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The Perspectives of Teachers on Nepotism

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is twofold: 1) to determine the reasons for nepotism in schools and 2) to offer some possible solutions to overcome this issue. To reach this purpose, the researchers have addressed some research questions during the research. These are; 1. What is the definition of nepotism?, 2. What are the reasons for nepotism?, and 3. What should be done to bring down nepotism?. This study has been carried out using a phenomenology research design within the framework of a qualitative research approach. The study group of this research consists of 12 teachers working in Amasya in the 2020-2021 academic year. They have been determined by homogeneous sampling technique in the framework of purposeful sampling method. Semi-structured interview form has been created by the researchers and used as a data collection tool in the research. The participant teachers have defined nepotism as unfair earnings, influential contact, favoritism, taking sides, and discrimination. The participants have also stated that the reasons for nepotism are as follows; gender, political view, idea-belief, fellow countryman-relative, and teacher unions. To reduce nepotism issues in schools, the participants have also offered some possible suggestions such as right-law-justice, administrators, merit, and regulations. In this context, both policymakers and policy practitioners should make right-law-justice among people in society. Therefore, it could be a kind of school policy and culture. Also, administrators should act equally. Moreover, individuals should be supported in ethical behavior by administrators. Decision-makers should consider individuals' abilities when recruiting. In addition to all, policymakers must make the necessary legal arrangements in a short time. Unless these are done, nepotism as an organizational reality will continue to exist as a damaging factor to the organization. Based on the findings of this research, the researchers have concluded that unless nepotism is eliminated, institutions will not be able to serve effectively and that trained manpower will not be adequately utilized.

Keywords: Nepotism, Reasons, Teacher, School, Perspective

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Öğretmenlerin Kayırmacılık Hakkındaki Görüşleri

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Öz

Bu araştırmanın iki amacı vardır: 1) okullarda kayırmacılığın nedenlerini belirlemek ve 2) bu sorunun üstesinden gelmek için bazı olası çözüm yolları önermek. Bu amaca ulaşmak için araştırmacılar araştırmaları sırasında bazı araştırma sorularını ele almışlardır. Bunlar; 1. Nepotizmin tanımı nedir?, 2. Nepotizmin sebepleri nelerdir?, 3. Nepotizmi azaltmak için ne yapılmalıdır?. Bu çalışma, nitel araştırma yaklaşımı çerçevesinde fenomenoloji araştırma deseni kullanılarak gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bu araştırmanın çalışma grubunu 2020-2021 eğitim-öğretim yılında Amasya ilinde görev yapan 12 öğretmen oluşturmaktadır. Araştırmanın çalışma grubu amaçlı örnekleme yöntemi çerçevesinde homojen örnekleme tekniği ile belirlenmiştir. Yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu araştırmacılar tarafından oluşturulmuş ve araştırmada veri toplama aracı olarak kullanılmıştır. Katılımcı öğretmenler nepotizmi haksız kazanç, etkili temas, adam kayırma, taraf tutma ve ayrımcılık olarak tanımlamışlardır. Katılımcılar kayırmacılığın nedenlerini; cinsiyet, siyasi görüş, fikir-inanç, hemşeri-akraba ve öğretmen sendikaları şeklinde sıralamışlardır. Katılımcılar okullarda kayırmacılık sorununu azaltmak için hak-hukuk-adalet, idare, liyakat ve tüzük gibi olası öneriler sunmuşlardır. Bu bağlamda hem politika yapıcılar hem de politika uygulayıcılar toplumda hak-hukuk-adaleti sağlamalıdır. Bu durum okul politikası ve kültürü haline de getirilmelidir. Ayrıca yöneticiler bireylere eşit davranmalıdırlar. Okul yöneticileri bireyleri etik ilkelere uygun olarak davranma konusunda destek olmalıdırlar. Karar vericiler bireyleri işe alırlarken bireylerin yeteneklerini dikkate almalıdırlar. Tüm bunların yanı sıra politika yapıcıların da kısa sürede gerekli yasal düzenlemeleri yapması gerekmektedir. Bunlar yapılmadığı sürece örgütsel bir gerçeklik olarak nepotizm, örgüte zarar veren bir faktör olarak varlığını devam ettirecektir. Araştırmacılar, bu araştırmanın bulgularına dayanarak kayırmacılık ortadan kaldırılmadıkça kurumların etkin bir şekilde hizmet veremeyeceği ve yetişmiş insan gücünden yeterince yararlanamayacağı sonucuna varmışlardır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kayırmacılık, Nedenler, Öğretmen, Okul, Görüş

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Introduction

Even though nepotism is one of the least researched and most unwell-described human resource approaches (Kaushal, Ghalawat, & Kaurav, 2021), the concept of nepotism, which is more or less seen in all developed and underdeveloped countries, is one of the important subjects that have been started to be discussed frequently in both national and international media (www.theguardian.com; www.hurriyet.com).

