

# Mediating Role of Job Dissatisfaction on the Relationship between Nepotism and Organizational Silence - an Empirical Study in the Banking Sector of Bangladesh

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## Abstract

Although nepotism is a global issue, its connection to employee attitudes and behaviors is not well understood. Based on social exchange and organizational justice theories, this study examines whether job dissatisfaction mediates the relationship between nepotism and organizational silence. A quantitative approach provided empirical evidence and results from a larger context. A structured questionnaire was used, involving 300 participants from Bangladesh's banking sector. As expected, the study found a positive relationship between nepotism, job dissatisfaction, and organizational silence. Additionally, job dissatisfaction partly explains the relation between nepotism and organizational silence. The research emphasizes the positive impact of nepotism on organizational silence and offers suggestions to reduce its occurrence in organizations. This is the first study to explore how job dissatisfaction influences the relationship between nepotism and organizational silence in Bangladeshi banks. It also addresses ongoing calls for more research on job dissatisfaction and its causes.

## Keywords

Nepotism, Job Dissatisfaction, Organizational Silence, Bangladeshi Bank.

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## Introduction

Research on nepotism is gaining importance among scholars and practitioners (Vveinhardt and Sroka, 2020). A bibliometric review by Kaushal, Ghalawat, and Kaurav (2021) showed that publications on nepotism nearly doubled over the past decade, which indicates the growing global concern about its ethical and organizational impacts. Managers more often see that nepotistic practices can threaten workplace fairness, decrease job satisfaction, and lead to employee silence, especially in sensitive industries like banking. In Bangladesh, reports of corruption and favoritism in both public and private banks highlight the ongoing presence of nepotism (Islam, 2013). Managers understand that customers' perceptions of nepotism can lead to boycotts or negative publicity (Kukreja, 2020). Although being a worldwide issue, the pros and cons of nepotism are still debated in many nations. Some believe it fosters corruption and impairs human resource management effectiveness (Jones, 2012; Wated and Sanchez, 2015), while others argue it can enhance organizational efficiency, particularly in family businesses (Bellow, 2003; Vveinhardt and Sroka, 2020). Despite growing academic interest, there is limited understanding of how nepotism influences employee attitudes and behaviors in Bangladesh's banking sector. Most prior research focuses on its immediate effects on outcomes like job satisfaction, commitment, or turnover intentions (Hossan and Hasan, 2021). Likewise, studies on organizational silence have examined its links to leadership style, fear of retaliation, and workplace culture (Morrison and Milliken, 2000; Vakola and Bouradas, 2005). Although these studies offer valuable insights, they often treat nepotism, dissatisfaction, and silence as separate issues, which leaves the underlying mechanisms largely unexplored.

There is limited research on how job dissatisfaction mediates the relationship between nepotism and organizational silence. By highlighting job dissatisfaction as a mediator, the study provides a deeper understanding of how nepotism influences silence within organizations. It also addresses the increasing need for research on nepotism (Arasli and Arici, 2020; Bekesiene, Petrauskaite, and Kazlauskaite, 2021; Jones, 2012; Kaushal, Ghalawat, and Kaurav, 2021; Vveinhardt and Sroka, 2020), organizational silence (Yalçınsoy, 2019; Örucü and Biyan, 2018), and job dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1966), along with their core causes (Morrison and Milliken, 2000) that have been understudied in Bangladesh's banking sector. The social and cultural context is especially relevant, as nepotism can be particularly difficult to control in Bangladesh and similar societies, where social norms encourage leaders to favor friends and relatives in hiring and promotions. While previous research on Bangladeshi banks has examined factors influencing job satisfaction and the impacts of nepotism on governance, no study has yet systematically explored whether job dissatisfaction acts as a mediator between nepotism and organizational silence. Addressing this gap can advance the organizational behavior literature and provide practical insights to enhance fairness, employee voice, and transparency in Bangladesh's banking industry. According to the Social Exchange Theory (SET), employees who perceive nepotism as a fairness violation may feel dissatisfied, leading them to avoid open communication. This study tests this idea within Bangladesh's

banking context, contributing both empirically and contextually to the field of organizational behavior.

## Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

### Nepotism

The term 'nepotism' originates from Pope Sixtus IV (1471–1484), who showed favor to family members, particularly his nephews (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2020). Historically, there was a clear distinction: nepotism involved favoritism toward relatives, while cronyism referred to favors for friends. However, these terms are now often used interchangeably (Jones, 2012), with standard measures of nepotism including both family and friends (Abdalla, Maghrabi, and Raggad, 1998). In this paper, nepotism is defined as giving preferential treatment based on blood or emotional ties rather than merit (Abdalla, Maghrabi, and Raggad, 1998; Arasli and Tumer, 2008; Bute, 2011).

Research on nepotism can be broken down into two main areas. The first looks at how managers and employees perceive nepotism. Many studies showed that most managers, including those in the USA (Abdalla, Maghrabi, and Raggad, 1998; Chen et al., 2017; Christie et al., 2003; Ford and McLaughlin, 1986), Brazil, China (Chen et al., 2017), Jordan (Abdalla, Maghrabi, and Raggad, 1998), Korea, India (Christie et al., 2003), and Poland (Ignatowski, Sułkowski, and Stopczynski, 2021), view nepotism negatively. Similarly, workers in Indonesia (Burhan, van Leeuwen, and Scheepers, 2020), Poland (Ignatowski, Sułkowski, and Stopczynski, 2021), and Turkey, especially under authoritarian leaders (Erden and Otken, 2019), also see nepotism unfavorably. Although most research suggests a negative view of nepotism, some scholars, such as Bellow (2003), argue that it may be viewed positively. Nepotism can also harm employee diversity since individuals often have friends from similar backgrounds (Pearce, 2015). Recent studies have examined boundary conditions, such as legitimacy, to understand how nepotism affects employee outcomes. For instance, Hudson, Gonzalez-Gomez, and Claasen (2019) found that perceiving nepotism as legitimate reduced its negative impact on affective commitment and perceived justice. Arasli and Arici (2020) discovered that psychological contract violations mediated the relationship between perceptions of nepotism and tolerance for workplace incivility. Overall, most managers and employees view nepotism negatively (Ford and McLaughlin, 1986; Burhan, van Leeuwen, and Scheepers, 2020), and nepotism has been linked to adverse employee outcomes, such as increased turnover intentions and reduced innovation (Agarwal, 2016; Daskin, Arasli, and Kasim, 2015). This paper offers a unique contribution to the second research stream by exploring whether job dissatisfaction mediates the relationship between nepotism and organizational silence. The following section briefly discusses organizational justice theory and social exchange theory, which support the proposed hypotheses.

