



## The Impact of Organizational Politics on Employee Performance: Analysis of Nepotism, Favoritism, and Power Dynamics on National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA) in Sierra Leone

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### Abstract

The study explores the impact of organizational politics on employee performance within the National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA) in Sierra Leone, with a specific focus on nepotism, favoritism, and power dynamics. Employing a quantitative research approach, data were collected from full-time employees across various hierarchical levels using a purposive sampling technique. The findings reveal a significant positive relationship between nepotism and employee performance, indicating that personal relationships within the organization can enhance job satisfaction and performance. Equally, favoritism and power did not show significant influences on employee performance, highlighting the complex nature of organizational dynamics. Mediation analysis further suggests that nepotism indirectly affects power through employee performance, while favoritism shows a weak positive relationship with power but remains statistically insignificant. The study underscores the importance of considering cultural and social contexts, such as family ties and political affiliations, in understanding organizational behavior in Sierra Leone. Future research should delve deeper into the mechanisms of these relationships and explore strategies to balance nepotism with meritocracy to foster a fair and productive work environment.

### INTRODUCTION

Employee performance plays a critical role in organizational success, high-performing employees contribute to the achievement of organizational goals, improve productivity and efficiency, and enhance overall business outcomes (Arulsamy et al., 2023). However, employee performance is not solely determined by individual capabilities and skills (Ángeles López-Cabarcos et al., 2022). Assessing and managing employee performance is a crucial aspect of organizational management (Samwel, 2018). It involves evaluating and providing feedback on an employee's job performance, setting performance expectations and goals, identifying areas for improvement, and recognizing exceptional performance. Effective assessment and management of employee performance require a systematic approach (Nikolić et al., 2020). This approach typically includes the following steps: 1. Setting clear performance expectations: It is important to communicate to employees what is expected of them in terms of their job responsibilities, goals, and objectives (Ángeles López-Cabarcos et al., 2022).

Employee performance is directly related to the achievement of organizational objectives, when employees perform well and meet or exceed their job responsibilities, goals, and objectives, it directly contributes to the overall success of the organization (Siddiqui, 2014). Performance management is essential for organizations to ensure that employees are aligned with the strategic goals and objectives of the organization (Alqudah et al., 2022). It involves setting performance expectations that are aligned with organizational objectives, regularly evaluating employee performance against these expectations, and providing feedback and support to help employees improve performance (Nikolić et al., 2020). However, innovative activities can significantly enhance employee performance, by promoting a culture of innovation and providing opportunities for employees to contribute their ideas and suggestions, organizations can tap into the creative potential of their workforce (Khan et al., 2022). A workforce that consistently delivers high performance gives the organization a competitive edge. It enables the company to innovate, adapt to market changes, and outperform competitors (Rožman et al., 2023). When employees perform well, they are more likely to be engaged



and satisfied with their work. This leads to higher morale, lower turnover rates, and a positive work environment(Zhenjing et al., 2022).

Employee performance in Sierra Leone has long been a subject of public concern, particularly due to the noticeable disparities in competence between private and public sector organizations(Kanneh & Haddud, 2016). Corruption is a pervasive problem in Sierra Leone and affects employee performance at all levels of the workforce(Fayiah, 2022). Bribery, embezzlement, and nepotism are common, leading to a culture of favoritism and unethical practices which undermines meritocracy and diminishes motivation among employees(Kiryah, 2020). However, Sierra Leone is a country in West Africa, and like many developing countries, it faces a number of challenges when it comes to employee performance(ILO, 2020). However, some of the major problems that have an impact on employee performance in Sierra Leone, such as unfavorable working conditions, low pay, a lack of opportunity for training and development, corruption, and political unrest(Cubitt, 2011). The country's economic progress and employee performance will both benefit from addressing these concerns and also, they discovered that while corruption and political instability can have an insignificant impact on employee performance, chances for training and development, performance-based rewards, and job security can all have significant effects(Boamah et al., 2023).

Organizational politics, characterized by behaviors such as nepotism, favoritism, and power dynamics, plays a significant role in shaping employee performance within various work environments. Employee performance is also influenced by various external factors, such as organizational politics(Muiruri, 2023). Organizational politics refers to the use of power, influence, and manipulation within an organization to achieve personal or group objectives that may not align with the overall goals and objectives of the organization(Boon et al., 2019). Organizational politics can have a significant impact on employee performance, particularly in terms of pay, promotion, power, and equity(Rahman et al., 2011).

