



Effect of Preferential Treatments on Employee Turnover Intention

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to examine the effect of preferential treatment, nepotism, favoritism, cronyism on the turnover intentions of employees working in pharmaceutical companies in Peshawar. Currently, there are 26 pharmaceutical firms in Peshawar, but for convenience, only 6 firms operating in Hayatabad have been selected as the study population. The study used the self-governing questionnaire method to collect data from employees. Predetermined questionnaires have been used for data collection. The findings of the study suggested that nepotism had a positive and significant effect on the employee's turnover intention, that favoritism also had a positive and significant effect on the employee's turnover intention, and that cronyism had a positive and significant effect on the employee's turnover intention. Nepotism has also been positively linked to the turnover of employees, and it is recommended that the management should not consider their families in the selection or promotion of their work so that employees may not feel injustice and undue favor in the organization.

Keywords: Nepotism, Favoritism, Cronyism, Turnover Intention.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

The phenomena of nepotism, favoritism, and cronyism are frequently observed in today's business, usually linked to corruption in both the private and public sectors and the misuse of organizational resources. The concept, however, is of an international scale, and no country, culture, and sector of the economy are free of it (Vveinhardt & Saroka, 2020). Social relations and family members are placed above the organization's interests and benefits. This situation is not good for the sustainability and development of organizations. As various studies have shown, nepotism is not all the same. First of all, it must be recognized that this is a natural phenomenon, characteristic of biological and social systems (Christodoulou, 2008). Second, the occurrence of preferential treatments is determined by socio-culture (Hooker, 2009). Third, even though it cannot be eliminated, it can be restricted in organizations when assessing the ethical side (Hildreth *et al.* 2016). This is confirmed by the various research studies carried out in different cultural environments, which highlight the issues and challenges facing organizations (Vveinhardt & Saroka, 2020).

Nepotism can be seen as the first form of preferential treatment. Word nepotism was derived from the Latin word 'Nepos' which is the norm for 'nephew' (Kiechel, 1984). Nepotism is a misuse of official resources to favor personal contact or family members (Ford-McLaughlin, 1985). The nepotism problem has still been

identified in the office environment and has been seen as a negative behavior that can affect the company's performance.

'Favoritism' is another concept in preferential treatment. The term 'favoritism' has been discussed with two concepts: 1) general leaning towards one or a group of employees and 2) specific treatment only for those with whom the person has personal contact, neighbors, friends, relatives, and other relatives (Loewe *et al.*, 2007). The term has been defined as the provision or preferential treatment to colleagues, staff, and career friends (Arsli-Tumer, 2008). While the issue of nepotism has shown preferential treatment towards their relatives (marriage or blood), it has been a matter of favoritism towards friends and contacts. In other words, favoritism is a word that is widely used than nepotism. In literature, both terms are often used together (Iqbal & Ahmad, 2020).

Favoritism happens when government workers unlawfully and unfaithfully empower their friends and family to strengthen them over others. In different terms, it is preferable when incompetent people are advanced when they are rewarded with additional cash than people doing the same occupation, and also when lateness is allowed at work. Favoritism shows the personal choices of people who could make choices in the administration (Kwon, 2005).

Cronyism is the third form of preferential treatment. The word "crony" can be seen as an unethical act in a company (Abdalla, 1998). Criticism is a bias that provides work and other benefits for close friends or trusted colleagues. This includes, for example, the confidential appointment of close friends to positions of authority, irrespective of their qualifications (Iqbal & Ahmad, 2020).

Nepotism, favoritism, and cronyism harm the performance of organizations that have been documented in numerous studies as research on these phenomena is conducted in different countries (Hudson & Classen, 2017) and in different sectors (Szakonoyi, 2019). In general, these forms of misconduct and corruption in organizations are linked to the level of acceptance or prejudice of society towards unethical and unfair behavior. It could be identified as a certain silent, invisible opposition on the part of the employees or as a resistance expressed individually because of the injustice experienced. Hudson and Claasen (2017) believed that nepotism exists in all cultures, but perceptions and severity of consequences may vary depending on cultural values as well as on the economic development of society.

