

Article

Nepotism and Favouritism in Polish and Lithuanian Organizations: The Context of Organisational Microclimate

Jolita Vveinhardt ¹  and Włodzimierz Sroka ^{1,2,*}

¹ Management Department, WSB University, 41-300 Dąbrowa Gornicza, Poland; jvveinhardt@wsb.edu.pl

² WorkWell Research Unit, School of Management Sciences, North-West University, Potchefstroom 2351, South Africa

* Correspondence: wsroka@wsb.edu.pl; Tel.: +48-602-744-239

Received: 22 December 2019; Accepted: 11 February 2020; Published: 14 February 2020



Abstract: The phenomena of ‘nepotism’ and ‘favouritism’ are frequently observed in contemporary business, being usually associated with corruption in the public sector and the abuse of public resources. The phenomena, however, have an international scale and no country and sector of the economy are free of them. Given these facts, our paper identifies the attitude of Lithuanian and Polish employees to it in the context of revealing the organizational microclimate. Our analysis is done in relation to three basic aspects: a) Sector (public vs. private), b) gender (male vs. female) and c) five different age groups. Our research sample involved 337 respondents (Poland-PL, N = 164 and Lithuania-LT, N = 173) representing public (PL and LT, N = 119) and private (PL and LT, N = 218) sector organizations. A closed-type questionnaire was used in the survey. Validity and reliability of the questionnaire were confirmed by its high psychometric characteristics. Several research methods, including factor analysis, Cronbach’s alpha, Spearman–Brown, factor loading and total item correlation were used in our study. The results show that there are both similarities as well as differences between the organizations analysed. As far as the private vs. public sector is concerned, in Poland, manifestation of nepotism in principal does not differ in private and public organizations, unlike in Lithuanian organizations, where a worse situation is recorded in public sector organizations. In turn, comparing employees’ attitudes by their gender, it was identified that there were more similarities than differences between Poland and Lithuania in four subcategories. Finally, comparing employees’ attitudes by their age, it was identified that the least number of statistically significant differences was identified in two age groups: 18–24 years old and over 51.

Keywords: nepotism; favouritism; organizational microclimate; public and private sector; Poland; Lithuania

1. Introduction

‘Nepotism’ and ‘favouritism’ are widely observed in modern business. One may observe the manifestations of both phenomena in different countries and different sectors of the economy. Nepotism and favouritism are analysed as the forms of expression of internal corruption in non-governmental sector organisations when decision-making is guided not by the objective criteria outlining the expertise of the employee, but by family relations (nepotism) or patronising employees for subjectively felt amiability (favouritism). In other words, in both cases, social connections are placed above the interests of the organization. Such a situation is not good for the sustainable development of organizations. As demonstrated by various studies, nepotism is not homogeneous. Firstly, it must be recognised that it is a natural phenomenon, characteristic of biological-social systems [1]. Secondly, the occurrence

of the phenomenon is determined by socio-culture [2]. Thirdly, though it cannot be completely eliminated, it can be controlled at the organisational level when evaluating the ethical aspects [3]. This is confirmed by studies carried out in different cultural environments, which indicate the challenges organisations face.

One should determine the definitions of nepotism and favouritism. The word ‘nepotism’ is derived from the Latin word ‘nepos’, meaning nephew, grandson. This concept originated in the Middle Ages. In general, it means abuse of a given position by a given person by protecting relatives, i.e., favouritism based on kinship. Therefore, it is one of the manifestations of favouritism, which should be understood as “a system of relations in which a group of people is given special considerations” without regard to the competencies or values of the person concerned (Rosicki, 2012) [4]. In other words, favouritism is a wider term than nepotism. In the scientific literature, these two terms are often used together (for example, [5–7]).

Nepotism and favouritism damage organizational performance and has been documented in numerous studies as research on these phenomena are conducted in different countries [8–10] and different sectors [6,11]. In general, these forms of corruption in organisations are inseparably linked with the level of tolerance or intolerance of society towards unfair behaviour. It could be identified as a certain quiet, invisible opposition of the employees or as resistance expressed individually because of the injustice experienced. Hudson and Claasen (2017) [9] believe that nepotism exists in all cultures but perceptions and severity of consequences may vary depending on cultural values as well as on the society’s economic development. One should stress that developing countries undergoing political and socio-economic transformations often attract the attention of researchers when analysing various manifestations of corruption in enterprises, including favouritism and nepotism (e.g., [12–15]). For example, in the countries of the former Soviet Union, relations based on useful links—the so-called “pull”—are still widely spread. Despite the fact that the system changed almost 30 years ago, the traditions of the “pull” remain quite viable. Onoshchenko and Williams (2014) [16] researched how school-leavers bypass formal procedures by using social connections in order to take up employment in Ukraine. It turned out that the use of the so-called “pull” remains a socially acceptable non-monetary form of assistance to acquaintances, used in order to take up employment, which highlights the risks of nepotism and cronyism to organisations. Besides, concealed kinship-based schemes providing access to public resources are flourishing [9].

There is a strong connection between nepotism and favouritism and the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), primarily due to organizations’ commitment to make efforts directed against corruption [17,18], one of the significant sources of which is abuse of connections [5,9,19]. One claims that if a company wishes to be perceived as a reliable partner in business, it should behave in accordance with CSR concepts, implementing elements of this concept, and, indeed, following this concept fully [20]. In general, this means that it should behave responsibly [21]. This ethical behaviour of enterprises is based on the principles of honesty, integrity and trustworthiness [22]. This implies that the company that operates ethically will not indulge in nepotism and favouritism and vice versa. If, manifestations of nepotism and favouritism are observed in the organizations, it will not be perceived as one that applies ethical behaviour. In addition, it may constitute a significant obstacle in the sustainable development of the organization. However, there is still insufficient research that directly deals with nepotism and favouritism in the context of CSR.

Given these facts the purpose of our paper is to identify the attitude of employees of Lithuanian and Polish organizations to the phenomena of nepotism and favouritism in the context of revealing the organizational microclimate. Our paper is structured as follows. Firstly, we describe the phenomena of nepotism and favouritism that are presented in the literature so far, mostly from the point of view of hypotheses formulated. Secondly, we present the material and methods that were applied in our research. The next part of our paper presents the research findings and analyses the results in details. Finally, we present the conclusions and limitations of our study.

2. Theoretical Background

The nepotism and favouritism phenomena have been analysed by many authors. They have assessed the topic from different points of view, concentrating on a variety of factors [23]. One should underline that, according to some of them, there are positive aspects of these phenomena. They claim that there are economic and social benefits that may accrue when an organization selects family member to fill an available position. For example, Lansberg (1983) [24] connects this fact with the life cycle of the organization and states that when a small family firm is early in its life cycle, hiring family members can ensure a sense of commitment and identification with the firm that non-family members will not have. Additionally, recommendations from trusted friends are a substitute for a potentially more expensive source of information (e.g., from former teachers and/or employers). Since these information sources are more difficult or more expensive to access, employers would rather use their friends for financial reasons [25]. Another benefit may be associated with a positive work atmosphere, as well as higher productivity and lower training costs. Hiring an influential family member or being perceived as a family operated firm can generate a positive image. For example, Donnelley (1988) [26] suggests that the family members who have a positive reputation can lend that reputation to the organization, which may increase or establish trust among the community. Utilizing the strong bonds created by family can provide an organization with many potential benefits that non-familial relationships can take years (if ever) to establish. Popczyk (2017) [27] tries to acknowledge that the positive influence of nepotism on a business, regardless of its size, constitutes a kind of continuum between the neutral effect and the strong competitive advantage resulting from the family social capital—an intangible, strategic resource inherent only in close family relationships.

