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"The Effect of Nepotism on Turnover Intention in Lebanese Family Businesses: The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction"

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of nepotism on turnover intention in Lebanese family businesses as well as the mediating role of job satisfaction in this relationship. Using a convenient sampling method, 378 participants from different administrative levels and sectors within Lebanese family businesses were selected to complete the study questionnaire. To test the hypotheses of the study (AMOS 27), structural equation modeling (SEM) is used. The findings of the study indicate that nepotism has a significant positive impact on turnover intentions. Moreover, the results reveal that job satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between nepotism and turnover intentions. Therefore, family businesses in Lebanon should implement policies and practices that promote fairness, transparency, and merit-based decision making to boost the level of satisfaction among employees and reduce their turnover intentions. The implications of this study can be valuable for Lebanese family business owners and managers seeking to mitigate the impact of nepotism on turnover intentions.

Keywords: nepotism; turnover intention; job satisfaction; family businesses; relationship; merit-based decision making; fairness; transparency; business owners; Lebanon.

1. Introduction

Family businesses play a critical role in the global economy, contributing 70–90% of global GDP, employing nearly 60% of the global workforce (Family Firm Institute, 2017), and comprising 65–90% of firms worldwide (Salvato et al., 2019). Their influence in globalization is significant (Pukall & Calabrò, 2014), yet they face unique internal challenges—one of the most pressing being **nepotism** (Aina & Nicoletti, 2018).

Nepotism refers to the practice of employing or promoting individuals based on family ties rather than merit, qualifications, or performance (Barkov et al., 2020). While some view nepotism positively—arguing it fosters loyalty, commitment, and a family-oriented work culture (Barmash, 1986; Bellow, 2003; Ford & McLaughlin, 1986)—others highlight its potential to undermine motivation, fairness, job satisfaction, and HR practices (Chegini, 2009; Karakose, 2014; Kerse & Babada, 2018). These conflicting views underscore an ongoing debate in the literature.

In the Middle East, nepotism is a prevalent feature of family-run firms, including those in Lebanon (Bodolica et al., 2015; Sidani & Thornberry, 2013; Sonfield et al., 2016). El-Achkar et al. (2015) found that about 60% of Lebanese family businesses practice nepotism, often placing family members in key positions. With family firms accounting for 85% of Lebanon's private sector and employing over 1.05 million individuals (Sreih et al., 2010), the implications of nepotistic practices on workforce outcomes merit deeper examination.

Therefore, this study investigates the effect of nepotism on turnover intention in Lebanese family businesses and explores the mediating role of job satisfaction in this relationship. While earlier studies have examined these variables separately, little attention has been paid to how they interact within the cultural and organizational context of Lebanese family firms.

This research aims to fill this gap and contribute novel insights to the literature on organizational behavior in family businesses by addressing how nepotism shapes employees' job satisfaction and their intention to leave.

2. Theoretical Background and Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Background

2.1.1 Equity Theory

Equity theory, developed by Adams (1965), has been extensively applied in organizational contexts to explain how perceptions of fairness influence employee motivation. The theory posits that employees engage in social comparisons by evaluating the ratio of their inputs—such as effort, experience, education, and personal attributes—to outcomes like salary, benefits, and recognition, relative to those of their peers (Carrell & Dittrich, 1978). Perceived inequity may trigger emotional and behavioral responses, including cognitive distortion of input or output, adjustment of effort, or even withdrawal from the organization. These responses reflect perceptions of organizational injustice, which can negatively affect performance and morale. Within the context of nepotism, employees who believe rewards and opportunities are unfairly allocated based on family ties may perceive inequity, leading to decreased motivation and increased turnover intentions.

2.1.2 Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory

The Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, introduced by Hobfoll (1989, 2002), provides a stress-based framework for understanding how individuals acquire, protect, and utilize valuable resources—ranging from time and energy to self-efficacy and social support. According to this theory, stress arises when these resources are threatened, lost, or insufficiently replenished (Hobfoll, 2007). In workplace settings, especially in the presence of perceived favoritism such as nepotism, employees who are excluded from valuable opportunities may experience resource depletion. This loss manifests in lower job satisfaction, decreased commitment, and higher turnover intentions (Vieira & Hobfoll, 2018).

When employees observe that resources such as recognition, advancement, or support are unfairly distributed due to familial ties, they may feel marginalized and demotivated. These emotional responses can culminate in disengagement, dissatisfaction, and eventual intent to leave the organization. Thus, COR theory offers a robust lens for examining how nepotism can contribute to negative psychological and behavioral outcomes by disrupting the equitable distribution of workplace resources.

2.2 Conceptualization of Variables

2.2.1 Nepotism

Nepotism refers to the preferential treatment of relatives in employment or promotion decisions, regardless of merit. Wong and Klemer (1994) define it as the hiring or advancement of underqualified or unqualified relatives solely due to their family connection with someone in authority. The term "nepo," derived from Latin meaning "nephew," originally signified the privilege of appointing family members (Ford & McLaughlin, 1986).

Abdalla et al. (1998) describe nepotism as the misuse of power or influence by those in authority to benefit family and friends. This aligns with Araslı et al. (2008), who emphasized that nepotism involves giving undue preference to personal connections rather than qualified professionals. Similarly, Isaac et al. (2019) explain it as prioritizing relationship ties over competence, skills, or experience. Historically, the term referred to the employment of an owner's relative in a family business context (Jain et al., 2022).

For the purposes of this study, nepotism is defined as favoring relatives in employment or promotion without sufficient qualifications (Jones, 2004), and granting excessive rewards or advancement to family members over non-family employees (Charles, 2014).

