

# Curbing the Plague of Nepotism by Improving Job Performance

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## Abstract

Nepotism is considered an ugly feature of corruption and is currently one of the most common plagues in the Syrian economy. The infestation of nepotism in public sector organizations is causing a major setback to the much-needed growth. This study examines the effect of nepotism on employee performance in the Syrian public sector and how the training and development of employees can curb this issue. Data were collected from the General Organization of Tobacco in Latakia, Syria. A total of 280 questionnaires were distributed among the organization's staff, and Regression Analysis was applied to test the hypotheses. The findings showed that the Syrian public sector employees were conscious of the undesirable effects of nepotism on job performance. In addition, employees who have the chance to participate in training and development programs tend to increase their job performance. Finally, the result indicates that nepotism has a noteworthy harmful impact on employee training and development in the Syrian public sector. The current results contribute valuable information to the existing literature on human resources.

**Keywords:** Nepotism, Employee Training, Syrian Public Sector, General Organization of Tobacco, Job Performance.

## 1. Introduction

The performance of government employees is a measure of a country's production and growth status. The performance also shows how efficient and effective governments are in managing public organizations. Therefore, higher employee performance can raise citizens' confidence in their government, as well as the awareness of products and services (Miao et al., 2019). Successful organizations are measured by the performance of their employees, and non-productivity and workplace failures are due to hiring the wrong people or not anticipating the variations in hiring requirements (Djabatay, 2012).

According to the Syrian Justus and Accountability Centre (2017), the public sector is hiring the wrong people, which has resulted in a shortage of the products and services provided by this sector. In addition, the number of unqualified employees with poor performance is increasing. Consequently, this practice resulted in an undesirable outcome for the government. Nimri et al. (2015) claimed that the poor performance of public sector employees is related to a lack of confidence in the employers' acknowledgment of the workers' output. Therefore, employees believe that their wages are inadequate to sustain their economic needs. Also, they lose trust in their organizations because of the Syrian public sector bureaucracy rules with a long managerial hierarchy. Thus, there are no promotions, training opportunities, or job involvement in decision-making.

Therefore, promotional opportunities based on good performance are rare. This forces the hardworking employees to leave this sector for a better opportunity and opens the door for nepotism when filling the vacant spot.

*"It is not important what you know, but who you know."* This statement was repeatedly heard during the conversations with my family and friends in Syria. When I asked for their opinion on the young people's complaints about lack of work, the answer was always that nepotism is the way to get a good job. Everyone now recognizes that nepotism has existed for a long time in the Middle East and is deeply ingrained in the design of public administration for many years. It is embodied in many cases, ranging from the seizure of political affairs in the country by a few to aspects of daily life such as appointment decisions, awarding contracts, and providing public goods. According to Transparency International's (2022) Corruption Perception Index (CPI), Syria scored 13 on a scale of 0 ("highly corrupt") to 100 ("highly clean"). Syria ranks the second lowest along with South Sudan, at 178<sup>th</sup> position among the 180 countries in the index.

Theoretically, nepotism is a type of courtesy extended to family members or friends. It is the privilege of hiring an individual who is related to the owner or manager of a public organization. Nepotism benefits friends and family members in their jobs and career advancement on the grounds of special treatment as a substitute for skills and expertise (Kawo and Torun, 2020). Most studies identify that owners and managers who give a job to a friend, or a family member are considered nepotism (Farahmand, 2013).

In the Middle East, nepotism is a major factor in hiring many civil servants (Loewe et al., 2007). Haywood (2018) indicated that nepotism can have negative consequences on employee satisfaction, turnover, and loyalty. Administrative decisions related to favouritism can adversely affect a firm's productivity and output. As a result, numerous competent staff will leave the workplace because of the unfair treatment practiced by government officials (Makhoul and Harrison, 2004).