According to the Turkish Language Association (TLA), nepotism meaning "advocating, being a side of" is a situation encountered from small working classes to big ruler domains. In line with the Oxford Online Dictionary (OOD), the meaning of nepotism is "giving unfair advantages to your own family if you are in a position of power, especially by giving them jobs" (www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com). Nepotism, which is common not only in public institutions and organizations but also in the private sector, is a situation that occurs in communication to provide mostly moral support to the people they know or care about and who ascend with certain favor (Argon, 2016; Erdem & Meriç, 2012; Yıldırım, 2013). Nepotism is present in every country in order to strengthen someone's presence in the area of residence and to have the necessary social power (Erdem & Meriç, 2012; Özsemerci, 2003; Yıldırım, 2013). However, nepotism is thought to increase as the required education level is not taken into consideration for most of the appointments in the institutions of our country (Argon, 2016). Nepotism caused by either needs, status quarrels, or forgotten humanity brings about some problems in business life. The most outstanding of these is that people who come with nepotism cannot move the institutions to a certain level, even if they lower the existing level. Incapability to carry out the desired studies, nepotism towards inadequate people, disruption of work ethics, and up to social division situations are some of the other striking results of nepotism (Yıldırım, 2013).

The spread of nepotism in different countries has started to impact areas in recent years by obstructing the nation's social and economic health (Kaushal, Ghalawat, & Kaurav, 2021). Though corruption types such as nepotism and bribery create some problems in the country's system, solutions have not been found properly yet (Çakır, 2014). Nepotism damages and weakens workers and managers (Jones & Stout, 2015) in any organization. This demonstrates that nepotism is a chronic problem. The unfair rapid rise of the person close to him, earning more from the people doing the same job, brings along situations such as waste of time in the workplace, delaying and neglecting the duties as they want day by day. After all, people who come to a place with nepotism seem to be the best in their workplaces while they have no validity to people who work better than them (Basu, 2009). Nepotism leads to unfairness within the workplace and this unfair behavior is able to influence how employees work together (Khatri and Tsang, 2003). Moreover, nepotism has considerable harmful effects on the employees' decision to leave and work satisfaction (Baloch & İraqi, 2020). One of the factors, not mentioned often in studies, affecting this situation is the tendency to self-serving bias. This behavior happens with taking on success to themselves, but blaming others for failures (Argon, 2016).

Literature Review

Looking at the related literature, types and reasons of nepotism are listed as; kinship nepotism, crony nepotism, political nepotism, clientelism, patronage, and sexual nepotism. In addition to the types and reasons for nepotism, the issue of nepotism in

school management and the consequences of nepotism are also discussed in the literature review.

Types and Reasons of Nepotism

Kinship Nepotism

Getting a promotion or being in a preservation position of someone who gets a promotion based on kinship relations with politicians, managers, or blood relations with ignored adequate skill and education is called nepotism or kinship nepotism (Argon, 2016; Erdem & Meriç, 2012; Fu, 2015; Özsemerci, 2003; Padgett & Morris, 2005). Bellow (2003) defines nepotism as the owner or manager's option to appoint family members (nepots) instead of unrelated employment nominees.

While some researchers have expressed that financial gain is obtained from nepotism (kinship nepotism), others have stated that spiritual gain is attained. Financial gain happens with salaries increasing with promotions while moral gain occurs in the form of dignity and appreciation (Özsemerci, 2003). However, as a result of kinship nepotism, which is one of the most encountered forms of nepotism in our country, it seems that individuals who do not have sufficient education ignore duties compared to working individuals in many public institutions (Erdem & Meriç, 2012).

Cronyism

The situation that occurred with grounding cronyism instead of merit (competence) and equality principles can be expressed as cronyism in public recruitment. The favored person here is a friend and people like acquaintances. "Citizen Nepotism" is evaluated as a special type of chronism in Turkey (Özsemerci, 2003). The risk of certain lacks in the organization, where cronyism is carried out, to come into the light which affects the institution adversely, is high (Çakır, 2014). Cronyism is the main reason for employee disappointment in any organization (Ozler & Buyukarslan, 2011).

Political Nepotism (Partisanship)

Political nepotism is the rewarding of people and obtaining unfair advantage by the political parties via giving various privileges to the groups who support themselves after they come to power. The party system can promise these before coming to power. After the election, they can follow these promises by choosing certain people to certain places within the framework of their benefits (Özsemerci, 2003). Partisanship is observed especially in municipalities, governorates, and health institutions. This is present in Turkey as in many countries (Argon, 2016).

Clientelism

Clientelism can be expressed as the political power looting the budget resources by allocating the state sums to the regions where it can get the most votes before the elections to come to power again (Erdem & Meriç, 2012; Özsemerci, 2003). More investments are made in the regions where the elections are won, and the fees for these works are earned from certain budgets. One of the problems in Turkey is that this nepotism conflicts with the principle of inequality and citizenship equality (Argon, 2016).

Patronage

Patronage is the name given to the new government's relieving senior staff of duty from

public institutions and organizations after the political elections and appointment of new people based on factors such as political nepotism, cronyism, ideology, and nepotism (Erdem & Meriç, 2012; Özsemerci, 2003). Patronage is a familiar circumstance in almost every state. This situation enables the ruling party to have continuance and allows it to do many jobs within specific frameworks with flexibility by strengthening its own pressure, weight, and authority (Özsemerci, 2003). The widespread use of patronage has caused to falling out of opposing ideas through divisions with sharp lines in society (Çakır, 2014).

Sexual Nepotism

Sexual nepotism is expressed in the situation in which managers or seniors employ/promote personnel privileging through discriminating against sexuality and romance (Erdem & Meriç, 2012). This situation results in a transformation of being of the opposite sex as an advantage rather than success and competence in the institution to benefit (Argon, 2016). When there happens sexual nepotism within the institution, there occurs such events that individuals are protected by the managers, delayed or not doing the work, or even get extra permissions which brings waste (Meriç & Erdem, 2013). As a result, while the institution does not get the progress it wants, the spread of these situations creates a crack in society and even leaves bad impressions against the names of their institutions (Çakır, 2014).