2.2.2 Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction has been explored extensively in organizational research. Herzberg et al. (1959) offered one of the earliest definitions, describing it as the extent to which individuals like or dislike their jobs. Locke (1976) later defined it as a pleasurable emotional state resulting from one's evaluation of their job or experiences. Cranny et al. (1992) referred to it as a general positive attitude toward one's work.

It is often associated with overall employee well-being and is closely linked to mental health and turnover (Araslı et al., 2006; Laker & Williams, 2003). Büte (2011) identified job satisfaction as a key predictor of turnover, while Paul and Phua (2011) noted that it reflects how well work-related outcomes align with employee expectations. Similarly, Adamy (2018) and Singh and Onahring (2019) emphasized the emotional orientation individuals hold toward their roles, which influences their workplace behavior and emotional responses.

2.2.3 Turnover Intention

Turnover intention is generally understood as an employee's conscious desire or intention to leave their current job or organization. According to Tett and Meyer (1993), it represents a deliberate decision to quit. Hom and Kinicki (2001) described it as the individual's desire to end their employment, while Lee and Mitchell (2004) framed it as a determination to exit the organization.

Wang and Chen (2007) defined it as the expressed willingness to leave within a specified time period. Lambert and Hogan (2009) characterized it as the cognitive process of contemplating resignation. Alatawi (2017) highlighted it as the degree to which an employee plans to end their organizational membership. In essence, turnover intention reflects a future-oriented decision to leave one's job (Zhang et al., 2018).

2.3 Empirical Review and Hypotheses Development

Arasli et al. (2006) conducted a study exploring the effects of nepotism on HRM practices, job satisfaction, turnover intention, and negative word of mouth in Northern Cyprus's hotel industry. The research targeted full-time employees in three- to five-star hotels, using a judgmental sampling approach. Out of 500 distributed questionnaires, 257 were deemed valid. The findings revealed that nepotism significantly reduced job satisfaction while increasing employees' intentions to leave and spreading negative word of mouth.

In a similar context, Büte (2011) examined the relationship between perceived nepotism, job satisfaction, and turnover intention in family businesses across various sectors in Istanbul. The study surveyed 430 non-family employees and found that perceived nepotism had a direct negative impact on job satisfaction. Moreover, job satisfaction significantly reduced turnover intention and mediated the relationship between nepotism and both turnover intention and negative word of mouth.

Nadeem et al. (2015) investigated the effects of favoritism, nepotism, and cronyism on job satisfaction within Pakistan's telecom sector. Using a convenience sample of 220 employees from four telecom firms, the researchers employed multiple regression analysis. Their results indicated that all three forms of favoritism—including nepotism—negatively affected job satisfaction across the sector.

Elsayed and Daif (2019) utilized a cause-effect model (Ishikawa diagram) to assess the impact of nepotism on employee experiences in Egypt's tourism and hospitality industry. Using purposive sampling, they interviewed HR managers from various hotels and travel agencies. Their analysis revealed that nepotism significantly undermined employee job satisfaction, increased stress, and reduced organizational commitment and citizenship behaviors. These outcomes, in turn, contributed to declining performance and rising turnover rates, along with talent loss and increased HR costs.

In another sector-specific study, Abdelghany and Abdel-Hafez (2021) explored the effects of nepotism on job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intention among 1,647 nursing staff at Main Assiut University Hospital in Egypt. Using SPSS for analysis, they found a strong positive correlation between nepotism and turnover intention and a negative correlation between nepotism and both job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The results confirmed that nepotism adversely affects employee attitudes, leading to dissatisfaction and heightened intent to leave.

Based on the reviewed empirical literature, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- **H1**: Nepotism has a significant positive effect on turnover intention.
- **H2**: Nepotism has a significant negative effect on job satisfaction.
- **H3**: Job satisfaction has a significant negative effect on turnover intention.
- **H4**: Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between nepotism and turnover intention.

2.4 Proposed Conceptual Framework

According to the review study, a conceptual framework, (Figure 1) is proposed. Nepotism is assumed to impact employee job satisfaction and turnover intention, while job satisfaction acts as a mediator construct between nepotism and employee turnover intention.

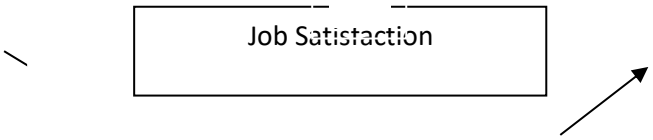

Figure1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Authors' own.

3. Methodology

This study adopts a positivist research philosophy to objectively examine the relationships among nepotism, job satisfaction, and turnover intention. To analyze the collected data, the researcher employed a range of statistical techniques, including descriptive statistics, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and structural equation modeling (SEM). Data analysis was carried out using SPSS version 27 and AMOS version 27, enabling comprehensive evaluation of the variables and hypothesis testing.

The target population comprises Lebanese family-owned businesses. According to the World Bank (2022), 85% of Lebanon's 225,000 enterprises are family-owned, yielding an estimated total of 191,250 such businesses. Thus, this figure was used as the population base for sample size determination.

A convenient sampling method was employed to select participants. This non-probability approach targets individuals who are easily accessible, geographically close, or willing to take part in the study (Dörnyei, 2007). The sample included employees from various hierarchical levels, departments, and industry sectors within Lebanese family-owned businesses.