In general, these positive aspects associated with nepotism and favouritism mostly stress the usefulness of social networks in attracting new employees to organizations (e.g., [28–31]). In such studies, the key points are related with the hope that people providing the recommendations will remain honest and objective. The use of content created by this social network depends on how managers in the organisation deal with ethical problems, and how reliable, objective and transparent the system of values and assessment of employees and careers created in the organisation is. Managers who consider themselves professionals rely on their experience, knowledge and insights, despite the dormant subjectivity and emotional traps that may affect the professionalism and competence of the staff. However, it cannot be overlooked that in such cases it is built upon subjective “trust” rather than on methodologically approved instruments [28]. This means that, in any case, the use of social relations to hire new employees should be linked to the professionalism and ethics of the managers, as well as some mandatory criteria for decisions, including objectivity, the employees’ competences and merit [32]. One should also emphasize that employees also regularly observe and assess the actions of managers, and, accordingly, respond emotionally to the irresponsible behaviour of the leaders. That is why clear norms and the responsibility for unethical actions are necessary [14,15]. Given these facts, no wonder that nepotism and favouritism create dilemmas for managers, and most organizations have policies that remove family members from personnel decisions about their loved ones [33]. Working with family members creates tremendous strains.

There are also authors (e.g., [34]) who distinguish two types of nepotism based on how nepots are chosen, i.e., entitlement nepotism and reciprocal nepotism. Accordingly, reciprocal nepotism leading to generalized exchanges among family members improves an organization’s competitive advantage by increasing the potential for effective management of tacit knowledge. In turn, entitlement nepotism is potentially harmful, especially when hiring new employees is based on family ties without consideration of family conditions. Because it can be so deeply embedded, this type of nepotism may be dysfunctional.

The vast majority of authors, however, emphasize the negative aspects of nepotism and favouritism. For example, one indicates a negative impact on satisfaction, motivation, work, commitment and trust among employees, as well as reduced social capital of the company [35], organizational commitment and human resource management practices [13]. In addition, when employees perceive nepotism,

their intention to leave work increases [36]. Nepotism is often criticised for the reduction of the quality of the labour force by recruiting less skilled employees. That is because nepotism places loyalty and obligations to one's family over obligations to one's employer. Hiring new employees primarily on the basis of their relationships to powerful others is problematic and susceptible to all forms of bias and discrimination [37]. Discrimination is defined as preferential treatment of one person over another due to non-job relevant factors such as social or ethnic group status [38]. Given this fact, one can state that nepotistic practices can be classified as a type of discrimination on the basis of family member connections [39]. Passing over qualified job applicants for someone with family ties has been shown to create reductions in organization productivity [40], but first of all it can potentially lead to legal action such as discrimination lawsuits [41]. As the result, organizations can decline due to a lack of innovation and creativity [42], which in turn will have a negative influence on their sustainable development. Nepotism is also damaging because any claims that family members make must take precedence over any organizational requirements [43]. This was demonstrated, *inter alia*, in research carried out in the USA and Jordan. It is significant that certain commonalities were identified: In both countries, the acceptance of nepotism was low and many agreed with the arguments against nepotism in human resources management [8]. This shows that the benefit provided by nepotism is highly ephemeral. Similar situations are observed in other countries too and researchers pay attention to the occurrence of nepotism and favouritism and their negative consequences mostly in public sector organizations. For example, Al-Aiban and Pearce (1993) [44] found that in Saudi Arabia, managers in for-profit businesses reported less nepotism in their organizations than did managers in governmental organizations, where performance pressures were weaker. This suggests that even when such practices are culturally accepted, they are seen as undermining organizational performance. One of the reasons may be the fact that cultural obligations to protect and advance family members are very strong in this country. A similar situation may be observed in Pakistan. Nadeema et al. (2015) [45], who analysed telecom sector organizations, stated that it is common that vacancies are filled on the basis of personal liking and preferences. Moreover, it was a common practice in public organizations, but now it is also very common in private sector organizations as well. In the developed countries, private sector organizations usually perform well because vacancies are filled on the basis of merit, whereas in the developing countries, vacancies are not filled on the basis of qualification, experience etc. therefore, the performance of these organizations is not as good as in developed countries. In other words, it shows clearly that the nepotism and favouritism phenomena prevail in the public sector rather than in private. Bute [13] analysed the effects of nepotism on employees' behaviour and human resource management practices in Turkish public banks operating in Ankara. Therein, 243 questionnaires were used for analyses. The results of the research revealed that nepotism had significant negative effects on intention to quit, job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Moreover, Hayajenh et al. (1994) [46] found that Egyptian and Jordanian human resource managers believed that organizations that prohibited nepotistic practices were more effective than those that allowed them. One should, however, remember that the public sectors in Arab independent states, like other less-developed countries, are the largest employers, leaving only little room for the private sector. Therefore, nepotism plays a major role in finding jobs for relatives and friends [8].

One should add that the situation does not differ in well-developed countries. Scoppa (2009) [47] who analysed the attractiveness of public sector jobs in Italy found similar data. According to his research, if the father is a public employee, the probability of his child working in the same sector is increased by a huge 44%. This advantage is larger for low-ability individuals, "stayers" and southern Italian residents. These findings may be clearly interpreted as evidence of nepotism in public employment. Moreover, the research of Ferlazzo and Sdoia (2012) [31], carried out in two countries, Denmark and Canada, brought similar results. They showed that six percent of the employees surveyed indicated that they were employed by the same employers who had employed their parents as well. Thus, the parents' job acts as a certain guarantee.

Nepotism and favouritism in the public sector, as well as in business organizations, disturbs the psycho-emotional climate of the organization and erodes confidence in the manager, as well as values and decisions of the organization. Employees will always have doubts whether the manager's relative has not been evaluated more favourably due to blood relations. Such doubt can lead to mistrust not only for recruitment, but also evaluation, their career and other systems of the organization. However, whilst nepotism and favouritism in public sectors is directly linked to corruption, in the private sector, the situation is changing [48]. While nepotism in public sector organisations violates the law, such behaviour in private sector organisations can at best be attributed to the grey zone of deviations. It then requires some actions to be taken and organisations have to set standards of conduct for managers and employees, together with control mechanisms.

The research findings presented above were mainly based on the analysis of the private or public sector. However, the situation of the organizations in different sectors within the same country may differ. It has been found that in Greece, for example, only public sector employees feel secure, and the absence of a unified national labour system prevents the formation of a national employment system and the overcoming of nepotism and political patronage [49]. Other authors accentuate a more vulnerable situation of nepotism in the public sector (e.g., [16,50–52]. Ponzio and Scoppa (2011) [53] state that nepotism tends to decline as the economy grows. That is, more advanced economies distinguish themselves by less nepotism. This is relevant in the countries with transition economies where the society feels less socially protected.

As the result of preliminary research, the following hypotheses was formulated:

Hypothesis 1 (H1). *The occurrence of nepotism and favouritism is more evident in public sector organizations than in private.*

In this paper, the phenomena of nepotism and favouritism are analysed from different points of view. For example, Ignatowski et al. (2020) [54] analysed the impact of religion. Accordingly, Protestants regard the phenomenon of nepotism as negative more frequently than do Catholics, and the phenomenon is more common among Catholics than Protestants. As shown in research conducted in Poland, women almost twice as often as men define themselves as “deeply religious” (26%) and much less often as “unbelieving” or “religiously indifferent” (5%) and much more often declare their faith in God (93–90%) [55]. These data show that one may expect different perceptions on nepotism and favouritism between women and men. This claim has been confirmed by Mohammed Abubakar et al. (2017) [56] who, on the basis of employees working in a three-star hotel in Northern Cyprus, analysed the impact of favouritism/nepotism, supervisor incivility on employee cynicism and work withdrawal. Their results revealed inter alia that the impact of employee cynicism on work withdrawal was about 6.7 times stronger for women and the impact of favouritism/nepotism on work withdrawal was about 2.1 times stronger for men.

