

Effect of Recruitment & Selection on Task Performance with the Mediating Role of Organization Politics: An Empirical Evidence from Public Sector Hospitals of Karachi

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Abstract:

This paper has examined the effect of recruitment & selection on task performance along with the mediating role of nepotism in the relationship between recruitment & selection and task performance in the public sector hospitals in Karachi, Pakistan. The study is explanatory for which the deductive approach was adopted for testing hypotheses. First-hand information from 384 respondents was collected through a questionnaire survey. The gathered data was analyzed through statistical tools using SPSS and AMOS. Analysis of the data indicates that 'recruitment & selection' has a direct effect on task performance and it is positively linked to nepotism, which in turn leads to better task performance among employees working in public sector hospitals. The study is considered quite helpful for the management of the healthcare sector to evaluate the effect of existing recruitment & selection practices and develop strategies to further improve the same. The study is also useful for academia and other service sector organizations.

Keywords: Recruitment & Selection, Organization Politics, Nepotism, Task Performance, Social Exchange Theory.

1. Introduction

In the field of management, researchers have viewed the occurrence of organizational politics with diverse meanings that are chosen by its usage in different settings. For illustration, in a setting of public-sector, politics is delineated as a means to accomplish the anticipated consequences which are provoked through the vested benefits of higher-ups (Kacmar & Baron, 1999). Contrary to this, Hudson & Claasen (2017) viewed politics as a practice of giving a privileged treatment by superiors to family members via using power to favor their close ones. Correspondingly, Ali & Brandl (2017) have argued that the practices of nepotism in public sector institutions affect the implementation of HR functions due to the use of excessive power. On the other side of illustration, according to Hasan & Sultana (2014), in the private sector, workers due to having a special power or political view are being preferred by higher management during the implementation of HR practices based on partiality i.e., nepotism & favoritism. In line with the presence of this phenomena, Faisal & Jafri (2017) and Pelletier & Bligh (2008) explicated that a violation of merit criteria in employment exists which is allied with authority abuse to make the discretionary decision related to HRM practices towards the favored ones and it is well-thought-out as a dimension of corruption and politics within the organization. Congruently, Erden & Otken (2019) elucidated that nearly

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all decisions linked to HR practices have been affected through nepotism (politics) within an organization which in turn affects the performance of employees.

Nowadays, researchers are paying more attention to nepotistic activities prevailing in the organizations which are considered as a way of giving privilege treatment to relatives by using power rather than on performance criteria (Abubakar, Namin, Harazneh, Arasli, & Tunç, 2017; Seçilmiş & Uysal, 2016). Furthermore, in the literature, researchers have also expounded that nepotism is considered as the easiest means to attract the workforce while the presence of this practice is not an illicit act unless it is intricate with differentiating individuals based on different aspects of diversity (Fields & Cheeseman, 2016). Additionally, this practice has positive outcomes in the form of high performance due to having a positive relationship with management (Nelton, 1998). Besides, mixed evidence found in the literature regarding nepotism and performance of employees, for instance, nepotism can positively affect the work outcomes (Gok & Ekmekci, 2015; Ishaq & Zuilfqar, 2014; Nadeem, Ahmad, Ahmad, Batool, & Shafique, 2015; Pearce & Huang, 2014). Whereas Ombanda (2018) found that nepotistic practices affect the performance of employees negatively. On the other side, employees also believe that nepotism (kinship) in organizations affect the implementation of HRM practices as well as the individual performance and organizational productivity (Pearce & Huang, 2014; Sidani & Thornberry, 2013).