### Organizational Justice Theory

Organizational justice refers to how people perceive fairness in decision-making, resource allocation, and management treatment within organizations. When employees

see or experience nepotism, they often perceive a lack of fairness in outcomes (distributive justice) and processes (procedural justice), as decisions are based on family connections rather than merit. These practices can damage various aspects of organizational justice, including fairness in outcomes, fairness in processes, and respectful treatment of employees (interactional justice) (Greenberg, 1987). This sense of injustice erodes trust in management and the organization's values, leaving employees feeling undervalued and unmotivated. Discontent stemming from unfairness can lead to lower effort, reduced job performance, and a weaker sense of commitment and belonging. Nepotism makes employees view promotions, rewards, and career prospects as based on family ties rather than individual performance. As a result, this perception can reduce employees' care for their work, harming overall performance. Furthermore, nepotistic practices can undermine employees' commitment to the organization.

### Social Exchange Theory

According to social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), workplace interactions involve a series of give-and-take exchanges between individuals. A social exchange starts when one party treats another with kindness or hostility, and the other responds in kind. These exchanges are guided by the norm of reciprocity, which suggests that when one party benefits, the other typically returns the favor with positive attitudes or actions (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005; Gouldner, 1960). On the other hand, negative treatment tends to spark unfavorable responses, potentially harming trust, cooperation, and flexibility (Gouldner, 1960). Since social exchange covers related concepts, such as organizational justice (Cropanzano et al., 2001), parties expect fair and equitable treatment (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). In organizations, employees use their skills and effort to complete tasks, and in return, they receive pay, benefits, and a safe work environment. When treated with dignity and respect, employees are more likely to develop a sense of commitment and display positive behaviors, such as organizational citizenship (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). Conversely, if employees feel that the organization has failed in its social role, for example, through workplace bullying seen as organizational neglect of safety, their commitment decreases, and adverse reactions may follow (Conlon, Meyer, and Nowakowski, 2005; Kakarika, Gonzalez-Gomez, and Dimitriades, 2017).

### Job Dissatisfaction

Job satisfaction is the emotional response employees have to their jobs, based on their evaluation of various job aspects, including rewards, supervisor cooperation, colleague relationships, promotion prospects, organizational development, and job security. The term "Job Satisfaction" refers to positive feelings, emotional responses, and happiness related to the job, based on these evaluations (Awal et al., 2020; Mousazadeh et al., 2018). Job satisfaction is a psychological feeling about the job (Paposa and Kumar, 2019). According to Scanlan and Still (2019), job satisfaction also depends on supportive colleagues, low work stress, a helpful supervisor, and opportunities for promotion. It affects key behaviors, including organizational citizenship, absenteeism, and turnover

intentions (Mount, 2006; Tazekand, Nafar, and Keramati, 2013). As noted by Akter et al. (2017), job security, working conditions, supervisor quality, and promotional opportunities are key factors in job satisfaction. On the other hand, some studies examine how job dissatisfaction directly affects work behavior. Herzberg (1966) noted that hygiene factors can alleviate dissatisfaction, but their absence can also cause it. These factors include poor policies, insecurity, strained relationships with colleagues and supervisors, inflexible work conditions, and low pay (Okpara, 2004). Job dissatisfaction is a state in which employees feel uncomfortable in their workplace. Factors that reduce job dissatisfaction include sound company policies, good working conditions, job security, adequate supervision, positive peer relationships, and fair compensation (Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman, 1959; Herzberg, 1966). Higher job satisfaction improves employee well-being, while dissatisfaction decreases it, ultimately leading to poor performance.

### Organizational Silence

Organizational silence happens when employees do not speak up about workplace issues for various reasons and keep their opinions to themselves (Yalçınsoy, 2019; Örucü and Biyan, 2018). They may have ideas that could benefit the organization but choose not to share them. There are three types of organizational silence: acquiescent, defensive, and prosocial (Şahin and Yalçın, 2017). Defensive silence occurs when employees are hesitant to express their opinions, even if doing so might have negative consequences, yet are willing to adapt and improve current conditions (Ülker and Kanten, 2009). Prosocial silence is when employees withhold information or opinions to protect individual or organizational privacy, which can foster motivation, information sharing, cooperation, and helpfulness (Amiri et al., 2018; Durak, 2014; Gencer, 2018). Employees often stay silent to avoid negative feedback from bosses or coworkers. Whatever the reason, silence can lead to lower motivation, poor performance, feelings of alienation, and dissatisfaction among employees (Öztırak and Barış, 2022). It also stifles innovation, causes communication issues between staff and management, and reduces organizational efficiency. Moreover, organizational silence hinders the development of solutions to problems (Akan and Oran, 2017; Durak, 2012). Therefore, an effective approach is desired that encourages employees to express their organizational concerns and ideas spontaneously.