Other negative aspects of nepotism and favouritism relate to employees not participating in these social networks marked by corruption and suffering from discrimination, as well as their relationship with the workplace (for sure, women are more opposed to such situations at their work). They are exposed to psychological stress [13,57], and, in addition, these phenomena negatively affect their performance. As a result, dissatisfaction at work may be observed. This situation may also lead to “word of mouth” dissemination of negative feedback about the organisation; when recruiting or promoting, the priority is given not to the employee's professional competence, but to kinship relations, friendliness or on the basis of subjective benevolence to one or another person, it negatively affects the quality of human resources across the organisation as a whole [12,13,58,59]. Based on this, one can state that nepotism and favouritism are bad for employees who are forced to weigh conflicting obligations, as well as for co-workers who become demoralized when they suspect the worst, and they are bad for organizational performance. It seems to us that women are more opposed to such situations at their work.

Finally, an interesting study was conducted by Padgett et al. (2015) [60] who, using scenarios that simulated the hiring process, carried out two experimental studies. Participants reviewed materials describing the hiring process for a manager and then completed a questionnaire assessing their perceptions of the person hired. The research revealed that women have a more negative attitude toward nepotism than men.

In addition to the studies presented, there have been multiple studies evaluating the gender perception of ethical practices. For example, Goel (2018) [61], Kiser (2015) [62] and Burke et al. (2012) [63] found a significant difference between male and female employees' perception over how they perceive rights to the job, being independent and being better executives in business organizations. One may therefore assume that it will relate to nepotism and favouritism phenomena too.

Employee age may be another factor that is important for the manifestation of nepotism and favouritism. The study conducted in Jordan has demonstrated that professed religion influenced nepotism, and age did not matter [64]. However, the research carried out in Turkey has shown that age mattered to friends' patronage in the working environment [65]. Several studies in different activity areas and different countries confirm the trend that the support of the loved ones is often received at the start of a career [66,67], although support-related expectations may negatively affect the efforts of children themselves [68]. The results of another study conducted in Italy have demonstrated that children with kinship connections in an academic setting did not yield to those without such connections in their academic performance, although the existence of nepotism was not denied [69]. Thus, since nepotism is based on the intentions of support to the loved ones, it can be expected that older employees will be more concerned about that and will have a more favourable attitude to nepotism.

Based on these deliberations, we formulated hypotheses H2 and H3.

Hypothesis 2 (H2). *There are substantial differences in the perception of nepotism by women and men.*

Hypothesis 3 (H3). *Employees' perception of nepotism depends on their age.*

Perception of the nepotism and favouritism phenomena is differentiated in particular countries. This is the result of a number of factors, but culture plays a vital role here. Hooker [2] (2009), whose study included Japan, Taiwan, India, China, North America, part of Africa, the Middle East and Korea, emphasised that corrupting behaviour differs around the world partly because of different norms, and partly because cultural systems break down in different ways. According to the author, activities such as nepotism or cronyism that are corrupting in the rule-based cultures of the West may be functional in relationship-based cultures. In spite of the different cultures and norms, nepotism and favouritism in the Western countries remain, sometimes taking specific forms [70,71].

Chao et al. (2004) [72] conducted an experimental investigation of MBA students' evaluations of the nepotistic practices of a large Chinese corporation's HRM department. Research showed that participants reported lower trust in management and a lower evaluation of the fairness of the organization's procedures in the nepotistic organization condition. An organization may believe that by hiring their incumbents' relations in their workforce, there will be cohesion, but these studies suggest that nepotistic practices can detrimentally affect employee reactions. Such a situation may be regarded as a very good example of a phenomenon known as the *guanxi* network, which is defined as a network of informal interpersonal relations within which favours are exchanged to facilitate business activities [73]. In the light of Western international law, all such phenomena are treated as corruption generating practices and are subject to penal sanctions.

Padgett and Morris (2005) [39] conducted an experimental study that found that participants in the nepotistic condition perceived workers hired on the basis of their family connections as less competent. In addition, the participants in the nepotistic condition perceived the company as only interested in promoting family members, and, therefore, non-family members were believed to be promoted less. Therefore, it was not surprising that participants perceived employees of nepotistic organizations

as low in organizational commitment. In turn, Redding (1990) [74] who analysed overseas Chinese firms found that these family-based organizations were characterized by extensive political infighting among siblings and cousins, and the firms usually split into separate, small organizations to provide each family member with his or her own organization, to keep the peace. In addition, supervisors were autocratic, and employees were unhappy.

In a longitudinal study of transitional Hungary, Pearce and Huang (2014) [75] followed three organizations that sought to implement more meritocratic selection and performance management practices in their transition from communist state ownership. The authors found that once employees believe that rewards are based on cronyism rather than merit, those perceptions do not change even years after new, foreign parent companies have implemented formal systems to eliminate that phenomenon. These employees recognized that reward systems had become formally more merit based, but employees simply did not believe that these formal systems had replaced the behind-closed-doors favouritism that employees had experienced. That is, not only do nepotism and cronyism have the negative effects listed above when operational, but also the resulting attitudes and perceptions are resistant to change once established. Cronyism and favouritism not only affected first level employees, but also changed the way managers operate when personal relationships are pervasive in the workplace. It was found that dependence on personal relationships led managers to withhold information from their subordinates because keeping critical personal relationships secret was important to the managers' legitimacy and this led to overcentralization and distrust.

Nepotism and favouritism are an ethical problem of organizational practice [7], which is also influenced by values formed by cultural traditions [9,76,77]. However, it is important to note the lack of such comparative studies between Poland and Lithuania. Certain references can be provided by comparative studies on corruption. For example, according to the risk of corruption in the European context, Lithuania and Poland are close, but the level in these countries is yet different [78]. Furthermore, bearing in mind that nepotism is influenced by the level of the country's economy and income [9], differences in economic development between the two countries may have a significant impact. While both states share the same past of the socialist market, the level of their autonomy differed similarly to that between Poland and Ukraine, which was more integrated in the Soviet Union. The study conducted in the context of the latter countries showed significant differences in preferences with regard to nepotism too [79].

Based on these deliberations, we formulated the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4 (H4). *Perception of ethics between Polish and Lithuanian employees differ.*

These negative aspects of these phenomena show that organisations need strong anti-nepotism and anti-favouritism policies to prevent the possible abuse of the existing social relations and the development of such networks, which would include the education of leaders and ethical interventions [33,80,81], thus preserving the quality of social relations and value for both employees and organisations. That is a very complicated issue, and studies carried out in different countries show that even the companies which underline the ethical aspects in their activities do not always successfully solve these problems in practice. Schwartz (2012) [82] states that Israel has achieved a great deal in implementing ethical principles; the majority of universities and colleges offer the students at least elective courses in ethics; and while most of the employees surveyed said that they worked in ethical organisations, many problems such as nepotism and discrimination were highlighted. Such situations are really bad, as research shows that socially responsible activities may also enhance employees' identification [83], as well as the company's ability for sustainable development.

3. Materials and Methods

Two countries, i.e., Poland and Lithuania were chosen for comparison. Both countries are neighbouring, and are characterised both by similarities (like cultural heritage, similar development

level, GDP per capita), as well as substantial differences. For example, Poland is five times bigger geographically, and its population is 38.5 million people, while in the case of Lithuania it is only around 3 million people. In addition, Poland has well developed industrial sectors whilst Lithuania is rather focused on providing services.