Chen (2008) presented a solution for unfair conduct in the workplace by applying Adams' Equity Theory principles – equality between employees is attained by realizing the employee's contributions to their productivity. This practice can provide the management with an awareness of what is ethical and equitable and what is not. Inequity in promotion and advancement can be devastating to competent employees; therefore, seeing incompetent employees being hired because of nepotism will result in attrition and a loss of capable and talented employees (Nyukorong, 2014).

Few studies have acknowledged the influence of nepotism on job performance (Alreshoodi, 2018; Ombanda, 2018; Serfraz et al., 2021). Other studies have had no decisive indication of the relationship between performance and nepotism. For example, Altindag (2014) considered nepotism as a sign of organizational weakness; nevertheless, it may become an opportunity for small and medium enterprises in Turkey. According to Altindag (2014), placing family members in top positions inside a business can result in improved performance. Those relatives considered themselves responsible for the business. Because of the inconsistency in the outcomes of previous studies, it is necessary to conduct more studies in this field. Therefore, this current study builds on the present literature by combining vocational training as an answer to the undesired consequences of nepotism on worker performance.

Vocational training is a key component of organizational performance and productivity (Shaheen et al., 2019). The researcher examines the impact of nepotism on employees' training and development. Through proper training, employees' performance can be improved. Massoudi (2016) indicated that continuous training permits personnel to acquire knowledge and experience. Eventually, their performance was improved. Likewise, the devotion of organizations to training sessions seems to satisfy and motivate workers (Algharibeh et al., 2014).

Appropriate training enhances the self-confidence of the employee to embrace modern technology and organizational change, thus increasing employee morale. According to Massoudi and Hamdi (2017), development-focused management has a vibrant mission to train personnel to withstand and improve the organizational productivity of the firm. Any employee with the opportunity to participate in training and development would see himself appreciated by his organization, which inspired him to work harder. By contrast, the notion of nepotism may deject or demoralize employees in the execution of their jobs because nepotism promotes relations and kinship. This can generate an adverse impact, such as injustice in promotions and opportunities. Although vocational training openings have been claimed to curb the bearing of nepotism on employees' performance, few studies have validated this concept. A few previous studies have debated the effects of nepotism on organizational or employee performance. Previous studies such as Alreshoodi (2018);

Alreshoodi and Andrews (2015); and İlişki et al. (2018) lean toward examining the relationship between nepotism and employee concerns, apparent capability, employee conduct, career planning, and employment procedure.

The goal of this study is to examine how nepotism affects employees' vocational training and performance at the General Organization of Tobacco in Latakia, Syria, in light of the aforementioned limitations.

## **2. Theoretical Background and Hypotheses**

### **2.1. Job Performance**

Thomas (2014) defined job performance as the achievement of responsibility and duty or the modest working effectiveness of employees. It is the achievement of goals through recurring activities by public or private organizations. Thus, it measures how well workers performed on a given job. The importance of job performance in organizations is derived from organizational objectives, which is the task of human resources to accomplish these objectives (Apase, 2013; Oravee et al., 2018).

Job performance has been extensively studied in organizational psychology (Xie and Yang, 2020). Previous studies, such as Murphy (1989) and Rotundo and Sackett (2002), mentioned that job performance is an activity and behaviour of personnel that can impact a firm's performance. Performance resolute employees' skills, aptitudes, and competencies to accomplish goals or potential through a performance appraisal process. Performance assessment aims to gauge and improve an individual's performance to strengthen future potential and value to the organization and to decide his salary and promotion.

According to Borman and Motowidlo (1997), job performance can be divided into two dimensions: task performance is the action that leads to business success and contextual performance is the behaviour that aids and outlines the organizational behaviour of the firm. This behaviour can be achieved through the impartiality of employees (Van Scotter and Motowidlo, 1996).