The issues of nepotism, favoritism, and cronyism have been criticized in previous studies and considered to be unprofessional (Abdalla *et al.*, 1998). In developing countries, different preventive measures have been adopted to control these issues, and in developed economies, these types of practices are also present in business life (Arsali *et al.*, 2006). For firms with these types of issues, the HR Department does not operate independently and does not carry out operations. In such situations, hiring based on merit and competence will not be possible and will have an impact on future performance (Boadi, 2000). Besides, working under a non-qualified staff firm will lead to increased stress among employees as a result of preferential treatment in the firm. The imbalance between the contribution rate of employees and the incentives of employees will create an unfair working environment.

When employees have a low level of confidence, it will have negative effects on the performance, satisfaction, and commitment of employees. Preferably, favoritism-based incentives and benefits will lead to a higher turnover ratio in the company (Vveinhardt & Saroka, 2020).

1.2. Problem Statement

The issues of cronyism, favoritism, and nepotism have been criticized in previous research studies and have been considered unethical and non-professional (Abdalla, 1998). In developing countries, various preventive measures have been adapted to address these issues; in developed economies, these types of practices are also present in business life (Vveinhardt & Saroka, 2020). These issues have also been identified in practice by almost every sector of organizations in Pakistan (Iqbal & Ahmad, 2020). Firms having these kinds of issues, the HR Department has always failed to operate independently and to carry out operations. These issues will lead to the detachment of employees from the current organization. This is the weakness of the firm to have preferential treatment in the firm. In this kind of environment, firm and individual failure are ultimately inevitable. The lack of confidence that appears in such circumstances negatively affects individual performance and leads to the intention of turnover.

1.3. Research Question

What is the relationship of nepotism, favoritism, and cronyism with turnover intention?

1.4. Objectives of the Study

The objectives are as follows:

1. To examine the level of nepotism, favoritism, and cronyism among employees of pharmaceutical companies.
2. To examine the effect of nepotism, favoritism, and cronyism on the intention of turnover of employees.

1.5. Hypotheses of the Study

- H1 Nepotism has a significant effect on employee turnover intention.
- H2 Favoritism has a significant effect on employee turnover intention.
- H3 Cronyism has a significant effect on employee turnover intention.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Nepotism

The term nepotism means leaning towards relatives and preferring them to compete with companions, relatives, or blood relations or partners. Nepotism occurs when relationships are given preference over the capacity or competence, skills, and experience of others and influence the performance of the representatives and, also, the execution of the association (Ahmad *et al.*, 2015). It includes ignoring other candidates or employees just to offer positions and promotions to their loved ones. The issue of preferential treatment is normal in developing countries as well as in developed countries (Arasli and Tumer, 2008). As a result, this issue did not affect countries like Pakistan, India, but also developed countries like European countries. The literature on nepotism has shown that, due to nepotism, employees of organizations cannot perform well when they feel unfair practices and are frustrated with their jobs (Nadeem and Shafique, 2015). According to Nadeem *et al.*, (2015), nepotism is intended to prefer relatives to other candidates who are blood relatives of the family or colleagues.

2.2. Favoritism

According to Ozler and Gumustekin (2007), favoritism has been described as: because of private involvement, preferring a person to someone more capable and skilled. Favoritism exists in every single corporation, both large and small. In some societies, managers have relationships with their most loved ones to hire. Favoritism is not only based on regional or political tendencies, but also on gender, ethnicity, culture, and language. Similarly, the family chain becomes a family chain; as a result, this issue creates unfair practices which, in turn, reduces the performance of the particular organization.

Favoritism exists in developed nations, but it is low compared to developing nations (Boadi, 2000). Management of organizations is therefore unable to develop a fair environment and is unable to retain productively and committed employees.

2.3. Cronyism

Cronyism affects the performance of employees in a way where close managers' friends are preferred over other employees (Hofstede, 1997). According to Özler-Gümüstekin, (2007) about cronyism, it is more of a political preference to protect itself or its present status. Research findings by Araslı and Tümer, (2008) found that among the types of preferential treatments there is a major cause of employee stress in the workplace.

In common, all aspects related to nepotism, favoritism, and cronyism mainly focus on the value of social networks and the family in attracting new employees to organizations (Ferlazzo & Sdoia, 2012). In the studies, the key points are linked to the hope that the recommendations will remain honest and objective. Managers who consider themselves professionals rely on their experience, knowledge, and insight, despite dormant

subjectivity and emotional traps that may affect the professionalism and competence of the staff. However, it cannot be overlooked that, in such cases, it is based on subjective "trust" rather than on methodologically approved instruments (Ferlazzo & Sdoia, 2012).