One of the most leading issues organizations are facing today is nepotism, whereas the understanding of such phenomena within organizations perhaps serves to anticipate the consequences of this conduct on the relationship between HRM practices and employee performance (Alreshoodi, 2018; Elbanna, 2010; Haroon, Hussain, & Nawaz, 2017; Sadozai, Zaman, Marri, & Ramay, 2012). Nepotism has now become a more widespread phenomenon in developing countries also. That is why we can observe the prevalence of nepotism with different notions among different countries such as guanxi in China (Dunfee & Warren, 2001; Ledeneva, 2008), clanism in Kazakhstan (Minbaeva & Muratbekova-Touron, 2013), Wasta in the Middle East (Tlaiss & Kauser, 2011), jaan-pehchaan in India (McCarthy et al., 2012) and nepotism & favoritism (sifarish) in Pakistan (Islam, 2004; Mangi, Jhatial, Shah, & Ghumro, 2012; Sarwar & Imran, 2019). Additionally, nepotism has now become an endemic in Asian countries which perhaps supports the association between employee and employer (Andrews, Nimanandh, Htun, & Kantabutra, 2019).

Keeping in view the above-mentioned arguments, the incidence of the preferential treatment by an influential person has become an indigenous issue in the health care sector of Pakistan, especially during the hiring of individuals which subsequently affects the motivation, behavior, and performance of human resource (Ali, 2013; Jooma & Sabatinelli, 2014; Willis-Shattuck et al., 2008). Besides, employees always protest about the existence of nepotism during the recruitment & selection process in the health care organization of Pakistan (Mahmood, 2014; Ousat, 2017; The Sindh Times, 2018) which in turn affects the overall performance of organizations. Moreover, regardless of the growing concerns by management researchers regarding organization politics in the form of nepotism, no study is available in

the current literature related to public sector hospitals which inspected the mediating role of organizational politics on the relationship between recruitment & selection and task performance.

The current study aims to address this gap by considering recruitment & selection as one of the main HRM practices as the predictor while task performance which is one of the dimensions of employee performance is taken as an outcome variable. Besides, nepotism is considered as a mediating (intervening) variable in the current study which is the dimension of organization politics and also specifies how this mechanism can be explained by social exchange theory (Blau, 1964). Therefore, this study highlights the effect of recruitment and selection on task performance of employees in a public sector (health care) context and it also explains a more nuanced view about how the practices of recruitment and selection via nepotism translate into task performance from the viewpoint of employees as researchers proposed that this link need to be inspected (Sarwar & Imran, 2019; Tabiu, Pangil, & Othman, 2016). Therefore, the subsequent objectives were put forth:

- To investigate the effect of recruitment & selection on task performance.
- To analyze the mediating role of nepotism in the relationship between recruitment & selection and task performance.
- To examine how this mechanism can be explained using social exchange theory.

2. Hypotheses Development

2.1 Recruitment & Selection and Task Performance

A process through which an organization generates a pool of candidates is defined as recruitment whereas selection is a process of assessing the skills and capabilities of the applicants to choose the best suitable candidates for the available positions (Rees & French, 2013). Nabi et al. (2014) asserted that the elementary feature of recruitment is to draw the pool of applications while the elementary feature of selection is getting the right person on the job. Likewise, careful execution of the recruitment & selection process can result in better management as well as the performance of human capital (Stiles & Kulvisaechna, 2003). Similarly, Gupta & Jain (2014) also explained that the recruitment process is essential for an organization to continue its operations and succeed in the short to medium-term through identifying competent individuals while the selection process is led in the organization to offer candidates for employment, those who are not part of the service. Besides, the strength or weakness of an organization comes from the competence of its personnel, and to attain this purpose organizations executes virtuous recruitment & selection to attract the right and qualified employees (Adam, Ogolla, & Maore, 2017) that can help in improving the effective functioning of an organization and individual performance as well.

In the contemporary world, task performance is well-thought-out as a vital factor of individual performance for any organization. According to Carpini, Parker, & Griffin (2017), task performance can be delineated to meets the designated expectations effectually towards the job. Consistently, Harzer & Ruch

(2014) explained that job performance can be delineated as task-related performance i.e., doing job-specific tasks. In the same way, Borman & Motowidlo (1993) defined task performance as the efficiency of a worker to perform actions or behaviors that supplement towards attaining the goals of the organization or by providing the required facilities to perform the specific responsibilities that employees are selected to perform. Also, to maximize the task performance implementation of HRM practices play a substantial role through which an organization can accomplish the desired goals by motivating employees intrinsically & extrinsically (Yousaf, Yang, & Sanders, 2015). Thus, it becomes critical for organizations nowadays to continually execute the HRM practices especially hiring & selection based on impartialities which can lead to an increase in a satisfactory level of task performance (Mastura, Imam, & Osman, 2013; Weldegebriel, Ejigu, Weldegebreal, & Woldie, 2016). Indeed, task performance is well-thought-out a vital component of individual performance for organizations.