### **2.2. Nepotism**

Nepotism is a Latin word that refers to the nephew of bishops from ancient times. The Oxford English Dictionary defines nepotism as the exercise of the Pope's authority to present different courtesy to nephews or other family members in the conferring office. In modern times, it indicates the hiring and sponsoring of an individual for his family ties or relationships with someone in power without considering his experience and skills. Also, Kurian (2013) defined it as a preferable treatment and consideration for family members or friends during organizational staffing or career advancement procedures.

Nepotism is widespread in many Arab organizations (Tlaiss and Kauser, 2011). It represents the strong cultural bonds that exist between families and friends in the Middle East, which have a big impact on work, professional growth, and decision-making (Mohamed and Hamdy, 2008). With nepotism or personal connections, anyone in the Middle East can be hired and promoted, regardless of their abilities, competencies, or expertise (Altindag, 2014). Nepotism is prevalent in Syria, due to the socially and ethnically based need to uphold authority. Nepotism in Syrian society is one of the factors contributing to the country's high unemployment rate. The presence of nepotism in Syria led to the reduction of workplace diversity and job involvement; it also destroyed the reputation of many factories and institutions (Albdour and Altarawneh, 2012). According to Al-Shamari (2012), nepotism is considered a type of corruption because it promotes the misuse of authority to advance personal agendas. It is an undesirable practice that treats individuals unfairly (Alwerthan and Swanson, 2016).

### **2.3. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development**

Numerous studies have recognized the harmful effects of nepotism on job performance (Makhoul and Harrison, 2004; Tlaiss and Kauser, 2011). They concluded that when nepotism is practiced, individuals with family links or connections will be given the open post, even if they lack the expertise or the skills needed for that position. Therefore, the result of this action is an unskilled workforce that affects the productivity of an

organization. Similarly, qualified employees lose opportunities for advancement and promotion. Subsequently, they will be dissatisfied and demotivated to perform their tasks.

In addition, numerous studies have stated that nepotism can damage organizational performance (Sarwar and Imran, 2019; Serkina and Logvinova, 2019; Szakonyi, 2019). The practice of nepotism is related to the tolerance of society toward unethical behaviour, which will eliminate organizational justice, commitment, and loyalty to the organization (Massoudi et al., 2020).

In the Middle East, Sidani and Thornberry (2013) examined the current practice of nepotism in the Middle East and conclude that nepotism is a destructive tool for the performance of any organization. Additionally, a study by Alreshoodi and Andrews (2015) in Saudi Arabia indicated the undesirable influence of nepotism on job satisfaction, commitment, and morale. Another study by Mohamed and Hamdy (2008) showed that employee recruitment through nepotism demonstrated less effectiveness and organizational ethics compared to non-nepotism employees. Nepotism triggers a conflict between staff, which negatively affects the performance of the organization. In Syria, apart from the delicate senior ranks in a public organization, hiring in a public institution is generally based on favouritism and kinship relationships rather than on experience and skills. This affects the efficiency of the qualified staff (Khatib and Sinjab, 2018). Based on this, this article hypothesizes that

H<sub>01</sub>: Nepotism in Syrian public sector organizations have an undesirable effect on employees' job performance.

H<sub>a1</sub>: Nepotism in Syrian public sector organizations have a desirable effect on employees' job performance.

Occupational training is a vibrant source for expanding job performance (Mpofu and Hlatywayo, 2015). When organizations depend on a better-skilled, knowledgeable, and talented workforce, it creates a competitive advantage (Shu-Rung and Chun-Chieh, 2017). Also, Gerpott et al. (2017) added that training can make the employees committed and promoted. This eventually generates trust and performance enhancement as well as inspires them to stay on the job. The above literature shows that training is an active ingredient in job performance because trained employees also obtain new experiences and skills that will advance their career plans (Halawi and Haydar, 2018; Mpofu and Hlatywayo, 2015). Based on the above, this article further proposes that

H<sub>02</sub>: Employee training and development have a negative effect on job performance.

H<sub>a2</sub>: Employee training and development have a positive effect on job performance.