Nepotism in School Management

The conveying of the system and the laws to different dimensions via protecting another employee of the authorized person at the school or the political nepotism, acquaintance nepotism of the person to be appointed is called "School Nepotism in its management" (Argon, 2016; Erdem & Meriç, 2012).

It is necessary that school administrators are also expected not to neglect ethical rules in addition to obeying the laws as in every profession. However, the nepotism attitude observed in educational institutions from time to time may harm the teacher-administrator relationship by affecting the working teachers negatively (Erdem & Meriç, 2012). Definite problems and solutions are not handled within possibilities, the improvements depend only on the individual success of teachers because of groups caused by nepotism in schools (Yıldırım, 2013).

It is an expected probable situation that teachers show a negative attitude against the clientelist attitude of the school administrator. In order to avoid this situation, it is necessary that the school administrator treat teachers equally, fairly, and consistently. When the related literature is analyzed, the number of studies on this subject is quite limited (Argon, 2016).

It is a legal obligation of school administrators, like other public officers, to comply with the required articles of the law of "Ethics of Public Officials" numbered 5176 in 2004 (www.mevzuat.gov.tr). School administrators, one of the biggest factors in the success of a school, their all necessary high-level authorities are supported by laws in addition to taking all responsibilities in the school. School administrators should treat the staff equally and fairly in the schools where they are appointed. It is thought that education will not work at full efficiency as a consequence of teachers being affected badly in schools where they face nepotism by school administrators (Meriç & Erdem, 2013).

The Consequences of Nepotism

Nepotism is seen frequently in underdeveloped or developing countries attached to their culture and traditions more tightly (Çakır, 2014). Similarly, Boadi (2000) has stated that anti-nepotism policies have eliminated favored treatment in developed countries, although it is routine of daily life in developing countries.

Looking at the related literature, it is seen that nepotism causes many dramatic consequences. For instance, privileges and wasted budgets are some of the biggest obstacles to the expected development (Meriç & Erdem, 2013). In organizations where nepotism is broadly faced, member employment and promotion cannot be acted reasonably (Kawo & Torun, 2020). Also, clientelism results in system degeneration, bad recognition of institutions, and even the collapse of institutions. Managing institutions with relatives, acquaintances, and congregational groups leads to immense insecurity as a society. These structures based on the relationship of self-interest betray many points of culture and destroy them (www.memurlar.net). Since the participants observed nepotistic relationships at work, the resulting member withdrawal is a probable risk for the future of organizations in terms of interpersonal relationships and performance (Kawo & Torun, 2020). Furthermore, by reason of nepotism, the organization will be less competitive in the market for high-quality candidates and can suffer the loss of qualified managers (Nyukorong, 2014). Nepotism destroys organizational harmony and employees' motivations. Therefore, employees may not feel they belong to the organization and lose their desire to reach organizational goals. Consequently, these employees who feel nepotism and unfairness in the workplace perform at a low level, do not come to work, and even damage organizations' properties (Farahmand, 2013). Nepotism negatively affects the organization's productivity and leads to poor performance (Kaushal, Ghalawat, & Kaurav, 2021).

The problem in the merit system in recruitment arises at the first stage in Turkey. The written and oral exams used in recruiting government officers involve more general cultural knowledge rather than the competence of the candidate. Most of the nepotism types (kinship, acquaintance, political nepotism) are used in recruiting. This situation leads to corruption and deterioration. Another aspect of the mentioned situation is that it causes the deterioration of education and employment relations. It is seen that there are people who do not work in their own domains, but rather work in other tasks due to nepotism in public institutions and organizations. This situation brings about inefficiency in the work environment and health. It is difficult for an individual to perform well in a task other than his/her domain (Yıldırım, 2013). Nepotism is the reason for losing individuals' belief in justice and declining motivation and morale. Thus, employee displeasure, fatigue, distrust, depression, and many other adverse moods stem from nepotism (Chegini, 2009; Karakose, 2014).

Nepotism practices also obstruct managers who come from the new generation and have superior abilities. From this point of view, both material and moral losses occur. The most striking of the spiritual losses are the loss of impression and the decrease of faith in the institution. The financial losses are the unfair profit from the state's budget. It should not be ignored that these losses do not affect only the institution but the whole country (Özkanan & Erdem, 2015). It is observed that people who benefit from nepotism can manage their certain requests and work easily in schools and can acquire unfair income and positions, the lesson hours and guard duty schedules are formed according to the

wishes of these personnel. Together with these situations, it is said that they have the priority to go to training and seminars by ignoring the negative behaviors of the staff using nepotism (Argon, 2016). It is recommended for the school directors to behave equally, fairly, and neutral to all employees in the school administration. For this reason, it is essential that teachers, who teach at schools, carry out educational activities without feeling the concept of nepotism (Meriç & Erdem, 2013).

The Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

This study aims to determine the reasons for nepotism in schools, which are educational organizations, and to reveal possible solutions to overcome nepotism. To reach this aim, the answers to the following research questions are sought:

1. What is the definition of nepotism?
2. What are the reasons for nepotism?
3. What should be done to bring down nepotism?

Methodology

Under this title, the method of the research, the design of the research, the participants, data collection and analysis, validity and trustworthiness of the study, and the researchers' roles have been handled respectively.