However, some studies suggest that a moderate level of organizational politics can positively affect individual work performance, excessive politics can lead to negative consequences such as conflicts of interest, power struggles, and a toxic work environment(Abun et al., 2022). To effectively manage organizational politics and mitigate its negative effects on employee performance, organizations should strive to create a culture of transparency and accountability, promote open communication, encourage collaboration and teamwork, and promote a culture of inclusivity and diversity(Abun et al., 2022). Research has shown that when employees perceive high levels of organizational politics, it can lead to negative outcomes such as decreased job satisfaction, lower levels of commitment to the organization, reduced motivation, and decreased performance(Paarima et al., 2024). Therefore, it is important

for organizations to understand the relationship between employee performance and organizational politics in order to effectively manage and mitigate their negative effects(Muiruri, 2023). Furthermore, understanding how organizational politics influence employee performance can help organizations develop strategies and interventions to promote a positive work environment and enhance performance outcomes(Paarima et al., 2024).

Nepotism within organizations is characterized by individuals in positions of authority displaying preferential treatment towards their relatives or close associates, this often leads to unfair practices in hiring, promotions, and other employment choices, where decisions are influenced more by personal connections than by the merits or qualifications of the individuals involved(Burhan et al., 2020). Nepotism is a term applied when an individual secures employment or advancement within a company solely based on their family ties while overlooking important factors such as their educational background, skills, abilities, and achievements(Lokaj, 2015). Additionally, low employee performance and a lack of team spirit result when someone is given preference in the workplace because of family ties rather than on the basis of their ability(Hubbarth, 2023). Nepotism indicates a threat to the organization's position because the selection of individuals based only on nepotism, regardless of whether applicants were the most qualified, has a dangerous effect on how well employee performed their jobs(Lokaj, 2015). Nepotism can sometimes result in smoother communication and collaboration among family members, as they may have a shared history and understanding of each other's strengths and weaknesses(Vveinhardt & Bendaraviciene, 2022). One potential positive aspect of nepotism is that it can foster a sense of loyalty and trust within a family-owned or operated business(Topsakal et al., 2024). Family members may have a deeper understanding of the company's values and goals, leading to increased dedication and commitment to the organization's success(Williams et al., 2018).

However, favoritism at work means showing special treatment to specific employees due to personal connections rather than their performance or qualifications, such behavior can foster a negative work atmosphere, reduce employee morale, and generate resentment among those who perceive unfair treatment(Lasisi et al., 2022). Favoritism has gained significant attention as a critical subject matter within corporations, governmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations(Fazekas et al., 2023). When employed as a form of recognition for outstanding employee performance, favoritism has the potential to motivate higher levels of productivity and improved performance among employees(Hussain et al., 2019). However, in Africa, favoritism manifests as nepotism, wherein individuals receive special treatment due to family ties or relationships, this bias can be observed across different domains like employment, education, and social standing(Vveinhardt & Sroka, 2020). The research discovered that showing preference towards certain individuals has a notably positive influence on the

performance of employees and human resource management practices (Alsafadi & Altahat, 2021). However, greater productivity may arise from both greater capability and commitment as well as favoritism in the workplace in order to acquire benefits or pursue their expected objectives, favoritism can have a negative impact on employee performance because it fosters a political climate within the organization that reduces competition for the best jobs and prevents high performers from advancing in their careers (Lasisi et al., 2022). When employees perceive favoritism in the workplace, it can negatively impact their motivation (Lasisi et al., 2022).

