The Status of Responsibility to Protect in the International Law and Whether Doctrine Advances Use of Military Force for Humanitarian Ends

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Abstract
This paper offers a delicate understanding of the responsibility to protect (R2P) principle and analyses the status of this significant principle within the international law. The place of the use of force is evaluated within R2P doctrine. The R2P norm and the pillars contained therein will be analysed to set out the legal responsibilities it contains towards member states and the international community, assessing the legality of the responsibilities held by states towards its population in addition to responsibilities owed by states to populations in other states and the obligation from the international community to intervene. Identifying the issues surrounding the principle of R2P in international law and the message it delivers with what it involves and what responsibilities it carries. It also illustrates the importance of the evolution of the concept, and the advances evolving around the principle including the use of military force for humanitarian ends.

Keywords: Responsibility to Protect, R2P, International Law, Military Force, Humanitarian Intervention, United Nations, Security Council.

1. Introduction

The so-called new norm to legalise humanitarian intervention, establishing the responsibility to protect as part of the 2005 Summit agreement. Despite the establishment of the new international legal norm, there still exists ambiguity as it has not appropriately been legalised. The issues surrounding the principle of R2P in international law and the message it delivers with what it involves and what responsibilities it carries. The R2P norm and the pillars contained therein, provide overarching, non-sequential guidance on matters in relation to the protection of vulnerable populations against acts of mortal endangerment and genocide, as agreed by the UN Member States. As noted above, the first pillar enshrines that a State has primary responsibility to protect its populations from genocide, however, when this responsibility is not upheld, the second and third pillars provide for assistance from the international community; firstly, by supporting the State to provide the necessary intervention (pillar 2) and further, when this assistance is not provided by the State in a meaningful way - or when a State is manifestly failing in its duty to protect - interventions will be delivered directly to the affected population via the international community, prioritising diplomacy and humanitarian means, and where a State
continues to fail in the delivery of its responsibilities, then via use of proportionate force consistent with the UN Charter (pillar 3) (UN, 2005 ‘Responsibility to Protect’ A/RES/63/308).

2. Responsibility to Protect

Humanitarian intervention has long been controversial in both cases when it happens, and when it fails to happen in international law. The early 1990s sought a new era of humanitarian intervention, the Kosovo crisis and the Rwanda Genocide has led to significant developments within the R2P. The principle is conceptual; and practical tool developed by states, international organisations such as United Nations. The doctrine was formally introduced as an outcome of the 2005 United Nations World Summit. It is further formulated in the Secretary General's 2009 Report on Implementing the Responsibility to Protect. The doctrine carries three main responsibilities; the first pillar is the primary responsibility of the States to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing, and their incitement. The second pillar of the doctrine focuses on the responsibility for the international community to encourage and assist States in fulfilling this responsibility and the third pillar states that international community has a responsibility to undertake appropriate diplomatic action, humanitarian, and other means to protect populations from these crimes (Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide 1948, Article 1).

The doctrine requires apportioning responsibility to and promoting collaboration among concerned States and the International community. The major issue regarding the principle of R2P is sovereignty. With the establishment of the R2P, sovereignty is no longer exclusively a protection from foreign interference. This principle is preserved in Article 1 of the Genocide Convention, where the concept of sovereignty as responsibility is found, where States are held accountable for the welfare of their people (Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide 1948, Article 1). This is followed by the second foundation of the R2P principle is that, where a population is suffering serious harm, as a result of internal war, insurgency, repression or state failure, and the state in question in unwilling or unable to halt or avert it, the principle of non-intervention yields to the international responsibility to protect (UN, 2005 ‘Responsibility to Protect’ A/RES/63/308).

When considering the R2P principle in more depth, the three elements contained within the doctrine can be identified as to the responsibility to prevent, to address both the root causes and direct causes of internal conflict and another man –made crises putting populations at risk. Furthermore, the responsibility to react, this is when the responsibility to respond to situations of compelling human need with appropriate measures, which may induce coercive measures like sanctions and international prosecution, and in extreme cases military intervention. Finally, the element of responsibility to rebuild plays a great part in providing full assistance with recovery especially in cases of military intervention, reconstruction and reconciliation, addressing the causes of the harm the intervention was designed to halt. The three elements mentioned are found to be the foundation of the principle, though the priority concern remains with the most critical dimension of the R2P to be the responsibility to prevent. The prevention option of putting the population at risk is the first and most imperative dimension and must be exhausted before intervention is contemplated, and more commitment and resources must be devoted to it.

The R2P can be found to be the answer to the question of the Secretary-General Kofi Annan’s Millennium report to the General Assembly as a reaction to the 54th session of the UN General Assembly in 1999, where he asked the question of “if humanitarian intervention is, indeed, an unacceptable assault on sovereignty, how should we respond to a Rwanda, to a Srebrenica – to gross and systematic violations of human rights that offend every precept of our common humanity?” This was a frustration illustrated by the General Secretary to recall the failures of the Security Council to act in Rwanda and Kosovo and challenged the member states of the UN to find common ground in upholding the principles of the UN Charter and acting in defence of our common humanity (United Nations, 2000, K. A. Annan, “We the Peoples, The Role of the United Nations in the 21st century”).