The Method of the Research

This research has been carried out within the framework of a qualitative research approach. The qualitative research method has advantages such as focusing on events in their natural environment, following an inductive approach, conveying thoughts by noticing as they are, and allowing the researcher flexibility (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). Also, qualitative research evaluates the problems with an interpretative look, trying to make sense of social or human problems (Creswell, 2018).

Research Design

This study has been designed using the phenomenological research design, one of the qualitative research designs. Phenomenology design is not only a process in which a phenomenon is explained, but also it is a progressive process approaching the facts with an interpretative point of view (Creswell, 2018). Also, the phenomenology design prepares a basis for working in researching problems from daily lives that cannot be explained exactly (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013).

The Participants

The study group of the research has been determined with a homogeneous sampling technique in the framework of the purposeful sampling method. A subgroup is defined thanks to this method to create a small, homogeneous sample (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). Data sources in studies conducted within the phenomenology design are selected among the individuals and groups who have faced and experienced the study subject (Büyükoztürk, 2018; Creswell, 2018). When these situations are considered, the study group consists of 12 people, who have faced nepotism in their school, determined by the "Homogeneous Sampling" technique within the framework of the sampling method.

Table 1
Demographic Information of Participants

	Level of Education	Gender	Age	Year of Seniority	Branch
Participant 1	Bachelor's	Male	33	11-15	Classroom teaching
Participant 2	Bachelor's	Male	32	6-10	Classroom teaching
Participant 3	Bachelor's	Male	31	6-10	Turkish teaching
Participant 4	Bachelor's	Male	51	20+	History teaching
Participant 5	Bachelor's	Female	49	20+	Pre-school teaching
Participant 6	Bachelor's	Male	43	20+	History teaching
Participant 7	Bachelor's	Male	38	15-20	Math teaching
Participant 8	Bachelor's	Female	39	15-20	Turkish teaching
Participant 9	Bachelor's	Female	34	11-15	English teaching
Participant 10	Bachelor's	Male	47	20+	Science teaching
Participant 11	Bachelor's	Female	33	11-15	Pre-school teaching
Participant 12	Bachelor's	Female	35	11-15	Math teaching

As can be seen in Table 1, all participants have bachelor's degree; seven of them are male and five of them is female; their age range from 31 to 51; their year of seniority range from 6-10 to 20+; two of them are classroom teaching, two of them are Turkish teaching, two of them are history teaching, two of them are pre-school teaching, two of them are math teaching, one of them is English teaching, and one of them is Science teaching.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data for this research has been gathered using the semi-structured interview technique with teachers from different branches in June-July 2021. Researchers decided to choose this method to collect at first hand the perspectives and experiences on the subject of the participant teachers in the study. In semi-structured interviews, some questions are prepared before while some are shaped according to the course of the interview (Patton,2010).

The semi-structured interview was carried out within the framework of the interview form prepared beforehand. An academician from the university was consulted to validate the interview questions to have validity. To determine the comprehensibility of the questions, a pre-interview was made with two teachers before interviews about the study subject. At the end of the process, the final form of the interview questions was obtained.

Before the interview, teachers were visited and informed about the subject through communication. The interview form was left to every participant and a few days were given to think about the questions. At the end of this duration, they were informed that the researchers would come again. The interviews were done at the appointed time, day, and place. The participants were coded as P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, and P12 by keeping the names hidden.

Some demographic information was attained from the participants before the interview started. In addition, some questions about the study and follow-up questions to detail these questions were asked to the participant teachers. The interviews were done face-to-face. The researchers made the interviews paying attention to Kvale's (1996) points about the interview process to increase the quality of the interview. These points can be listed as; during the interview, paying attention to not the answers wandering off the aim of the study, recording and taking notes in the interview, taking care to get longer and more

detailed answers compared to the questions, obtaining convincing and deep answers and not intervening to the answers of the participants in the study.

Interviews were recorded so as not to lose any data in the interviews with the consent of the participants. Each interview lasted for about 25-30 minutes.

Apart from the questions in the interview form, additional questions are also included in order to get more detailed information by leading them to talk a lot on the condition that it does not go beyond the purpose of the research. Yıldırım and Şimşek (2011) state that the additional questions provide the data obtained during the interview to be more detailed and enriching.

These recorded data are numbered and converted into text. In the analysis of data descriptive analysis technique has been used. The reason why this technique is used in the study is that the descriptive analysis technique enables the data obtained to be summarized and interpreted according to the previously determined themes during analysis (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). In this regard, the data attained have been analyzed in four steps. These;

1. First, a framework for data analysis was created by considering the interview questions. The data obtained was determined on which themes would be planned and presented according to this framework.
2. Some of the data was excluded from the study as the data was organized according to the created framework and acted accordingly.
3. The attained data was supported by identifying by direct expressions. It was taken into account that the data would be comprehensible.
4. Finally, the cause-effect relationships between the findings were tried to be explained by explaining the identified findings.

Validity and Trustworthiness of the Study

In the analysis of the obtained data, some methods were used to ensure validity and reliability. These are respectively,

- In order to ensure credibility, long-term interaction with the participants was made, expert review was provided, and participant confirmation was made.
- In order to ensure transferability, the participants were determined according to the purposeful sampling method and detailed descriptions were made.
- In order to ensure consistency, it has been tried to show the necessary sensitivity in the creation of the data collection tool, the processes of obtaining the data, and the analysis of the collected data.
- In order to ensure confirmability, the researchers filed the interview forms used as a data collection tool, protected the raw data, and archived all the coding and notes they made during the analysis of the data (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011).

