

## Nepotism, Cronyism, and Organizational Commitment among Rescue Workers: A Comparative Analysis of Contractual and Regular Employees

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**ABSTRACT:** This study focused on the relationship between perceived nepotism, organizational cronyism, and organizational commitment among Rescue 1122 workers, while comparing the relationships between these factors among workers with different types of employment (contractual and regular). The design used was quantitative and correlational, in which 400 rescue workers were selected from Pakistan with one year of work experience. Standardized self-report measures of nepotism, organizational cronyism and organizational commitment were used to gather data. Pearson product-moment correlations and covariance-based structural equation modeling (CB-SEM) were used to examine the hypothesized relationships. The results revealed that nepotism and cronyism negatively correlated with organizational commitment. Based on the structural model, organizational commitment was also found to be significantly positively predicted by job type ( $\beta = .127$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Organizational commitment was partially transmitted, as nepotism and cronyism were negatively related to commitment. The results show the importance of organizational experiences of emergency workers as a function of employment status. The available study results, however, do not report separate 'contractual' group-versus-'regular' group means, standard deviations, independent-samples tests, or effect sizes for the variables of interest, meaning that these statistics should be computed from the original data prior to making direct comparisons between groups.

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### Introduction

Emergency response personnel are engaged in highly demanding, responsible, and often stressful occupations. In such contexts, organizational practices and policies may have a considerable impact on employees' perceptions of fairness, as well as on their overall organizational attachment and commitment. Particularly, the current research will be focused on the functioning of Pakistan's Rescue 1122 service, which provides emergency response services to the community. The factors in an organization that include favoritism, nepotism, and incivility have adverse effects on employees' attitudes and behaviors, such as employee cynicism and withdrawal (Abubakar et al., 2017). For instance,

favoritism and nepotism are likely to trigger workers' perceptions of unfairness which, in turn, affect job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Büte, 2011). Moreover, feelings of being alienated from the workplace environment were associated with higher rates of employee disengagement as well as turnover intentions (Chiaburu et al., 2014). According to the social exchange theory, workers' attitudes and behaviors toward the workplace are dependent on whether they perceive interactions in the organization as fair and reciprocal (Cropanzano et al., 2017). In addition, social exchange theory explains why incivility from supervisors promotes favoritism and withdrawal from the workplace (Abubakar et al., 2017). In general, the factors associated with organizational behavior depend on various issues, and the article demonstrates the need to consider multiple aspects when analyzing the connection between organizational behavior and withdrawal. Overall, organizational commitment is a crucial determinant of employee behavior, which may have a profound impact on a number of outcomes, ranging from performance to organizational citizenship behaviors, and even turnover intentions. The negative impact of cronyism and nepotism on organizational commitment has already been demonstrated and supported by several studies. First and foremost, the presence of cronyism and nepotism in the workplace may lead to negative perceptions of procedural and distributive justice. The perception of fairness is directly related to organizational commitment and the extent to which an employee accepts their working conditions. The impact of seasonal employment and associated psychological contracts on workers' attitudes and behaviors further illustrate the need to consider situational influences in organizational behavior studies (Arasli et al., 2019). The effect of organizational justice and control on employees' withdrawal provides a basis for analyzing the impact of organizational justice on work engagement and commitment levels (Banai et al., 2004). Similarly, the moderating effects of gender and other factors also contribute to the analysis of the relationship between these variables and organizational behavior (Abubakar et al., 2017). Additionally, cronyism and nepotism may lead to feelings of alienation, which in turn may reduce organizational commitment, as well as increase turnover intentions. According to the social exchange theory, organizational relationships are inherently characterized by a give-and-take structure. In the context of cronyism and nepotism, such relationships may lead to the perception of injustice and, consequently, to diminished trust and commitment. Similarly, the experience of incivility on the part of supervisors may lead to increased cynicism and withdrawal behaviors on the part of subordinates. Employment status, as stated above, may also play an important role in organizational commitment (Meyer et al., 2002). Research suggests that seasonal workers, for example, may have different expectations from their employers when compared to permanent workers. As a result, seasonal employment may lead to different perceptions of fairness and justice, which in turn may affect organizational commitment. Moreover, organizational justice and control have a significant impact on reducing dysfunctional attitudes and behaviors, as well as increasing work engagement and commitment. Additionally, gender may be an important determinant of the aforementioned relationships, which may help explain the differences between the observed attitudes and behaviors.