To determine the appropriate sample size, the researcher used Cochran's formula (Cochran, 1977), which is effective for large populations and ensures a sufficient level of precision and confidence. The formula is: $n=N/[1+N(e)^2]$, Where:

- n = sample size
- N = population size (191,250)
- e = margin of error (0.05)

Applying the formula resulted in a required sample size of 398 participants

Data were collected through a structured survey questionnaire designed to capture respondents' perceptions of nepotism, job satisfaction, and turnover intention. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended questions and was originally prepared in English, then translated into Arabic to ensure comprehension and accessibility. It employed a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 ("Strongly Disagree") to 5 ("Strongly Agree").

The questionnaire was distributed electronically using Google Forms, shared through various social media platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp groups. To maximize response rates, the researcher also conducted phone calls and on-site visits to explain the study's purpose and encourage participation. After removing incomplete or invalid responses, a total of 378 valid responses were retained for analysis.

The constructs in the study were measured using established and validated scales from prior literature:

- Nepotism: measured using six items based on Kawo and Torun (2020).
- Job Satisfaction: measured using five items adopted from Abbasi et al. (2016).
- Turnover Intention: measured using six items developed by Bothma and Roodt (2013).

4. Data analysis and results

4.1 Profiling of the respondents

This section presents a profile of the respondents. The respondents were characterized based on gender, age, level of income, employment status, years of experience, job position, and level of education. The profile of respondents is given in table 1.

Table 1: Demographic profile of respondents (N=378)

Attribute	Value	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	160	42.3
	Male	218	57.7
Age	20-30 years	114	30.1
	31-40 years	158	41.8
	41-50 years	85	22.5
	51-60 years	13	3.4
	More than 60	8	2.1
Income level	Less than $500	191	50.5
	$501 - $1000	102	27.0
	$1001 - $2000	47	12.4
	$2001 - $3000	24	6.3
	More than $3000	14	3.7
Employment Status	Full Time	264	70
	Part Time	114	30
Years of Experience	Less than 5 years	226	59.8
	5-10 years	107	28.3
	11-15 years	28	7.4
	16-20 years	11	2.9
	More than 20years	6	1.6
Job Position	Non-Managerial	67	17.7
	Operational Level	99	26.2
	Middle Level Manager	178	47.1
	Top Level Manager	34	9.0
Educational Level	Secondary School	87	23.0
	Bachelors' Degree	226	60.0
	Masters' Degree	31	8.0
	Doctoral Degree	6	1.5

Others	28	7.5

Table 1 indicates the demographic and professional characteristics of the 378 respondents. The sample comprised 57.7% males and 42.3% females. The largest age group was 31–40 years (41.8%), followed by 20–30 years (30.1%). In terms of monthly income, 50.5% of respondents earned less than $500, while 27.0% earned between $501 and $1,000. Most participants were employed full-time (70.0%).

Regarding work experience, 59.8% had less than five years, and 28.3% had between five and ten years. Middle-level managerial positions were the most common (47.1%), followed by operational-level (26.2%), non-managerial (17.7%), and top-level managerial roles (9.0%). In terms of education, 60.0% held a bachelor's degree, 23.0% had completed secondary school, and the remainder had either a master's degree (8.0%), doctoral degree (1.5%), or other qualifications (7.5%).

4.2 Reliability Testing

To assess internal consistency, the reliability of each construct was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha. The interpretation of the alpha values follows the criteria set by Hayajneh et al. (1994):

- $\alpha < 0.5$ indicates low reliability,
- $0.5 \leq \alpha \leq 0.8$ suggests moderate reliability,
- $\alpha > 0.8$ reflects high reliability.

The results of the reliability analysis for each construct are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Reliability scores

Construct	Construct Identifier	Initial number of items	Items carried for further analysis	Cronbach's Alpha
Nepotism	NEP	6	4	.883
Job Satisfaction	JS	5	4	.750
Turnover Intention	TI	6	4	.717

As shown in Table 2, all constructs demonstrated acceptable internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values exceeding the threshold of 0.5. Specifically, Nepotism achieved a high reliability score of 0.883, while Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intention yielded moderate reliability scores of 0.750 and 0.717, respectively.

These results suggest that the items retained for each construct exhibit sufficient internal consistency, supporting the use of these measures in subsequent analysis. Overall, the scales used in this study can be considered reliable and valid for assessing the intended constructs.

4.3 Testing the assumptions of SEM analysis.

To ensure the appropriateness of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), it is essential to verify that certain statistical assumptions are satisfied—most notably, the assumption of normality (Aplin & Leveto, 1977). This study assessed univariate normality through the examination of skewness and kurtosis values.

According to Brown et al. (2016), skewness refers to the asymmetry of the distribution around the mean. A positive skew indicates that the majority of scores fall below the mean, while a negative skew suggests the opposite. Kurtosis, on the other

hand, pertains to the peakedness of the distribution: positive kurtosis reflects a higher peak and heavier tails, whereas negative kurtosis suggests a flatter distribution.

Research indicates that deviations in skewness and kurtosis can influence inferential statistics, including measures such as the mean, standard deviation, correlations, and variance-covariance estimates (Jayasundera et al., 2017). To evaluate normality, this study adopts the commonly accepted thresholds proposed by Lavy (2019), which recommend skewness values between -1 and +1, and kurtosis values between -1.5 and +1.5.

Table 3 presents the skewness and kurtosis scores for the key constructs used in the study.