### Nepotism and Organizational Silence

Employees' silence within an organization varies depending on the types of bias they face, as shown in existing research. For instance, Erkekli and Yavuz (2020) discovered a direct link between nepotism and employee silence in the accommodation industry. Macit (2020) examined self-nepotism in three public sectors. Polat (2016) found that perceptions of nepotism, favoritism, and cronyism differ by public employees' job status, with cronyism perceived most often. Hozouri, Yaghmaei, and Andbordbar (2018), focusing on municipal workers, found a negative connection between organizational silence and commitment, indicating lower organizational commitment. Demaj (2012) investigated the impact of perceptions of nepotism on trust and commitment, concluding

that perceptions of nepotism negatively affect both. Overall, these studies show a connection between nepotism and employee silence, suggesting that nepotism discourages employees from speaking up to protect their jobs. This silence can detrimentally affect their effectiveness, productivity, and motivation, ultimately decreasing the organization's performance, success, and goal achievement. Based on social exchange theory, the author proposes:

H1: There is a positive relationship between nepotism and organizational silence.

#### Nepotism and Job Dissatisfaction

While a few studies have established a direct connection between nepotism and job dissatisfaction, some organizational behavior concepts related to nepotism have been examined. Research has found that nepotism is related to higher employee job dissatisfaction (Abbas et al., 2021; Arasli, Bavik, and Ekiz, 2006; Arasli and Tumer, 2008; Daskin, Arasli, and Kasimet, 2015). When relatives of senior executives work alongside employees, nepotism can deteriorate morale, as employees often feel that family members are promoted and rewarded without merit (Abdalla, Maghrabi, and Raggad, 1998; Asunakutlu and Avci, 2010). Employee alienation occurs when workers believe that recruitment, selection, promotions, work divisions, authority delegation, information flow, and workplace relationships are not handled correctly. Nepotism-based practices within an organization can lead employees to develop an attitude of alienation toward the organization. This sense of isolation can lead to reduced job satisfaction, lower productivity, decreased motivation, increased job stress, and lower loyalty to the organization, resulting in higher turnover and employee quitting (Erkiliç, 2012; Kanungo, 1992). As a result, research has shown adverse effects on job satisfaction (Arasli, Bavik, and Ekiz, 2006), perceived job security (Keleş, Özkan, and Bezirci, 2011), and attitudes toward the organization.

Although job dissatisfaction is a significant attitude that employees may develop towards their work and organizations, with potentially negative consequences, existing studies lack a comprehensive understanding of this topic. To address this gap, an empirical study will be conducted to explore the connection between nepotism and organizational silence, with job dissatisfaction as a mediating factor. The goal is to deepen our understanding and develop solutions to the issue of nepotism in Bangladeshi banks. Drawing on organizational justice theory, the hypothesis is that:

H2: A positive relationship exists between nepotism and job dissatisfaction.

#### Job Dissatisfaction and Organizational Silence

A few studies have examined the direct connection between job dissatisfaction and organizational silence. To develop the hypothesis, the researcher examined the existing research on how organizational silence is linked to job dissatisfaction. Employee evaluations of their workplace often influence their feelings, thoughts, and satisfaction with the work environment (Pinder and Harlos, 2001). An employee who chooses to

remain silent and withhold their feelings may develop negative attitudes toward the organization over time, which could impact their overall satisfaction, especially in terms of interpersonal interactions, as they may perceive the organization as unfair and feel disconnected from communication (Çakıcı, 2008). Avoiding communication, staying away from organizational events, and refraining from expressing opinions can reduce job satisfaction by leaving employees feeling alienated and disconnected from the organization (Donaghey, Cullinane, and Wilkinson, 2011; Scott, Corman, and Cheney, 1998). Dissatisfaction with organizational activities may also lead employees to leave their jobs when opportunities arise. Consequently, dissatisfaction often manifests as silent behavior towards the organization. To promote employee commitment, management must foster an environment that encourages open communication. Elci et al. (2014) noted that reducing organizational silence and mobbing behaviors can decrease employees' intentions to quit. The literature review confirms that numerous studies have indicated that organizational silence negatively affects job satisfaction (Aktaş and Şimşek, 2015; Vakola and Bauradas, 2005; Dyne, Ang, and Botero, 2003). These findings demonstrate that employee silence is generally associated with job dissatisfaction. Based on this, the author proposes the following hypothesis:

H3: There is a positive relationship between job dissatisfaction and organizational silence.

#### Job Dissatisfaction as a mediator

This study investigates how job dissatisfaction influences the link between nepotism and organizational silence in Bangladesh's banking industry. While previous research has explored nepotism, organizational silence, and job satisfaction separately, few have examined why nepotism results in silence through the frameworks of organizational justice and Social Exchange Theory (SET). Existing studies show that nepotism can boost employee loyalty in family businesses, as family members are more invested in the company's success. Conversely, other research indicates that nepotism can cause dissatisfaction, stress, mistrust, turnover, and lower engagement and innovation. As favoritism becomes more prevalent, employees might adopt coping strategies, often leading to silence. From an organizational justice standpoint, nepotism undermines employees' expectations of fairness and meritocracy. When promotions and rewards are based on connections rather than merit, employees perceive distributive and procedural injustice. According to SET, employees develop psychological contracts with their organizations, expecting fair exchanges in return for their effort and reciprocity. Nepotism breaches these expectations, making employees feel undervalued and demotivated, which leads to job dissatisfaction. Dissatisfied employees are less inclined to engage in positive behaviors like voicing concerns or proposing improvements. Instead, they may remain silent as a defensive response to unfairness, fearing retaliation or ineffectiveness. This supports findings that unfair treatment and favoritism cause withdrawal, mistrust, and emotional disengagement (Pinder and Harlos, 2001; Pelit, Dinçer and Kılıç, 2015). Hence, job dissatisfaction acts as the psychological phenomenon which connects the perception of unfairness from nepotism to employees' silence behaviors. Consequently,

job dissatisfaction may mediate the relationship between nepotism and organizational silence. Based on this, the researcher formulated the following hypothesis:

H4: Job dissatisfaction mediates the relationship between nepotism and organizational silence.