Mokaya, Mukhweso, & Njuguna (2013) gives the sights that it is imperative for organizations to comprehend the execution of recruitment as well as the selection process to attract & select the individuals with relevant experience, education, and capabilities to attain a higher level of performance related to assigned tasks and responsibilities. Consistent with the extant literature, around the world many organizations have been concerned about the execution of recruitment & selection practices as it can eventually influence the performance of an individual related to the assigned task. Likewise, Babagana (2014) elucidated that human resource practices such as recruitment & selection practices are critical for the improvement of assigned (task) performance by employees. Consequently, based on arguments offered in the aforementioned paragraphs, the subsequent hypothesis was anticipated:

Hypothesis 1: Recruitment & selection has a positive effect on task performance.

2.2 Nepotism as a Dimension of Organization Politics

Holm, Westin, & Haugen (2017) explained that nepotism or kinship is considered as the core factor of social power in the past and it is still pertinent today to prefer family contacts into places of living as well as in working setup for the selection and employment followed by distribution of resources, learning, along with a performance of related job tasks. Correspondingly, Hotho, Minbaeva, Muratbekova-Touron, & Rabbiosi (2018) regarded that nepotism is nowadays a common display in organizations around the world. Moreover, Seçilmiş & Uysal (2016) have avowed that nepotism occurs at the workplace when a manager uses the power to prefer some employees over others irrespective of their knowledge and experience for the given position. Also, Pelletier & Bligh (2008) stated that nepotism is well thought-out as one of the displays of organizational politics that perhaps relevant in apprehending the employee perceptions linked to the practice of showing preference to family members during the deliberations of hiring within an organization. Therefore, giving privileged treatment to family members by superiors via using politics has primarily become a prevalent practice in the organization (Hudson & Claasen, 2017).

2.3 Link between Recruitment & Selection, Nepotism, and Task Performance

Currently in organizations recruitment practices have shifted largely from principles of meritocracy which built on education and experience towards factors such as nepotism, political support, and ethnicity (Okeke-Uzodike & Subban, 2015) these factors can have a harmful effect on the recruitment process and performance of an individual. Likewise, Otoo, Assuming, & Agyei (2018) affirmed that in the public sector recruitment and selection practices mainly depend on the reference as a key mode of employment along with delays after interviews can lead to generating a perception related to partiality or bias in recruitment & selection process among applicants. Hitherto, recruitment, as well as a selection process, is affected by nepotistic practices (Mahesar, Chaudhry, Ansari, & Nisar, 2016). Also, researchers explicated that nepotism is considered as the easiest means to attract the workforce and sometimes it produce positive outcomes (Nelton, 1998), so nepotism is not an illicit act unless it discriminates competent people to enter the organization based on the facets of diversity (Fields & Cheeseman, 2016).

Subsequently, investigators unveiled that nepotism can positively affect the work outcomes (Nadeem et al., 2015), while the effective implementation of recruitment and selection practices can lead to augment the performance at individual as well as at the organizational level positively as it is stated by Ekwoaba, Ikeije, & Ufoma (2015). Furthermore, based on Blau (1964) social exchange theory, people respond in a manner as they are treated. For instance, positive actions have been retorted positively on one side, whereas on the other side of the continuum negative actions or behaviors have been negatively answered. Similarly, Martin, Guillaume, Thomas, Lee, & Epitropaki (2015) stated that positive exchange between a supervisor and subordinate is associated positively with citizenship behavior as well as task performance.