The research instrument developed for revealing trends in the organizational microclimate was based on the items provided in the questionnaires entitled “mobbing as discrimination in employee relations aiming to improve the organisational climate” (MDOC-110) [84], which included 14 subcategories of organizational climate and the Organisational Climate Crisis Test for Lithuanian Job Organisations [85,86]. In turn, the questionnaire entitled “Nepotism and Favouritism in the Context of Revealing the Organizational Microclimate” (NFOM), which includes 10 subcategories of organizational climate, into which the items of nepotism and favouritism are integrated, was used in this research. Statements of nepotism and favouritism are formed on the basis of Abdalla et al. (1998) [8] and Arasli and Tumer (2008) [57]. The questionnaire consists of 125 items in total, 44 of which are intended for the diagnosis of nepotism and favouritism. Statistical verification of the validity and reliability of the questionnaire during the exploratory research [87] showed its high psychometric characteristics. In a sample of this, research validity and reliability tests were conducted using factor analysis and explained dispersion (%), Cronbach’s alpha, Spearman–Brown, factor loading (L) and total item correlation (r/itt) (Tables 1 and 2).

The methodological quality characteristics of the questionnaire (Table 1) were evaluated by calculating the percentage of explained factor dispersion, Cronbach’s alpha coefficient, minimum factor weight (L) and total item correlation (r/itt); beyond the aforementioned, primary and secondary factorization using principal components and alpha factoring methods was done (Table 2). The comparison of the explained dispersion percentage in all subcategories shows that it is high because the lowest value is four times higher than the allowed minimum value (the lowest limit allowed is 10%). If the explained factor dispersion in the subcategory is less than 10%, this indicates that the analysed subcategory contains statements that reduce dispersion. It is evident that the subcategories analysed do not contain statements reducing dispersion. The analysis of Cronbach’s alpha values shows that for all subcategories in the case of this sample the coefficient is 0.8 and above 0.8, except for one subcategory where its value is 0.65. According to psychologists, this coefficient should not be lower than 0.5, while in other social sciences the coefficient is acceptable only if its value is not lower than 0.7. In the case of this study, Cronbach’s alpha values are high, which indicates that there is strong internal consistency between the subcategories of the questionnaire. The minimum factor loading (L) may not be lower than 0.3. If it is lower than 0.3, this indicates that an inappropriate statement was detected in the subcategory. Furthermore, the mean of the total item correlation (r/itt) should not be less than 0.2. The recorded value being lower than 0.2 again indicates the presence of an inappropriate statement in the subcategory being tested [84]. In the case of this sample, both the minimum factor loading (L) and the mean of the total item correlation (r/itt) across all subcategories meet the above-mentioned conditions and even significantly exceed them.

Table 1. Psychometric characteristics of the questionnaire “Nepotism and Favouritism in the Context of Revealing the Organizational Microclimate” (NFOM).

Categories	Subcategories	Explained Dispersion, %	Cronbach Alpha	Spearman-Brown	Factor Loading (L)			Total Item Correlation (r_{itt})		
					mean	min	max	mean	min	max
1.1. Factors related to behaviour of managers, monitoring and security	1.1.1. Fears related to the lack of certainty and security	58.94	0.86	0.83	0.76	0.60	0.83	0.58	0.32	0.83
	1.1.2. The manager’s behaviour and relationships with employees	63.14	0.92	0.89	0.79	0.72	0.86	0.63	0.45	0.85
	1.1.3. Supervision, monitoring and checking of activity and responsibility	60.23	0.88	0.86	0.77	0.59	0.90	0.58	0.23	0.88
1.2. Factors related to the organisation’s assessment	1.2.1. Achievements and evaluations	63.19	0.88	0.86	0.79	0.65	0.86	0.62	0.43	0.86
	1.2.2. Values and traditions: fostering of ideology	52.02	0.84	0.80	0.72	0.56	0.81	0.51	0.23	0.80
	1.2.3. Organisational entry, downgrading and dismissal	42.46	0.65	0.65	0.64	0.52	0.80	0.40	0.02	0.77
1.3. Factors related to employee interrelationships	1.3.1. Communication and information sharing	49.84	0.92	0.87	0.70	0.47	0.81	0.48	0.18	0.81
	1.3.2. Employee behaviour and interrelationships	62.29	0.94	0.92	0.79	0.60	0.86	0.62	0.40	0.86
	1.3.3. Unification of persons sharing common interests, attitudes and objectives	62.24	0.85	0.82	0.79	0.67	0.84	0.61	0.39	0.83
	1.3.4. Confrontation of conflicting interests, attitudes and objectives	66.03	0.91	0.89	0.81	0.73	0.85	0.66	0.45	0.84
1.4. Factors related to internal policy and norms of behaviour within organization	1.4.1. Consequences/harm of nepotism/favouritism	43.15	0.81	0.80	0.65	0.37	0.78	0.40	0.05	0.76
	1.4.2. Nepotism as a problem of organizational communication	49.73	0.89	0.80	0.70	0.55	0.79	0.49	0.28	0.83
	1.4.3. Favouritism as a problem in organizational management	41.58	0.80	0.72	0.64	0.45	0.78	0.40	0.11	0.76
	1.4.4. Nepotism as a problem of organizational management	55.77	0.80	0.79	0.74	0.63	0.79	0.54	0.33	0.77
	1.4.5. Tolerating “different” persons	65.84	0.87	0.78	0.81	0.78	0.85	0.65	0.46	0.85

Notes: Questionnaire parts: OM—organizational microclimate (1.1., 1.2., 1.3. categories); NF—nepotism, favouritism (1.4. category). It should be noted that the sub-categories of organizational microclimate contain items measuring microclimate and nepotism, favouritism.

Table 2. Secondary factoring results of the questionnaire “Nepotism and Favouritism in the Context of Revealing the Organizational Microclimate” (NFOM) categories and subcategories.

Factoring in Accordance with <i>Principal Components (1 Factor Model) F1</i> Method		Factoring in Accordance with <i>Alpha Factoring F1</i> Method	
Categories and subcategories	N = 337	Categories and subcategories	N = 337
Factors related to behaviour of managers, monitoring and security			
The manager’s behaviour and relationships with employees	0.92	The manager’s behaviour and relationships with employees	0.91
Supervision, monitoring and checking of activity and responsibility	0.90	Supervision, monitoring and checking of activity and responsibility	0.85
Fears related to the lack of certainty and security	0.85	Fears related to the lack of certainty and security	0.73
Explained dispersion, %	79.15	Explained dispersion, %	69.50
Factors related to the organisation’s assessment			
Values and traditions: fostering of ideology	0.90	Values and traditions: fostering of ideology	0.86
Achievements and evaluations	0.88	Achievements and evaluations	0.81
Organisational entry, downgrading and dismissal	0.88	Organisational entry, downgrading and dismissal	0.81
Explained dispersion, %	79.22	Explained dispersion, %	68.90
Factors related to employee interrelationships			
Employee behaviour and interrelationships	0.94	Employee behaviour and interrelationships	0.93
Confrontation of conflicting interests, attitudes and objectives	0.93	Confrontation of conflicting interests, attitudes and objectives	0.92
Communication and information sharing	0.92	Communication and information sharing	0.89
Unification of persons sharing common interests, attitudes and objectives	0.89	Unification of persons sharing common interests, attitudes and objectives	0.83
Explained dispersion, %	84.83	Explained dispersion, %	79.91
Factors related to internal policy and norms of behaviour within organization			
Favouritism as a problem in organizational management	0.93	Favouritism as a problem in organizational management	0.95
Nepotism as a problem of organizational communication	0.90	Nepotism as a problem of organizational communication	0.87
Consequences/harm of nepotism/favouritism	0.89	Consequences/harm of nepotism/favouritism	0.87
Tolerating “different” persons	0.80	Tolerating “different” persons	0.73
Nepotism as a problem of organizational management	0.76	Nepotism as a problem of organizational management	0.67
Explained dispersion, %	73.70	Explained dispersion, %	68.02

Primary and secondary factorization are required when questionnaires are large-scale; therefore, in the case of this study, it was necessary to calculate both primary and secondary factorization. Subcategories forming a certain category must be similar in their content. During primary factorization, the totality of criteria is calculated, while during secondary factorization, the criteria calculated are combined into categories. The closer the factor loading to 1, the more the individual statement of the questionnaire corresponds to the distinguished factor. As it can be seen from the results given in Table 2, the subcategories that received the largest percentage of respondents' approval showed up. The category "Factors related to employee interrelationships" received the highest percentage of respondents' approval (according to the principal components method), i.e., 84.83%; the category "Factors related to internal policy and norms of behaviour within organization", the relatively lowest, i.e., 73.70%. Thus, the results of the secondary factorization only reaffirm the high methodological characteristics of questionnaire categories and subcategories.