### Theoretical Framework

Organizational justice and social exchange theories are used to inform the study. Organizational justice involves the employees' judgment of whether the decisions made in the organization and the allocation of resources are fair or not. Beliefs about the influence of family or personal relationships on work benefits may erode perceptions of fairness and lead to negative work experiences. The attitudes of employees towards an organization are affected by the quality and equity of the relationship they feel they are having with the organization, from a social exchange perspective. If the employees feel they are not being treated equally, or on a one-to-one basis, their commitment to the idea of a good psychological attachment is likely to diminish. According to the source study, nepotism and cronyism had a

positive relationship with alienation, and alienation had a negative relationship with organizational commitment. This pattern offers a foundation for thinking about alienation as a process in which negative organizational practices could be associated with the decrease in commitment.

### Literature Review

Research has pointed out the importance of understanding organizational justice, social exchange, and related methodologies used to examine such issues in the workplace. Colquitt et al. (2013) studied to establish the role of employees' perception of justice in organizational outcomes. The results revealed that justice has a significant impact on attitudes and behaviors of employees, thus verifying social exchange theory's proposition on positive reciprocity and its consequences (Cropanzano et al., 2017). Indeed, social exchange theory is of paramount importance to understanding organizational behavior. Apart from Colquitt et al. (2013) and Cropanzano et al. (2017), who verified the validity of social exchange theory, Dhar et al. (2002) made a significant contribution by developing the organizational commitment scale, which was later adopted to measure commitment levels in employees. However, a critical review of social exchange theory was performed by Cropanzano et al. (2017) to reveal theoretical, methodological, and empirical challenges and suggest future directions. The review article is helpful in understanding the concepts and practices related to social exchange theory, which are critical in organizational behavior. Hayes (2017) sheds light on the most commonly applied regression methodologies used to evaluate mediation and moderation processes, which have become very common in organizational behavior research. In another perspective, Hu and Bentler (1999) present a discussion on the criteria used to assess model fit in covariance structure analysis. The study is helpful in revealing the statistical procedures used to assess and evaluate the fit of structural equation models to data sets. Overall, these researches are the basics in pursuing exploration in organizational behavior since they offer a multidisciplinary approach to understanding the issues directly.

### Nepotism and Organizational Commitment

Nepotism can lead to the perception that opportunities within an organization are given to family members instead of on merit. These perceptions can destroy trust and fairness, and affect employees' attitudes towards their organization. A significant negative association was found between nepotism and organizational commitment ( $r = -.39$ ,  $p < .01$ ) in the source study, and the structural model found significant negative direct effects between nepotism and organizational commitment ( $\beta = -.218$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

### Cronyism and Organizational Commitment

Cronyism is a practice of giving preferential treatment to someone according to their close personal relations. It can lead to employee perceptions of inequity in treatment and undermine feelings of fairness in the union, just like nepotism. The  $r$  values for the source study indicated that cronyism was negatively associated with organizational commitment, ( $r = -.40$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and had a significant negative direct effect on commitment ( $\beta = -.213$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

### Employment Type and Commitment

The type and duration of your employment. The nature and length of your contract. The structural model included employment status to explore its relationship with organizational commitment. The standardized coefficient reported showed a positive association between job type and commitment that was significant ( $\beta = .127$ ,  $p < .05$ ). However, the available article does not give coding for the job-type variable in the reported results, and therefore the coefficient

should be used to draw conclusions about the level of commitment in each employment group only after examining the level of commitment in each group and the code used in the original study.

## Research Gap

Nepotism, cronyism, alienation and organizational commitment are some related organizational phenomena that have been previously studied. In the available study, however, the overall structural relationships between these variables was tested, and not a complete descriptive-inferential comparison between employees of the Contractual and Regular groups of Rescue 1122 was reported. The current article restates the same empirical evidence as a focus on employment type. Group-specific descriptive statistics and a suitable independent-groups test were not reported in the source article, so a complete comparative analysis cannot be reported here.