2.4. Turnover Intention

According to Manu *et al.* (2004), employees have waived the relationship due to a financial cause. They have established an operating financial model that allows individuals to renounce a relationship because of a financial cause and that they can operate to anticipate the proceeds of work on the market. Enormous firms can provide employees with improved opportunities for development and higher salaries and, as a result, the organization's insurance link (Idson and Feaster 1990).

Employees feel great to stay longer in positions where they are associated with some dimension of the basic leadership process. That is, employees should fully understand the matter that powers their operating air (Magner *et al.*, 1996). As might be the case, in the absence of transparency in the distribution data, worker intensification of the congruity of workers is insignificant. Exorbitant *et al.* (1987) point out that a high turnover in work could indicate poor staff preparation, poor staffing policies, poor decision-making practices, poor criticism or encouragement. Each of these variables adds to the high turnover of workers, as there are no legitimate administrative practices and approaches to faculty issues, as a result of which employees are not logically enlisted, staff advancements are not based on spelled out strategies, no complaint methods are established, and thus employees choose to stop.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Population of the Study

The population of the study shall mean any event, item, person, or employee from whom the data is collected. The study in hand includes employees working in pharmaceutical companies as the study population. These staff includes managers, marketing managers, product managers, territorial managers, and adjunct area managers. As the practice of nepotism, favoritism, and cronyism can easily be found in the pharmaceutical industry, employees working in pharmaceutical companies in Peshawar have therefore been selected as the study population. The total number of employees in Peshawar pharmaceutical companies is 1,340.

3.2. Sample Size

According to Sekaran (2000), for any phenomenon of interest where prompt information is required, convenience sampling should be used. Based on convenience sampling, 160 employees working in pharmaceutical companies were drawn from the study population. For convenience, the proportional allocation method is elaborated as follows:

$$n_i = n/N \times N_i$$

Where,

n = Sample

N = Population

N_i = Number of personnel in pharmaceutical companies

n_i = Number of personnel nominated in pharmaceutical companies

Companies	Total Staff	No. of Staff
Getz pharmaceuticals	300	36
Sammi pharmaceuticals	220	26
Pharm Evo pharmaceuticals	185	22
Martin Dow pharmaceuticals	240	29
CCL pharmaceuticals	190	23
Hilton pharmaceuticals	205	24
Total	1340	160

Source: intercontinental marketing services

3.3. Measures

3.3.1. Independent Variable

Nepotism:

Nepotism was measured on a 4-item scale developed by Abdalla in 1998. Employee responses were ranked on the Likert 5-point scale (ranging from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree).

Favoritism:

Favoritism was measured on a 5-item scale developed by Abdalla in 1998. Employee responses were ranked on the Likert 5-point scale (ranging from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree).

Cronyism

Cronyism was measured on a 4-item scale developed by Abdalla in 1998. Employee responses were ranked on the Likert 5-point scale (ranging from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree).

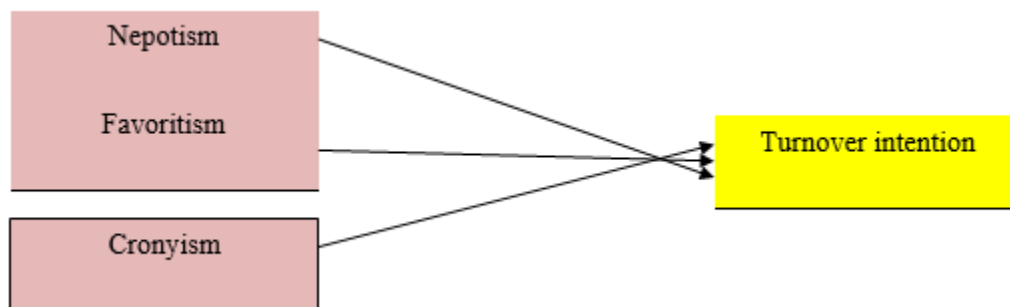
3.3.2. Dependent Variable

Turnover Intention

Employee turnover is defined as the voluntary departure of employees from their services to the organization. The 3-item scale was used to measure the purpose of turnover. Employee responses were ranked on the Likert 5-point scale (ranging from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree).