3. The Legality of the R2P

The legality of the doctrine is based on various guidelines of the international community. The main legal responsibility lies within the United Nations Security Council. Under Article 24 of the UN Charter, the Council
has the main responsibility to maintain international peace and security. In addition to the legal obligations found under human rights protection declarations, treaties, covenants, and international law. Starting with the 1945 UN Charter, committing the UN to ‘promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion’ (United Nations Charter 1945). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 further contains moral, political and legal consensus of human rights universally. The International Covenant on Civil and Political rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1996 affirmed that human rights norm as a significant principle of international law and the great impact on the Universal Declaration of the protection.

Further developments can be found with international criminal tribunals been specially designed to deal with crimes against humanity and the establishment of the International Criminal Court as part of the Rome Statute, resulted in a benchmark and means of standards for state conducts, inspirational provisions for national laws, and significant impact on international law. The universality of the ICC’s Rome Statute has a significant impact on the enforcement of the R2P doctrine. Universal jurisdiction at its core is when the concept of extraterritorial jurisdiction is applicable, despite absence of robust link to the crime and this constitutes a way to end impunity when serious human rights violations are perpetrated and helps victims to obtain a remedy for their harm suffered. R2P is based on the obligation of states to protect their people from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Estonia, 2013 ‘The complex relationship between R2P and ICC’). The belief that the traditional view of security had left out the important element of protecting people or individuals, not just states and the matter of sovereignty. The matter of intervention and sovereignty was the main focus when introducing R2P. The fundamental components of human security involved the security of people against the threat to life, health, livelihood, personal safety, human dignity.

Form a concept that was known as a fairy tale to an emerging legal norm. The R2P which was viewed as a moral responsibility and up until the end of the 2005 Summit Document some States have opposed the idea that it had a legal basis under international law to have such strong phrase such as the responsibility to protect as it only remains in the hands of the Security Council and the UN. Nonetheless, the 2005 Outcome Document, paragraph 138 and the 139 represent a mixture of political and legal considerations to the concept. Article 138 illustrates a very clear commitment in stating ‘each State has the responsibility to protect its populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity’ this sentence reflects the traditional view of the bond of duty between the state and its citizens. Article 139 emphasises on the responsibility to react stating ‘the international community, through the United Nations, also has the responsibility to use appropriate diplomatic, humanitarian and other peaceful mean, in accordance with Chapters VI ad VII of the UN Charter, to help to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity’ (UNGA Resolution A/60/1, 60th Session, 2005 World Summit Outcome, Article 138).

A systematic duty for the international community to engage itself in responding to mass atrocities committed. Although there is an idea-driven from the sentence above regarding guidelines for the authorisation of Collective Security when reacting. The text of the Outcome Document does not firmly state the UN collective security ids the only means for responding to mass atrocities. The language of the Document can also be found leaving the door open to unilateral response through case-by-case vision of collective security a qualified commitment to act in cooperation appropriately. Meaning that it must be in accordance with the Chapter VI and VII of the UN Charter, in addition to the need for the General Assembly to consider the responsibility to protect remains within the principles of the Charter and international law.

Though critics have stated that line of the sentence illustrates ambiguity of the responsibility to protect doctrine, the legality remains vague as to the General Assembly must consider the implementation and the implications when carrying out the responsibility to react, this is due to the different opinions and different means of mass atrocities and implications in reacting and preventing such act, there remains a challenge in addressing the most appropriate measure. Nonetheless, there was certainly a legal meaning behind the drafters of the Outcome Document in emphasising the importance of the emerging norm for the international community to prevent Rwanda, Kosovo, and Bosnia happening again. The Security Council has the ‘primary’ responsibility under Article 24 of the UN Charter to for peace and security. Though, it does not expressly state the Council has the sole or exclusive primary responsibility.
The second crucial qualification within the UN Charter can be found under Article 39 of the Charter. This allows the Security Council to take action when ‘determining the existence of any threat to peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression’. When actions under Article 40 have failed, such as embargoes, sanctions and severance measures, Article 41 of the Charter can be considered, where measures enhance military intervention, such measures include actions by air, sea or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security. Meaning, that it may resort to or permit the use of military force that’s promised under Article 42. It will not be possible to say that the framework of R2P falls outside what is known as the international norm. This is due to the comprehensive legal framework that is compromised within the UN Charter and other international legal documents such as Geneva Convention, Genocide Convention, and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

Furthermore, Resolution 1674 adopted by the Security Council in 2006 on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict, the Resolution entails the first official Security Council reference to R2P. Paragraphs 138 and 139 of the World Summit Outcome Document are reaffirmed and states that the Security Council’s readiness to address gross violations of human rights. This was followed by a report released by the Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon focusing on ‘Implementing the Responsibility to Protect’. The report further focused great importance on the responsibility to protect people against atrocities, however, nothing was noted regarding the international acceptance of the doctrine.

On the other hand, it cannot be said that R2P could be considered as an international binding source. This is because it does not fall into the selected recognised sources of international law under Article 38 of the International Court of Justice Statute (Statute of International Court of Justice 1945). When considering customary international law, the scope of R2P must be exercised by the States on regular occasions, as an outcome, the opinio juris principle of international law will apply to the R2P doctrine.