However, power is the ability to influence others and achieve goals through the use of inherent desire. This can be achieved through various types of power, including personal power, coercive power, expert power, and reward power (Fennell, 2021). Personal power is based on a person's attributes and characteristics that inspire others to follow them. Coercive power involves using force or threats to accomplish goals (Chughtai et al., 2023). Expert power is derived from a leader's knowledge or expertise, allowing them to influence others through their expertise. Reward power involves providing positive outcomes to influence others (Fennell, 2021). These types of power can be used for good or evil, depending on the person's character. Employee work satisfaction, organizational commitment, and performance are typically more closely correlated with personal sources of power than with organizational sources of power (Linda et al., 2021). Nevertheless, managers in both public and commercial organizations acquire and use power daily to further their organizations' objectives (Agustian et al., 2023). Nevertheless, Hartner-Tiefenthaler, (2021) path modelling analysis indicate that when employees perceive the organization and their supervisors as having coercive power, it leads to an increase in their inner resignation. On the other hand, perceiving the organization and supervisors as having legitimate power is positively linked to contextual performance, while being negatively associated with inner resignation. Moreover, the presence of supervisor reward power amplifies the positive connection between legitimate organizational power and inner resignation (Shang et al., 2023).

However, most studies examine the immediate impact of organizational politics on employee performance. However, a research gap exists in understanding the long-term consequences. Does continued exposure to nepotism or favoritism that led to decreased in employee performance (Yasmeen et al., 2019a)? However, the study aims to investigate the relationship between organizational politics and employee performance, utilizing nepotism, favoritism, and power as key metrics. The objective is to explore how organizations can mitigate the adverse impacts of organizational politics and enhance both employee performance and overall organizational effectiveness.

## Literature Review

### *Theoretical Background*

The equity theory examines how individuals perceive fairness in the distribution of resources, rewards, and opportunities within a social system. It focuses on the evaluation of outcomes and the fairness of the allocation process (Davlembayeva & Alamanos, 2023). It examines the relationship between the effort employee put into a situation and the outcomes they receive, comparing it to the inputs and outcomes of others (Inuwa, 2017). This theory suggests that individuals strive for fairness and will assess the equity of a situation by comparing their own contributions and outcomes to those of others (Adams, 1965). In this context, inputs refer to various factors such as an employee's time, skills, qualifications, experience, intangible qualities like motivation and interpersonal abilities, outcomes encompass monetary pay, perks, benefits, and flexible work options (Adams, 1965). When employees perceive an imbalance, they will take steps to rectify it. This can involve distorting their own perceptions of inputs and outcomes, directly modifying these factors, or even deciding to leave the organization, as explained by (Carrell & Ditttrich, 2014).

### *Employee performance*

However, employee performance refers to an individual's ability and drive to efficiently and accurately complete tasks related to their job (Elnaga & Imran, 2013). Employee performance on the job examines whether or not an employee executes his or her duties efficiently, individual performance can thus be divided into two categories, namely, the performance of a behavior described in the job description and the performance of a second behavior in response to the environment and not to instructions (Na-Nan et al., 2018). According to, Petsri, (2020) employee performance refers to employee conduct in relation to the responsibilities and objectives of a responsible business. Therefore, it is the proportion of a person's capacity that is utilized to successfully complete a task within a predetermined timeframe (Inuwa, 2017). It is important to note that there is no consensus among scholars about the definition of employee performance (Taamneh et al., 2021).

There is evidence that organizational politics are connected with positive results, such as reduced stress (Ferris et al., 1996), higher job involvement (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992), and improved performance (Maslyn & Fedor, 1998, Rosen et al., 2006). However, Vigoda, (2000) stated that there was a weak negative correlation between organizational politics and the performance of employees as reported by supervisors. In addition, Li & Mahadevan, (2017) revealed that relationship between, one of the characteristics of organizational atmosphere, favorably promotes employee performance. According to Abbas, Quaiser & Awan, (2017) study indicate that management must comprehend the perceptions of employees regarding the organizational politics prevalent in their firms and must implement ways to reduce the perception of organizational politics and increase employee performance.

### *Nepotism*

However, nepotism based on personal connections can occur in the majority of work environments (Elbaz et al., 2018). According to, Al-shawawreh, (2016) this phenomenon occurs in both developed and developing nations, spanning across both public and private sectors. Nepotism is associated with various outcomes, including employee frustration, apathy, reduced self-confidence, diminished skills, a feeling of social detachment, persistent anxiety, and pessimistic attitudes. It also leads to the dismissal of skilled workers, ineffective human resources planning, reduced competition among employees, hindered teamwork, diminished creativity and innovation, and a negative influence on organizational culture and decision-making (Safina, 2015). According to, Yasmeen et al., (2019) empirical findings stated that the tendency of nepotism has a negative effect on employee performance due to the fact that competent employees feel their work is not appreciated as much as that of relatives. Furthermore, nepotism represents a significant threat to an organization's reputation, as the practice of favoring family members or acquaintances for employment, regardless of their qualifications compared to other candidates, can have detrimental effects on overall employee performance ((Singh & Twalo, 2014). When there is a disparity between how much employees contribute and the benefits they receive, it leads to a perception of unfairness in the workplace, this perceived unfairness can erode confidence, leading to detrimental effects on employee performance (Büte, 2011).