The survey was conducted in the Lithuanian and Polish languages, so the psychometric characteristics of the questionnaires presented in Tables 1 and 2 show the validity and reliability of both questionnaires used in the joint research. Based on the results of verification of the questionnaire, it can be seen that its psychometric characteristics are high and that the questionnaire is suitable for measuring the intended set of attributes.

The sample of the research is sufficient for verification of the questionnaire, as according to a graded scale of sample sizes for scale development, proposed by Comrey and Lee (1992) [88]; when a sample is 300 respondents, the sample is considered good; when a sample is 500, very good. In this case, our sample falls between the categories good and very good, i.e., answers were received from 337 respondents in total (PL, N = 164 and LT, N = 173) representing public (PL and LT, N = 119) and private (PL and LT, N = 218) sector organizations in Lithuania and Poland. The survey was conducted electronically, meaning that the questionnaire was placed on an electronic survey platform. Access to the questionnaire was not public, i.e., only the persons to whom the questionnaire link was sent could participate in the survey. As the submission of the questionnaire was impossible without the full completion of the questionnaire, no questionnaires were rejected because of incompleteness. The possibility of the same ratings in a subcategory was also forbidden, thus, in this case all questionnaires were properly completed as well.

4. Results

4.1. Demographic Results

Table 3 presents the size and sectors of activities of investigated organizations.

Table 3. Size and sectors of activities of investigated organizations.

The Size of the Organization	LT, N = 173		PL, N = 164	
	Quantity	%	Quantity	%
A very small company (with less than 10 staff)	24	13.9	12	7.3
A small company (with less than 50 staff)	53	30.6	39	23.8
An average company (with less than 250 staff)	61	35.3	45	27.4
A large company (with more than 250 staff)	35	20.2	68	41.5
	173	100 %	164	100 %
The nature of the activity	LT, N = 173		PL, N = 164	
	Quantity	%	Quantity	%
Services	88	50.9	100	61
Production	48	27.7	39	23.8
Trading	37	21.4	25	15.2
Total:	173	100 %	164	100 %

4.2. Outcomes of Nepotism and Favouritism in the Context of Revealing the Organizational Microclimate Results

The results of the study are given by presenting the attitude of employees working in the organisations of two culturally close countries, i.e., Poland and Lithuania, to the phenomena of nepotism and favouritism in their organizations, in parallel evaluating the state of organizational climate: Differences in public and private sector organizations (Table 4), differences with regard to gender (Table 5) and differences with regard to employees' age groups (Table 6).

Table 4 details the results of the study with regard to the situation of the public and private sector on the analysed topic in Lithuanian and Polish organizations in the case of this sample. The answers of respondents of both countries show that employees of Polish organizations in three out of four categories were more statistically significantly worried about the factors indicating nepotism, compared with the reactions of employees of Lithuanian organizations. In the fourth category of factors related to patronage of relatives and friends in the workplace, the analogous trend is identified only in the subcategories of consequences/harm of nepotism/favouritism, of nepotism as a problem of organizational communication and of tolerating "different" persons. However, the comparison of answers by different statuses of organizations within states highlighted different trends. In Poland, differences in the reactions of employees working in both public and private sector organizations are minimal and statistically non-significant. In other words, manifestation of nepotism in principal does not differ, unlike in Lithuanian organizations. In the latter country, a worse situation in certain aspects is recorded in public sector organizations. That is, employees of the public sector statistically significantly feared more the lack of security and certainty, uneven opportunities of achievements and evaluations, worse interrelationships, division into groups sharing common interests, confrontation of interests, harm experienced due to patronage of relatives, communication problems and unequal toleration of persons attributed to different groups. What is more, nepotism and favouritism were more strongly emphasized as a problem of organizational management. This suggests that different sector organizations within the same country may have different management traditions influencing greater or lesser manifestation of nepotism and favouritism. In general, these findings in both analysed countries, despite some differences between them, are in line with the results of surveys carried out by Al-Aiban and Pearce (1993) [44] in Saudi Arabia, though substantial cultural differences exist between Poland and Lithuania on the one hand and Saudi Arabia on the other hand.

In addition, the comparison of different sector organizations in both countries shows that fears related to the lack of certainty and security are more pronounced in the Polish private sector than in the Lithuanian private sector, while these differences in the public sector are minimal and statistically non-significant. A similar trend was also identified in the area of the manager's behaviour, responsibility, supervision and checking, which indicates that respondents who are not attributed to the kin group in Polish private sector organizations were statistically significantly more sensitive to the manager's trust in persons related through kinship. In addition, employees in both public and private sector organizations expressed greater dissatisfaction in the area of achievements and evaluation, and differences, compared with analogous groups of organisations in Lithuania, are statistically significant. Similar trends were also identified in the area of attitude to "different" persons, that is, of persons' distribution into relatives and non-relatives: Employees of Polish organizations in both sectors reacted statistically significantly more sensitively to this type of discrimination. In eight more subcategories covering values and traditions, organisational entry/downgrading/dismissal, communication and information sharing, interrelationships, unification of persons sharing common interests and attitudes into groups, confrontation of interests and objectives, harm of nepotism/favouritism, communication and management problems, employees of Polish private sector organizations expressed greater dissatisfaction than did their colleagues in Lithuania, and differences were statistically significant. Differences between the reactions of public sector employees in Lithuania and Poland were minimal and statistically non-significant (Table 4).

Thus H1 was confirmed.

Table 5 presents the results of the study in Lithuanian and Polish organizations, in the case of this sample, comparing the analysed problem with regard to different genders. In Lithuanian organizations, in the case of this sample, no differences were found between male and female groups, applying the Mann–Whitney U test, i.e., the level of significance p , comparing all groups is > 0.05 . On the other hand, it was noticed that women tended to be slightly more sensitive, assessing negative aspects of analysed phenomena related to managers' behaviour (male Median, Me = 2.25, female Me = 2.38), to supervision, monitoring and checking of activity and responsibility (male Me = 2.67, female Me = 2.83), to organisational entry and dismissal (male Me = 2.40, female Me = 2.60), to employee interrelationships (male Me = 2.45, female Me = 2.82), to the harm of nepotism and favouritism (male Me = 2.63, female Me = 2.88), etc. Men, meanwhile, felt less secure (Me = 2.50) and put more emphasis on value non-correspondences (Me = 2.43), etc.

Table 4. Statistical differences between sectors: Public vs. private.