Figure 1 summarizes the conceptual model of this study.

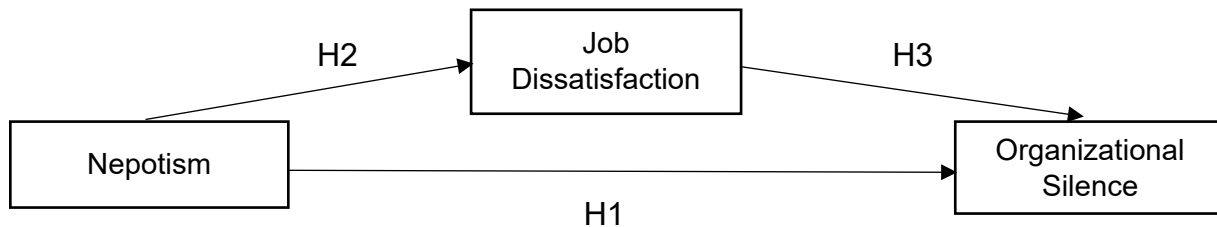


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework  
Source: Author

## Methodology

### Research Design

The researcher conducted a quantitative study using structured surveys to collect data. The focus was on examining relationships and investigating the mediating effects among the constructs. Data analysis involved both descriptive and inferential statistics conducted with IBM SPSS Statistics 22. The goal was to provide a detailed, practical analysis of how these constructs interact. Statistical analyses using Macro PROCESS (Hayes, 2022) were conducted to evaluate the hypotheses. Model 4 enabled mediation analysis to determine if the indirect effects of nepotism on organizational silence, mediated by job dissatisfaction, were significantly different from zero. The study used a percentile bootstrap approach with 5,000 samples (Shrout and Bolger, 2002) and was performed with Macro PROCESS Version 4.2 (Hayes, 2022).

### Population, Sampling Procedure, and Sample Size

A crucial part of this study is selecting the appropriate population to provide valuable data for testing the research hypothesis. Researchers typically choose a sample of the accessible population, which is the group they can reach, also known as the sampling frame (Fraenkel and Wallen, 1996; Johnson and Christensen, 2000; Creswell, 2005). In this study, the population consists of employees in Bangladesh's banking sector, and the sampling frame covers both full-time and part-time employees in the banking sector. The study used purposive sampling, a nonprobability method, and gathered data from employees at all levels of Bangladesh's banking industry. Data collection took place from June 1 to August 30, 2025, using digital platforms (email, phone, WhatsApp) and in-person interactions. A total of 300 valid responses were collected from employees across various banks, covering a wide range of organizations. Since no biological or clinical samples were used, the study raised minimal ethical concerns. Participation was

voluntary, with employees sharing their opinions freely without receiving any monetary compensation or incentives.

### Questionnaire Development and Measurement of Variables

The questionnaire in this study had two parts. Part A collected demographic data, including institution type, gender, marital status, age group, employment status, years of experience, job position, and educational qualifications. Part B measured respondents' perceptions of the developed hypotheses using a five-point Likert scale, with options from "1-strongly disagree" to "5-strongly agree" for all constructs.

### Nepotism

For this study, the researcher adapted the scale of nepotism from the work of Abdalla, Maghrabi and Raggadet (1998) and Babin and Boles (1998), which includes 10 items. The items begin with "Employees of this bank always feel they need someone they know or a friend in a senior position" and end with "Acquaintances' disagreements become business problems in organizations, allowing favoritism and cronyism."

### Job Dissatisfaction

The job dissatisfaction scale consists of 8 items. Four of these items are based on the study by Babin and Boles (1998). The items are: "I find my job unpleasant because witnessing nepotism toward unqualified people creates a toxic work environment," "I feel dissatisfied with my current job because nepotism hampers diversity and inclusion efforts, leading to the hiring and promotion of individuals from similar backgrounds," "I am often bored with my job when I see nepotism creates an environment where unethical behaviors, such as fraud and corruption, are more likely to occur," and "Most of the time, I have to force myself to go to work as nepotism can lead to discrimination or unfair treatment of employees." The author carefully developed the remaining items to align with the study's goals and focus on aspects of job dissatisfaction that are especially relevant to the research setting.

### Organizational Silence

The nine items of organizational silence were assessed based on Daşcı and Cemaloğlu (2016). The items begin with "Although my views will contribute to the development of my organization, I prefer not to say" and conclude with "I believe that speech is useless if it changes nothing."

## Research Findings

Table 1 presents the demographic details of the respondents, showing the percentage distribution across categories for each variable. The study gathered responses from employees in Bangladesh's banking sector. Most respondents (51.0%) were from the private sector, while the remaining (49.0%) were from the public sector.

Regarding gender, 51.7% of participants identified as female, and 48.3% as male. In terms of marital status, 64.7% were married, while 35.3% were unmarried. The largest age group was 25 to 34 years, making up 40.0% of respondents. Next, 38.0% were aged 35 to 44, 14.0% were 45 to 54, and 8.0% were 55 or older. Regarding employment, 89.3% worked full-time and 10.7% worked part-time. Experience levels included 38.0% with less than 5 years, 34.0% with 5 to less than 10 years, 22.0% with 10 to less than 15 years, and 6.0% with 15 or more years. Job roles were distributed as 48.0% non-managerial, 28.0% operational, 18.0% middle management, and 6.0% top management. Educational qualifications showed 54.0% graduates, 34.0% postgraduates, 4.0% with professional degrees, and 8.0% with other degrees.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents (n=300)