Table 3: Skewness and Kurtosis Scores for Constructs

Construct	Skewness	Kurtosis
Nepotism	-0.754	0.732
Job Satisfaction	-0.401	0.512
Turnover Intention	-0.731	0.283

As shown in Table 3, the skewness and kurtosis values for all three constructs fall within the acceptable ranges. Specifically:

- Nepotism: skewness = -0.754, kurtosis = 0.732
- Job Satisfaction: skewness = -0.401, kurtosis = 0.512
- Turnover Intention: skewness = -0.731, kurtosis = 0.283

These results confirm that the data for all constructs are approximately normally distributed, satisfying the normality assumption required for SEM analysis.

4.4 Measurement model validation- Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)

Prior to testing the structural model, this study assessed the validity of the measurement model through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) using AMOS version 24. As outlined by Park et al. (2019), validating a measurement model involves two essential components:

1. Establishing acceptable Goodness-of-Fit (GOF) indices
2. Providing clear evidence of construct validity

These two components are addressed in the following subsections.

4.4.1 The results of CFA for constructs and full measurement model

This section presents the CFA outcomes for each construct individually, followed by the results for the full measurement model. For each construct, key metrics are reported, including factor loadings, unstandardized regression weights, and model fit indices.

According to Haque and Aston (2016), factor loadings reflect the strength of the relationship between latent constructs and their observed indicators. They quantify the extent to which an item represents the underlying factor (Rocha et al., 2019). In addition, unstandardized regression weights denote the magnitude of change in the dependent variable for a one-unit change in the predictor.

The Standard Error (SE) represents the variability of the unstandardized regression weight, and the Critical Ratio (CR)—calculated by dividing the regression weight by its SE—determines statistical significance. According to Takaya and Ramli (2020), a CR value greater than 1.96 indicates significance at the $p < .05$ level.

4.4.1.1 CFA results for Nepotism Construct

Figure 2 presents the CFA results for the Nepotism (NEP) construct, which was developed to assess employees' perceptions and experiences regarding nepotistic practices in their organizations—such as favoring personal relationships over merit or qualifications in decision-making.

During the analysis, two items (NEP2 and NEP3) were removed due to factor loadings falling below the 0.50 threshold. The revised measurement model retained four items, each of which demonstrated acceptable loading values. Figure 2 displays the unstandardized factor loadings, where NEP1 recorded the highest loading (2.06), indicating the strongest association with the latent construct, while NEP6 had the lowest loading (1.00).

Since the model includes only four items and no degrees of freedom remain, it is classified as a just-identified (saturated) model. As a result, fit indices such as CMIN/DF, TLI, and RMSEA are not generated by AMOS, as they are undefined for saturated models.

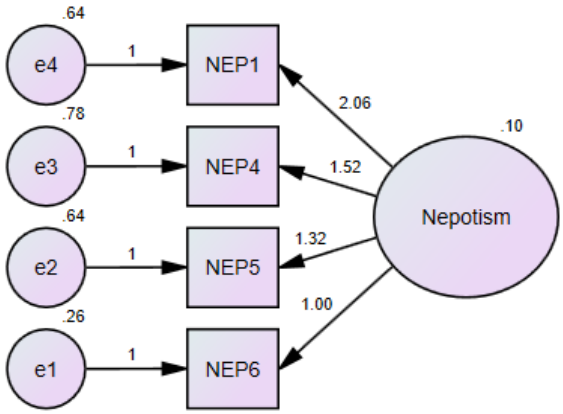

Figure 2: CFA for Nepotism

Table 4: Regression weights for NEP

		Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
NEP1 ←	Nepotism	0.792	0.04	19.81	***
NEP4 ←	Nepotism	0.832	0.104	8.023	***
NEP5 ←	Nepotism	0.896	0.217	4.129	***
NEP6 ←	Nepotism	0.393	0.023	17.028	***

Table 4 displays the unstandardized regression estimates of NEP construct on its items, its Standard Error (SE), Critical Ratio (CR), and level of significance (P). All the factor coefficients were significant ($p < 0.001$), with critical ratio value greater than 1.96.

4.4.1.2 CFA results for Job Satisfaction Construct

Figure 3 shows the final CFA findings for job satisfaction construct. Those items are exploited to evaluate various aspects related to job satisfaction. (i.e., perception of fair promotion opportunities based on job performance, level of meaningfulness, engagement, and enjoyment in work, equitable distribution of benefits among employees).

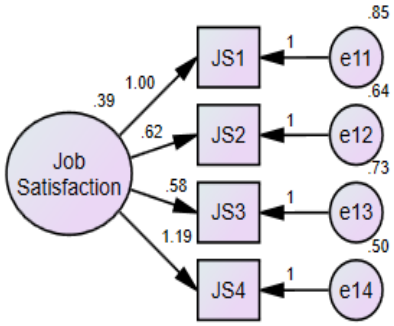

Figure 3: CFA for Job Satisfaction

The figure displays the factor loadings for JS. Four items out of five measuring the JS construct showed acceptable levels of factor loadings above 0.5 except for JS5; JS1 and JS4 scored the highest loading 1 and 1.19, respectively. The model fit indices were as follows: CFI = 1 and GFI= 1 suggesting a perfect fit (Takaya & Ramli, 2020). The EMP measurement model is composed of four items, this implies that the model is a saturated (just-identified) model with zero degrees of freedom, and thus CMIN/DF, TLI, RMSEA, are of no calculated values.

Table 5: Regression weights for JS

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
JS1 ← Job Satisfaction	1.280	0.290	4.413	***
JS2 ← Job Satisfaction	0.785	0.215	3.651	***
JS3 ←Job Satisfaction	0.370	0.100	3.700	***
JS4 ← Job Satisfaction	0.470	0.090	5.222	***

The unstandardized regression estimates, SE, and CR values for job satisfaction construct are depicted in Table 5. It is shown that the factor coefficients are all significant (0.001 level), with CR value greater than 1.96.