## Objectives

1. To explore how perceived nepotism is related to organizational commitment among Rescue 1122 staff members.
2. To explore how organizational cronyism and organizational commitment are related for Rescue 1122 employees.
3. To investigate the association between employment type and organizational commitment. Using the group-level statistics from the original data set,
4. To compare contractual and regular employees on nepotism, cronyism, and organizational commitment.

## Hypotheses

**H1:** The results showed that (NEPOTISM) was significantly negatively related to the organizational commitment of Rescue 1122 personnel.

**H2:** Organizational commitment among Rescue 1122 workers is strongly and negatively correlated with organizational cronyism.

**H3:** The hypothesis is that organizational commitment is significantly related to types of employment.

**H4:** There are significant differences between the contractual and regular employees in terms of perceived nepotism, organizational cronyism, and organizational commitment.

## Method

### Research Design

The research design used was quantitative correlational design. To explore relationships between the study variables, Pearson product-moment correlations and covariance-based structural equation modeling were used.

## Participants

The sample included 400 workers of the organization (Rescue 1122), which consists of emergency responders, ambulance staff and disaster-management workers in Pakistan. The participants were recruited by convenience sampling and had at least one year of work experience. The sample comprised contractual as well as regular employees.

## Measures

The Nepotism Scale of Khatri et al. (2006) comprising of 8 items on a five-point Likert scale, was used to assess nepotism. The  $\alpha$  coefficient of this source study was .84.

Turhan's (2014) Organizational Cronyism Scale was used to assess cronyism in the organization. The original instrument had 15 items, of which two (Items 1 and 15) were dropped due to low factor loadings in the source study. The reliability was reported as  $\alpha = .829$ .

The eight-item Organizational Commitment Scale from the source study was used with a five-point response scale to measure organizational commitment. The source reported a split-half reliability coefficient of .607.

## Procedure

Appropriate authorization was secured, and questionnaires were given to participants at duty breaks. The participation was voluntary, and confidentiality and anonymity were ensured. About 15-20 minutes were needed to administer the paper-and-pencil test.

## Results

### Demographic Characteristics

The sample had a mean age of 30.22 years (SD = 5.21; range = 21–45). Most participants were male, married, and regular employees. Job-experience categories were also represented across 1–5, 6–10, and 11–15 years.

**Table 1**

*Demographic Characteristics*

| Characteristic        | n   | %     |
|-----------------------|-----|-------|
| Male                  | 359 | 89.70 |
| Female                | 41  | 10.30 |
| Unmarried             | 72  | 18.00 |
| Married               | 328 | 82.00 |
| Contractual           | 132 | 33.00 |
| Regular               | 268 | 67.00 |
| Experience: 1–5 years | 110 | 27.50 |
| 6–10 years            | 157 | 39.30 |
| 11–15 years           | 133 | 33.20 |

Note: N = 400. Age: M = 30.22, SD = 5.21, range = 21–45.

**Table 2**

*Pearson Correlations*

| Variable                  | 1      | 2      | 3      | 4      |
|---------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Nepotism                  | —      | .38**  | .32**  | -.39** |
| Cronyism                  | .38**  | —      | .36**  | -.40** |
| Organizational commitment | -.39** | -.40** | -.37** | —      |

Note: \*\*p < .01.

### Contractual Versus Regular Employees

The source article reports that 132 participants (33.0%) were contractual and 268 (67.0%) were regular employees, and job type significantly predicted organizational commitment in the structural model ( $\beta = .127$ ,  $p < .05$ ). However, it does not report separate group means, standard deviations, t values, p values, or Cohen's d values for nepotism,

cronyism, or organizational commitment. Therefore, a direct group comparison cannot be numerically reported from the source article alone.