Categories	Subcategories	Lithuania (LT) N = 173		Poland (PL) N = 164		N = 337			Statistical Differences between Ratings of Respective Subcategories of LT and PL (by Sector)					
		Public N = 61	Private N = 112	Public N = 58	Private N = 106	LT N = 173	PL N = 164	Mann-Whitney U						
		Level of Statistical Significance, p		Level of Statistical Significance, p		Median		U	Z	p	Public	Private		
		Median	Median	Median	Median	Median	U	Z	p	Public	Private			
Factors related to behaviour of managers, monitoring and security	Fears related to the lack of certainty and security	2.83	2.00	0.006 **	2.50	2.83	0.288	2.33	2.67	11403.5	-3.117	0.002 **	0.711	0.000
	The manager's behaviour and relationships with employees	2.38	2.25	0.271	2.44	2.75	0.873	2.25	2.69	11375.0	-3.149	0.002 **	0.259	0.002
	Supervision, monitoring and checking of activity and responsibility	2.83	2.67	0.499	3.00	3.00	0.537	2.83	3.00	12353.5	-2.053	0.040 *	0.233	0.099
Factors related to the organisation's assessment	Achievements and evaluations	2.33	2.00	0.041 *	3.00	2.83	0.409	2.17	2.83	8702.0	-6.143	0.0001 **	0.007	0.000
	Values and traditions: fostering of ideology	2.43	2.29	0.244	2.43	2.57	0.665	2.29	2.57	12209.5	-2.214	0.027 *	0.609	0.019
	Organisational entry, downgrading and dismissal	2.60	2.40	0.124	2.80	2.80	0.704	2.60	2.80	11831.0	-2.642	0.008 **	0.693	0.003
Factors related to employee interrelationships	Communication and information sharing	2.64	2.54	0.155	2.68	2.89	0.243	2.57	2.79	11379.0	-3.141	0.002 **	0.566	0.000
	Employee behaviour and interrelationships	3.09	2.45	0.026 *	2.64	3.09	0.549	2.73	3.00	12061.5	-2.378	0.017 *	0.809	0.001
	Unification of persons sharing common interests, attitudes and objectives	3.00	2.30	0.005 **	2.60	3.00	0.310	2.80	3.00	11639.0	-2.855	0.004 **	0.523	0.000
	Confrontation of conflicting interests, attitudes and objectives	2.71	2.21	0.025 *	2.93	2.86	0.710	2.43	2.86	10660.0	-3.951	0.0001 **	0.214	0.000
Factors related to internal policy and norms of behaviour within organization	Consequences/harm of nepotism/favouritism	3.00	2.69	0.033 *	3.00	3.13	0.984	2.75	3.06	10755.0	-3.843	0.0001 **	0.306	0.000
	Nepotism as a problem of organizational communication	3.00	2.50	0.046 *	3.00	3.10	0.528	2.60	3.00	9849.0	-4.855	0.0001 **	0.131	0.000
	Favouritism as a problem in organizational management	3.38	2.94	0.002 **	3.00	3.13	0.648	3.13	3.13	13630.0	-0.623	0.533	0.082	0.026
	Nepotism as a problem of organizational management	3.60	3.20	0.024 *	3.40	3.40	0.890	3.40	3.40	13383.0	-0.901	0.367	0.333	0.070
	Nepotism as a greater commitment to the organization	2.50	2.67	0.361	2.75	2.67	0.794	2.50	2.67	13492.5	-0.779	0.436	0.330	0.840
	Tolerating "different" persons	2.80	2.60	0.362	3.30	3.20	0.728	2.80	3.20	9426.0	-5.339	0.0001 **	0.006	0.000

Notes: * statistical significance level $\alpha = 0.05$; ** statistical significance level $\alpha = 0.01$.

In Polish organizations, in the case of this sample, statistically significant differences between men and women were identified only in the subcategory of organisational entry, downgrading and dismissal ($Z = -2.129$, $p = 0.033$), where men felt more vulnerable than women (male Me = 2.80, female Me = 2.60). Other differences, as in the Lithuanian group, were not statistically significant, although women in Polish organizations felt more insecure than men (male Me = 2.50, female Me = 2.75), emphasised excessive control (male Me = 2.83, female Me = 3.00), felt confrontation of conflicting interests at work more often (male Me = 2.86, female Me = 3.00) and exhibited greater non-tolerance of “different” persons (male Me = 3.00, female Me = 3.40), but at the same time, also more strongly associated nepotism with greater commitment to the organization (male Me = 2.67, female Me = 2.83).

Comparing Lithuanian and Polish work organizations in the case of this sample, statistically significant differences in both gender groups were not identified only in four subcategories. This shows that at the levels of, first, supervision, monitoring and checking of activity and responsibility (subcategory “supervision, monitoring and checking of activity and responsibility”); second, of values and traditions (subcategory “values and traditions: Fostering of ideology”); third, of nepotism as a problem of organizational management (subcategory “nepotism as a problem of organizational management”); and, fourth, of nepotism as a greater commitment to the organization (subcategory “nepotism as a greater commitment to the organization”) the two countries have more similarities than differences. However, Polish women feel more insecure and have more fears than Lithuanian women (PL female Me = 2.75, LT female Me = 2.25). On the other hand, men in Poland feel more vulnerable in the processes of organisational entry/downgrading/dismissal (subcategory “organisational entry, downgrading and dismissal”), unlike representatives of this gender in Lithuania ($p = 0.003$), while no statistically significant differences between women of both countries were found (PL male Me = 2.80, LT male Me = 2.40). Men in Polish work organizations also felt less secure in the area of communication and information sharing ($p = 0.002$), experienced poorer interrelationships ($p = 0.010$) and emphasized greater negative behaviour of persons who were related by common interests, attitudes, objectives ($p = 0.011$). In addition, favouritism as the organizational problem also statistically significantly distinguished itself in the ratings of Polish men ($p = 0.050$).

Despite the differences that have shown up, common trends between genders of different countries were also identified. In Poland, both men and women more strongly feel the manager’s pressure in the relationships with employees (respectively, $p = 0,015$ and $p = 0,033$), experience confrontation of conflicting interests, attitudes and objectives (respectively, $p = 0,007$ and $p = 0,003$), emphasize the harm of nepotism and favouritism ($p = 0,005$ in both gender groups) and view nepotism as an organizational communication problem (respectively, $p = 0,000$ and $p = 0,002$). In addition, in the case of the Polish sample, representatives of both gender groups felt that they were less tolerated than persons attributed to favourites and nepots, compared with male and female groups in Lithuania (respectively, the statistical significance level $p = 0,002$ and $p = 0,000$) (Table 5). Organizational microclimate’ is a wide term that encompasses a number of different aspects. Given this fact it is extremely difficult to find a direct reference of the results of our research to other studies. There is, however, possibilities to find similar areas analysed by other researchers. Our study confirms then the findings of Keleş et al. (2011) [89], who revealed that nepotism and favouritism have a significant negative effect on organizational trust (their survey was conducted on a sample of 252 employees of family businesses in the textiles industry in Istanbul province, Turkey).

The results achieved show that H2 should be rejected.

Table 5. Statistical differences between genders: Males vs. females.

Categories	Subcategories	Lithuania (LT) N = 173					Poland (PL) N = 164					Statistical Differences between Ratings of Respective Categories of LT and PL (by Gender)	
		Male N = 53	Female N = 120	Mann-Whitney U			Male N = 56	Female N = 108	Mann-Whitney U			Level of Statistical Significance, p	
		Median		U	Z	P	Median		U	Z	P	Male	Female
Factors related to behaviour of managers, monitoring and security	Fears related to the lack of certainty and security	2.50	2.25	2963.0	−0.716	0.474	2.50	2.75	2898.5	−0.436	0.663	0.208	0.004
	The manager’s behaviour and relationships with employees	2.25	2.38	3130.0	−0.165	0.869	2.88	2.50	2730.5	−1.019	0.308	0.015	0.033
	Supervision, monitoring and checking of activity and responsibility	2.67	2.83	3160.0	−0.066	0.947	2.83	3.00	2921.5	−0.356	0.722	0.200	0.114
Factors related to the organisation’s assessment	Achievements and evaluations	2.00	2.17	2992.0	−0.620	0.535	2.83	2.83	2924.5	−0.346	0.729	0.002	0.000
	Values and traditions: fostering of ideology	2.43	2.29	3157.0	−0.076	0.940	2.64	2.43	2794.0	−0.799	0.424	0.068	0.145
	Organisational entry, downgrading and dismissal	2.40	2.60	3017.0	−0.538	0.591	2.80	2.60	2413.5	−2.129	0.033 *	0.003	0.203
Factors related to employee interrelationships	Communication and information sharing	2.43	2.61	3037.5	−0.469	0.639	2.89	2.79	2629.5	−1.369	0.171	0.002	0.082
	Employee behaviour and interrelationships	2.45	2.82	2789.5	−1.287	0.198	3.00	2.95	2944.0	−0.278	0.781	0.010	0.254
	Unification of persons sharing common interests, attitudes and objectives	2.40	2.80	2927.0	−0.835	0.404	3.00	3.00	2922.0	−0.355	0.723	0.011	0.080
	Confrontation of conflicting interests, attitudes and objectives	2.43	2.43	3063.0	−0.387	0.699	2.86	3.00	2925.0	−0.344	0.731	0.007	0.003
Factors related to internal policy and norms of behaviour within organization	Consequences/harm of nepotism/favouritism	2.63	2.88	2959.5	−0.727	0.467	3.00	3.13	3006.5	−0.061	0.952	0.005	0.005
	Nepotism as a problem of organizational communication	2.50	2.95	2735.5	−1.465	0.143	3.10	3.00	2797.5	−0.786	0.432	0.000	0.002
	Favouritism as a problem in organizational management	3.00	3.13	2751.0	−1.415	0.157	3.06	3.13	2699.5	−1.127	0.260	0.050	0.659
	Nepotism as a problem of organizational management	3.20	3.40	3086.0	−0.310	0.756	3.40	3.30	2642.0	−1.330	0.183	0.119	0.946
	Nepotism as a greater commitment to the organization	2.50	2.50	3030.5	−0.494	0.621	2.67	2.83	2874.0	−0.523	0.601	0.959	0.319
	Tolerating “different” persons	2.80	2.80	3013.0	−0.552	0.581	3.00	3.40	2696.0	−1.143	0.253	0.002	0.000

