

PERCEPTION OF GRADUATING STUDENTS ON NEPOTISM IN GOVERNMENT EMPLOYMENT

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DOI: 10.47760/cognizance.2025.v05i01.046

Abstract:

This study examines the perception of graduating students from the Baguio Central University in the Philippines towards nepotism in government employment. Adopting a quantitative, descriptive research design with survey methodology, the study examines the occurrence of nepotism, its perceived influence on career aspiration among students. The research indicates that the graduating students view nepotism as being very serious, eroding public confidence in government institutions and discouraging qualified people from joining the public service. The research indicates that government agencies should fight nepotism through enhanced anti-nepotism policies, educational campaigns, and independent hiring committees to advance merit-based hiring and prevent favoritism in the employment of government officials.

Keywords: PERCEPTION, GRADUATING STUDENTS, NEPOTISM, GOVERNMENT EMPLOYMENT

Introduction

Nepotism is that favoritism given to the relatives, normally in the form of employment opportunities, which is a pervasive problem in public sector employment around the world (OECD, 2014). It is extremely toxic in public sector because people generally anticipate that public employees should deserve their jobs, irrespective of whether they are hired through merit-based criteria or not (Fisman and Golden, 2017). Nepotism negates meritocratic principles, reduces the efficiency of an organization, and erodes the confidence of the public among governmental institutions.

Nepotism also indicates the lack of meritocracy since more unqualified individuals seem to benefit from hiring and promotion strategies that indicate corruption (Scoppa, 2009; Geys, 2017). One can only hypothesize that nepotism is more probable in the existence if public sector wages are set above the optimal (Chassamboulli and Gomes, 2019) and hiring decisions are left to individual preference rather than a committee, for example. For example, Geys (2017) study observes that electorates favor meritocracy over political dynasties but politicians favor their kinsmen to fill job functions regardless of the latter's merits.

Favoring family members in the workplace has been a significant problem in the Philippines, particularly in government agencies where nepotism is prevalent. This goes against the Civil Service Commission's (CSC) rule that disapproves of political appointees and permits the appointment of family members in GOCCs who have what is known as a third degree of consanguinity or affinity in the national, provincial, city, and municipal civil service (Civil Service Commission, 2018). Nepotism is nevertheless prevalent in most companies and agencies, despite these rules, undermining the values of meritocracy and nondiscrimination in the provision of public services.

Nepotism appears to be well justified in government employment, and it has serious repercussions for graduating students after they find jobs. The way that prospective employees feel about nepotism may influence their career choices, which may deter talented people from entering the public sector. Perceived nepotism may exacerbate professional and family-based career anxieties, especially for male participants, according to a study that examined the synthetic capacity for nepotism perception among final-year undergraduates and recent graduates. This may imply that recent graduates brace themselves for situations involving unfair hiring practices, leading to elevated anxiety levels over future employment. (Yıldırım et al., 2024; Yavuz et al., 2020).

The findings in literature also support the idea that graduates who have family companies are more likely to exhibit entrepreneurial impulses. After graduating, children of self-employed parents are far more likely to intend to work for their own family enterprises. Kids who have at least one parent who works for themselves are over 175% more likely to have the greatest entrepreneurial intent than kids in the baseline scenario, even after controlling for survey non-response bias. (Kidwell et al., 2024; Vveinhardt & Sroka, 2020).

Moreover, for a candidate to be successful in the hiring process for public sector organizations, political affiliation has a strong positive and significant impact. The primary reason for this effect of employing members of that political party is the current ruling party's control over the choice of leaders for all public sector organizations. Therefore, it was evident from the data that nepotism was present due to political affiliation. The findings showed that political figures had a significant impact on public sector institutions' hiring of recent graduates. (Yasin et al., 2019; Chauke, 2023).

However, the "padrino system," the Philippine equivalent of the patronage system, undermines merit and provides nepotism with a fertile base throughout the nation. The following illnesses and corruption have been linked to this system in the nation, including the Padrino system in 2023. In addition to undermining public trust, these long-standing practices give new hires a sense of insecurity as they enter the workforce and fear being shut out by incumbents. (Agaton, 2024).

Methodology

Research Design

The study will employ a quantitative research design. The study is considered as a quantitative study. It involves statistical analysis and numerical forms data. According to Apuke (2017), quantitative research entails the use of statistical tools to analyze numerical data in order to answer questions such as who, how much, what, where, when, how many, and how. It also refers to the process of accumulating numerical data in order to understand a problem or event. Survey research, correlational research, experimental research, and causal-comparative research are all examples of quantitative approaches.