4.4.1.3 CFA results for Turnover Intention Construct

The turnover intention construct is measured using four items. Those items considered the assessments of employees' tendency to leave their current organizations. (i.e., limited career growth opportunities, barriers to achieving work-related objectives., reduced motivation and engagement). However, items TI2 and TI5 were removed from the scale as their scores were less than 0.5. The CFA model for TI was re-specified as a variable with four indicator items.

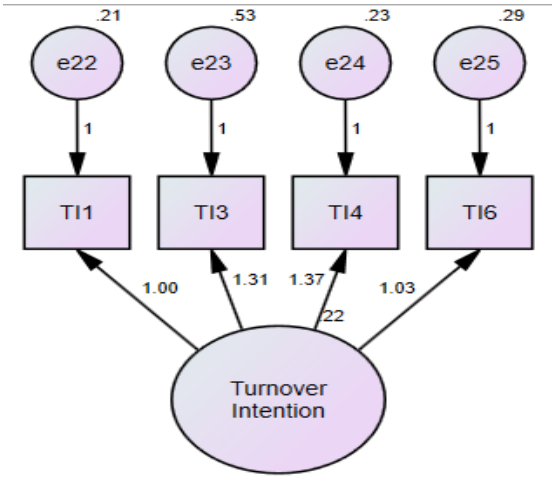

Figure 4: CFA for Turnover Intention

Figure 4 displays the standardized loadings for the TI construct. It is shown that TI3 exhibited the highest capacity to measure TI, with a factor loading of 1.31, while TI4 had the lowest loading value of 0.22. The remaining item loadings ranged between these two values. Because the final model is composed of four items, this implies that the model is a saturated (just-identified) model with zero degrees of freedom, and thus CMIN/DF, TLI, RMSEA, are of no calculated values in AMOS.

Table 6: Regression Weights for Turnover Intention

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
T1 <--- T	0.94	0.07	13.67	***
T3 <--- T	1.066	0.085	12.134	***
T4 <--- T	1.076	0.089	11.194	***
T6 <--- T	1.042	0.090	11.582	***

Table 6 shows the unstandardized regression estimates for the items measuring turnover intention construct, in addition to SE and CR values. It demonstrated that all factor coefficients are significant ($p<0.001$), and their relevant CR values are greater than 1.96.

4.5 Convergent Validity

Convergent validity was assessed using three indicators: standardized factor loadings, composite reliability, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). This section presents the factor loading results for each construct, along with their respective Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measures of sampling adequacy, as summarized in Table 7.
According to Karki and Kangri Vishwavidyalaya (2015), acceptable factor loadings should exceed 0.50, and ideally 0.70. Items falling below this threshold are subject to removal. Additionally, Hayajneh et al. (1994) recommend a KMO value above 0.50 as the minimum for satisfactory sampling adequacy.

Table 7 : Summary of final factor loadings scores

Variable	Item	Factor Loading	KMO
Nepotism	NE1	0.542	0.725
	NE2	0.469	

	NE3	0.415	
	NE4	0.528	
	NE5	0.659	
	NE6	0.852	
Job Satisfaction	JS1	0.582	0.693
	JS2	0.559	
	JS3	0.523	
	JS4	0.519	
	JS5	0.418	
Turnover Intention	TI1	0.559	0.893
	TI2	0.423	
	TI3	0.519	
	TI4	0.523	
	TI5	0.453	
	TI6	0.639	

Notes: According the cut off criterion for the acceptable limits, Factor loadings >0.5 (Hayajneh et al., 1994); Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) >0.50 (Hayajneh et al., 1994)

Nepotism (NEP)

The NEP construct was measured using six items. NEP1, NEP4, NEP5, and NEP6 had factor loadings above 0.50, while NEP2 (0.469) and NEP3 (0.415) fell below the threshold and were excluded from further structural equation modeling (SEM) to enhance model validity. The KMO value of 0.725 indicates acceptable sampling adequacy for factor analysis.

Job Satisfaction (JS)

All five items were initially retained to measure Job Satisfaction. Four of them (JS1 to JS4) demonstrated acceptable factor loadings ranging from 0.519 to 0.582. However, JS5 yielded a lower factor loading (0.418), suggesting it is a weaker indicator of the construct. The KMO value of 0.693 is within the acceptable range, confirming the adequacy of the sample for analysis.

Turnover Intention (TI)

The TI construct was assessed using six items. Most items demonstrated moderate to strong factor loadings, ranging from 0.453 to 0.639. However, TI2, with a factor loading of 0.423, fell below the recommended level and was removed from subsequent analysis. The construct's KMO score of 0.893 is considered excellent, reflecting high inter-item correlations and robust sampling adequacy.

In conclusion, The factor analysis results indicate that each construct includes items with acceptable to high factor loadings and favorable KMO values, supporting the convergent validity of the measurement model. Items that failed to meet the minimum threshold were appropriately excluded to enhance the integrity and reliability of the structural model.

4.6 Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was assessed using two widely accepted criteria:

a- Comparing Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values with Maximum Shared Variance (MSV)
b- Comparing the square root of AVE values with inter-construct correlations

According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), discriminant validity is established when the AVE of a construct is greater than its MSV, and when the square root of the AVE exceeds the correlation coefficients between that construct and others.

Maximum Shared Variance (MSV)

The MSV values for the three constructs were:

- Nepotism: 0.518
- Job Satisfaction: 0.437
- Turnover Intention: 0.416

All MSV values were found to be lower than the corresponding AVE values, indicating that each construct shares more variance with its own items than with other constructs.