Finally, the soft law that is known to be based on a consensus within the international community. Although, political language can be found upon the R2P. Nevertheless, there are certainly legal responsibilities involved within it, hence the international community agrees to the responsibilities involved with the doctrine as already found within international treaties, and conventions, therefore, results in creating customary norms of international law. Soft laws are viewed to interact with hard laws in complex areas. This is surely present about R2P, the legal responsibilities adjoining the doctrine and the sovereignty principle of States. Though, one of the big achievements of the R2P was to prevent the sovereignty principle to be used to remove immunity for those who have committed atrocities.

Soft laws are found to be a great contribution towards future binding sources in international law. It might be found to lack binding status. However, it offers a great contribution towards legal interpretation and informal judicial reasoning. To summarise the legality of the R2P doctrine, it is best to say that it is known as a form of soft law. The doctrine is fairly defined and shaped by existing international legal principles, and it can be said it has been significantly successful in undergoing a transformation in accurately applying the process in the future.

4. Does The Doctrine Advances the Use of Military Force for Humanitarian Ends?

It is plainly clear that the UN Charter under Article 2(4) states that all UN members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state. Only under two exceptional circumstances use of force can be found lawful, the first one being self-defence under Article 51 of the UN Charter and the military measures authorised by the Security Council under Chapter VII in response to ‘any threat to peace, breach of the peace or act of aggression’. The second exception is found most relevant regarding the R2P principle. Article 42 of Chapter VII allows the Security Council to make a decision on military measures when necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security.

This authorisation overrides any prohibition about military measures when international peace and security is considered. Without having a concrete definition of what is a threat to international peace and security, the High Panel of the ICISS Commission pointed out the Security Council and itself and the international community have come to accept that when pursuing the emerging norm of an international responsibility to protect, the Council under Chapter VII can always authorise military action to redress the situation if recognised as a threat to international peace and security. The debate on the use of force is found to be at the heart of the
R2P principle. The questions arise about use of force when it is legal and legitimate to use military force as part of R2P. The issue is based on force been applied to a State without the presence of consent.

It is argued that R2P has been solely focused on the military use of force, hence loses its purpose in preventing and protecting rather reacting with the military use of force. Though, it is vital to note that coercive military force is only defensible in the most extreme and exceptional circumstances when multiple criteria have been satisfied in addition to considering the threshold for the seriousness of the threat to human security. When reflecting the shocking disastrous atrocities that have occurred in the past, and the advantage of using military force, could have saved thousands of innocent lives. Rwanda 1994 and Srebrenica in 1995 are examples of where the military use of force could have been used to protect innocent civilians. Due to the seriousness of the issue and the immediate risk of those under threat it makes it extremely challenging to have a set of rules regarding the legitimacy and stages of when the military use of force is appropriate. Concerning the legitimacy of the use of military force against the will of the state in question, the Security Council must adopt the guidelines set out by the ICISS Commission. One of the five criteria is known as Just Cause, where there is a serious and irreparable harm occurring to human beings or imminently likely to occur, examples of serious harm are known as genocidal intent or large scale of loss of life that is a product of deliberate state action or state neglect or inability to act. The bar military intervention for this is believed to set deliberately high and tight. Followed by the right authority criteria (Massingham, E. “Military intervention for humanitarian purposes: does the Responsibility to Protect doctrine advance the legality of the use of force for humanitarian ends?” International Review of the Red Cross, 91(876), 803-831. This refers to the question who should be authorising military intervention. The Commission have noted the Security Council, General Assembly and Sub-Regional Organisations have the right authority to authorise military intervention.

Right intention is the third guideline of the criteria. To have the right intention present for the proposed military action, i.e., to prevent human suffering. Last Resort, every non-military option must have been explored, all types of peaceful resolution must be considered, does not necessarily mean to have tried and failed every option before the military intervention. However, it does require a reasonable ground for believing that other measures would not have worked. The scale and the duration of the planned military intervention must be based on the minimum necessary basis to secure the defined human protection known as Proportional Means as part of the criteria. Finally, the Reasonable Prospects is known for the reasonable chance of the military action being successful in meeting the threat in question. The test of balance of consequences is applied where the consequence of action is not likely to be worse than the consequence of inaction.

It is argued that the existence of the criteria does not guarantee that the Security Council will adapt every time military use of force is involved, nonetheless, to an extent it does reflect on the nature of the Security Council’s debate on achieving a consensus regarding when and what action to be taken when deciding military intervention is required. It was further noted by the Commission that although the first point of call must be from the Security Council, however, due to the past inability of the Council, General Assembly or Regional Organizations would have a high degree of legitimacy, this, however, must satisfy the ‘right authority’ criteria for military intervention.

Military intervention for humanitarian purposes has always been a heated debate. As it is found in the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty report, military intervention has a case of both when it has happened as in Somalia, Bosnia and Kosovo and when it has failed to happen, as in Rwanda’. In addition to the three elements of the R2P doctrine, though it is understood as a last resort measure, military intervention is a crucial part as part of the responsibility to react. Once again, a challenging issue to the principle is to respect the sovereignty of the state in question. Though the R2P principle has made it plainly clear that the concept of sovereignty is to provide protection rather than territorial control.