Specifically, the study will be employing a descriptive research design that will systematically describe the perceptions of graduating students toward nepotism in government employment. Descriptive research is suitable for this study because it gives an avenue for obtaining quantitative data, which will then be analyzed to identify trends and patterns existing within the target population, as explained by Creswell and Creswell (2017).

The research design would involve a survey approach while collecting data with the help of structured questionnaires that can measure one's awareness and perceived influence on the career aspirations of nepotism.

Target Population

The target population for this study would be random graduating students of Baguio Central University students; that is graduating students who are in the final year of study and, therefore, can be considered to be actively preparing for the world of work, hence the best respondents for assessing perceptions of nepotism and its impact on their career choices (Del Rosario, 2020).

Sampling Technique and Sample Size

Stratified random sampling will be used in such a way that the sample should reflect the academic disciplines and institutions under a representative proportion of the population (Friedman, 2018). The population will be divided into a number of strata on pre-conceived variables like university, field of study, and place or

region. Participants will be randomly selected from each stratum to produce a balanced sample which may represent the population in its entirety.

A sample size of 30 graduating students is adequate for making statistically valid inferences and yet allows for non-responses (Israel, 2017).

Data Collection Method

Questionnaires will be administered on an online self-report basis, which are to be forwarded through handing printed questionnaire to random students. This approach would also ease the data collection process and reach various participants from different courses of the university (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2014). It will have questions that will be closed ended in form with Likert scales and those which are opened for getting nuanced perceptions and suggestions, respectively. The reliability and validity of the questionnaire will be validated with 30 respondents using a pilot test before going to full-scale distribution (Santos, 2020). The result from the pilot test will be used in fine-tuning the clarity and relevance of the questions asked.

Voluntary Participation: The participation is purely voluntary and is determined by the ability to withdraw at will without penalty. **Confidentiality and Anonymity:** The respondents' responses will be confidential with no identity elimination in the final presentation of the findings to ensure anonymity (Reyes, 2017). **Non-Maleficence:** The risk to the participants is minimal because it only factors in perceptions without placing any of them within vulnerable personal information (Cabral, 2015). Addressing the ethical considerations within the conduct of the research may ensure respect to the participants whilst still showing regard to the dignity of the study.

Ethical Considerations: This study adheres to the prescribed ethics to protect the rights and interest of the respondents. Some of the most significant ethical considerations herein involved:

Results and Discussion

Perceptions of Nepotism

Statement	Mean Result
1. I believe nepotism is prevalent in government employment.	4.2
2. Nepotism negatively impacts the quality of government services.	4.5
3. I feel that the qualifications of candidates should always be prioritized over their relationships in government hiring.	4.8
4. I believe nepotism leads to a lack of trust in government institutions.	4.3
5. I think nepotism affects my chances of getting a job in government.	4.1
6. Nepotism undermines the fairness of the government hiring process.	4.6
7. Nepotism can lead to unqualified individuals being hired for government positions.	4.4
Overall Mean	4.41

The survey results reveal strong perceptions among respondents regarding the prevalence and negative impacts of nepotism in government employment. With a mean score of 4.2, respondents generally agree that nepotism is widespread, indicating a shared belief that favoritism in hiring is a persistent issue. The negative effects of nepotism on the quality of government services are highlighted by a mean score of 4.5, suggesting that respondents feel favoritism undermines efficiency and performance in public institutions.

The organization seems to have a great preference for merit-based hiring as evident by the mean scores where 4.8 is the highest. This shows that respondents expect that qualifications ought to always take precedence over experience and personal connections in recruitment procedures. Also, the assertion that nepotism weakens public trust in institutions of governance got an average score of 4.3 implying that favoritism undermines the public's confidence in the fairness of governance they receive.

Sample also perceived that nepotism influences their ability to get government employment, with a score of 4.1 for the unfair competition for employment. Likewise, the average overall rating of 4.6 means that the

participants partially or strongly agree with opinion that nepotism prejudice the occupational selection procedure. There is average score of 4.4, regarding the idea that nepotism leads to the recruitment of the qualified personnel to fill government positions and points the fact that favoritism undermines institutional goals.

Overall, a survey ID score of 4.4 indicates that respondents think that nepotism is a major issue in government employment. In this instance, respondents support merits yet have a bad opinion of nepotic hiring procedures. These results suggest, implicitly, that nepotism affects young entrants' self-efficacy and labor force expectations in addition to undermining trust in public institutions.