Square Root of AVE vs. Inter-Construct Correlations

The square roots of AVE for each construct were as follows:

- Nepotism: 0.628
- Job Satisfaction: 0.569
- Turnover Intention: 0.518

These square root values were greater than the inter-construct correlation coefficients, demonstrating that each construct is empirically distinct from the others. The corresponding values are presented diagonally in bold in Table 8.

Table 8: Discriminant Validity

	Mean	SD	CR	AVE	MSV	NEP	JS	TI
NEP	3.672	0.553	0.732	0.628	0.518	0.468		
JS	3.935	0.841	0.812	0.569	0.437	0.258	0.347***	
TI	3.818	0.664	0.887	0.518	0.416	0.283	0.317***	0.254***

4.7 Model Assessment

The structural model was developed to examine the relationships among the three key constructs: Nepotism, Job Satisfaction, and Turnover Intention. The Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis was conducted to evaluate both the measurement and structural aspects of the model, including the path coefficients among latent variables and the factor loadings of the observed indicators on their respective constructs.

In the SEM diagram, the symbol "E" denotes error terms, which represent the residual variances not explained by the latent constructs. These error terms reflect measurement inaccuracies or unobserved influences affecting each observed variable.

According to Morrison et al. (1992), the key parameters estimated in SEM include variances, regression coefficients, and covariances among variables. In SEM path diagrams:

- Regression coefficients are indicated by single-headed arrows, illustrating hypothesized causal or directional relationships between constructs.
- Covariances are depicted by double-headed arrows, signifying correlations without implied causality or directionality between variables.

4.7.1 Structural Model Goodness of Fit

To assess the structural model goodness of fit (GOF), specific indices were checked: CMIN/DF (Chi-square divided by degrees of freedom), CFI (Comparative Fit Index), TLI (Tucker-Lewis Index), GFI (Goodness-of-fit index), and RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation). The results of the structural model fit indices are summarized in Table 9.

Table 9: Fit indices of the structural model

Fit index	CMIN	DF	CMIN/DF	CFI	GFI	TLI	RMSEA
Obtained Estimate	1353.494	290.000	4.665	0.765	0.843	0.899	0.070

The model yielded a CMIN/DF value of 4.665, which is within the acceptable threshold of less than 5, suggesting a reasonable fit relative to model complexity. Similarly, the RMSEA value of 0.070 falls within the acceptable range of 0.03 to 0.08 (Hanaysha, 2016; Karki & Kangri Vishwavidyalaya, 2015). However, the indices CFI (0.765), TLI (0.899), and GFI (0.843) were slightly below the conventional benchmark of 0.90, which is often cited as the minimum for good model fit (Morrison et al., 1992).

Despite this, it is important to consider that complex models involving numerous observed and latent variables and larger sample sizes often do not meet strict cut-off thresholds. As noted by Bing-You and Varaklis (2016), rigid adherence to benchmarks such as 0.95 on CFI and TLI may not be appropriate in cases of model complexity. Moreover, Morrison et al. (1992) emphasized that such heuristic thresholds may be misleading, as they overlook factors such as model size, measurement structure, and parameter estimation constraints.

Therefore, while not all indices reached ideal cut-off points, the model can still be interpreted as providing an acceptable level of fit, particularly when evaluated in the context of its theoretical framework and complexity.

4.7. 2 Hypotheses testing

The hypotheses were tested by scrutinizing the standardized regression coefficient of path relationship (beta coefficients β), and the significance levels (*p*-values) of each hypothesized relationship. The outcomes of the hypotheses tests suggested earlier for the research are described in Table 10.

Table 10: Outcomes of relationships analysis

Proposed Hypotheses	β	P-value & Significance	Findings
H1: Nepotism positively affects turnover intention in Lebanese family businesses.	0.336	0.013***	Supported
H2: Nepotism negatively affects job satisfaction in Lebanese family businesses	-0.414	0.012**	Supported
H3: Job Satisfaction negatively affects Turnover Intention in Lebanese family businesses.	-0.312	0.011***	Supported
H4: Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between nepotism and turnover intention in Lebanese family businesses.	0.465	0.014**	Supported

Note: *p ≤ 0.05, **p≤0.01, ***p≤0. 001..

According to table 10, The findings indicated that there is a significant positive relationship between nepotism and turnover intention (β= .336 and sig = .013< 0.05) thus, H1 is supported. Moreover, the results revealed that there is a significant negative relationship between nepotism and job satisfaction (β= -.414 and sig = .012< 0.05). Thus, H2 is supported.

Furthermore, the results reveal a negative significant relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention (β= -.312 and sig = .011<0.05). Thus, H3 is supported

Regarding the mediator effect of job satisfaction, the findings indicate that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between nepotism and turnover intention (β=.465 and sig=.014<0.05).Thus, H4 is supported.

Table 11: Mediation Analysis

Hypothesis Model	Direct Effects	Indirect Effects	Total Effect	P-Value	Result
NE→JS	-0.414	0	-0.414	0.025	X
NE→TI	0.336	0	0.336	0.049	X
JS→TI	-0.312	0	-0.312	0.023	X
NE→JS→TI	0.336	0.129	0.465	0.014	Partially Mediate

Table 11 displays the results of a hypothesis test that considered the mediating role of job Satisfaction (JS) between the independent variable (NE), and the dependent variable (TI). The table shows the results of a hypothesis model with direct effects, indirect effects, and total effects along with their corresponding p-values and results.