Category		Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Type of Institution	Private Sector	153	51.0
	Public Sector	147	49.0
Gender	Male	145	48.3
	Female	155	51.7
Marital Status	Married	194	64.7
	Unmarried	106	35.3
Age	25-34 years	120	40.0
	35-44 years	114	38.0
	45-54 years	42	14.0
	55 years and above	24	8.0
Employment Status	Full-Time Employment	268	89.3
	Part-Time Employment	32	10.7
Year of Experience in the Job	Less than 5 years	114	38.0
	5 years to less than 10 years	102	34.0
	10 years to less than 15 years	66	22.0
	More than 15 years	18	6.0
Job Position	Non-Managerial	144	48.0
	Operational Level	84	28.0
	Middle Level	54	18.0
	Top Level	18	6.0
Educational Qualification	Graduate	162	54.0
	Post-Graduate	102	34.0
	Professional Degree	12	4.0
	Others	24	8.0

By evaluating the study's reliability, researchers can ensure consistent results with Cronbach's alpha, a statistical measure of reliability. According to George and Mallery (2003), the higher the alpha value, the closer it is to 1, the greater the internal consistency of the scale's items. Schuessler's (1971) research shows that an alpha value above 0.60 indicates acceptable reliability. Cronbach's alpha scores for the dependent variable (0.880), independent variable (0.934), and mediating variable (0.767) indicate strong internal consistency and reliability (Table 2). In summary, these results demonstrate that

the scales used in the study are reliable and appropriate for representing the concepts under study.

Table 2: Reliability Analysis

Constructs	Reliability Statistics	
	Cronbach's Alpha	NO. of Items
DV: Organizational Silence	0.880	6
IV: Nepotism	0.934	10
MV: Job Dissatisfaction	0.767	3

The researcher conducted Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) using the principal component method with Promax rotation on twenty-seven items related to the constructs. EFA primarily aims to describe the underlying structure, patterns, or relationships among a set of variables and to summarize this large set into a smaller set of factors or components (Hair et al., 2019). After two trials, the factor analysis produced Table 3. The general guidelines for the measure of sampling adequacy (MSA) involve 0.80 or above, meritorious; 0.70 or above, middling; 0.60 or above, mediocre; 0.50 or above, miserable; and below 0.50, unacceptable (Hair et al., 2019). The study found a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy value of 0.956, which is meritorious in this case. A communalities value range of 0.40 to 0.70 is acceptable for a sample size of at least 200 (Hair et al., 2019). In this study, all items had communalities above 0.60 and were thus acceptable. An eigenvalue greater than one has been suggested to determine the number of factors (Hair et al., 2019); hence, three main factors were identified, and the total variance explained was 63.943%. A Bartlett's Test of Sphericity confirmed the test's significance, with an approximate Chi-Square of 3253.005,  $df = 171$ ,  $p = 0.000$ . This suggests that the sample is highly suitable for factor analysis, with strong correlations among variables, making the data suitable for advanced statistical methods. Common method variances (CMV) provide a direct indication of how much variance can be explained by one single factor (Malhotra, Kim, and Patil, 2006) based on Harman's single-factor test. In this study, 47.952% of the dataset's variance was explained by a single factor, which is below the recommended level (50%) (Dupuis, Khadeer, and Huang, 2017; Ouellette and Wood, 1998). Thereby, CMV does not present any serious issues for the dataset.

Table 3: KMO, Bartlett's Test, and Total Variance Explained

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy							0.956	
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity							Approx. Chi-Square	3253.005
							df	171
							Sig.	0.000
Total Variance Explained								
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings <sup>a</sup>	
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	
1	9.111	47.952	47.952	9.111	47.952	47.952	8.224	
2	2.022	10.641	58.593	2.022	10.641	58.593	6.362	
3	1.017	5.350	63.943	1.017	5.350	63.943	5.397	
4	.602	3.169	67.112					
5	.584	3.074	70.187					
6	.553	2.911	73.098					
7	.522	2.749	75.847					
8	.515	2.712	78.559					
9	.488	2.570	81.130					
10	.470	2.475	83.605					
11	.418	2.202	85.807					
12	.403	2.124	87.930					
13	.397	2.087	90.018					
14	.372	1.957	91.974					
15	.341	1.793	93.767					
16	.321	1.691	95.459					
17	.314	1.653	97.111					
18	.296	1.559	98.670					
19	.253	1.330	100.000					
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.								
a. When components are correlated, sums of squared loadings cannot be added to obtain a total variance.								

Table 4 shows the factor loadings of the items related to the latent constructs. The factors identified by EFA were labelled as perceived nepotism and favoritism, organizational silence and suppressed voice, and job dissatisfaction and negative work attitudes. All the measurement items loaded above 0.7, indicating the three latent factors. Collectively, these factors demonstrate how nepotism undermines organizational justice, promotes silence, and leads to job dissatisfaction, thereby capturing the core latent construct.

Table 4: Factor Analysis

Factors	Measurement Items	Factor Loadings		
		1	2	3
Perceived Nepotism and Favoritism	Supervisors fear subordinates connected to high-level executives.	.824		
	Employees of this bank always feel that they need someone they know or a friend in a senior position.	.817		
	A friend or acquaintance of a bank executive can never meet the expectations of other employees if given a position at the bank.	.817		
	My organization prioritizes the expectations of family and friends of high-level executives.	.808		
	Employees who are promoted or rewarded only because of family ties are a negative influence at this bank.	.801		
	High-level executives in my organization struggle to demote or fire family members and friends.	.751		
	Middle-level managers at this bank feel uneasy about employees who have close personal connections to high-level executives.	.749		
	Acquaintances' disagreements become business problems in organizations allowing favoritism and cronyism.	.749		
	I always exercise caution when talking to family or friends of high-ranking executives in my organization.	.742		
	Executives are more interested in keeping friends and acquaintances in good positions than they are in those employees' performance or the organization's profitability.	.741		
Organizational Silence and Suppressed Voice	I believe that speech is useless if it changes nothing.		.821	
	If I have a different opinion from my colleagues, I prefer not to say my mind.		.797	
	I cannot articulate my ideas due to the fear of losing my achievements.		.781	
	When I discuss the company's problems, my workload increases.		.772	
	When I talk about problems at work, I feel the pressure of unions on me.		.766	
	Although my views will contribute to the development of my organization, I prefer not to say.		.749	
Job Dissatisfaction and Negative Work Attitudes	I feel excluded in the workplace because nepotism influences decisions that aren't based on merit, often leading to poor organizational results and missed opportunities.			.839
	I feel undervalued because of nepotism and might look for a job elsewhere, which could increase turnover and cause the loss of valuable talent.			.807
	I feel dissatisfied with my current job because nepotism hampers diversity and inclusion efforts, leading to the hiring and promotion of individuals from similar backgrounds.			.722