Personal Consideration

Statement	Mean Result
8. I would consider applying for a government position if I had a family member already working in that department.	3.8
9. I believe having a family member in government would improve my chances of getting hired.	4.2
10. I would be more likely to apply for a government position if I had a family member working in that department, even if I was not as qualified as other candidates.	3.5
Overall Mean	3.83

It is evident from the survey results that family relations can act as determining factors to influence the respondent's application to work for the government. Mean score rating 3.8, this shows that the respondents have a tendency of apply for a position if they have relative working in the same department of this organization. thus, family influence might have an influence on the intended career choice. Also, the guarantee that their kin's position in government would secure them a job holds high values, with the mean score of 4.2. This suggests an attitude that favoritism can offer a massive edge in the government employment procedures. Nevertheless, the mean score of 3.5 given when they were requested if they would take a government job if they were less qualified than other applicants but have a relative working for that department is slightly more neutral. This suggests some reluctance to use family connections when the respondents get a feeling that they lack adequate qualifications. Mean score of total respondents is 3.83 that confirm a respondent opinion about the fact that family connections use in government hiring may or may not be true. These results support the sentiment that favoritism is present when it comes to employment, the importance of which will not change since people should be provided equal opportunities for employment. Nevertheless, the mixed reactions also indicate that some of the participants still appreciate merit and qualification than the favor.

Future Aspirations

Statement	Mean Results
11. My awareness of nepotism influences my decision to pursue a career in government.	3.9
12. I would prefer to work in a government job where merit-based hiring is the norm.	4.7
13. My career aspirations would change if nepotism was common in government roles.	4.1
14. I believe that nepotism hinders the development of a more competent and efficient government workforce.	4.6
Overall Mean	4.32

The results of Section 4 provide valuable insights into how nepotism influences the career aspirations of respondents. A mean score of 3.9 suggests that respondents moderately agree that their awareness of nepotism impacts their decision to pursue a career in government. This indicates that perceptions of unfair hiring practices may deter some individuals from considering government employment as a viable career path.

Respondents expressed a strong preference for working in a government job where merit-based hiring is the norm, with a mean score of 4.7. This reflects the importance placed on fairness and competence in

recruitment processes, highlighting that meritocracy is a key factor in shaping their career aspirations. Furthermore, with a mean score of 4.1, respondents agree that their career aspirations would change if nepotism were common in government roles, suggesting that the prevalence of favoritism could discourage them from pursuing opportunities in the public sector.

The belief that nepotism hinders the development of a more competent and efficient government workforce is strongly reflected by a mean score of 4.6. This finding underscores the perception that nepotism not only affects individual career decisions but also has broader implications for the overall effectiveness and integrity of government institutions.

The overall mean score of 4.32 suggests that nepotism significantly impacts respondents' attitudes toward government employment and their career aspirations. The results indicate a clear preference for a fair and transparent system that prioritizes merit over connections. These findings emphasize the need for government institutions to address nepotism and reinforce merit-based hiring practices to attract and retain competent individuals who trust the fairness of the system. Addressing these concerns could help mitigate the negative perceptions of nepotism and enhance the appeal of government employment to aspiring professionals.

Conclusion

The study's findings, which were derived from the students' self-completed questionnaires, show that nepotism can significantly affect the attitudes of graduating students and their expectations and aspirations for employment in various government institutions. Respondents in all parts were certain that nepotism was the main issue, regardless of organizational success, public trust, or meritocratic criteria. The findings are summed up by the average scores, which show that nepotism is viewed as widespread, and negative which has a direct impact on public confidence in government hiring and recruitment procedures as well as deterring people from pursuing careers in the public sector. Furthermore, the majority of respondents continue to firmly support promotion, fair selection, and hiring practices, even while some acknowledge the benefits of family employment.

Recommendation

As part of the recommendations, several government agencies must strengthen their prohibitions on employing family members and improve the processes for filling open positions. Campaigns about meritocracy that address societal biases against applicants with disabilities are examples of further informative public education initiatives. Additionally, creating distinct committees to handle hiring practices and putting whistleblower measures into place showed promise for boosting the organization's accountability and equity. By doing this, the government will win back the trust of our future government employers, develop a workforce that is more capable and productive, and have a youthful, professional majority that serves the public based on qualifications rather than influence.

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