NE --> JS: The direct effect of NE on JS is -0.414 with a p-value of 0.012, indicating that there is a significant negative relationship between NE and JS. There is no indirect effect, and the total effect is -0.414.

NE --> TI: The direct effect of NE on TI is 0.336 with a p-value of 0.013, indicating that there is a significant positive relationship between NE and TI. There is no indirect effect, and the total effect is 0.336.

JS --> TI: The direct effect of JS on TI is -0.312 with a p-value of 0.011, indicating that there is a significant negative relationship between JS and TI. There is no indirect effect, and the total effect is -0.312.

NE --> JS --> TI: There is a significant partially mediating effect of JS on the relationship between NE and TI. The direct effect of NE on TI is 0.336 with a p-value of 0.013, and the indirect effect through JS is 0.129 with a p-value of 0.014. The total effect is 0.465

4.7.3 Assessing the Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

R^2 is the Coefficient of determination which measures "the proportion of the variance of the dependent variable about its mean that is explained by the independent, or predictor, variables; the coefficient can vary between 0 and 1, the higher the value of R^2, the greater the explanatory power of the regression equation, and therefore the better the prediction of the dependent variable" (Smith and DeWine, 1991). Studies that are aiming to explain human intentions and behavior usually have R^2 values less than 0.5; because it is harder to anticipate like physical processes (Riyadi, 2018).

Table 12 Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Endogenous Construct	R squared
Nepotism	0.562
Job Satisfaction	0.427
Turnover Intention	0.430

Table 12 displayed the values for the endogenous constructs of the research conceptual model. In this research, the endogenous variables are Nepotism, Job Satisfaction, and turnover intention, which have R^2 value of 0.562, 0.427, and 0.430, respectively. This implies that the model developed by the research have reasonable predictive relevance for job satisfaction and turnover intention in the Lebanese Family Business setting.

5. Discussions

The main objective of this study was to examine the effect of **nepotism** on **turnover intention** in Lebanese family businesses and to assess the **mediating role of job satisfaction**. The results offer important insights into the behavioral responses of employees working in family-owned firms.

5.1 Effect of Nepotism on Turnover Intention

The findings reveal that nepotism has a significant positive effect on turnover intention. This aligns with previous research (Arasli et al., 2006; Büte, 2011; Jimoh & Thomas, 2021; Kerse & Babadağ, 2018; Khan et al., 2020). Nepotistic practices often result in family members occupying senior roles regardless of merit, which can lead non-family employees to feel overlooked and undervalued. This perceived lack of fairness and limited opportunities for advancement fosters dissatisfaction and increases the likelihood of employees seeking employment elsewhere.

This trend is especially pronounced among early-career employees: 59.8% of respondents had less than five years of experience, a group more inclined to leave due to perceived stagnation. Additionally, the unequal distribution of rewards, responsibilities, and recognition in favor of family members contributes to organizational mistrust and a toxic work environment, further intensifying turnover intentions.

5.2 Effect of Nepotism on Job Satisfaction

The analysis also indicates a significant negative effect of nepotism on job satisfaction, consistent with prior studies (Arasli et al., 2006; Arasli & Tumer, 2008; Nadeem et al., 2015; Serfraz et al., 2022; Yavuz et al., 2020). Nepotism creates an environment of perceived injustice, where decisions appear to be based on personal relationships rather than competence or performance. This undermines morale and reduces motivation among employees who feel their efforts are not equally recognized or rewarded, leading to dissatisfaction with their jobs.

5.3 Relationship Between Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intention

The study further confirms a significant negative relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention, supporting previous literature (Alam & Asim, 2019; Jehanzeb et al., 2015; Kurniawaty et al., 2019; Pratama et al., 2022). Satisfied employees are more likely to feel loyal and committed to their organizations, while those experiencing dissatisfaction may perceive a lack of support or appreciation. This can result in emotional disengagement and a growing desire to exit the organization.

5.4 Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction

Finally, the results demonstrate that job satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between nepotism and turnover intention. This is consistent with prior studies (Abbas et al., 2021; Kim & Moon, 2021). Employees who are excluded from advancement due to family favoritism may perceive a violation of meritocratic principles, leading to reduced job satisfaction and increased intent to leave.

This finding is particularly relevant given that 60% of respondents held Bachelor's degrees, indicating a workforce with professional aspirations. For such individuals, perceived inequality in promotion opportunities due to nepotism can significantly diminish motivation, hinder career growth, and ultimately drive them to seek alternative employment.

5.5 Implications

5.5.1 Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to theory in several key ways. First, it provides empirical evidence on the specific challenges faced by Lebanese family businesses related to nepotism, highlighting its significant influence on employee attitudes and behaviors. By identifying nepotism as a key organizational factor impacting job satisfaction and turnover intention, the study enhances the conceptual understanding of how internal favoritism can shape workforce dynamics.

Second, the research expands on the existing literature by establishing the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between nepotism and turnover intention. This finding offers a more nuanced theoretical framework for understanding how negative organizational practices can indirectly influence employee retention. The study thus opens new avenues for research into intervention strategies that improve employee satisfaction, even in environments where nepotistic practices may persist.

5.5.2 Practical Implications

From a practical standpoint, the findings provide valuable insights for managers and decision-makers in Lebanese family-owned businesses:

Policy Development: To mitigate the negative effects of nepotism, businesses should implement transparent and merit-based recruitment and promotion processes. Ensuring that decisions are based on qualifications and performance rather than familial ties can foster greater trust and motivation among non-family employees.