#### **Favoritism**

Favoritism in the workplace refers to the unfair or preferential treatment of certain employees over others (Büte, 2011). It occurs when a supervisor or manager shows bias towards specific individuals, often based on personal relationships, friendship, or other non-work-related factors (He et al., 2022). This can lead to negative consequences, both for the employees who are not favored and for overall employee performance (Özler & Büyükarıslan, 2011). However, objective measures of employee performance are rarely available, and firms rely on subjective judgments by supervisors. Subjectivity opens the door to favoritism, which can have both harmful and beneficial effects on organizations (Prendergrast & Topel, 1993).

Research has shown that favoritism in the workplace can significantly impact employee performance. A study by Cropanzano et al., (2003) highlighted how perceived favoritism can lead to decreased job satisfaction and commitment among employees, subsequently influencing their performance. Moreover, in a study conducted by Erdogan et al., (2012) it was found that favoritism negatively affects task performance, as employees may feel demotivated or unfairly treated, leading to a decrease in their overall productivity and commitment to the organization. This relationship between favoritism and reduced employee performance is further supported by various organizational behavior and human resource studies that underscore the detrimental effects of favoritism on workplace dynamics and productivity (Erdogan et al., 2012, Cropanzano et al., 2003).

#### **Power**

However, the relationship between power and employee performance can be complex and context-dependent, research suggests that certain aspects of power dynamics can impact employee performance (Okeke, 2020). For instance, a study by Delic et al., (2021) indicated that when employees perceive their supervisors as empowering, it positively influences their job satisfaction, motivation, and subsequently, their performance. Empowering leadership behaviors, such as delegating authority and providing autonomy, can foster a sense of empowerment among employees, enhancing their performance (Vu, 2020). On the other hand, excessive or abusive use of power by supervisors can have detrimental effects on employee performance (De Clercq et al., 2022). A study by Tepper, (2000) highlighted how abusive supervision, characterized by behaviors such as humiliating or controlling employees, is associated with reduced job satisfaction and performance. Employees working under such conditions may experience stress and demotivation, which can significantly hinder their performance (Bushiri, 2019).

However, acquiring power can significantly influence how individuals perceive and behave, the psychological effects of having power often empower those in authoritative positions to strengthen and uphold their advantageous status (Giurge et al., 2021). More precisely, power affects three key aspects of behavior that allow them to sustain their authority: emotions, thoughts, and actions (Anderson & Brion, 2014). Therefore, the outcomes of an experiment done in China reveal that participants used their authority to assist, promote, and otherwise empower employees when they perceived power as expandable as opposed to fixed or limited (Tjosvold & Sun, 2006a). They also responded to the employee's requirements by providing support to low-performing employees, but they formed a long-term relationship with high-performing employees and felt their authority was strengthened according to (Tjosvold & Sun, 2006b).

## **Research method**

### **Population and sampling**

National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA), is a semi-autonomous government agency that supports social sector ministries, agencies, and local authorities in delivering services to deprived and remote communities. The agency operates under a Board of Directors representing the government, donors, and civil society. NaCSA has regional, district, and chiefdom offices nationwide. For research purposes, a quantitative approach was used, focusing on full-time NaCSA employees across four regions, totaling 150 employees. Purposive sampling, also known as judgment sampling, was employed to select a sample of 100 employees for the study. The regions were chosen deliberately due to their responsibility for providing municipal services. The sample included employees from various hierarchical levels and considered factors such as position in the organization and gender (Ferrary & Déo, 2023).