A study by Bute (2011) revealed that nepotism negatively affects human resource practices, including training, satisfaction, and commitment. Audretsch (2015) has specified that nepotism creates unequal chances for employees when it comes to training. Subsequently, well-connected employees of nepotism are offered the opportunity to enrol in vocational and training courses to improve their skills, although they may not need them. The organization may also discriminate against employees who were not hired through nepotism by denying them the ability to grow and learn (Altarawneh, 2009). Finally, Ombanda (2018) explained that the primary proposed goal of training is made worse by the dishonest nature of supervisors in organizations. Based on this argument, this article also postulates that

H<sub>03</sub>: Nepotism can create an adverse effect on employees' training and development.

H<sub>a3</sub>: Nepotism can create a positive effect on employees' training and development.

### 3. Methodology

The 4900 employees who work in the General Organization of Tobacco in Latakia, Syria, who are part of the Syrian public sector, make up the study's population. The sample size was set to 280. The researcher used simple random sampling to represent the target population and drop sampling bias.

Prior to data collection, the researcher was granted permission to conduct the study by the institution's managers. A self-administered questionnaire was distributed to 280 employees from the General Organization of Tobacco. Only 260 of the 280 questionnaires that were distributed were deemed legitimate, representing a 93% response rate.

The questionnaire had four outline sections; statements were adopted from earlier literature. Section 1 describes the respondents' demographic characteristics. In Section 2, six items that were modified from Vveinhardt (n.d.) measure the degree of nepotism in public sector organizations. Six items measuring training are used in Section 3 (adapted from Halawi and Haydar, 2018), and six items measuring job performance are

used in Section 4 (adapted from Ombanda, 2018). A 5-point Likert scale was applied, ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree.

The demographic profiles are presented in Table 1. It shows that most of the respondents were male (71.5%), almost half of the respondents were aged between 26 and 30 (44.6%), qualified workers with high school diplomas (73.1%), and the result also showed that 71.5% of respondents worked as administrators. Finally, the majority of the respondents had 6–10 years of experience.

Table 1. Respondents' demographic profiles (%).

| Demographic Characteristic | Category            | Frequency | Percent (%) |
|----------------------------|---------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Gender                     | Male                | 186       | 71.5        |
|                            | Female              | 74        | 28.5        |
|                            | Total               | 260       | 100.0       |
| Age (in years)             | 18–25               | 6         | 2.3         |
|                            | 26–30               | 116       | 44.6        |
|                            | 31–35               | 48        | 18.5        |
|                            | 36–40               | 38        | 14.5        |
|                            | 41–50               | 34        | 13.1        |
|                            | 51 and above        | 18        | 6.9         |
|                            | Total               | 260       | 100.0       |
| Educational qualification  | School level        | 4         | 1.5         |
|                            | High school         | 190       | 73.1        |
|                            | Bachelor degree     | 34        | 13.1        |
|                            | Post-graduation     | 18        | 6.9         |
|                            | Ph.D.               | 6         | 2.3         |
|                            | Total               | 260       | 100.0       |
| Job title                  | Security            | 6         | 2.3         |
|                            | Administrative work | 186       | 71.5        |
|                            | Production          | 24        | 9.2         |
|                            | Marketing           | 36        | 13.8        |
|                            | Other               | 8         | 3.1         |
|                            | Total               | 260       | 100.0       |
| Work experience            | 1–5 years           | 72        | 27.7        |
|                            | 6–10 years          | 106       | 40.8        |
|                            | 11–20 years         | 62        | 23.8        |
|                            | More than 20 years  | 20        | 7.7         |
|                            | Total               | 260       | 100.0       |

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1. Reliability Statistics

For the reliability of the respondents' statements, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was applied, which is a recognized technique for estimating dependability. According to Nunnally (1978), an unwavering quality score or alpha that is 0.60 or above is adequate. In this article survey, all 260 respondents noted their answers, just components that have great degrees of unwavering quality (more noteworthy than 0.70), all of which met the threshold requirement suggested by Nunnally (1978), below those that were removed. Six items were from training, six from job performance, and six from the nepotism statement. Table 2 presents the overall reliability statistics of 0.892. As shown in Table 3, all items achieved a reliability of more than 0.800.