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

A primary analysis for each construct was performed using the mean, standard deviation, skewness, kurtosis, and standard error scores. As shown in Table 5, all latent constructs had identical mean scores ( $M=3.00$ ), indicating that employees generally perceive these constructs similarly. Skewness and kurtosis values are expected to fall within  $\pm 1$ ,  $\pm 2$ , or  $\pm 3$  (Kalaycı, 2014: 6). Since all skewness and kurtosis values are within  $\pm 2$ , the variables roughly follow a normal distribution. The correlation analysis reveals that nepotism is positively and significantly related to both job dissatisfaction ( $r = 0.624$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and organizational silence ( $r = 0.577$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Additionally, job dissatisfaction shows a significant positive association with organizational silence ( $r = 0.558$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Discriminant validity is supported when the correlations between items of different constructs are significantly lower than those within the same construct. For instance, in this study, the correlation between NP1 (scale of nepotism) and JD3 (scale of job dissatisfaction) (.383) is lower than that between NP1 and NP2 (.592), which confirms discriminant validity.

Table 5: Mean, Standard Deviation, and Pearson Correlations

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Std. Error	Kurtosis	Std. Error	NP	JD	OS
Nepotism	3.000	1.12223	-.005	.141	-1.085	.281	1	0.624**	0.577**
Job Dissatisfaction	3.000	1.16973	-.013	.141	-1.149	.281	0.624**	1	0.558**
Organizational Silence	3.000	1.13527	.009	.141	-1.059	.281	0.577**	0.558**	1

\*\*Correlation is significant at the level of 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 6 shows that the predictor variables explain 33.1% of the variance in organizational silence (adjusted  $R^2 = 0.331$ ). This suggests that improvements in predictor variables, nepotism, and job dissatisfaction are associated with a moderate 33.1% increase in organizational silence within Bangladesh's banking sector. Therefore, banks should recognize nepotism and employee job dissatisfaction as key factors contributing to organizational silence. Furthermore, to assess multicollinearity, the researcher calculated variance inflation factors (VIFs).

If the VIF value reaches five and tolerance values are less than 0.1, multicollinearity can be recognized (Hair et al., 2019). The VIF in this study was 1.888, within acceptable limits. In addition, the tolerance value (0.530) was within the permitted range (0.1-1). Therefore, it can be confirmed that multicollinearity was not present in the dataset.

Table 6: Multiple Regression Results

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.918	.157		5.837	.000		
	Nepotism	.379	.058	.375	6.499	.000	.530	1.888
	Job Dissatisfaction	.315	.056	.325	5.633	.000	.530	1.888

Notes: R=0.577, R<sup>2</sup>=0.333, adjusted R<sup>2</sup>=0.331, standard error of the estimate=0.92886, R<sup>2</sup> change=0.333; F change=148.649; df1=2; df2=298; Sig. F change=0.000; predictors(constant), job dissatisfaction, nepotism; dependent variable: organizational silence

The author analyzed the mediation effect with the Process Macro proposed by Andrew F. Hayes. Table 7 shows that nepotism affects job dissatisfaction, significantly and positively [ $\beta = 0.6499$ , 95% CI (LLCI= 0.5570, ULCI=0.7428),  $t = 13.7679$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ]. It is concluded that the effect is significant because the confidence interval for the effect (LLCI= 0.5570, ULCI=0.7428) does not include zero (0). Nepotism explains 38.88% of the variance in the change in job dissatisfaction among employees ( $R^2 = 0.3888$ ).

Table 7: Results showing the effect of Nepotism on Job Dissatisfaction

Model 4; Y=OS; X=NP; M=LD; Sample Size: 300; Outcome Variable: JD

	R	R <sup>2</sup>	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
Model Summary	0.6235	0.3888	0.8391	189.5544	1.0000	298.0000	.0000
Model	Coeff.	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	
Constant	1.0502	0.1512	6.9475	0.0000	0.7527	1.3477	
NP	0.6499	0.0472	13.7679	0.0000	0.5570	0.7428	
Standardized Coefficients							
	Coeff						
NP	0.6235						

Table 8 reveals that nepotism has a significant and positive impact on organizational silence [ $\beta = 0.3789$ , 95% CI (LLCI = 0.2641, ULCI = 0.4936),  $t = 6.4990$ ,  $p < .05$ ]. This effect is considered significant because the confidence interval (LLCI = 0.2641, ULCI = 0.4936) does not include zero. Additionally, the results show that job dissatisfaction has a significant and positive effect on organizational silence [ $\beta = 0.3150$ , 95% CI (LLCI= 0.2050, ULCI=0.4251),  $t = 5.6328$ ,  $p < .05$ ]. Together, nepotism and job dissatisfaction account for 39.72% of the variance in employees' organizational silence ( $R^2 = 0.3972$ ).