In the current literature, mixed evidence found related to nepotism and performance of employees such as Ombanda (2018) found that nepotism can have a detrimental effect on employee performance. Contrasting to this, Altındağ (2014) found no direct effect of nepotism on the performance of employees. On the other hand, Amjad et al. (2015) found that workplace relationship has a positive effect on task performance. Though we did not find any study in the current literature related to public sector context which inspected the mediating role of organizational politics from the viewpoint of nepotism, yet, we found limited studies that were based on parallel arguments. For the case, Nabi et al. (2014) determined the usefulness of recruitment and selection procedures in the public-sector of Pakistan. They found that recruitment and selection effectiveness is affected by organizational politics which ultimately lead to affect performance due to the involvement of management behind politics within the organization to hire and select the preferential individuals. Therefore, based on arguments presented in earlier paragraphs, the following hypothesis was projected:

Hypothesis 2: Nepotism mediates the relationship between recruitment & selection and task performance.

3. Methodology

3.1 Sample and Data Collection

For data collection, the population of the current study comprises of public sector employees working in tertiary care hospitals located in Karachi, Pakistan. Besides, for the current study, the sample was chosen solely by stratifying the respondents by their position in the organization. Around 600 questionnaires were disseminated among employees in the public-sector hospitals. While ethical considerations were kept to conduct a study and respondents were informed that they fill the questionnaires without any fear because their data will remain confidential and it will be reported in an aggregate form. Moreover, the congregated data was evaluated using AMOS version 22 and SPSS version 25.

Besides, the questionnaire was embraced of items regarding the respondents' demographics along with the items for determining the outcome variable i.e., Task Performance, the intervening variable i.e., nepotism, and predictor variable i.e., recruitment & selection. A total of 384 questionnaires were received in (complete) form, resulting in a response rate of 64%. Moreover, among the respondents of the current study, a total of 43% female and 57% male were presented in our sample. While 35.9% of respondents were doctors, 33.9% were nurses and 30.2% were the paramedical staff. Besides, 19.3% of the respondents were under 30 years, 46.4 % were between 30 and 39 years, 22.9% were between 40-49 and 11.5 % were older than 49 years.

3.2 Measures

For a collection of data, the questionnaire was administered among respondents in the English language with 5-point Likert-type scales ranging from 1(strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Besides, pilot testing was performed among 100 employees to test reliability by using Cronbach's alpha technique. The fallouts indicate a score of greater than 0.7 which is in the acceptable range. Moreover, after confirmation of reliability, the questionnaires were disseminated among the sample of the study.

For measuring recruitment and selection practices scale developed by Demo, Neiva, Nunes, & Rozzett (2012) was used containing six items while the sample items for recruitment and selection (R & S) are "Organization disseminates information about both external and internal recruitment requirements", "Organization discloses information to applicants regarding the criteria of the selection process", "Recruitment & selection process is conducted by an impartial person". The Cronbach's alpha reliability for recruitment & selection was .752.

To measure nepotism four items were used that was adopted from Büte, M. (2011) and the sample of items are as follows: "I am always cautious when talking to the relatives of hospital top management", "Hospital permitting the employment of relatives causes internal conflicts in the organization". The Cronbach's alpha reliability for nepotism was .747.

In the present study, to measure task performance six items were taken from the scale developed by Pradhan & Jena (2017) such as “I maintain a high standard of work as per job specification”, “I can handle various assignments without much supervision to attain the organizational goals”, “I am very passionate about my work”, “I complete my tasks on time”. The Cronbach's alpha reliability for task performance was .702. Besides, self-reports were used to measure the task performance of employees as Guo, Kang, Shao, & Halvorsen (2019) elucidated that employees' self-evaluation or reporting regarding their performance needs to be examined.

4. Findings

4.1 Descriptive and Correlation Analyses

The descriptive statistics, as well as the correlations of all variables, are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Mean, Standard Deviation, and Correlation among Variables of Study (N = 384).