Role of the Researchers

The first researcher has worked for 4 years in institutions affiliated with the Ministry of National Education. Then, he has been working at the university for more than 9 years. The researcher has witnessed some incidents of nepotism at both institutions Therefore, he has considered studying nepotism necessary.

The second researcher started doing his master's degree after graduating from Amasya University Classroom Teaching Department and surmised that the nepotism concept has increased both in his undergraduate and postgraduate education periods in his environment and in the school environment. Within this scope, he has scanned some works on the topics of nepotism and reasons for nepotism in the literature, Thus, the researcher has decided to do this study to draw attention to nepotism, to the reasons for it, and to reveal some solution suggestions for nepotism.

Findings

The findings obtained were analyzed according to the research questions of the study respectively.

The Perception of Nepotism

The findings regarding the first research question of the study (1. What is the definition of nepotism?) are given below. Accordingly, the teachers participating in the research have expressed that they perceive nepotism as; 1. Unfair earnings, 2. Influential contact, 3. Favoritism, 4. Taking sides, and 5. Discrimination.

Table 2

Teachers' Definitions Regarding the Concept of Nepotism

No	Code	f	%	Sample Sentence
1	Unfair earnings	10	34	"That is, to give him that opportunity unjustly, even though he does not deserve it." (P2).
2	Influential contact	6	21	"Nepotism, supporting one's man, these expressions can be used." (P3).
3	Favoritism	5	17	"We can use concepts manhood, selectivity, injustice, etc. like." (P4).
4	Taking sides	4	14	"To discriminate, to take sides, to choose persons (III) but not according to the criteria but select according to his will." (P5).
5	Discrimination	4	14	"We can say discrimination as close meaning instead of nepotism." (P1).
	Total	29	100	

Looking at Table 2, teachers' definitions of the concept of nepotism are seen as; %34 unfair earnings, %21 influential contact, %17 favoritism, %14 supporting one side, and %14 discrimination.

Unfair Earnings

Most of the teachers participating in the study perceive nepotism as unfair earnings not deserved, and unfair competition between individuals. For example, one participant teacher has expressed nepotism as follows:

"To me, nepotism is gaining certain unfair earnings of people, namely, teachers, students, and staff in schools in such a way they don't deserve. Namely out of current regulations, it means that people reach to the things that they cannot get because of their political opinions, religious beliefs, or personal relationships except their present formal gains." (P6).

Another participant gave concrete examples of nepotism as followingly;

"For example, in a school, I witnessed that the course program was opened so that a person was able to overcharge even though he was inadequate to open a course. Actually, this was unfair in fact he wouldn't get great success when it was opened. Nevertheless, the course was opened so that it would provide economic income." (P2).

As can be understood that most of the participants see nepotism as unfair earnings not deserved, and unfair competition between individuals. Because of some unfair challenges in their workplace, it may be commonly experienced by individuals.

Influential Contact

Some teachers who participated in the study state that the concepts of nepotism and influential contact are the same. For example, a participant (P3) emphasizes influential contact as;

"Usually, instead of this if you have acquaintances in particular positions, you can use the sentence "done". It may be the concept of influential contact. These are the things that come to my mind right now. That's how nepotism can be said."

Also, another participant (P4) underlines influential contact's meaning and similar expressions "...When we say favoritism, influential contact first comes to mind, of course. We can also say that a particular person is wanted and received by a familiar manager for a mission. Synonyms may be favoritism or unfairness."

Unfortunately, the relationships among individuals in most workplace are still not good enough in terms of professional perspective. Therefore, the reality of influential contact may occur because of not being professional in the workplace.

Favoritism

Some teachers who participated in the study have evaluated the concepts of favoritism and nepotism as the same. For example, a participant (P2) states that:

"Nepotism is delivering a job to the people who are not worthy of that job, who are not capable of it, who do not have the principles and achievements required by that job just because they are close to themselves when assigning a job. In other words, as a reality it is a very bad thing to give opportunity, to favor people even though they don't deserve it. As a reality, there occurs giving opportunities, nepotism though not deserved also in our institutions like in others."

Another participant (P1) refers to outcomes of nepotism saying, "...There is a lot from the neighbors around us. For example, a friend of mine. Just because he has bilateral relations politically, he is currently in the position of superior where he should not be..."

Both familiarity and political intimacy are still two very influential elements in Turkish society. Therefore, both elements can be used if individuals want to gain power.

Taking Sides

Some participant teachers of the study have stated that they saw the concept of nepotism and taking sides in the same way. For example, a participant (P1) has referred to taking sides; "People have such considerations that who are close to me, who are in favor of my opinion should move to higher positions. It may be that those who are close to us are better. It could be both."

Also, another participant (P3) has stated nepotism clearly as

“You know, someone’s employing is not objectively done, rather we can say that someone’s employing occurs when the person is closer to us or has more acquaintances instead of questioning whether the person does this job better or without caring the merit of them”.

Unfortunately, there are generally political polarizations in Turkish society today. As a natural result of this, individuals on the side of power can get some privileges from time to time.

Discrimination

Some teachers involved in the study stated that they see discrimination similar to the concept of nepotism. For example, one participant (P6) has referred to discrimination with these sentences “I don't understand how some people are superior to me just because he's from the same hometown or the same union. Isn't everyone equal under the law? This is just what the books say. What really happens is exactly discrimination ... I have been a teacher for many years, and I have seen this in every school where I worked before.”.

Since discrimination and nepotism are two closely related concepts, some of the participants may have equated discrimination with nepotism.