**Analysis Techniques**

The research relied on questionnaires as the primary method for collecting primary data, aiming to gather employees' perspectives within organizations regarding different forms of nepotism and their impact on employee performance (Pelit et al., 2015). To ensure reliability, the study used previously employed questionnaire instruments in similar studies and incorporated Cronbach's Alpha coefficient to evaluate internal consistency and stability (Taber, 2018). The study followed the guideline that a reliability coefficient value exceeding 0.7 is statistically acceptable. In analyzing the data, the study employed Partial Least Squares (PLS3) analysis as an alternative to conventional methods like Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression or Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). PLS3 analysis is effective in establishing connections between independent variables and multiple dependent variables, particularly handling scenarios with a large number of predictors and addressing multicollinearity among them (Dash & Paul, 2021).

**Research result**

**Table 2. Respondent characteristics**

Category	Total	%
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	65	81%
Female	15	19%
<b>Age</b>		
under 20	1	1%
21 - 30	15	19%
31 - 40	46	58%
41 - 50	15	19%
51 - 60	3	4%
<b>Job position</b>		
Top management	10	13%
Middle management	33	41%
Lower management	22	28%
others	15	19%
<b>Education</b>		
Master's Degree	29	36%
Bachelor's Degree	39	49%
Higher Diploma	5	6%

Category	Total	%
Diploma	4	5%
Certificate	3	4%

Table 2 presents an analysis of employee demographics within NaCSA, revealing significant gender disparity with males comprising 81% of the workforce, indicating a need for initiatives to enhance gender diversity. The age distribution shows that 58% of employees are aged 31-40, highlighting a mature workforce and potential areas for targeted recruitment among younger and older age groups. The organizational structure is primarily composed of middle management positions (41%) and 13% in top management, reflecting a structured hierarchy. The educational profile indicates a highly educated workforce, with 49% holding Bachelor's degrees and 36% having Master's degrees, emphasizing the importance of diverse educational backgrounds for effective social development initiatives.

**Variable Description**

**Table 3. Result of Convergent Validity 1**

Variable	Indicator	Outer loading	AVE	Remark
Nepotism	F	0.770	0.619	Valid
	T	0.754		Valid
	K	0.814		Valid
Favoritism	PC	0.807	0.595	Valid
	PT	0.802		Valid
	HRP	0.642		Valid
	TI	0.855		Valid
Power	E	0.802	0.722	Valid
	RP	0.853		Valid
	FP	0.892		Valid
Employee performance	TP	0.759	0.720	Valid
	SF	0.893		Valid
	A	0.887		Valid

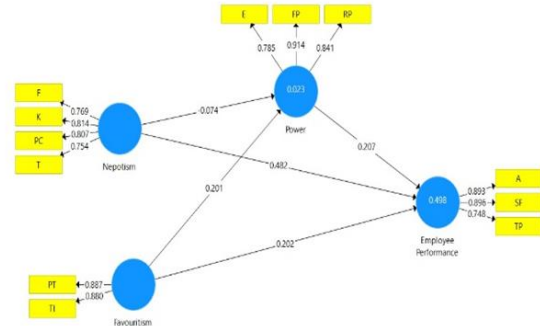
The analysis of latent constructs in relation to nepotism, favouritism, power, and employee performance reveals high outer loadings, robust association between variables, and convergent validity. The indicators' AVE scores suggest substantial variance explanation, confirming their reliability in measuring intended constructs. Consistent validation of indicators demonstrates the measurement model's robustness, indicating discriminant validity and laying the groundwork for structural modeling.

**Result of Convergent Validity second run**

Nepotism	F	0.785	0.719	Valid
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	T	0.785		Valid
	K	0.814		Valid
Favoritism	PC	0.807		Valid
	PT	0.887	0.780	Valid
	TI	0.880		Valid
Power	E	0.785		Valid
	RP	0.841	0.719	Valid
	FP	0.914		Valid
Employee performance	TP	0.748		Valid
	SF	0.748	0.720	Valid
	A	0.893		Valid

The analysis shows that the remaining indicators for all constructs exhibit robust measurement properties, with high outer loadings exceeding 0.7 and satisfactory Average Variance Extracted (AVE) scores for nepotism, favouritism, power, and employee performance, confirming convergent validity and reliability in measuring the intended constructs.