	Variables	M	SD	1	2	3
1	Recruitment & Selection	4.36	.623	(.752)		
2	Nepotism	4.27	.716	.784	(.747)	
3	Task Performance	4.19	.675	.695	.720	(.702)

Note. Correlation is substantial at .01 levels (two-tailed); reliabilities (alpha value) are specified in parentheses and p value < .01.

Table 1 portrays mean and standard deviation of recruitment & selection ($M=4.36$ & Std Dev. =0.623), nepotism ($M=4.27$ & Std Dev. =0.716) and task performance ($M = 4.19$ & Std Dev = 0.675). Recruitment & selection is correlated positively with nepotism ($r = .784$, $p < .01$) and task performance ($r = .695$, $p < .01$). Similarly, nepotism is also positively correlated with task performance ($r = .720$, $p < .01$).

4.2 Full Collinearity Diagnostics

Before testing hypotheses full collinearity diagnostic was used to test the common method bias (Kock & Lynn, 2012), as data were collected from a single source using the same instrument. Table 2 comprises of the summary related to collinearity diagnostics.

Table 2: Full Collinearity Diagnostics after Collection of Data

	Variables	VIF Value
1	Recruitment & Selection	2.85
2	Nepotism	3.07
3	Task Performance	2.28

The fallouts show in table 2 that the VIF value of all variables is less than 5 as par Rogerson's (2001) explanation that VIF value must be less than 5. Correspondingly, if all values of VIFs resulting from a full collinearity test are < 3.3, then there is no issue of common method bias that exists (Kock & Lynn, 2012). Therefore, there is no issue of common method bias in the current study.

4.3 Testing of Hypotheses

The standardized coefficient for a structural path of hypothesis 1 is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Standardized Coefficients for Structural Path of Hypothesis 1.

Structural Path	β	B	S. E	P-value
R & S $\longrightarrow$ TP	.695	.753	.040	***

Note. Recruitment & Selection (R&S), Task Performance (TP), *** = $P < 0.001$, β = Standardized Regression Coefficients, B = Un-Standardized Regression Coefficients, S.E = Standard Error.

According to the results of the study recruitment & selection has a positive as well as a substantial effect on task performance ($\beta = 0.695$, $p < 0.001$). Therefore, hypothesis one of this study is accepted that recruitment & selection influence the task performance of hospital employees.

4.4 Mediation Analyses using Bootstrapping

Table 4, shows the value of direct effect, indirect effect, upper & lower limits of the confidence interval of hypothesis 2 has been reported. Hypothesis 2 anticipated the mediating role of nepotism in the relationship between recruitment & selection and task performance.

Table 4: Mediation Analyses using Bootstrapping

Hypothesis	DE	IDE	LL (95% CI)	UL (95% CI)	Result
R & S $\longrightarrow$ N $\longrightarrow$ TP	.096	.112	.059	.179	Mediation

Note. Lower Limit (LL), Upper Limit (UL), Confidence Interval (CI), Indirect Effect (IDE), Direct Effect (DE), Recruitment & selection (R&S), Task Performance (TP), Nepotism (N).

The outcome of the study unveiled that the values of a lower limit of confidence interval = .059 and upper limit of confidence interval = .179 are positive and no zero exists between the lower and upper limits of confidence intervals. As per it is imperative for mediation that the values of the lower and upper limits of confidence interval should be positive or negative and there should not fall any zero between the lower and upper limits of confidence interval (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). Consequently, Hypothesis 2 is accepted that nepotism mediates the relationship between recruitment & selection and task performance. Based on the outcomes of the current study recruitment & selection has a positive effect on the task performance of hospital employees while nepotism mediates the relationship between recruitment & selection and task performance of hospital employees. Hence, the framed hypotheses of the current study were supported.