Table 2. Reliability statistics.

| Cronbach's alpha | Cronbach's alpha based on standardized items | No. of items |
|------------------|--|--------------|
| 0.892            | 0.894  | 18           |

Table 3. Item-total statistics.

| Item          | Scale means if an item deleted | Scale variance if item deleted | Corrected item-total correlation | Squared multiple correlations | Cronbach's alpha if the item deleted |
|---------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Nepotism_1    | 97.46                          | 272.157                        | 0.457                            | 0.604                         | 0.888                                |
| Nepotism_2    | 97.12                          | 277.437                        | 0.509                            | 0.633                         | 0.887                                |
| Nepotism_3    | 97.12                          | 282.002                        | 0.329                            | 0.560                         | 0.891                                |
| Nepotism_4    | 97.05                          | 279.550                        | 0.401                            | 0.619                         | 0.889                                |
| Nepotism_5    | 97.15                          | 277.191                        | 0.486                            | 0.643                         | 0.888                                |
| Nepotism_6    | 97.19                          | 277.036                        | 0.470                            | 0.634                         | 0.888                                |
| Training_1    | 97.23                          | 285.275                        | 0.300                            | 0.466                         | 0.891                                |
| Training_2    | 97.22                          | 278.996                        | 0.454                            | 0.512                         | 0.888                                |
| Training_3    | 97.54                          | 290.026                        | 0.167                            | 0.509                         | 0.893                                |
| Training_4    | 97.39                          | 277.104                        | 0.524                            | 0.563                         | 0.887                                |
| Training_5    | 97.57                          | 281.883                        | 0.374                            | 0.541                         | 0.890                                |
| Training_6    | 97.56                          | 282.965                        | 0.376                            | 0.528                         | 0.890                                |
| Performance_1 | 97.35                          | 278.791                        | 0.488                            | 0.628                         | 0.888                                |
| Performance_2 | 97.31                          | 282.098                        | 0.372                            | 0.597                         | 0.890                                |
| Performance_3 | 97.25                          | 279.032                        | 0.540                            | 0.622                         | 0.887                                |
| Performance_4 | 97.18                          | 282.030                        | 0.424                            | 0.486                         | 0.889                                |
| Performance_5 | 97.61                          | 289.089                        | 0.142                            | 0.572                         | 0.895                                |
| Performance_6 | 97.34                          | 288.534                        | 0.195                            | 0.521                         | 0.893                                |

Table 4 shows the mean score of 3.138, which means that respondents agree with the subject, but they are not highly satisfied. The value of the variance was 9.287, which is acceptable. The value of standard deviation is  $0.538 < 1$ , i.e., which is considered to be good.

Table 4. Scale statistics.

| Mean  | Variance | Std. deviation | N of items |
|-------|----------|----------------|------------|
| 3.138 | 9.287    | 0.538          | 18         |

#### 4.2. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were used to measure the mean and standard deviations of the constructs used. Table 5 illustrates item statistics, which range from 2.85 to 3.38. This denotes that respondents are satisfied but not highly satisfied. In a subsequent discussion, it was found that the respondents were threatened by nepotism. Respondents said, “*In the era of troublesome times, there are no effective human resource policies in their organizations, which causes insecurity feeling in the mind of respondents while asking for more training opportunities.*”. However, the respondents very much agree that training time increases job performance.