Table 8: Results showing the effect of Nepotism and Job Dissatisfaction on Organizational Silence

Outcome Variable: OS

	R	R2	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
Model Summary	0.6302	0.3972	0.7821	97.8531	2.0000	297.0000	.0000
Model	Coeff.	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	
Constant	0.9183	0.1573	5.8373	0.0000	0.6087	1.2280	
NP	0.3789	0.0583	6.4990	0.0000	0.2641	0.4936	
JD	0.3150	0.0559	5.6328	0.0000	0.2050	0.4251	
Standardized Coefficients							
	Coeff						
NP	0.3745						
JD	0.3246						

Table 9 indicates that nepotism has a significant and positive total effect on organizational silence [ $\beta = 0.5836$ , 95% CI (LLCI= 0.4894, ULCI=0.6778),  $t = 12.1922$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ]. This effect is considered significant because the confidence interval (LLCI = 0.4894, ULCI = 0.6778) does not include zero. Nepotism accounts for 33.28% of the variance in employees' organizational silence ( $R^2 = 0.3328$ ).

Table 9: Results showing the Total effect of Nepotism on Organizational Silence

Outcome Variable: OS

	R	R2	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
Model Summary	0.5769	0.3328	0.8628	148.6494	1.0000	298.0000	.0000
Model	Coeff.	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	
Constant	1.2492	0.1533	8.1494	0.0000	0.9475	1.5509	
NP	0.5836	0.0479	12.1922	0.0000	0.4894	0.6778	
Standardized Coefficients							
	Coeff						
NP	0.5769						

Table 10 shows the mediation analysis investigating how job dissatisfaction mediates the relationship between nepotism and organizational silence. The results indicate that nepotism has a significant total effect on organizational silence [ $\beta = 0.5836$ ,  $SE = 0.0479$ ,  $t = 12.1922$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , 95% CI (0.4894, 0.6778)]. When including the mediator, the direct effect of nepotism remains significant [ $\beta = 0.3789$ ,  $SE = 0.0583$ ,  $t = 6.4990$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI (0.2641, 0.4936)], suggesting nepotism influences organizational silence both directly and indirectly. The indirect effect through job dissatisfaction is also significant [ $\beta = 0.2047$ ,  $BootSE = 0.0385$ , 95% CI (0.1300, 0.2801)]. Additionally, the fully standardized indirect effect [ $\beta = 0.2024$ ,  $BootSE = 0.0381$ , 95% CI (0.1280, 0.2776)] underscores the key mediating role of job dissatisfaction.

Table 10: Results showing the direct effect, indirect effect, and total effect of Nepotism on Organizational Silence

Total effect of X on Y					
Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
0.5836	0.0479	12.1922	0.0000	0.4894	0.6778
Direct effect of X on Y					
Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
0.3789	0.0583	6.4990	0.0000	0.2641	0.4936
Indirect effect of X on Y					
	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI	
JD	0.2047	0.0385	0.1300	0.2801	
Completely Standardized Indirect effect of X on Y					
	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI	
JD	0.2024	0.0381	0.1280	0.2776	

Table 11 indicates that nepotism has a significant direct effect on organizational silence [ $\beta = 0.379$ ,  $t = 6.50$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI (0.264, 0.494)], thus supporting H1. It also has a strong effect on job dissatisfaction [ $\beta = 0.650$ ,  $t = 13.77$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI (0.557, 0.743)], which supports H2. Furthermore, job dissatisfaction is positively associated with organizational silence [ $\beta = 0.315$ ,  $t = 5.633$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI (0.205, 0.425)], which confirms H3. The mediation analysis showed that nepotism has a notable indirect effect on organizational silence through job dissatisfaction [ $\beta = 0.205$ , BootSE = 0.038, 95% CI (0.130, 0.280)], thereby confirming H4. Since both the direct and indirect effects are significant, job dissatisfaction serves as a partial mediator in the relationship.

Table 11: Hypothesis Testing

Hs	Effects	Path coefficient	Std error	t-value	p-value	LLCI	ULCI	Decision
H <sub>1</sub>	NP → OS	0.3789	0.0583	6.4990	0.0000	0.2641	0.4936	Supported
H <sub>2</sub>	NP → JD	0.6499	0.0472	13.7679	0.0000	0.5570	0.7428	Supported
H <sub>3</sub>	JD → OS	0.3150	0.0559	5.6328	0.0000	0.2050	0.4251	Supported
H <sub>4</sub>	Indirect Direct (NP → JD → OS)	0.2047	0.0385			0.1300	0.2801	Supported

## Discussions

Early research on nepotism mainly focused on how managers and employees perceive it (Ford and McLaughlin, 1986). More recently, studies have shifted toward examining its behavioral and attitudinal effects (Agarwal, 2016). Building on this, the current study examines how job dissatisfaction mediates the relationship between nepotism and organizational silence, grounded in organizational justice and social exchange theories. Results reveal that nepotism significantly and positively affects job dissatisfaction among bank staff (H2) ( $\beta = 0.6499$ ,  $t = 13.7679$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), which supports prior findings that nepotism reduces fairness perceptions and damages organizational trust (Asunakutlu and Avcı, 2010; Keleş, Özkan, and Bezirci, 2011). According to organizational justice theory, nepotism breaches both distributive and procedural fairness, while, from SET,