3.4. Conceptual Framework

The following figure shows the framework of the present study, which defined (DV) i.e. Turnover intention, while (IDV) is nepotism, favoritism, and cronyism.



4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The chapter presents all the statistical results of the study. Section 4.1 sets out the demographic results. Section 4.2 presents the study's descriptive statistics. Section 4.3 explains the statistics on reliability. For all hypotheses, the last section 4.4 provides detailed regression results.

4.1. Demographics

Table 1. Gender.

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	110	69
Female	50	31
Total	160	100

Table 1 shows the demographic results that have been used for the gender distribution of the sample of respondents. The findings show that the male respondents were 110 with 69 percent and the female respondents were 50 with 31.

4.2. Age

Table 2. Age.

Age	Frequency	Percentage
20 to 25	60	38
26 to 30	40	25
Above 31	60	37
Total	160	100

The results of demographics used for the distribution of sample respondents on their age are shown in the Table 2. The findings show that the 20-to 25-year respondents were 60 with 38%, the 26-to 30-year respondents were 40 with 25 percent and the above 31 respondents were 60 with 37.

4.3. Experience

Table 3. Experience.

Experience	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 1 years	44	28
2 to 5 years	63	39
Above 6 years	53	33
Total	160	100

The results of the demographics used for the distribution of sample respondents based on their experience are shown in the Table 3. The findings show that the number of respondents from less than 1 year was 44 with 28 per cent, the number of respondents from 2 to 5 years with 39 per cent and the number of respondents from more than 6 years with 33 was 53.

4.4. Descriptive Statistics

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Nepotism	160	3.7125	0.26886
Favoritism	160	3.6105	0.29692
Cronyism	160	3.6133	0.32506
Turnover Intention	160	3.7250	0.34347
Valid N (listwise)	160		

Table 4 presents the findings of the descriptive statistics showing that the mean value of nepotism is 3.712 and has a maximum value of 4.12, a minimum of 3.12, and a standard deviation of 0.26886. The mean value of favoritism is 3.610 and has a maximum value of 4.09, a minimum of 3.00, and a standard deviation of 0.29692. The mean value of cronyism is 3.6133 and has a maximum value of 4.14, a minimum of 2.86, and a standard deviation of 0.32506. The mean value of the purpose of turnover is 3.7250 and has a maximum value of 4.43, a minimum of 3.00, and a standard deviation of 0.34347.

4.5. Reliability Statistics

Table 5. Reliability Statistics.

S. No.	Variables	Cronbach Alpha
1	Nepotism	0.789
2	Favoritism	0.871
3	Cronyism	0.889
4	Employee turnover intention	0.860

The findings of the Table 5 are the results of the reliability statistics used at present to check the reliability of the variables used in the study. Alpha values were found to be more than .70 and concluded that the selected variables are reliable.

4.6. Hypothesis 1 (Nepotism and Turnover Intention)

The study was conducted to check the role of nepotism in the turnover intention of employees in firms. The regression model was used to estimate the relationship between variables and to check the variance explained by nepotism between employees in the turnover. The value of R in the Table 6 is 0.525 which shows the coefficient of correlation. The value of the coefficient of determination or R² is 0.276, which means that the independent variable has a 27 percent effect on the intention of turnover. The value suggested that nepotism would bring about a 27 percent change in the intention of turnover.

Table 6. Nepotism and Turnover Intention

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.236	0.322		3.837	0.000
	Nepotism	0.671	0.087	0.525	7.752	0.000

R: 0.525, R² = 0.276, F-value: 60.088

The f-value in the Table 6 is 60.088, which is more than the standard value, and concludes that the model selected is appropriate.

Regression parameters or coefficients have been estimated to measure the change in turnover intention per unit due to nepotism. The value of the nepotism coefficient is 0.671, which reflects that the turnover intention will change by 0.671 units when the nepotism is increased by 1 unit. The positive sign of beta nepotism shows that the change in the turnover intention will be in a positive direction means that, once the nepotism in the firm has been increased, the employee's turnover intention will be increased. The t-value of nepotism is 7.752, which is greater than the standard value, i.e. 2.