The Reasons for Nepotism

The findings related to the second research question of the study. (1. What are the reasons of nepotism?) are given below. Accordingly, teachers participating in the study specified the reasons for nepotism 1. Gender, 2. Idea-Belief, 3. Political view, 4. Fellow Countryman-Relative, and 5. Teacher unions.

Table 3
Teachers' Perceptions of the Reasons of the Concept of Nepotism

No	Code	f	%	Sample Sentence
1	Gender	20	31	“A woman-man who is liked or admired wants to provide an extra plus for a man woman...” (P2).
2	Idea-Belief	17	26	“It comes from the fact that people want to employ people having their own ideas again in their own place.” (P4).
3	Political View	15	23	“If you are a political official and place the person who suits your opinion through nepotism, then they become confined to you.” (P3).
4	Fellow Countryman-Relative	9	14	“We can always come across with the business of interfering with people who have the familiar political power to get his child into work.” (P1)
5	Teacher Unions	4	6	“Unions have intervened, it is told that employ this one as he is the person authorities and different upper-level institutions know.” (P5).
	Total	65	100	

Looking at Table 3, it is seen that teachers rank the reasons for nepotism as 31% gender, 26% idea-belief, 23% political view, 14% fellow countryman-relative, and 6% teacher unions.

Gender

All teachers involved in the study emphasized that gender has an important place in nepotism. For example, one of the participant teachers (P3) has expressed the following words and described nepotism:

“Sir if we said that we do not do positive discrimination (III), it would be a lie when we approach it as gender. We're looking at the job, according to the job to be done, it will be difficult if we send a woman friend, but it will be easier if we send a man friend. Or, for example, let's say something happens about fine art, female friends become more interested. Male friends are becoming more involved when sporting events are happening. Here we are doing positive discrimination. If my arts teachers are more interested, we lead them, if we think that male teachers can be more efficient in sports activities, we direct them. We do positive discrimination in this way, but when we do it, we of course ask other friends.”.

Another participant (P2) has stated the gender effect on nepotism as if supporting the above participant:

“To me, in positive discrimination, gender has an effect. There is discrimination, especially regarding the relationship between men and women. A woman-man who is liked or liked wants to provide an extra plus for a man-woman. Therefore, I think that gender difference increases injustice and positive discrimination much more.”.

The fact that gender equality cannot be fully achieved in Turkish society and the practice of positive discrimination for women causes injustices from time to time.

Idea-Belief

Teachers involved in the study mentioned that ideas and beliefs caused nepotism in schools. For example, one of the teachers (P5) has touched upon the effect of ideas on nepotism:

“Someone finds others who share his ideas, gets the majority, and then multiplies that crowd around him. So, what they say, that is, to themselves it'll be easier to get that crowd to accept what they're saying, and then they'll be able to do it very easily as they have the others around them certify.”.

Similarly, another participant (P6) has remarked on the effect of ideas on nepotism as

“Especially nepotism can be evaluated as that people who have a certain thought or people who share a political opinion (...) come to some places by getting ahead of others, or to be tolerated because of the things what they do, or to be tolerated due to the mistakes they make.”.

As can be understood from the above statements, since having the same thoughts and beliefs provides privilege, it can also cause nepotism.

Political View

Some of the teachers involved in the study specified that there had been incidents of nepotism according to political views in schools. For example, one of the teachers (P3) participating in the study has revealed the situation; “Nepotism is already happening mostly in the political area. If you say why because they do each other's work. (III) If you

are a political official and place someone somewhere who suits your opinion by nepotism, they are confined to you. As he accepts you as an employer in his later life, he has to look like he's in your opinion, even though he may not accept your opinion on your side. From this point of view, nepotism is being done more in the political area."

Similarly, one of the participants (P4) has emphasized political views and their effects on nepotism "Teachers whose thoughts correspond with themselves are preferred instead of having a teacher who doesn't have their own views. An example of this hasn't happened to me, but I've heard that teachers sometimes can't go where they want to go within and out of the province."

Policy, which affects every aspect of life, also affects the school environment. In this context, having a similar political view can be considered as a reason for nepotism.

Fellow Countryman-Relative

Some of the teachers involved in the study cited the presence of fellow countryman relatives as one of the reasons for nepotism. For example, one of the teachers (P1) participating in the study has ascertained this situation with the following words.

"We always may come across with the people who interfere with people having familiar political power when putting their child to work. It happens among relatives, among neighbors around us, and among acquaintances, too. I can give you an example. A friend, for example. Unfortunately, he is in the position of chief right now where he shouldn't be just because he has bilateral relations politically."

Similarly, another participant (P6) has paid attention to the reality of fellow countryman-relative:

"I will answer this question again, especially from an administrative point of view. I mean everything is related to friends-relatives for our profession. This comes to the front in administrative appointments thanks to nepotism. Second, especially when teachers go to in-service seminars, they don't go according to their score, current success, or formal professional work according to the ranking, vice versa we see too much choosing the persons according to the special people for these in-service seminars and leading teachers according to them."

As can be understood from the above discourses, citizen-relatives have an important place in Turkish society. This reality can cause nepotism among individuals.

Teacher Unions

Some of the participating teachers in the study have also highlighted that unions have caused nepotism. For example, one of the teachers participating in the study explained this with the following words:

"As follows, unions have intervened, as some people have acquaintances in high authorities with different institutions, they are to be employed. I mean, people are not given according to the job, rather the job is given according to the people. Or when there is nepotism, the seat for the position is given, but the authority is not given. Just there's the image of the person, let that person's work be done. In other words, it is not crucial whether the work of an institution is done, the person works in the institution or not, just it is said that employ that person and handle it. If you can, you make them work. Of

course, because he has friends in high places and has favoritism from the upper authorities, you can't interfere or get work done." (P 5).