perceived unfairness weakens reciprocal obligations, leading to disengagement and silence. These issues hinder efficiency and performance, harming the organization and increasing employee turnover (Araslı, Bavik, and Ekiz, 2006). Additionally, although previous research found that nepotism negatively impacts job satisfaction (Daskin, Araslı, and Kasimet, 2015), this study shows that nepotism is positively associated with job dissatisfaction, a related but distinct concept from job satisfaction (Greenhaus, Parasuraman, and Wormley, 1990). Furthermore, results indicate that nepotism positively affects organizational silence (H1) ( $\beta = 0.3789$ ,  $t = 6.4990$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), and that job dissatisfaction predicts silence significantly (H3) ( $\beta = 0.3150$ ,  $t = 5.6328$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The overall effect of nepotism on organizational silence is significant ( $\beta = 0.5836$ ,  $t = 12.1922$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) (see Table 10). Perceptions of favoritism can lead employees to feel negatively toward their organization. Fear of losing benefits or job security discourages voice, reduces motivation, and fosters helplessness (Abdalla, Maghrabi, and Raggadet, 1998; Asunakutlu and Avci, 2010). The total effect of nepotism on silence is significant ( $\beta = 0.584$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). When including job dissatisfaction as a mediator, the direct effect remains significant ( $\beta = 0.379$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), with a significant indirect effect via dissatisfaction [ $\beta = 0.205$ , 95% CI (0.130, 0.280)]. According to effect size guidelines, a mediator effect near 0.25 indicates a high effect, around 0.9 a medium effect, and close to 0.1 a low effect (Preacher and Kelley, 2011). Here, the mediation effect is approximately a high effect ( $\beta = 0.2024$ ) (see Table 10). These findings support the research hypothesis (H4).

These effects are likely more pronounced in Bangladesh's high-power distance culture and tightly regulated banking sector, where hierarchical norms discourage upward feedback and support authority figures. In such environments, employees may fear retaliation or losing favor if they voice concerns, which increases silence around nepotism. Similar patterns have been observed in other high-power-distance countries, such as Turkey (Araslı and Arici, 2020) and India (Jain, Srivastava, and Sullivan, 2023), where nepotism is also linked to job dissatisfaction and fear-driven silence. By applying justice and social exchange theories within Bangladesh's unique socio-cultural and institutional setting, this study improves understanding of how nepotism damages perceptions of fairness and leads to organizational silence in hierarchical workplaces.

## Conclusion

### Theoretical Implications

The findings of the study offer a different view on how nepotism influences workplace behavior by highlighting job dissatisfaction as a key psychological link between nepotism and organizational silence. They support social exchange theory, which holds that employees who notice favoritism or bias tend to withdraw and remain silent rather than engage. The results also expand organizational justice theory by showing that feelings of unfairness expressed through job dissatisfaction partly explain why nepotism leads to silence in the banking industry. The more substantial indirect effect found here indicates that many of nepotism's flaws come from its negative impact on employees' emotional

well-being and perceptions of fairness. However, certain organizational and contextual factors can lessen these harmful effects. Ethical leadership, grounded in transparency, fairness, and integrity, can reduce biased perceptions by fostering trust and fairness (Mako, 2022; Özdemir and Özer, 2019). A supportive environment where employees feel safe to voice concerns without fear of retaliation can also weaken the connection between nepotism and silence. Additionally, robust human resource practices focusing on merit-based hiring and promotion, along with effective oversight and regulation in the banking sector, can limit nepotism and support procedural fairness. Overall, this study emphasizes the role of job dissatisfaction in the relationship between nepotism and silence and shows how ethical and structural measures can help organizations respond to the adverse effects of nepotism and create a more transparent, participative, and fair workplace.

### Policy Implications

Addressing nepotism is vital for maintaining employee trust, satisfaction, and organizational integrity. Transparent, merit-based HR practices can counter perceptions of unfairness, reduce job dissatisfaction and discourage employee silence. Although this study focuses on the banking sector in Bangladesh, a high-power-distance, developing nation, its implications extend globally. Nepotism, often driven by unconscious biases toward friends and relatives (Bozionelos, 2014; Lai and Banaji, 2020), remains prevalent across various contexts, particularly in hierarchical or male-dominated environments such as China, Greece, police departments, and technology firms. The findings indicate that nepotism undermines fairness, erodes motivation, and fosters organizational silence, which ultimately harms long-term performance and talent retention. To mitigate these effects, organizations should establish objective, accountable recruitment and promotion systems. Standardized evaluation criteria, multi-rater assessments, and, where feasible, blind recruitment can reduce favoritism and reinforce equity. Where anonymity is impractical, decision-makers should be required to justify their choices transparently, with formal oversight mechanisms to support them. Furthermore, bias-awareness training (Lai and Banaji, 2020) can complement these measures by reducing implicit bias and reinforcing organizational fairness.

Since nepotism often silences employees, creating platforms that foster voices is vital. Anonymous feedback systems, open communication channels, and a psychologically safe environment enable employees to speak up without fear of retaliation. Regulators and policymakers should encourage banks to implement fair recruitment, promotion, and reward systems with transparent accountability standards. When employees observe that advancement is based on merit, their engagement and trust naturally grow, aligning with Burhan, van Leeuwen, and Scheepers (2020), who highlighted that fairness in HR decisions is essential to increase employee morale. Eventually, ethical leadership plays a pivotal role in exhibiting fairness, inclusion, and transparency. By upholding these principles, organizations can restrain the destructive effects of nepotism, strengthen open communication, and sustain high-performing, trust-based workplaces.

## Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The findings demonstrate a strong association between nepotism, job dissatisfaction, and organizational silence; however, several limitations warrant attention. The cross-sectional design limits causal interpretation, as it captures employee perceptions at a single point in time. Future studies should employ longitudinal or time-lagged methods to explore how these relationships evolve over extended periods. The use of nonprobability sampling from a few banks also constrains generalizability. Employing probability or stratified sampling across multiple institutions and sectors would enhance external validity and clarify whether organizational silence is sector-specific or universally prevalent. Examining differences across governance systems and organizational cultures may further reveal contextual influences.

To address potential common-method bias, future research should collect data from multiple sources or across different time points. Strengthening discriminant validity by refining overlapping items between nepotism and job dissatisfaction scales will also improve measurement accuracy. Additionally, advanced statistical techniques such as Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using AMOS or Smart-PLS can provide more robust analyses. Finally, future research could expand this model across diverse cultural and hierarchical settings by considering ethical leadership, justice climate, or power distance as moderators. To examine whether job dissatisfaction mediates the effects of nepotism on outcomes such as turnover or emotional exhaustion would enhance both theoretical and practical understanding.

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