Enhancing Job Satisfaction: Management can improve job satisfaction and reduce turnover by offering employee development programs, recognition and rewards systems, and clear pathways for career advancement. A focus on inclusive leadership and supportive management practices can increase employees' emotional commitment to the organization.

Reducing Turnover Intentions: Involving employees in decision-making, encouraging a healthy work-life balance, and promoting open communication can reduce feelings of exclusion and enhance employee engagement, ultimately lowering the likelihood of turnover.

Promoting Inclusive Work Culture: The findings emphasize the importance of creating a diverse and inclusive organizational culture, where all employees—regardless of family affiliation—feel valued and have equal access to opportunities. This not only enhances satisfaction but also builds long-term organizational commitment.

Managing Workplace Conflict: Since nepotism can generate interpersonal tension, it is crucial to adopt proactive conflict resolution strategies. Encouraging transparent communication and providing channels for feedback from both family and non-family employees can help address concerns early and reduce the negative impact on morale.

By applying these recommendations, Lebanese family businesses can improve employee satisfaction, reduce turnover, and cultivate a fairer, more effective organizational environment.

5.6 Limitations and suggested ideas for future studies

While this study offers important contributions to the literature on nepotism, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions in Lebanese family businesses, several limitations must be acknowledged. These limitations provide valuable direction for future research efforts.

First, the study adopted a quantitative approach, which, although effective for examining patterns and relationships, may not fully capture the complexity and contextual depth of the constructs involved. Future research could adopt a mixed-methods approach, combining survey data with qualitative interviews or focus groups, to gain richer, more nuanced insights into how nepotism influences employee perceptions and behavior.

Second, the use of a convenience sampling technique may limit the generalizability of the findings, as the sample might not fully represent the broader population of employees in Lebanese family businesses. Future studies should consider employing probability-based or purposive sampling methods to obtain more diverse and representative samples.

Third, the context-specific nature of this study—focused solely on Lebanese family businesses—may limit the applicability of its findings to other organizational or cultural settings. Replicating the study in different cultural or national contexts could help determine the extent to which the findings hold across varied environments and business structures.

Fourth, while the sample size was sufficient for analysis, it remains relatively small compared to the total population of employees in Lebanese family-owned firms. Future studies should consider larger and more varied sample sizes to improve the statistical power and enhance the generalizability of the findings.

Fifth, this study focused only on job satisfaction as a mediating variable. However, other psychological and organizational factors such as perceived equity, organizational justice, or organizational culture may also play mediating or moderating roles. Future research should explore these additional variables to build a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms linking nepotism to turnover intention.

Finally, the influence of cultural values and norms on employee perceptions of nepotism was not directly addressed. Given the cultural embeddedness of family businesses, future research could explore how cultural dimensions affect employees' tolerance for nepotism, their satisfaction, and intent to stay or leave. Comparative studies across different cultural contexts could provide deeper insight into how cultural attitudes toward hierarchy, favoritism, and fairness mediate or moderate these relationships.

6. Conclusion

This study aimed to examine the effect of nepotism on turnover intention in Lebanese family businesses. The mediating role of job satisfaction in this relationship was also assessed. A sample size of 378 employees working in different sectors of family-owned businesses were selected for this study. The findings of this study revealed that nepotism positively affect turnover intention among employees and that job satisfaction mediates this relationship. This outcome means that individuals who are not part of the family may feel frustrated when family connections are prioritized over their abilities and qualifications. This perception of merit being undervalued can generate job dissatisfaction and potentially drive individuals to seek opportunities elsewhere.

The current study presents valuable insights, recommendations, and suggestions for family businesses, policymakers, and managers seeking to enhance their understanding of the effects of nepotism on employee outcomes. The results could assist

family business owners and decision makers in devising strategies to mitigate the negative effects of nepotism on turnover intentions.

Family business owners and decision makers are encouraged to implement transparent hiring policies and fair promotion criteria based on abilities and qualifications. By establishing an environment of fairness and equal opportunities, employee commitment and engagement can be enhanced, leading to higher job satisfaction and reduced intentions to seek employment elsewhere

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الملخص:

هدف هذه الدراسة هو التحقيق في تأثير المحسوبية على نية ترك العمل في الشركات العائلية اللبنانية بالإضافة إلى الدور الوسيط لرضا العمل في هذه العلاقة. باستخدام طريقة أخذ عينات ملائمة، تم اختيار 378 مشارك من مستويات إدارية وقطاعات مختلفة داخل الشركات العائلية اللبنانية لإكمال استبيان الدراسة. لاختبار فرضيات الدراسة(AMOS 27) ، تم استخدام نمذجة المعادلات الهيكلية .(SEM) تشير نتائج الدراسة إلى أن المحسوبية لها تأثير إيجابي كبير على نوايا ترك العمل. علاوة على ذلك، تكشف النتائج أن رضا العمل يتوسط جزئيًا العلاقة بين المحسوبية ونوايا ترك العمل. لذلك، يجب على الشركات العائلية في لبنان تنفيذ سياسات وممارسات تعزز العدالة والشفافية واتخاذ القرارات بناءً على الجدارة لزيادة مستوى الرضا بين الموظفين وتقليل نوايا تركهم للعمل. يمكن أن تكون نتائج هذه الدراسة قيمة لمالكي ومديري الشركات العائلية اللبنانية الذين يسعون لتخفيف تأثير المحسوبية على نوايا ترك العمل.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المحسوبية؛ نية ترك العمل؛ رضا العمل؛ الشركات العائلية؛ العلاقة؛ اتخاذ القرارات بناءً على الجدارة؛ العدالة؛ الشفافية؛ مالكي الأعمال؛ لبنان.