In a similar way, another participant (P2) paid attention to the unions that they cause nepotism:

"In our educational community, the union of people should not be cared for, everyone should be seen as equal. Everyone should be looked at as a teacher, an educator, and if work is done in their domain with the attention of seniority, years, this discrimination can be eliminated, inner peace can be achieved, and everyone does their job really well."

As can be seen clearly, there is no doubt that there is a political extension of teacher unions in Turkey. Hence, teacher unions can be an important factor that triggers nepotism in schools.

Suggestions for the Solution of Nepotism

The findings related to the research questions the third and the last one of the study (3. What should be done to reduce nepotism?) are stated below. Accordingly, teachers participating in the study have given some suggestions for reducing nepotism. These recommendations are collected under the headings; 1. Right, Law, Justice, 2. Administrators, 3. Merit, and 4. Regulations.

Table 4
Teachers' Suggestions for the Solution of Nepotism

No	Code	f	%	Sample Sentence
1	Right, Law, Justice	29	40	"In a place where there is no justice, success, trust, and peace don't exist" (P2).
2	Administrators	20	28	"If we apply what is written in the book, there will be no nepotism anyway, but to prevent nepotism, you know, it needs to be started from managers at the top rather than the persons at the bottom" (P3).
3	Merit	15	21	"I'd care firstly, merit, the dominance of social intelligence, whether problem-solving skills are good" (P1).
4	Regulations	8	11	"It is necessary to act according to the regulation, objectively prepared legislation to prevent nepotism" (P6).
	Total	72	100	

Looking at Table 4, it is seen that teachers rank suggestions for the solution of nepotism as 40% right, law, justice, 28% administrators, 21% merit, and 11% regulations.

Right-Law-Justice

Teachers participating in the study have emphasized that if people act together with the concepts of rights-law-justice, then nepotism can be avoided, and work will progress properly. For example, one of the teachers who participated in the study has expressed the following words:

"We must be fair to prevent nepotism. We need to focus on the concept of justice, altogether, that is, justice from the bottom to the top. That's the way it is in our religion. Give the work to the hand. So, it is necessary to give the job to those who have merit to

deliver the job. Because when you give that work to people who don't have talent in that domain, that institution, that society breaks down. It would be wrong to expect benefits or gains from the institution or a society deteriorated. Therefore, first of all, we must be fair. we need to be fair as a society. We need to care about merit. We need to give jobs to people who are really capable of doing the job, people who can be more successful in that job. Therefore, I think if we are in favor of justice, we will avoid nepotism." (P 2).

Similarly, another participant has highlighted that nepotism could be eliminated with the following words:

"For nepotism (iii), I think it is necessary to raise values in society to end nepotism. These are cultural values plus, let's say, the values of society, the right to give the concepts of law and Justice. These should be from childhood, not at advanced ages. In other words, the necessity that things shouldn't be taken if it is not for you or that it is not true to get earnings when you get ahead of someone and have those jobs. I mean, I think Islamic and moral values should be given in childhood." (P5).

It is clearly seen that unless we make right-law-justice among individuals in the workplace, it is very hard to avoid nepotism. Therefore, it could be a kind of school policy and culture.

Administrators

Some of the teachers involved in the study have given a suggestion to overcome nepotism involving administrators. For example, one of the teachers participating in the study expressed as below:

"The right to choose and to be elected should be given. I mean, if you send someone to an institution, the right to choose them must belong to the manager there. It shouldn't be I'm sending this and employ him, the administrator of the institution should be asked 'How an employer does he want to work with? or What are the criteria according to the job there should be asked and then they should be sent.'"(P5).

In a similar way, another participant supported the above participant as follows:

"It should be started from the junior managers to the top managers to prevent nepotism. First of all, these managers do nepotism. Let's look at the whole topic like this sir. "Our nepotism is now accepted. If nepotism is done or a work is done or if he's settled into a job, no one's questioning it anymore. (iii). Because everyone's after it. Now if someone is going to get a job 'who can I contact?' or There is not such a situation that 'Create a file, your merit will be evaluated'."(P 3).

As it can be understood from the statements above, administrators at all levels of the administration should act equally by acting against nepotism. Moreover, individuals should be supported in ethical behavior by administrators.

Merit

Some of the teachers who participated in the study have said that merit should be involved in overcoming nepotism. For example, one of the teachers participating in the study has emphasized the importance of merit with the following words;

"First, I would look at merit, then I would look at one's creativity with different practices, social intelligence, and human communication. After studying them, if 2 people are on equal terms, I would like to give priority to the last person I know. Apart from this, I

would first pay attention to his merit, whether his social intelligence is dominant, or his problem-solving skills are good.” (P 4).

Similarly, another participant revealed the necessity of merit in the following words:

“Give the job to the competent people. So, it is necessary to give the job to those who have merit. Because in that area when you give that job to people who aren’t talented for it, that institution, that society breaks down. Hence, it would be wrong to expect benefits or gains from a society, a deteriorating institution.” (P 2).

The abilities of the individual should be taken into account when recruiting. Otherwise, the reality of nepotism will be permanent. Therefore, instead of finding a job according to the person, the person should be determined according to the job.