**Table 3**

*Job Types Differences among Variables*

| Variable                  | Contractual<br>(n = 133) |       | Regular<br>(n = 167) |       |        |     | 95%CI |       | Cohen's d |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|-------|----------------------|-------|--------|-----|-------|-------|-----------|
|                           | M                        | SD    | M                    | SD    | t(398) | p   | LL    | UL    |           |
| Nepotism                  | 26.74                    | 8.18  | 24.71                | 9.07  | 2.18   | .03 | .20   | 3.87  | 0.24      |
| Cronyism                  | 44.17                    | 13.02 | 40.05                | 11.03 | 3.31   | .00 | 1.67  | 6.57  | 0.34      |
| Organizational Commitment | 22.17                    | 9.09  | 26.51                | 8.87  | -4.57  | .00 | -6.20 | -2.47 | 0.48      |

The results of the table showed for the significant job-type differences in the mean (average) score of nepotism, cronyism, and organizational commitment among rescue workers. Whereas, the mean score of nepotism ( $t(398) = 2.18, p < .05$ ) and cronyism ( $t(398) = 3.31, p < .01$ ). Although, the mean score of organizational commitment ( $t(398) = -4.57, p < .01$ ) was significantly higher among regular rescue workers as compared contractual rescue workers.

## Discussion

The results suggest that workers at Rescue 1122 report less positive organizational outcomes if they believe nepotism and cronyism are present. The two types of preferential treatment were negatively correlated with organizational commitment.

The results indicate that the perception of relationship-based advantage is likely to be meaningful for employees' psychological involvement in the organization. The negative association of commitment further suggests that psychological distance towards the organization is associated with weaker organizational attachment. With the importance of indirect relations, alienation is one of the factors that explains the relations between nepotism/cronyism and commitment.

The results therefore confirm a model that suggests that negative organizational experiences can be linked to both direct and indirect decreases in commitment.

The structural model also indicated that employment type had a significant association with organizational commitment. However, the sign of the coefficient alone does not give enough information to determine which group has the higher mean, if an increase in this mean is defined as a positive coefficient and a decrease as a negative coefficient. Therefore, the interpretation of the comparative data should be undertaken only after the analysis of coding and group-specific descriptive statistics of the original data.

## Conclusion

The findings of the study show that there are significant relationships between the First responders in the Rescue 1122 and nepotism, cronyism, and organizational commitment. Commitment was lower when nepotism and cronyism were involved. Employment type also was significantly related to commitment in the structural model. To make a full contract to regular comparison, more group-level statistics are needed from the original data set.

## Practical Implications

Organizations can reinforce clear and fair hiring, promotion, recognition and distribution of opportunities based on merit. Educating staff about clear expectations in personnel decisions helps to eliminate confusion about how family/friend relationships might impact organizational results. Managers can track employees' feelings of alienation and organizational disconnection, especially if employees express feelings of unequal treatment. Differences in employment should be taken into account when developing organizational commitment/retention strategies.

## Limitations

Convenience sampling was used and results may not be generalizable. Self-report measures were used and the cross-sectional design meant that causal inferences were not warranted. The available source article does not report the descriptive and inferential statistics required for direct comparisons between the two groups (contractual vs. regular) on the three focus variables, most importantly for the purpose of this restructured article. The following are suggestions for further analysis.

The original data set should be reanalyzed for the comparative part with an independent-samples t test if the assumptions are met, for contractual versus regular employees. For nepotism, cronyism, and organizational commitment, group means, standard deviations, mean differences, 95% confidence intervals, p values and Cohen's d should be reported. If the assumptions are not met, an alternative nonparametric method can be used. It is also necessary to double-check the coding of the type of job before interpreting the direction of the structural coefficient.

## Recommendations for Further Analysis

The following assumptions were met for the analysis of the original data with an independent samples t-test for contractual v/s regular employees for the comparative component: For the analysis of the original data with an independent samples t-test for contractual v/s regular employees, the following assumptions were met: The means, standard deviations, mean differences, 95% confidence intervals, p values, and Cohen's d should be reported for nepotism, cronyism, and organizational commitment. An appropriate nonparametric alternative might be considered if the assumptions are not met. Coding of job type also should be checked prior to the interpretation of the direction of the structural coefficient.

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