Path Diagram Model  
Hypothesis test results

Relationship	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Remark
<b>Nepotism -&gt; Employee Performance</b>	0.146	3.308	0.001	Accepted
<b>Favoritism -&gt; Employee Performance</b>	0.143	1.416	0.157	Not Accepted
<b>Nepotism -&gt; Power</b>	0.235	0.314	0.753	Not Accepted
<b>Favoritism -&gt; Power</b>	0.198	1.018	0.309	Not Accepted
<b>Power -&gt; Employee Performance</b>	0.11	1.881	0.061	Not Accepted

Source: PLS 3.

The table explains the hypotheses testing, below are the analysis.

**Nepotism and Employee Performance:**

- H1 suggests that nepotism has a significant positive effect on employee performance, supported by a T-statistic of 3.308 and a P-value of 0.01. Nepotism can lead to increased job satisfaction and performance due to personal relationships within the organization. However, it's noted that genuine qualifications and motivation also play a role in performance enhancement.

**Favoritism and Employee Performance:**

- H2 indicates a slight positive relationship between favoritism and employee performance, but it fails to reach statistical significance (P-value = 0.157). Favoritism can create a negative work environment and lower motivation, impacting employee productivity.

**Nepotism and Power:**

- H3 shows a very weak negative relationship between nepotism and power, with no statistical significance (P-value = 0.753). Nepotism can sustain disparities and reinforce privilege but may not directly correlate with increased power.

**Favoritism and Power:**

- H4 suggests a weak positive relationship between favoritism and power, also not statistically significant (P-value = 0.309). Favoritism and power dynamics are common but may not always lead to significant changes in power distribution.

**Power and Employee Performance:**

- H5 indicates a weak positive relationship between power and employee performance, though not statistically significant (P-value = 0.061). Empowerment and perceptions of authority can influence motivation and performance but are influenced by various organizational factors.

Mediation test results

Relationship	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Values	Remark
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	(O)	(I/O/STDEV)		
Nepotism -> Power -> Employee Performance	-0.015	0.278	0.781	Not Accepted
Favoritism -> Power -> Employee Performance	0.042	0.807	0.420	Not Accepted

Source: PLS 3

Table 6 explains the mediation test result, below are the analysis

**Nepotism's Influence on Power Through Employee Performance**

- H6 suggests that while nepotism has a very weak negative relationship with power (-0.015) and a moderate positive relationship with employee performance (0.781), there's a weak positive relationship between power and employee performance (0.278). This implies that nepotism doesn't directly impact power but affects it indirectly through employee performance.

- In NaCSA and Sierra Leone, nepotism intertwines with power and employee performance. Widespread nepotism can lead to individuals with personal relationships securing positions of authority, impacting employee performance positively or negatively. The Social Exchange Theory explains this as individuals exchanging resources like power and influence within nepotistic structures.

- Nepotism's prevalence across sectors in Sierra Leone often leads to authority positions secured through personal connections rather than merit, affecting employee performance and organizational dynamics.

**Favoritism's Influence on Power Through Employee Performance**

- H7 suggests a weak positive relationship (0.042) among favoritism, power, and employee performance, but this relationship is not statistically significant (p-value = 0.420). Favoritism can create a negative work environment and decrease motivation among employees in NaCSA and Sierra Leone.

- In organizational theory, favoritism can instigate power dynamics that either positively or negatively affect employee performance. When used positively, these dynamics can enhance performance, but they can also lead to perceptions of injustice and decreased motivation.

- Sierra Leone's context sees favoritism as a persistent challenge, often tied to personal relationships, tribal affiliations, or political favoritism rather than meritocracy. This dynamic can impact employee motivation, empowerment, and ultimately, their performance within the organization.

**Discussion of the result finding**

The analyses show a comprehensive examination of the relationships between favoritism, nepotism, power, and employee performance within NaCSA, with an exploration of mediation effects. These findings contribute significantly to the understanding of the complex power dynamics that influence employee performance and outcomes. However, the

analysis reveals a significant positive relationship between nepotism and employee performance, supported by a substantial T statistic of >3.308 and a low p-value of >0.001, indicating statistical significance. This suggests that nepotism relate positively with enhanced employee performance within the studied sample. The presence of ethnicity, family bonds, friendship, and political ties can cultivate trust and collaboration in NaCSA and Sierra Leone as a whole, thereby enhancing teamwork and productivity in most public organization.