Notes: * statistical significance level $\alpha = 0.05$; ** statistical significance level $\alpha = 0.01$.

Table 6 presents the results of the study in Lithuanian and Polish organizations, in the case of this sample, comparing the analysed problem in different age groups of employees. In Polish organizations, statistically significant differences between age groups ($p = 0,036$) were identified only in the subcategory of communication and information sharing: The problems of interpersonal communication and information sharing were experienced strongest by 31–40-year-old respondents. In other subcategories, differences were minimal and statistically non-significant, unlike in Lithuanian organizations where four subcategories distinguished themselves (of fears related to the absence of safety or certainty; to the manager's behaviour and relationships with employees; to achievements and evaluations; as well as to consequences/harm of nepotism/favouritism), where differences were statistically significant. Fears related to the absence of certainty and security in the organization were most strongly felt in the age group of 41–50 year olds; and most weakly in the age groups of persons aged 18–24 and 31–40. That is, in such age stages the representatives of which entered the labour market after the restoration of the independent state. Similarly, the manager's behaviour and relationships with employees were most sensitively experienced by employees over the age of 41, while those who most strongly indicated injustice in the area of achievements and evaluation were over the age of 51. Persons aged 41–50 and over 51 were most sensitive with regard to consequences/harm experienced due to nepotism or favouritism.

Comparing ratings of employees working in organizations in both countries, the least number of statistically significant differences was identified in two age groups, namely, of 18–24 year olds and of persons over 51. In the first age group, employees of Polish organizations experienced injustice in the area of achievements and evaluation stronger than Lithuanian respondents, and differences were statistically significant. It should be noted that statistically significant differences in this subcategory were also found in other age groups ranging from 25 to 50 years, where employees of Polish organizations felt significantly worse. The representatives of the youngest group of employees in Poland experienced non-tolerance stronger than their Lithuanian peers, and differences were statistically significant. In the group of employees over 51, Lithuanian representatives statistically significantly more strongly felt the influence of nepotism on organisational entry/degradation/dismissal than did employees of Polish organizations.

Fears related to the absence of certainty and security were statistically significantly experienced more by employees of Polish organizations, aged 25–30 and 31–40, while differences between other age groups of representatives of both states were minimal and statistically non-significant. The same statistically significant differences showed up in the age group of 31–40 years: Employees of Polish organizations rated significantly more poorly the manager's behaviour and relationships with employees; supervision, monitoring and checking of activity and responsibility; organizational policy in the area of values and traditions; and the management's bias in the processes of organisational entry/degradation/dismissal. In addition, compared with Lithuanian organizations, this age group of employees of Polish organizations is in a statistically significantly worse situations in communicating and sharing work information; greater tension in interrelationships due to negative behaviour of co-workers is experienced; harm of nepotism is more evident, emerging communication problems are more emphasised; and non-tolerance of persons attributed to "different" persons is more pronounced. Confrontation of conflicting interests, attitudes and objectives was also statistically significantly felt more in the groups of employees of Polish organisations, aged 25–30 and 31–40, unlike among representatives of the same age working in Lithuanian organizations (Table 6).

Thus H3 was confirmed.

Research results presented in Tables 4–6 also allow positive verification of H4, though the differences between Polish and Lithuanian organizations are not substantial and do differ in particular subcategories.

Table 6. Statistical differences between employees' age groups.

Subcategories	Lithuania					Poland					Statistical Differences between Ratings of Respective Categories of LT and PL (by Age) Level of Statistical Significance, p								
	N = 173					N = 164													
	18–24 N = 50	25–30 N = 46	31–40 N = 36	41–50 N = 20	51 and More N = 21	Kruskal-Wallis H	18–24 N = 14	25–30 N = 49	31–40 N = 32	41–50 N = 56	51 and More N = 13	Kruskal-Wallis H	18–24	25–30	31–40	41–50	51 and More		
Median					χ^2		p	Median					χ^2	p					
Fears related to the lack of certainty and security	2.17	2.00	2.17	2.83	3.33	9.438	0.0050*	2.75	2.67	2.92	2.75	2.33	2.399	0.663	0.057	0.021	0.049	0.736	0.178
The manager's behaviour and relationships with employees	2.25	2.06	1.88	2.63	2.88	9.477	0.049*	2.56	2.50	2.88	2.94	2.00	7.141	0.129	0.678	0.228	0.000	0.436	0.286
Supervision, monitoring and checking of activity and responsibility	2.67	2.58	2.33	3.00	3.00	4.242	0.374	2.83	3.00	3.25	3.00	2.33	6.043	0.196	0.896	0.223	0.036	0.972	0.227
Achievements and evaluations	2.00	2.33	1.92	2.25	2.83	10.387	0.034*	3.00	2.83	3.00	3.00	2.17	5.241	0.263	0.026	0.010	0.000	0.019	0.445
Values and traditions: fostering of ideology	2.29	2.14	2.43	2.64	2.71	5.565	0.234	2.36	2.57	2.93	2.57	2.14	8.745	0.068	0.542	0.054	0.026	0.781	0.039
Organisational entry, downgrading and dismissal	2.40	2.20	2.20	2.80	3.20	9.334	0.053	2.70	2.80	2.80	2.80	2.60	3.025	0.554	0.607	0.056	0.004	0.892	0.041
Communication and information sharing	2.46	2.57	2.50	2.57	2.79	3.624	0.459	2.68	2.71	3.18	3.00	2.29	10.285	0.036*	0.505	0.254	0.011	0.211	0.295
Employee behaviour and interrelationships	2.36	2.82	2.36	2.68	3.18	6.441	0.169	2.64	2.91	3.14	3.18	2.55	5.939	0.204	0.389	0.698	0.026	0.595	0.146
Unification of persons sharing common interests, attitudes and objectives	2.80	2.60	2.30	2.70	3.40	9.320	0.054	2.30	3.00	3.30	3.00	2.60	5.860	0.210	0.851	0.186	0.002	0.309	0.140
Confrontation of conflicting interests, attitudes and objectives	2.43	2.36	2.14	2.36	3.29	8.675	0.070	2.79	3.00	2.86	3.07	2.71	2.130	0.712	0.210	0.036	0.010	0.086	0.523
Consequences/harm of nepotism/favouritism	2.75	2.69	2.38	3.00	3.13	9.679	0.046*	2.69	3.13	3.13	3.13	2.75	6.254	0.181	0.733	0.062	0.000	0.210	0.189
Nepotism as a problem of organizational communication	2.60	2.55	2.35	3.20	2.90	6.942	0.139	3.00	2.80	3.25	3.25	2.90	6.148	0.188	0.107	0.118	0.001	0.446	0.382
Favouritism as a problem in organizational management	3.13	3.06	2.88	3.38	3.38	9.080	0.059	2.94	3.00	3.13	3.38	2.75	6.799	0.147	0.672	0.884	0.092	0.619	0.031
Nepotism as a problem of organizational management	3.40	3.40	3.00	3.30	3.80	8.527	0.074	3.20	3.40	3.40	3.40	3.40	3.501	0.478	0.478	0.805	0.019	0.758	0.382
Nepotism as a greater commitment to the organization	2.50	2.67	2.50	2.50	2.33	4.001	0.406	2.83	2.50	2.67	2.67	3.00	4.715	0.318	0.203	0.075	0.455	0.294	0.199
Tolerating "different" persons	2.50	2.80	2.60	3.00	3.00	6.442	0.168	3.30	3.20	3.20	3.20	3.20	1.580	0.812	0.015	0.008	0.001	0.394	0.762