One of the arguments put forward to the co-chair of the Commission, Gareth Evans, was that the R2P is precisely another name given to humanitarian intervention. His response was that R2P is designed to be focused more on prevention, non-military forms of intervention and post-conflict rebuilding. With an integrated approach to prevent any conflict and avoid human rights abuses and mass atrocities. It is argued that the word protect has a very strong standing when understanding the phrase, and it leads to expectations. Intervention is then found lawful when failed states cannot deliver to protect the population from mass atrocities. Hence, military intervention for humanitarian ends can be added to the three main elements of the R2P. However, it
is vital to consider the UN Charter as previously discussed; it does not permit the use of force other than self–defence without the authorization of the Security Council.

As stated in the World Summit Outcome Document, the only operative military intervention is through the UN Charter, Security Council. The doctrine of non-intervention, therefore, remains the fundamental principle of the international legal system. From a legal perspective, there seem no other paths other than authorisation from Security Council, however, in practice the R2P doctrine and the responsibility to react element with military intervention for humanitarian ends may well take place outside the Security Council’s authorisation due to the inactivity of the Security Council may well be illegal but morally legitimate.

There are many unanswered questions regarding the new international norm known as the R2P principle, though it is classified as a significant step forward for the international community for taking a holistic approach to protecting population from mass atrocities. Though every situation differs thus makes the doctrine extremely challenging when applying. However, R2P asserts that an inability to intervene in one situation should not be based as a justification for not intervening in another. Most importantly, the UN confirming the legality of the declarations by the Security Council in which they find Genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, or crimes against humanity within the definition of what constitutes a threat to peace.

5. Conclusion – The Case of Syria

The Syrian conflict indicates no marks of abating. It has been observed that, the civil war has pulled on its violence has developed more extreme, systematic, and widespread. The dispute has also become more threatening and more intractable the stability and peace of entire Middle East. Already it had devastating outcomes for neighbouring Iraq and postures a permanent threat to Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon. The R2P, the international commitment adopted at the United Nation 2005 World Summit, has been leading to the global discourse on how to react towards mass outrage crimes in Syria. On the other hands, in Libya in the year 2011, despite the bitter debate nearby the United Nations Security Council-mandated involvement regional organisations, individual states and UN agencies have writhed to discover ways and means of maintaining their R2P the Syria’s people.

The responsibility to protect is the global norm; however, it does not have independent agency. The failure to protect civilian and to end atrocities in Syria is not a failure regarding responsibility to protect, but as of the imperfect institutions and actors charged with its execution. Afar from the main responsibility, three of the government of Syria to stop killing its inhabitants, responsibility rests with the one body mandated and trusted by the 193 UN members with the maintenance of global security. It has been observed that Syria has taken into unambiguous relief the realism of a twentieth century UN stressed to react toward twenty-first era challenges. The Security Council, without or with reform, is still obliged to assist crimes against humanity and end war crimes in Syria. Issues relate to the access of humanitarian, negotiating a political resolution and ending still complex and oppressed political risk. However, the inability to resolve successfully after four years of disputes establishes a catastrophic historical in aid of the Security Council. The harsh truth is that there is no informal solution to the distress of the Syrian populaces, then that does not show that the Security Council has to select between inaction and invasion. As the civil war in Syria passes added bloody anniversary, this still is true now because it was when the dispute began (Stahn, C. “Responsibility to Protect: Political Rhetoric or Emerging Legal Norm?” (2017) American Journal of International Law.

In Syria, there was the problem of responsibility for three years of bulkatrocity crimes. The Council of Human Rights Commission of Inquiry has issued various reports recording mass atrocities committed by all sides. They provide detail on how forces of government and their associated militias have been accountable for the gross violation, large-scale massacres, and war crimes of global humanitarian law as an issue of country policy. It was important for regional authorities including Turkey, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Iran to accept the necessity to military separate from the Syrian conflict and accept that a wider regional sectarian blaze was not in the strategic interest of anyone. The Arab league behind these powers, Russia and United States had a vital role to play as possible guarantors of any assigned settlement. It was also important for the Security Council towards single its willpower to castigate violations of any peace contract. It is therefore arguing that the primary organ responsible for maintaining peace and security – is impacted by realpolitik.
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"WE THE PEOPLES: THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN THE 21ST CENTURY"

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 (Djabatey, 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 178th 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, Alhindag (2014) considered nepotism as a sign of organizational weakness; nevertheless, it may become an opportunity for small and medium enterprises in Turkey. According to Alhindag (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

H0: Nepotism in Syrian public sector organizations have an undesirable effect on employees' job performance.
H1: Nepotism in Syrian public sector organizations have a desirable effect on employees' job performance.

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

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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cronbach's alpha</th>
<th>Cronbach's alpha based on standardized items</th>
<th>No. of items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.892</td>
<td>0.894</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3. Item-total statistics.

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

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>Std. deviation</th>
<th>N of items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.138</td>
<td>9.287</td>
<td>0.538</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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).

