ties)	58	20	20	1	100
tance (Distant Ties)	55	28	12	3	100
Margin	240	96	55	12	400

The average contribution of each dimension is calculated as 100 divided by rows minus 1 or 100 divided by columns minus 1 and convert them to percentage. So, from the numbers came out to be for both rows and columns as $(100/4-1 = 33.33\%)$. Dimension that has the greater value than 33.33% should be considered as significant and be construed as a viable solution to the issue at hand. It is evident from the summary table that Dimension 1 is contributing the 73.7% (proportion of inertia, accounted for column) and Dimensions whereas contributes 26.1% which is less than average contribution i.e., 33.33%. So, we would rely on Dimension 1 as our viable solution.

Likewise, it is safe to interpret here that COMMUNAL TIES and COPING STRATEGY be easily explained and depicted in two dimensions explaining total inertia as 99.8% (Proportion of inertia column, cumulative sub-column, 2nd row).

Symmetrical normalization

Table 3

Overview Column Points^a

COPING STRATEGY	Mass	Score in Dimension		Inertia	Contribution of Point to Inertia of Dimension		Of Dimension to Inertia of Point		
		1	2		1	2	1	2	Total
Acquiescence	.250	-.525	.031	.009	.581	.004	.997	.002	.999
Compromise	.250	.360	.342	.006	.272	.404	.657	.343	1.000
Avoidance	.250	.255	.414	.005	.120	.588	.385	.615	1.000
Defiance	.250	-.083	.038	.000	.016	.005	.801	.095	.896
Active Total	1.000			.020	1.000	1.000			

Table 4

Overview Column Points

COPING STRATEGY	Mass	Score in Dimension		Inertia	Contribution Of Point to Inertia of Dimension		Of Dimension to Inertia of Point		T total
		1	2		1	2	1	2	
Acquiescence	.250	-.535	.033	.009	.582	.004	.997	.002	.999
Compromise	.250	.366	.343	.006	.273	.404	.657	.343	1.000
Avoidance	.250	.253	.414	.005	.130	.588	.385	.615	1.000
Defiance	.250	.085	.038	.000	.015	.005	.801	.095	.896
Active Total	1.000			.020	1.000	1.000			

For instance, let's consider the scores of Acquiescence on dimension one and dimension two, which are -.535 and .033 respectively (please refer to the overview column points table above for more information). These scores indicate how Acquiescence is positioned on the plot. Moreover, we found that the contribution of Acquiescence to the inertia of the first dimension is .582, meaning that it has a significant impact on this dimension. Similarly, the contribution of Avoidance to the inertia of the second dimension is .588, which implies that it has a significant impact on this dimension as well. Therefore, we can conclude that Acquiescence and Avoidance dominate the first and second dimensions, respectively, among the communal ties. The contribution of dimension to the inertia of point refers to the contribution of each dimension to the representation of rows and columns based on the point in the map.

Discussion and Conclusion

It has been observed that there is a lack of research on nepotism and favoritism in the recruitment process in Pakistan. The primary aim of this study was to investigate how managers in Pakistan deal with favoritism in the recruitment process and how it affects the organization. Data was collected only from managers at different levels and Correspondence Analysis technique was used for analysis. No specific hypothesis was formulated for this study. The data was processed using SPSS.

The results of this study show that during recruitment and selection, managers in Pakistan tend to favor their family members and distant relatives, regardless of whether they are qualified for the job or not. Additionally, managers tend to ignore friends and unknown candidates during the recruitment process. This indicates that in Pakistan, merit, skills, and abilities of employees are given secondary importance. Favoritism not only causes corruption in the organization, but it also demotivates the already working employees. The study concludes that merit is in a deplorable state in Pakistan due to the prevalence of favoritism.

This study can be useful in improving and making the recruitment process in Pakistan more transparent. A great many projects fail every year around the globe there can be many explanations and reasons to the failure. One of the leading causes is nepotism and favoritism. Keeping this in view, this study aims at assessing the situation of nepotism and favoritism in recruitment and selection process in Pakistan. More over, methods and strategies used by managers in order to cope the menace of favoritism and nepotism are also briefly discussed. The results of the study show that majority of the managers gives favors to their close relatives and family members. This study also reveals that managers mainly avoid hiring friends and unknown person.

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