5. Discussion

The aspect of nepotism as a dimension of organization politics has received greater attention from researchers nowadays (Hotho et al., 2018; Mangi et al., 2012). Besides, structuring on the existing body of research, the current study has attempted to examine task performance as an outcome of recruitment & selection practices along with the mediating role of nepotism between recruitment & selection and task performance. Based on the fallouts of the study we found ample empirical support for

the framed hypotheses. Besides, our results unveil that recruitment & selection is related positively to the task performance of employees. Consequently, our results support the notion that hiring of preferred employees tends to react positively in the form of performing the assigned task. The fallouts are in line with prior studies which argued that the execution of recruitment, as well as selection, play a crucial role in the attainment of a higher level of performance related to the designated tasks and responsibilities as elucidated by Babagana (2014) & Mokaya et al. (2013). Nepotism also mediates the relationship between recruitment & selection and task performance as the hiring and selection of individuals based on relations can have a positive effect on the performance of employees due to the preferences they receive from higher-ups than other applicants (Amjad et al., 2015; Ekwoaba et al., 2015; Nadeem et al., 2015), therefore, the outcomes of our study are consistent with results of the above-mentioned study. In line with the presence of this phenomena, a violation of merit criteria in employment exists which is allied with authority abuse to make the discretionary decision related to HRM practices towards the favored ones is viewed as a dimension of politics within the organization (Faisal & Jafri, 2017; Pelletier & Bligh, 2008). Besides, nepotism now becomes an endemic in Asian countries which perhaps supports the association between employee and employer (Andrews et al., 2019). On the other side, our results also support that the employees feel satisfaction to make a connection with higher-ups to gain benefits during the execution of HRM practices by repaying the positive favors with positive work-related outcomes especially in terms of task performance. This is consistent with the Blau (1964) social exchange theory, that people respond in a way they are treated for instance positive actions or favors have been retorted positively while on the other side of the continuum negative actions or behaviors have been negatively answered. In the same way, Martin et al. (2015) stated that positive exchange between a supervisor and subordinate is associated positively with task performance. Consistently, this argument is supported by the result of the study that human resources in Pakistan are happy with having connections or relationships in top management to survive within the organization and they try to repay this support based on the principle of reciprocity with positive outcomes in terms of task performance.

6. Conclusion

This paper has primarily engrossed at detecting the influence of recruitment selection on task performance along with the mediating effect of nepotism as a dimension of organization politics in the relation between recruitment & selection and task performance. The fallouts of the study designate that there is a strong relationship that exists between recruitment & selection and task performance of employees working in hospitals. While there is a substantial effect of recruitment & selection on task performance of employees working in public sector hospitals. Moreover, recruitment & selection has a positive impact on task performance in the presence of nepotism. It may be because the employees working in this important sector are happy to make connections with higher-ups to get the most benefits out of the relationship especially during the hiring and selection process. Therefore, people respond in a way they are treated like positive actions or favors have been retorted positively. This study is helpful for the management of the healthcare sector to develop strategies to overcome this phenomenon in the

recruitment & selection process which eventually helps in amplifying the task performance of healthcare professionals.

7. Implications

The findings of our study have implications for public sector hospitals as the fallouts indicate that recruitment and selection play a crucial role in affecting the task performance of employees. The fallouts also designate that nepotism indirectly affects the relationship between recruitment and selection and task performance of healthcare professionals. It may be because the employees working in this important sector are happy to make connections with higher-ups to get the most benefits out of the relationship especially during the hiring and selection process. It is important to establish a practice of merit-based hiring and selection of employees in public sector hospitals because it is the responsibility of HR manager to hire and appoint the workforce based on education and experience rather on connections or relationships by creating a system to observe the hiring process by an impartial person who is accountable to sightsee the whole process. After all, it will be leading to affect the outcomes at the individual level, organizational level, and societal level.

8. Limitations, and Future Research Directions

The current study has the following limitations. Firstly, in our study, only one HRM practice and one dimension of employee performance were assessed. Future studies may investigate other dimensions of HRM practice and employee performance with the mediating effect of organizational politics in the form of nepotism. Secondly, future studies may investigate this study model in the private sector with a larger sample size to further widen the horizons. Thirdly, future studies may collect data from employees and supervisors to further assess the whole process.

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