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

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).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nepotism</td>
<td>2.988</td>
<td>1.0816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational training</td>
<td>3.254</td>
<td>1.0728</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job performance</td>
<td>3.246</td>
<td>1.2427</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KMO measure of sampling adequacy</th>
<th>0.738</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bartlett's test of sphericity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approx. chi-square</td>
<td>6176.959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>df</td>
<td>861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Initial eigenvalues</th>
<th>Extraction sums of squared loadings</th>
<th>Rotation sums of squared loadings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>% of Variance</td>
<td>Cumulative %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.408</td>
<td>24.780</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.216</td>
<td>5.275</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.098</td>
<td>4.996</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.846</td>
<td>4.396</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.749</td>
<td>4.165</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.623</td>
<td>3.864</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.486</td>
<td>3.538</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.260</td>
<td>3.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.144</td>
<td>2.724</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>1.127</td>
<td>2.682</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.091</td>
<td>2.597</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>1.013</td>
<td>2.413</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>0.935</td>
<td>2.227</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9 summarizes the results of the three hypotheses proposed by the author.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Correlation value</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>$\alpha$</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>$t$</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nepotism to job performance</td>
<td>0.073</td>
<td>0.121</td>
<td>0.005</td>
<td>8.162</td>
<td>SE 0.557</td>
<td>14.650</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>$H_{01}$ is accepted. $H_{a1}$ is rejected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee training opportunity to job performance</td>
<td>0.284</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.081</td>
<td>5.983</td>
<td>SE 0.697</td>
<td>8.580</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>$H_{02}$ is rejected. $H_{a2}$ is accepted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepotism to employees' training and development</td>
<td>0.112</td>
<td>0.035</td>
<td>0.013</td>
<td>5.326</td>
<td>SE 0.459</td>
<td>11.612</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>$H_{03}$ is accepted. $H_{a3}$ is rejected.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

References


Critical Thinking in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq Schools: A Case Study of Two Prominent Schools in Erbil

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Abstract
Critical thinking goes beyond memorization, promotes independent thinking and reasoned judgment. It is a crucial element in connecting ideas, solving problems, and creating knowledge. Schools are considered to be among the initial steps in developing critical thinking where pedagogical methods would guarantee the formation of it. Critical thinking in schools develops the intellectual capability instead of using it as a memory bank of information where mind does not have any role to play. This work is an attempt to demonstrate role and effect of practicing critical thinking in primary school and analyse reflection and ability of practicing critical thinking in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The study relies on deep interview and observation of eighth-grade students and teachers in two prominent schools in Erbil, focusing on four different subjects. Type of questions raised by teachers and students during the lectures have been examined, and a detailed analysis of the reflection and ability to practice critical thinking is presented.

Keywords: Critical Thinking, Education, Education System, School, Kurdistan Region.

1. Introduction

Human beings begin to think from an early age since childhood, and each is looking at things from their own perspective when they are exposed to certain experiences that develop their capacity to be scrutinizing and focusing on a specific point. Scholars call that 'self-centred', where they think of themselves as the centre of universe (Little and Little, 2016). This is a quite common way of thinking for children since it increases the ability to focus on the world around. The problem raises when later in life, lack of proper education occurs that cannot help improvement of their thinking and cognitive development to terminate the self-centred stage. At that point, the self-centred stage is strengthened to create a sense of selfishness. Nowadays challenge in the education system is about how to pass one’s own perspective and examine other perspectives to testify different angles and approaches in thinking.

In the less developed countries and particularly in the Middle East, weakness in the education system and reliance on the banking method in teaching led to individuals who have a self-centred way of thinking. That is
called psycho-education way of teaching, an approach that might become a socio-centrism culture which might create a serious issue. For instance, an individual’s religious point of view is formed from his/her ideology, own country, and/or city, and they see their opinion as the only right opinion in the world. This creates problem with acceptance for example acceptance of others' perspectives and opinions.

Critical thinking plays a crucial role in accepting others and makes us open to others' perspectives and cultures. In critical thinking settings, students are centre of education process. They participate in analysing concepts through discussions and learn how to interpret various possibilities for strengthening their ability in thinking and distinguishing between ‘truth’ and ‘personal opinion’. In environments where critical thinking is encouraged and practiced, teachers are not allowed to impose their opinion, in contrast, they are the motivator who eagerly assist students' cognitive, mental, and emotional capacities to improve. Students themselves will be thinkers who dig deep to find answers and will not be imprisoned with textbooks and what has been said in classroom. Teachers will have facilitator role instead of conveying and transferring information.

This study examines the practice of critical thinking in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq schools and is conducted on Fakhir Mergasori and Cambridge-Capital schools in Erbil by examining the questions raised by teachers and students in different class subjects including science, social sciences, religion, and Kurdish language. The work is organized in four sections. In this section a brief introduction about the topic is presented. Section two includes the theoretical framework of critical thinking in the education process. Section three contains analysis and the study findings. The last section contains conclusions and a few recommendations.

2. Critical Thinking in the Education Process

section contains a brief overview about critical thinking and the benefits of critical thinking in the educational process and teaching.