Table 5. Item statistics (N=260).

| Item       | Mean | Std. deviation | Item       | Mean | Std. deviation | Item          | Mean | Std. deviation |
|------------|------|----------------|------------|------|----------------|---------------|------|----------------|
| Nepotism_1 | 2.96 | 1.509          | Training_1 | 3.03 | 1.083          | Performance_2 | 3.34 | 1.163          |
| Nepotism_2 | 3.3  | 1.095          | Training_3 | 2.85 | 1.119          | Performance_4 | 3.24 | 1.229          |
| Nepotism_4 | 3.31 | 1.236          | Training_4 | 2.86 | 1.038          | Performance_1 | 2.88 | 1.116          |
| Nepotism_5 | 3.38 | 1.207          | Training_5 | 3.08 | 1.059          | Performance_2 | 3.25 | 1.105          |
| Nepotism_6 | 3.28 | 1.153          | Training_6 | 3.12 | 1.109          | Performance_3 | 2.84 | 1.068          |
| Nepotism_3 | 3.23 | 1.195          | Training_1 | 3.17 | 0.956          | Performance_4 | 3.38 | 1.056          |

Table 6 further illustrates the descriptive statistics of the study (N = 260) (groupwise). The results show that nepotism in Syria is socially unacceptable (M = 2.98). This indicates that the respondents viewed nepotism as negative. This is not surprising because nepotism was one of the main causes of the Arab Spring of 2011. In

addition to favoritism and nepotism being important factors in determining who received what in the public sector in Syria, the government maintained its authority by ensuring that loyalists infiltrated business, religious, social, and tribal circles (Khatib and Sinjab, 2018).

Table 6. Descriptive statistics of the study (N = 260) (groupwise).

| Item                    | Mean  | Std. deviation |
|-------------------------|-------|----------------|
| Nepotism                | 2.988 | 1.0816         |
| Organizational training | 3.254 | 1.0728         |
| Job performance         | 3.246 | 1.2427         |

#### 4.3. Results of Factor Analysis

Factor examination distinguishes the fundamental structure inside a lot of watched factors. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software was used to evaluate legitimacy. Eighteen questionnaire items were initially considered; however, after factor analysis, 13 items were found to be applicable and accessed. The correlation matrix was scrutinized to identify the appropriateness for the factor analysis. The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) value for 13 survey items was 0.738. Moreover, the sphericity statistical test value was based on the chi-squared transformation. The determinant of the correlation matrix score was 6176.959, which is high; the required appropriate significance level was 0.000, which is low. Table 7 presents the factor analysis results. The result indicated that the data were multivariate and normal. In addition, the correlation matrix has satisfactory covariation for factoring. Confirmatory factor analysis is an analytical tool for assessing the interrelationship among latent constructs, which allows the examination of fundamental relations between latent and observed variables in a stated theoretical model (Mueller and Hancock, 2001).

Table 7. KMO and Bartlett's test.

|   |                    |          |
|---|--------------------|----------|
| <b>KMO measure of sampling adequacy</b> |                    | 0.738    |
| <b>Bartlett's test of sphericity</b>    | Approx. chi-square | 6176.959 |
|   | df                 | 861      |
|   | Sig.               | 0.000    |

The total variance is presented in Table 8. From the analysis, it was found that 13 factors had a strong impact on respondents' opinions (up to 72.51%).

Table 8. Total variance.