Employers may choose to hire or promote individuals based on factors like ethnicity, family connections, close friendships, or political affiliations because they believe it lowers the risk of hiring someone unfamiliar who might not meet performance expectations. However, Sierra Leonean society places a strong emphasis on family and kinship ties. This can translate into a cultural norm were helping and supporting family members, including in securing employment opportunities, is seen as a positive act rather than nepotism. In some cases, there may be a lack of robust mechanisms for addressing nepotism or enforcing merit-based hiring practices. This can create a situation where nepotism continues unchecked, leading to its acceptance as a norm in certain settings. Altindag & Siller, (2014c)research findings indicate that nepotism does not directly influence employee performance, it was discovered that the factor of self-devotion, when assessed separately from nepotism, positively and directly affects employee performance. He further argues that although nepotism is typically seen as a managerial flaw, it can potentially transform into a beneficial opportunity for family-run businesses if it is utilized appropriately. This could involve hiring candidates who are closely connected to the shareholders and managers, or recruiting individuals who have previous business dealings with the company, and placing them in pivotal roles. Such actions can contribute positively to the organizational environment and dynamics.

However, the analysis indicates a non-significant relationship between nepotism and employee performance and also suggests that, based on the analysis, there is no direct impact of nepotism on employee performance. The analysis suggests a very weak negative relationship between nepotism and power, although this relationship is not statistically significant. This implies that the presence of nepotism in the NaCSA does not necessarily lead to an increase or decrease in an individual's power or authority within the organizational hierarchy. The mediation test provides insights into the relationships between nepotism, power, and employee performance. While the direct impact of nepotism on performance is not supported by this analysis. These results indicate that while nepotism and power may coexist in



NaCSA, they do not necessarily lead to changes in employee performance as measured in this study. However, Sierra Leoneans, like many other societies, have developed resilience and adaptability in navigating complex social structures, including power dynamics and nepotism.

Employees may find ways to work effectively within these systems, leveraging personal connections or understanding how to navigate hierarchical structures to achieve their goals. Cultural acceptance or normalization of power dynamics and nepotism can sometimes diminish the perceived negative effects on employee morale and motivation. This is because employees may see these practices as integral to the social context rather than obstacles to performance. Employees within NaCSA may have developed adaptive strategies to cope with or mitigate the effects of nepotism and power. This could include building strong professional networks, focusing on skill development, or finding ways to excel despite potential barriers. However, Haugen & Westin, (2016) suggests that nepotism not only affects employee performance and turnover intention but also hinders their opportunities for learning and growth within the organization. However, other potential factors might impact employee performance, such as job satisfaction, motivation, skills, and organizational culture. Additionally, the findings suggest that addressing nepotism alone may not directly improve employee performance. Instead, a holistic approach that considers various organizational factors is needed to enhance overall performance outcomes.

However, the first stage of the mediation analysis examines the link between favoritism and power. the analysis indicates a very weak negative relationship between favoritism and power, this shows that the relationship is not statistically significant. This suggests that favoritism does not directly influence an individual's power within the organizational hierarchy in NaCSA. The next step involves assessing the relationship between power and employee performance. However, the mediation test does not provide the coefficients for this specific relationship. Instead, it focuses on whether power mediates the relationship between nepotism and employee performance. The analysis indicates a non-significant relationship between favoritism and employee performance. This suggests that, based on the analysis, there is no direct impact of favoritism on employee performance. The mediation analysis evaluates whether power acts as a mediator in the relationship between favoritism and employee performance. The non-significant coefficient suggests that power does not serve as a significant mediator in the relationship. However, this means that the influence of favoritism on employee performance is not explained or channeled through power within NaCSA.

The results imply that while favoritism and power may exist, they do not necessarily lead to visible differences in employee performance based on the analysis. Sierra Leone has a complex cultural context where relationships and hierarchies play a significant role. Favoritism and power dynamics might be perceived differently within this context compared to more individualistic cultures. employee may prioritize loyalty and

relationships over meritocracy in certain situations. Some organization in Sierra Leone may lack strong transparency and accountability mechanisms. This can allow favoritism and power dynamics to persist without being adequately challenged or addressed. Economic challenges and resource constraints in Sierra Leone can affect the way organizations operate. In such environments, leaders may prioritize maintaining relationships and stability over strict performance-based evaluations. Historical factors, societal norms, and past experiences can also shape attitudes and behaviors in office settings. These factors may influence how favoritism is perceived and whether it leads to visible differences in performance.