Regulations

Some of the teachers involved in the study expressed that in order to overcome nepotism, it is necessary to act according to the regulations. For example, one of the teachers who participated in the study said the following words:

“I would act in accordance with existing laws, legislation, and regulations. I wouldn't look at anyone's political opinion, gender, or anything else. I would look at him whether he was doing the work properly, following the rules, being loyal to his state, and prioritizing the state or not. That is, I would prefer people who act according to normal legislation. Except this, I wouldn't look at any religious or political views. I'd look at his work in his domain. His studies in the field. I mean whether he does his service, his work with love he approaches people without exception and does objective or not.” (P 6).

Similarly, another participant highlighted that the regulations and laws must prevent nepotism definitely:

“The fact that nepotism is entrenched in society is a hard situation. First, we need to clear this up with laws and regulations and give people that opportunity. If you give people this opportunity, nepotism happens everywhere where people are, sir. If you don't give it, you need to make it impossible. If you leave something open to interference, nepotism will run somehow. Therefore, we must increase legal legislation and focus on practices to reduce the impact of nepotism.” (P 3).

In order to prevent nepotism, policymakers must make the necessary legal arrangements in a short time.

Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This study was conducted with permanent staff teachers working at the preschool, primary, secondary, and high school levels of the Ministry of National Education. Teachers who participated in the research have defined the concept of nepotism as unfair earnings, influential contact, favoritism, taking sides, and discrimination. Looking at the current Dictionary of the Turkish Language Association, nepotism is similarly defined as “advocating”, and “taking sides” (TLA, 2011). Likewise, according to the Oxford Online Dictionary, nepotism is “giving unfair advantages to your own family if you are in a position of power, especially by giving them jobs” (OOD, 2023). In a similar way, Erdem and Meriç (2012) have expressed nepotism as “supporting someone- nepotism”. Also, Özsemerci (2003) stated the concept of nepotism as “unfair gain” in his research.

On the other hand, teachers who participated in the study cited the reasons for nepotism as “gender”, “idea-belief”, “political view”, “fellow countryman-relative”, and “teacher unions”. When Meriç and Erdem (2013) similarly examine the causes of nepotism in their research, they reach the findings that “citizen-relative” nepotism is becoming widespread while emphasizing that the concept of “gender” is an important factor. Similarly, Argon (2016) supports that the “opinion-faith” factor is effective in in-house communications and management staff. From a different perspective, Çakır reveals in his research (2014) that “political opinion” and “countrymen-relative” nepotism are experienced in institutions and this will be harmful to institutions in the future.

Moreover, the researchers have found that the participant teachers have offered some suggestions to reduce the nepotism issue. These are “right, law, justice”, “administrators”, “merit”, and “regulations”. All of them have been discussed below in detail:

Policymakers and policy practitioners make right-law-justice among individuals in the workplace. Also, it could be a kind of school policy and culture. Administrators at all levels of the administration should act equally by acting against nepotism. Moreover, individuals should be supported in ethical behavior by administrators. The abilities of the individual should be taken into account when recruiting. In other words, instead of finding a job according to the person, the person should be determined according to the job. Policymakers must make the necessary legal arrangements in a short time.

When related literature has been examined, it is seen that there are some similarities in different studies. For example, Erdem and Meriç (2012) state that nepotism can be prevented by compliance with laws and ethical rules references. To prevent nepotism, Yıldız (2017) argues in his research that politics should be kept in the background of institutions and merit should be present in all areas, whose nepotism findings bear similarities with the findings of this study. In his study which tackles the concept of nepotism in public administration, Yıldırım (2013) has similarities in terms of paying attention to the effect of rights-law-justice concepts in management and merit is an unquestionable solution. In addition, Maya (2013) emphasizes the importance of ethical behaviors in terms of institutional structure. According to her, ethical behaviors can be shown by individuals as an institutional culture. She also states that organizations should have ethical values and individuals (specifically administrators) as role models should act according to them.

In addition, the findings of the relevant research demonstrate similar findings to some studies that have previously made findings on the results of nepotism. As for the results of nepotism Erdem and Meriç (2012), as for results of nepotism, Erdem and Meriç have concluded that nepotism is done according to hometowns and political views of teachers regarding their gender, within the school administrative assignments for teachers who are close to themselves, in cooperation with the teachers, in the preparation of the assignments and lesson programs. Özkanan and Erdem’s (2014) findings of nepotism in executive promotions and increased politicization in administrations are similar to the findings of this study. In 2016, Argon similarly addressed the political views, gender, co-amity, and union favoritism of managers, stating that the foundations of institutions for incompetent employment will be damaged.

According to the research results, researchers have provided the following

recommendations to reduce the effects of nepotism.

- Being fair should always be the most important priority, thoughts of rights, law, and justice should be given to people from childhood,
- The principle of equality should not be abandoned, every employee should be treated equally, management should be carried out objectively and honestly,
- Merit should be taken into account first of all, given to those who do well according to their ability,
- From the most competent administrator to the following employee, compliance with the necessary laws and regulations, is the biggest factor in preventing nepotism.

In today's world, competition between countries is fiercer than ever. One of the development criteria of countries and societies is undoubtedly trained manpower. However, unless a chronic problem such as nepotism is eliminated, it is obvious that institutions will not be able to serve effectively, and that trained manpower will not be adequately utilized. Therefore, both policymakers and policy practitioners should develop policies that will eliminate the negative effects of nepotism and pay attention to carefully implementing them.

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