| Component | Initial eigenvalues |               |              | Extraction sums of squared loadings |               |              | Rotation sums of squared loadings |               |              |
|-----------|---------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|--------------|
|           | Total               | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total                               | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total                             | % of Variance | Cumulative % |
| 1         | 10.408              | 24.780        | 24.780       | 10.408                              | 24.780        | 24.780       | 4.133                             | 9.840         | 9.840        |
| 2         | 3.391               | 8.075         | 32.855       | 3.391                               | 8.075         | 32.855       | 3.755                             | 8.941         | 18.781       |
| 3         | 2.216               | 5.275         | 38.130       | 2.216                               | 5.275         | 38.130       | 2.949                             | 7.021         | 25.802       |
| 4         | 2.098               | 4.996         | 43.126       | 2.098                               | 4.996         | 43.126       | 2.422                             | 5.766         | 31.568       |
| 5         | 1.846               | 4.396         | 47.522       | 1.846                               | 4.396         | 47.522       | 2.359                             | 5.616         | 37.184       |
| 6         | 1.749               | 4.165         | 51.688       | 1.749                               | 4.165         | 51.688       | 2.198                             | 5.233         | 42.418       |
| 7         | 1.623               | 3.864         | 55.551       | 1.623                               | 3.864         | 55.551       | 2.132                             | 5.075         | 47.493       |
| 8         | 1.486               | 3.538         | 59.089       | 1.486                               | 3.538         | 59.089       | 2.009                             | 4.782         | 52.275       |
| 9         | 1.260               | 3.000         | 62.089       | 1.260                               | 3.000         | 62.089       | 1.989                             | 4.736         | 57.012       |
| 10        | 1.144               | 2.724         | 64.813       | 1.144                               | 2.724         | 64.813       | 1.821                             | 4.335         | 61.347       |
| 11        | 1.127               | 2.682         | 67.495       | 1.127                               | 2.682         | 67.495       | 1.743                             | 4.150         | 65.497       |
| 12        | 1.091               | 2.597         | 70.093       | 1.091                               | 2.597         | 70.093       | 1.724                             | 4.105         | 69.602       |
| 13        | 1.013               | 2.413         | 72.505       | 1.013                               | 2.413         | 72.505       | 1.219                             | 2.903         | 72.505       |
| 14        | 0.935               | 2.227         | 74.732       |                                     |               |              |                                   |               |              |

|    |       |       |        |  |  |  |  |  |
|----|-------|-------|--------|--|--|--|--|--|
| 15 | 0.822 | 1.957 | 76.689 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 16 | 0.792 | 1.886 | 78.575 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 17 | 0.749 | 1.784 | 80.359 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 18 | 0.726 | 1.728 | 82.087 |  |  |  |  |  |

Extraction method: Principal component analysis.

Table 9 summarizes the results of the three hypotheses proposed by the author.

Table 9. Summary of the hypotheses testing.

| Item   | Correlation value | Significance | R <sup>2</sup> | α                 | β                 | t               | Sig.           | Remarks  |
|--|-------------------|--------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------------|--|
| Nepotism to job performance                      | 0.073             | 0.121        | 0.005          | 8.162<br>SE 0.557 | 0.039<br>SE 0.033 | 14.650<br>1.171 | 0.000<br>0.243 | H <sub>01</sub> : is accepted.<br>H <sub>a1</sub> : is rejected. |
| Employee training opportunity to job performance | 0.284             | 0.000        | 0.081          | 5.983<br>SE 0.697 | 0.259<br>SE 0.054 | 8.580<br>4.763  | 0.000<br>0.000 | H <sub>02</sub> : is rejected.<br>H <sub>a2</sub> : is accepted. |
| Nepotism to employees' training and development  | 0.112             | 0.035        | 0.013          | 5.326<br>SE 0.459 | 0.091<br>SE 0.050 | 11.612<br>1.814 | 0.000<br>0.071 | H <sub>03</sub> : is accepted.<br>H <sub>a3</sub> : is rejected. |

Hypothesis 1—Nepotism effects on job performance: The value of correlation = 0.073 and significance = 0.121; the values of  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  were not significant, while the value of  $R^2 = 0.005$ . Since the significance value is  $0.243 > 0.05$ ,  $H_{01}$  is accepted and  $H_{a1}$  is rejected. The findings showed that Syrian public employees were conscious of the undesirable effects of nepotism on job performance. The respondents observed the effect of nepotism in the selection and recruitment process had produced unqualified staff in the organization. This condition leads to insufficiencies and effectiveness in performing duties. In addition, they noted that training unqualified employees leads to further escalation and problems and affects the productivity and resources of the firm. Likewise, Syrian public employees professed that nepotism leads to unfair treatment and unethical behaviour that could lead to poor job performance. The outcome of this study is consistent with previous studies (Alreshoodi, 2018; Kawo and Torun, 2020).