However, it's crucial to consider other potential factors that might impact employee performance, such as job satisfaction, motivation, skills, and organizational culture. From a practical standpoint, these findings suggest that addressing favouritism alone may not directly improve employee performance. A more comprehensive approach that takes into account various organizational dynamics and factors is likely needed to enhance overall performance outcomes.

The mediation test results indicate that nepotism and favouritism direct impact on employee performance is not statistically significant, and power does not act as a significant mediator in the nepotism, favouritism to employee performance relationship. This suggests that while nepotism, favouritism, and power may exist, they do not lead to observable differences in employee performance in the analysis. There is need to consider additional factors like job satisfaction, motivation, skills, and organizational culture to better understand and improve employee performance in organization influenced by nepotism and power.

## Conclusion

This study delved into the effect of organizational politics on employee performance. The findings revealed a significant positive correlation between nepotism and employee performance, indicating that nepotism may indeed boost employee performance. However, ethical considerations regarding fairness and meritocracy are relevant, as nepotism could foster perceptions of favoritism and inequality among employees. However, the study did not extract significant relationships between favoritism and either employee performance or power. Despite exploring potential mediation effects, the results suggest that favoritism may not apply a significant influence on employee performance or power within NaCSA. Additionally, the analysis found no significant relationship between nepotism and power, highlighting the complex nature of power within organizations, influenced by various contextual factors beyond nepotistic practices. These insights underscore the importance of further research to unravel the complex mechanisms through which organizational politics impact employee performance and outcomes, informing more effective management strategies and policy interventions.



## Recommendations

However, future studies should endeavor to research deeper into the underlying mechanisms through which nepotism influences both employee performance and broader organizational dynamics. Explore adaptive strategies that employees use to cope with or leverage nepotism in the workplace, such as building networks, improving skills, or seeking mentorship. It's necessary to examine the ethical implications of nepotism from the employer's perspective. Evaluate how organizations can balance nepotism with meritocracy to ensure fairness and transparency in employee performance. However, the findings revealed a significant positive relationship between nepotism and employee performance, indicating that nepotism may indeed boost employee performance. However, it's crucial to consider other potential factors that might impact employee performance, such as job satisfaction, motivation, skills, and organizational culture. From a practical standpoint, the findings suggest that addressing favoritism and power alone may not directly improve employee performance. A more comprehensive approach that takes into account various organizational dynamics and factors is likely needed to enhance overall performance outcomes. Future studies could offer valuable insights into the evolving effects of nepotism over time, shedding light on its sustained impact on employee morale, organizational culture, and overall performance. Additionally, comparative research across diverse sectors and industries within Sierra Leone could explain differences in the indicator and consequences of nepotism, thus facilitating the development of more targeted interventions and policies aimed at fostering fairness and transparency in organizational practices across the country.

## Implication

### Implications of the Research Findings

The study did not attain 100 percent response rate because some of the respondents were unwilling to disclose information about the organization's behavior for fear of punishment or considered the information as highly confidential and google form was completely new to them such pushed more respondents to be neutral with their responses. This means that the results may not be generalized for all employees in NaCSA given that the sample selection may have also limited the generalization of results to the overall population.

### Managerial Implications

The analyses suggest that nepotism has a significant positive relationship with employee performance within National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA). This implies that family and social ties may influence individuals' success at work. However, there were no significant relationships found between favoritism and employee performance or power, nor between nepotism and power. These results underscore the importance of addressing nepotism in organizational practices to promote fairness and meritocracy. Management should prioritize transparent and merit-based processes for recruitment, promotion, and performance evaluation to moderate perceptions of favoritism and foster a culture of

equity and inclusivity within National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA).

### Theoretical implication

Theoretical implications of the result analysis challenge traditional assumptions regarding the negative consequences of nepotism by revealing a significant positive relationship between nepotism and employee performance. However, the lack of significant relationships between favoritism and both employee performance and power suggest that favoritism may not consistently translate into benefits or influence organizational power structures. These findings prompt a reassessment of existing theoretical frameworks to better account for the complexities of organizational behavior and interpersonal dynamics within diverse cultural contexts.

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