2.1. Critical Thinking Overview

Thinking is an activity of mind, within the limits of information recorded in one's memory, to reach a conclusion. It is a mental process that becomes the dynamo and source of behaviour, reaction, and movement. Human is by nature a free being with thinking quality. All people normally have this quality equally, but it is often deprived of by cultural, political, and social systems. In many societies and countries, thinking in the interests of certain people is suppressed just like many people are politically and economically deprived of political, economic, and social privileges. Therefore, it is important to emphasize in the education process that, above all, the dignity of the individual and the right to freedom of expression and thought as a thinking creature is protected so that all are defined as free people who have the ability to think without discrimination.

Critical thinking is an objective intellectual analysis of facts to reach a conclusion (Cottrell, 2011). It is an attempt to understand the facts and examine the different dimensions of each subject, through questioning, analysis, evaluation, and comparative work, based on evidence, considering opposites, reading different perspectives, and estimating all possibilities. Philosophers and sociologists agree that critical thinking is a way to ensure development of individuals, families, societies, and even official institutions (Alsaleh, 2020).

Douglas North, who is an American economist and a Nobel Prize winner in 1993 in economy, emphasizes the importance of critical thinking and states that “If you want to know if a country is developing, do not look at its technology, factories, and buildings, because it is easy to buy, steal, and copy all of them. Oil can be sold and imported. To predict the future of a country, go to schools and primary schools and see how they educate children there. If they teach their children to be inquisitive, creative, patient, organized, fearless, ready for dialogue, public consultation, and group cooperation, they can be sure that the country is on several steps of sustainable and widespread progress” (North, 1990). For critical thinking to develop, the education process must be systematically at an innovative level, that is what Benjamin Bloom calls ‘creative expression’, which is a reference of the type of learning where learners think thoughtfully and critically to link facts to real-world experience (Bloom, 1956).

In the developed countries, since the middle of the 20th century, educational and social experts indicate that the classical education system cannot produce critical thinking students as learners are repeating teacher's knowledge only. Therefore, they thought to develop another approach that can create individuals that can contribute to knowledge and innovate. In this regard, Benjamin Bloom, an American educational psychologist
who made significant contributions to the educational theory, has developed a taxonomy and stated that learners initially just remember information, and the classical education system encourages learners to stay in that stage without reaching to understanding, applying, analysing, evaluating, and creating or innovating stages (Willms, 2003).

Educators are criticizing the current educational system for not having the capability to grow the intellectual level of learner despite highlighting the theoretical importance of innovation. For instance, a university like Harvard could not contain a learner like Bill Gates as he has looked for a proper environment for invention. He started innovation outside the education system to become that giant innovator. That means even in the educational institutions of the most developed countries like the United States of America, they have failed to provide environment for innovators.

According to Bloom's taxonomy, the teacher as evaluator is the highest example of an educated person. However, according to the recent studies about the classification, innovation is above evaluation (Zheng et al., 2022). That is, teachers do not have to be role models, they can be role models for those who want to be evaluated i.e., innovator normally has a higher level of cognitive ability than evaluator. Therefore, innovator, even if s/he is a learner, is now more cognitively significant than teacher. Nowadays as there is a kind of democracy in education, which is called educational democracy in universities and educational institutions, the relationship between teachers and students is not a relationship between a higher-level person and a lower-level person. Even in the design of classroom settings, the social interaction between student and teacher is not vertical which is an indication of the balance and horizontal power between teacher and learner. That means, the relation is based on equal ‘knowledge’ power which encourages universities and schools to become environments for educating talented, creative, and thinking individuals. However, in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, in addition to the classical education, we have another issue which is attention not much paid to thinking in terms of religious and cultural interpretations. The people who think and ask questions is considered to be a ‘lost’ person. That means, till now, we equate the act of thinking with random thinking, or excessive or over thinking.

In that framework, we conclude that in the Kurdish society, some of our problems are educational, and is related to the process of socialization of the individuals, some are cultural related to the interpretation of religion that does not encourage thinking, and some are political as our society does not encourage growth of free and thinking individuals. In politics, humans are seen as numbers as the more people are considered numbers, the easier it is to control. A thinking person is a free person, who is not easily monopolized or swallowed up in the political sphere.

2.2. Critical Pedagogy

The replacement of ‘banking’ with ‘dialogic’ teaching is fundamental to make change in the educational systems. Banking education is a characteristic of the culture of silence and a means of continuing, developing and stabilizing that culture (García-Carrión et al., 2020). Therefore, critical thinking, critical awareness, and struggle against fear of freedom, backwardness, and oppression must be directed towards banking education because without prevention of such system, educational revolution will not happen, and the society of oppression will not end. Banking teaching is the flow of information, advice, rules, and regulations from teacher to student and then retrieved through experiences. It is a teaching based on oppression which is an example of authoritarianism. It goes on a boring rhythm, and the learner's submission to the teacher constitutes the law of relationship. This kind of teaching includes the rules of silence, submission, chewing and repeating information, and takes it into the broad and various relationships of all institutions of society.