Hypothesis 2—Employees' training and development effect on job performance: The value of correlation = 0.284 and significance = 0.000; the values of  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  are significant, while the value of  $R^2 = 0.081$ . Since the significant value is  $0.000 < 0.05$ ,  $H_{02}$  is rejected and  $H_{a2}$  is accepted. The results of this hypothesis are consistent with earlier studies (Diab and Ajlouni, 2015; Halawi and Haydar, 2018), which contended that employees who have the chance to join training and development programs tend to increase their job performance. Improved training and development can decrease turnover rates and increase the level of effectiveness and growth of firms (Issahaku et al., 2014). Therefore, employees with training opportunities can deliver public services with advanced proficiency.

Hypothesis 3—Nepotism effects on employees' training and development: The value of correlation = 0.112 and significance = 0.035; the values of  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  are significant, while  $R^2 = 0.013$ . Since the significant value is  $0.071 > 0.05$ ,  $H_{03}$  is accepted and  $H_{a3}$  is rejected. These results indicate that nepotism has a noteworthy harmful impact on personnel training and development. Dissatisfied employees create a turnover, disloyalty, and lack of commitment. In addition, with nepotism, training is assigned to personnel who do not need training, whereas an employee who requires training is not given the chance. Syrian public employees at the organizations under study displayed injustice and unfairness on their faces, which was evident in their performance. As a result, productivity in the Syrian public sector is extremely poor. The result of this study is corresponding to the outcomes of prior studies (Ali et al., 2017; İlişki et al., 2018).

## 5. Conclusion and Implications

This study examined the effects of nepotism on job performance. The results of this study offer empirical suggestions for Syria. This study extends previous research, particularly in human resource management, by concentrating on nepotism as an impediment to job performance. The crucial significance of training and development as a feature that could reduce the unfavourable impact of nepotism and its influence on job performance has also been made clear in this article.

The practical implications of the results are recommended. The executives and directors of the Syrian public sector organization must exert all efforts to lessen or abolish the nepotism practice in their institutions and avoid nepotism interference during recruitment, selection, and employee training and development. Nepotism and favouritism negatively impact an organization's ability to improve the competencies and skills of its employees. In addition, assigning training and development sessions on the grounds of kinship, associations, and networks, rather than on the employees' credentials, experiences, and merits, generates occupational anxiety. Consequently, employees will be unenthusiastic and discouraged in their jobs, which will affect their productivity and output. We conclude that nepotism-sponsored firms are undesired organizations, mainly for knowledgeable and talented employees. Since 2011, Syria has suffered the exodus of its talented minds and skilled workers, causing poor growth in the public sector and disastrous economic conditions.

Nepotism is considered a key cause of the backwardness of Arab countries and their calamities. The researcher suggests that placing the wrong person in a leadership position cannot be tolerated and harms the interests of all employees. It is necessary to establish strict laws related to professional and ethical behaviour in work in all public and private sectors and to organize more awareness and educational sessions that contribute to implanting ethical principles in society. In addition, there are other ways to deal with nepotism, one of which is to limit the authority of managers when appointments are made, ensuring that the position is maintained based on logical, scientific, and unbiased basis by scrutinizing the employees' job descriptions and the applicant's qualifications. Also, personnel decisions should be made based on the public interest; otherwise, organizations will be susceptible to nepotism and favouritism.

This study had a few limitations. The most important limitation is the small sample size; therefore, similar studies are proposed to be conducted to expand the sample size and generalize the results. A similar study can also be conducted in private sector organizations for the purposes of comparison with the results of the current study.

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