4.7. Hypothesis 2 (Favoritism and Turnover Intention)

The study was conducted to check the role of favoritism in the turnover intention of employees in the sample firms. The use of the regression model was to estimate the relationship between the variables and also to check the variance used for the intention of turnover due to favoritism among the sample employees. The value of the R in the Table 7 is 0.253, which shows the coefficient of correlation. The value of the coefficient of determination or R-square is 0.048, which means that independent variables favoritism has a 4 percent effect on the intention of turnover. The value suggested that favoritism has brought about an approximate 4% change in the intention of turnover.

Table 7. Favoritism and Turnover Intention.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.812	0.325		8.644	0.000
	Favoritism	0.253	0.090	0.219	2.816	0.005

R: 0.219, $R^2 = 0.048$, F-value: 7.927

The f-value in the Table 7 is 7.927, which is more than the standard value, and concludes that the model selected is statistically significant.

The value of the coefficient of favoritism is 0.253, which reflects that the intention of turnover will change by 0.253 units once the favoritism has been changed. The t-value of favoritism is 2.816, which is more than the absolute 2.

4.8. Hypothesis 3 (Cronyism and Turnover Intention)

The study was conducted to check the role of cronyism in the turnover intention of employees in the sample firms. The use of the regression model was to estimate the relationship between the variables and also to check the variance explained in the turnover intention due to cronyism between the sample employees. The value of the R in the Table 8 is 0.176, which shows the coefficient of correlation. The value of the coefficient of determination or R-square is 0.031, which means that independent variable cronyism has a 3 percent effect on the turnover intention. The value suggested that cronyism led to about a 3 percent change in the intention to make a turnover.

Table 8. Cronyism and Turnover Intention.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.052	0.300		10.166	0.000
	Cronyism	0.186	0.083	0.176	2.252	0.026

R: 0.176, R-square: 0.031, F-value: 5.071

The f-value in the Table 8 is 5.071, which is more than the standard value, and concludes that the model selected is appropriate.

The value of the coefficient for cronyism is 0.176, which reflects that the intention of turnover will be changed by 0.176 units once the cronyism has been changed. The positive sign of beta cronyism shows that the change in the turnover intention will be positive, which means that the employee will have positive effects on the turnover intention when the cronyism has been increased in the company. The t-value of cronyism is 2.252, which is more than the absolute 2.

5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1. Summary

The study was conducted in Pakistan's pharmaceutical sector. The listed pharmaceutical firms on the Pakistan Stock Exchange were selected as the study population. Since the phenomena of nepotism, favoritism, and cronyism can easily be found in pharmaceutical firms, the study population was, therefore, the pharmaceutical firms in Peshawar. Employees working at different levels of management of pharmaceutical firms in Peshawar have been included in the data collection study. The study used the pre-determined structured questionnaire method to collect data from the respondents. The data has been collected from 160 employees. The findings

of the study suggested that nepotism had a significant impact on the employee's intention to make a turnover; favoritism had a significant impact on the employee's intention to make a turnover and Cronyism had a significant impact on the employee's intention to make a turnover. The correlation model shows that nepotism, favoritism, and cronyism have a positive relationship with the intention of turnover of employees.

5.2. Conclusion

The objective of the study was to examine the effect of preferential treatment, i.e. Nepotism, favoritism, and cronyism on the turnover intentions of employees working in Peshawar pharmaceutical companies. To achieve the objectives, a regression model has been used which has shown that (a) Nepotism has a direct and significant effect on the intention of turnover; (b) Favoritism has a direct and significant effect on the intention of turnover; and (c) Cronyism has a direct, significant and direct effect on the intention of turnover. The results of the study concluded that higher preferential treatment practices will increase the turnover intentions of employees of the organizations.

5.3. Recommendations

1. It is recommended that management ensure a fair selection of employees who will form the basis of a fair system of promotion, or that employees who have suffered favoritism switch their firms.
2. Management should not consider their families in the selection or promotion of their work so that employees may not feel that they are leaving their work in the current organization.
3. It is recommended that management is not fair treatment and justice in the workplace, which reduces the intention to quit their jobs.
4. Everyone ought to be treated fairly.
5. Empathy with staff should be developed.
6. Relatives should be kept as far away as possible from the fact that the relative should be kept to the same high-performance standards as non-relatives.

DISCLOSURE

This paper is extracted from author's own research thesis.

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