Paulo Freire, who was a Brazilian educator and philosopher, has criticized the banking teaching (Freire, 2000). He believed that this popular global teaching shows a distorted picture of human life, carves a cover of myth, prevents consciousness of workers, peasants and all the oppressed in the world from following free dialogue. It views learners as weak and worthy of ‘help’ and leaves them without independency, killing their critical, conscious thinking, and creativity such that the learner has a passive role in the process that does not contribute to any innovation (Freire, 2000). In addition to that, banking education leaves marks on character and mechanisms of social change process as it views humans as an abstract being, not a historical being. Therefore, it works towards adapting people to the stagnant social reality, not changing the reality and the relationships
within that reality. Furthermore, banking education considers teachers as center of education process and excludes learners from scope of the process. This form of education adapts the teacher's personality and characteristics to fulfill the banking task.

Research suggests a relationship between the ability to acquire critical learning skills and certain characteristics, including intellectual openness, flexibility, independence in decision-making, self-esteem, and self-confidence. In order to become a critic, an individual must implement previous decisions, and must have a degree of mental skepticism about assumptions, in addition to the ability to examine, tolerate, determine the authenticity of information sources, and recognize errors. Then s/he must be skilled in distinguishing between assumptions and generalizations, and between facts and claims (Cottrell, 2011).

With the increasing confrontations of the technological revolution, the world has become more complex. Overcoming such confrontations requires how to use skills and thinking abilities in full as active learning in order for students to acquire critical thinking skills that are more essential than ever. Today, in most developed countries, learning to think critically has become the main goal among the educational goals, and researchers believe that learning to think critically leads to the development of learners’ cognitive infrastructure. Contemporary education attempts to teach individuals how to learn and how to think with the goal of turning him/her from passive into active learner to have the ability to continuously learn and keep up with cognitive and social changes. If we want a learner to be a critical and creative thinker, we must teach him/her thinking skills that are appropriate to his developmental stage and learning ability through clear steps. Critical thinking also improves learner achievement, innovation, decision-making, and confidence. Thinking skills require strategies to build relationships between previous and new knowledge, organize thinking, help plan, and solve problems, make wise decisions, ensure active monitoring of cognitive processes, monitor understanding, and assess progress. That is, the process of learning and acquiring information from the horizontal dimension to the secondary dimension in order to go deeper into things, phenomena, and attitudes. It helps learners to discover and analyze almost all options and provides a feel of achievement and content. Finally, critical thinking is one of the most important foundation skills that learners need to express themselves in reading and writing. The process of reproduction of reading aims at the individual's ability to reconstruct acquired ideas and new unknown products.

Critical thinking is one of the most important keys to ensuring effective cognitive development that helps in using mind to the maximum to interact positively with environment, cope with life situations in which interests are conflicting and desires are increasing, succeed, and keep up with the progress of life (Paul and Elder, 2013). Critical thinking skills are those skills that all individuals in society need. Most of the empirical studies used to develop such thinking, methods, and experiences have demonstrated these skills. It benefits learner in several ways including (Cottrell, 2011):
- deeper understanding,
- independent thinking that may prevent backwardness and stagnation in society,
- encourages inquiry, searching, and not submitting to facts without thorough examination,
- makes learning in institutions meaningful i.e., learner efforts are worthy,
- increases level of achievement,
- makes learner more positive, active, and participatory in learning process,
- strengthens the ability to find solutions to problems and make appropriate decisions,
- increases self-confidence, and
- provides opportunities for growth, progress, and innovation.

In this rapidly changing world, the development of critical thinking skills has become a necessary subject as it helps active participation in society and gives students a variety of experiences that can adapt to the needs and developments of life and ensure success in the future. If democratic learning and education aims to prepare citizens with the ability to make decisions and choose freely, then this requires educators to pay attention to the development of this kind of thinking.

Teachers are considered to be one of the main factors to successfully practice critical thinking in education as learning highly depends on the way of teaching that teachers do in the classroom and teaching environments. One of the most important characteristics that teachers should have in order to setup an appropriate environment for the success of the learning process of thinking and learning is through listening to learners, providing enough time to think, providing opportunities for them to discuss and express their views, encourage
them to engage in active learning that is based on the emergence of ideas through asking questions and dealing with higher thinking, acceptance and reinforcement of their views, respect for their differences, efforts to develop self-confidence, and provide them with appropriate information.

There are a number of studies on critical thinking in the education process including importance, benefits, practice, and reflection such as Raj et al. (2022), Uribe Enciso et al. (2017), Hamid (2021), and Radulovic & Stancic (2017). However, there is not any comprehensive academic assessment on role and effect of practicing critical thinking in the education process in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq schools. This work highlights how to practice critical thinking in various subjects especially religion, social, science, and language for developing student skills to understand the subjects in more depth and growing thinking individuals in society that can create and develop.

3. Data and Analysis

This section contains the methodology, scope, data, and analysis of the study.

3.1. Methodology

Observation and deep interview method is used for studying the case. This approach is considered to be the best for performing accurate analysis of such type of studies since practicing a skill needs in-depth observation in the real set like teaching techniques and questions asked by teachers during the lesson, and to understand the reflection on student understanding by the questions asked by each which can only be achieved through observation and in-depth interviews.

3.2. Scope

The eighth grade of two prominent schools have been selected for conducting the study which are Cambridge International School - Capital City (CISC) and Fakhir Mergasori International School (FMIS). Both are private, co-educational, English-medium, independent day schools in Erbil. Four subjects have been examined in each school which are Science, Social Science, Religion, and Kurdish Language, each subject was managed by a single teacher, that makes observation of 8 teachers in total.

3.3. Data

A sample of questions asked by teachers and students in both schools have been taken to analyse the use of practicing critical thinking skills as demonstrated in Table 1 since questioning is the main element of critical thinking.

### Table 1. Sample of questions in each subject.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>FMIS Example of teachers' questions</th>
<th>FMIS Example of students' questions</th>
<th>CISC Example of teachers' questions</th>
<th>CISC Example of students' questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>What is the function of the body's organs?</td>
<td>Why the male body system is different from the female?</td>
<td>What do you know about the topic?</td>
<td>What are the benefits of eclipses?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Why is it formed like that?</td>
<td>How are eggs fertilized?</td>
<td>What does today's topic have to do with everyday life?</td>
<td>Why is it wrong to watch the eclipse directly?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>General questions about the topic</td>
<td>How are babies born?</td>
<td>How can we take advantage of this?</td>
<td>If I become a doctor, how can I apply this in my work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurdish Language</td>
<td>Who has heard of this poet?</td>
<td>This poet lived 100 years ago, why should</td>
<td>What do you think the character in the story will do?</td>
<td>Why did the character act that way?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.4. Analysis

By presenting several examples of teacher questions to students and student questions on various subjects as shown in Table 1, and we reached the following:

Two different methods of teaching are used in these two schools in Erbil. On the one hand, teachers try to link topic information to everyday life and practice critical thinking, and they try to encourage students to think about the facts. On the other hand, applying the banking method and using general questions by teachers makes students’ ability for thinking narrowed down and limited. Even in an important subject such as the sciences, students cannot widen their horizon of thinking and relate the subject to their daily life.
teachers can practice critical thinking techniques even in language lessons if they are properly trained and prepared. In return, if critical thinking method is not practiced, learners will remain within a boring circle of repeated questions with now added info or any motivation to think out of the box, the process continue to be transforming the information from teachers to learners.

- following critical thinking in teaching makes students ask deeper and ask more substantial questions and look at the problems and arrangements of their lives and their surroundings by linking the evidence with a critical way of thinking. On the other hand, the banking method keeps the questions repetitive which makes students' intellectual abilities relied on and attached to the teacher's answer. As result, students will accept answers and opinions which have been given to them without considering any other answers or views.

- the questions about religion and the questions asked by the students are intellectually vague and blurry, one might argue that on the one hand, there is no indicator for critical thought in students thinking, these types of questions shock students’ way of thinking and drive them into a closed end. This may show that in a religious education program, arguments based on clear discussions are not structured in such a way that they can raise questions based on a rational, humanitarian, and religious basis. On the other hand, the student's questions prove that the religious education program does not meet the student's intellectual and spiritual needs and dives into an ambiguous circle. It is obvious here that, in the subject of religion, there is little difference between the practice of both forms of teaching, rather, in both cases, students are driven to a closed-ended approach which will not enable them to act as critically as possible, so they ask the least question related to religion in an ordinary and common way.

Most teachers emphasized that they use critical thinking techniques in the teaching process. However, the lack of teaching time is an obstacle to this process and prevents the completion of the teaching process to achieve its goal. Another challenge to the practice of critical thinking in schools is that the use of laboratories for scientific subjects is very limited and must be carried out under intensive teacher supervision. That is, again, the limitations of the student's expression and talent are shaped within the context of the subject s/he has studied. As a result, the learner's ability to act and think critically to direct problem solving does not reach a level where he can rely on him/erself and freely to the point of creativity.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

As a result of the analysis and interpretation of the data obtained, the following conclusions are reached:

- Practicing critical thinking techniques will help students to improve their understanding of subjects and removes the fear of asking questions.
- Practicing critical thinking during teaching will enable students to relate the topics they learn to their daily lives.
- Using the banking method in teaching, limits and weakens students thinking ability and makes them intellectually inefficient because the only source they rely on depends on teachers understanding and answers that will be gained passively.
- Practicing the banking method in teaching makes the teacher the centre of education and thinking so that even if the student asks essential questions, the teacher does not take the question seriously, by imposing the teacher's point of view subjectively which discourages students to raise inquiries for understanding.
- Recently, the curriculum has been reformed and updated in the Kurdistan Region, but this alone is not enough to meet the needs of educated and thoughtful students. Teachers must be well trained in parallel with the reformation of any program update.
- To fill the gaps in lectures, some teachers raised this concern that their specialty varies what they perform in teaching, this would leave a wide gap as the possibility for investing in critical thinking will be very limited.

Based on the results, the followings are recommended:

- researchers to conduct wider studies on the practice of critical thinking in teaching at different stages and levels of education.
- the Ministry of Education to implement continuous trainings and workshops for teachers on how to practice critical thinking in teaching.
- providing teachers with clear instructions and clarity on how to practice critical thinking in different subjects.
- the Ministry of Education to follow up on instructions on the policies and decisions that have been made, especially those related to teaching and developing students' intellectual and cognitive abilities.
- the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Higher Education to collaborate in developing a strategy to meet the students need in education.

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