Notes: * statistical significance level $\alpha = 0.05$; ** statistical significance level $\alpha = 0.01$.

5. Conclusions

The study identified the attitudes of employees of Lithuanian and Polish private and public sector organizations to nepotism and favouritism. We also looked at it more broadly than in other similar studies and considered the links with CSR and employees' emotional state. The differences in the reactions that have shown up between employees of both countries indicate not that much difference in the prevalence of patronage of the loved ones and friends itself, but in the ways the phenomenon manifests itself in different types of organizations of different countries and how employees working in different organizations respond to it. While some processes in Poland and Lithuania developed differently, both countries are considered to be culturally and historically close to each other, which enables an expectation of similar reactions to the phenomenon as well. Therefore, the differences that showed up in this research sample signal differently occurring processes. In this case, the greater differentiation between public and private sector organizations in Lithuania shows the dual nature of nepotism and favouritism, which is determined by two traditions of the management's peculiar approach, solving patronage problems. The management tradition that is more favourable to patronage of the loved ones is also related to more pronounced negative reactions of employees, i.e., a more significant negative impact on the organizational climate is recorded. No such differentiation was noticed between the public and private sectors of Poland; this suggests the existence of common quite established traditions of managers' attitudes to nepotism and favouritism and a similar management culture reinforcing employees' sense of insecurity. On the one hand, employees who do not belong to nepots feel discriminated, and this determines the negative attitude to management and organization. On the other hand, the study uncovered that discrimination processes differ not only with regard to gender, age or seniority, but also vary within different subcategories (e.g., communication, interrelationships, supervision, monitoring, etc.). This reveals the complex specificity of the manifestation of nepotism and favouritism and encourages a systemic approach to the problem. In addition, the results of our research can serve as a guide for managers when making decisions about hiring employees and future activities regarding widely understood notions of CSR.

Our study contributes to the science in several ways. Firstly, it presents the results of quantitative research related to the attitude of employees of Polish and Lithuanian organizations on the nepotism and favouritism phenomena. It is the second study that analyses the nepotism and favouritism phenomena, presenting an international approach on the basis of two culturally close countries. Another advantage is the fact that (to our best knowledge) such research is relatively rare (due to the sensitive nature of the topic) not only in both countries, but also on an international scale. Given this fact, this aspect of the research constitutes significant added value to this study. Secondly, our research confirmed the widely known thesis that no country is free from these pathologies. Thirdly, this study is significant in that it supplements the understanding of nepotism and favouritism in the contexts of social responsibility of public and private sectors and provides a certain support for further research into the impact of this phenomenon on the organizational climate. Such an approach creates a more complete picture of the situation and can therefore serve not only for prevention of nepotism and favouritism in both sectors. It can also contribute to the development of the socially responsible policy, paying greater attention to internal stakeholders. In other words, the knowledge of this fact may be useful for managers, and first of all for company owners, by enabling them to take the necessary preventive actions so as to achieve sustainable development. In addition, managers in both the public and private sector are provided with additional knowledge of the risks posed by employee age, which can aggravate preventive actions. Finally, the detailed results of our research may be very useful for formulation of the research hypotheses in further surveys.

This study did not attempt to identify the prevalence of nepotism and favouritism across countries and sectors, but focused on the ways in which the phenomenon manifested itself in organizations, and first of all, on employees' reactions to them. Therefore, it was not purposely sought to have a large sample of respondents and to make a comparison of the prevalence of nepotism and favouritism. In the future, it would make sense to conduct a separate study not only in order to identify the extent of

the prevalence of nepotism and favouritism at the national level, but also to make a detailed evaluation of the link with nationally implemented anti-corruption measures and toward what sectors they are oriented. This study identified different responses of two generations of employees, that is, of those who entered the labour market before and after the collapse of the Soviet system, to patronage of loved ones in the workplace, but the causes of differences in such reactions should be investigated more exhaustively.

Author Contributions: J.V. conceived and designed the metrics of the research. W.S. wrote the theoretical part of the paper. J.V. wrote the empirical and discussion parts of the paper. J.V. and W.S. conducted direct research and obtained data. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

1. Christodoulou, I. Nepotism in Medicine and the Concept of Franchising. *Int. J. Med.* **2008**, *1*, 58–61.
2. Hooker, J. Corruption from a Cross-cultural Perspective. *Cross Cult. Manag. Int. J.* **2009**, *16*, 251–267. [[CrossRef](#)]
3. Hildreth, J.A.D.; Gino, F.; Bazerman, M. Blind Loyalty? When Group Loyalty Makes us See Evil or Engage in it. *Organ. Behav. Hum. Decis. Process.* **2016**, *132*, 16–36. [[CrossRef](#)]
4. Rosicki, R. Rzecz o nepotyzmie i kumoterstwie. *Przegląd Politologiczny* **2012**, *2*, 131–146. [[CrossRef](#)]
5. Akbari, M.; Bahrami-Rad, D.; Kimbrough, E.O. Kinship, fractionalization and corruption. *J. Econ. Behav. Organ.* **2019**, *166*, 493–528. [[CrossRef](#)]
6. Szakonyi, D. Princelings in the Private Sector: The Value of Nepotism. *Q. J. Political Sci.* **2019**, *14*, 349–381. [[CrossRef](#)]
7. Iqbal, Q.; Ahmad, N. Workplace spirituality and nepotism-favouritism in selected ASEAN countries: The role of gender as moderator. *J. Asia Bus. Stud.* **2020**, *14*, 31–49. [[CrossRef](#)]
8. Abdalla, H.F.; Maghrabi, A.S.; Raggad, B.G. Assessing the Perceptions of Human Resource Managers toward Nepotism: A Cross-cultural Study. *Int. J. Manpow.* **1998**, *19*, 554–570. [[CrossRef](#)]
9. Hudson, S.; Claasen, C. Nepotism and Cronyism as a Cultural Phenomenon? In *The Handbook of Business and Corruption*, Emerald Publishing Limited; Aßländer, M., Hudson, S., Eds.; Emerald Publishing Limited: Bingley, UK, 2017; pp. 95–118. [[CrossRef](#)]
10. Sarwar, A.; Imran, M.K. Exploring Women’s Multi-Level Career Prospects in Pakistan: Barriers, Interventions, and Outcomes. *Front. Psychol.* **2019**, *10*, 1376. [[CrossRef](#)]
11. Serkina, Y.; Logvinova, A. Administrative management of universities: Background and consequences. *Amazon. Investig.* **2019**, *8*, 673–683.
12. Safina, D. Favouritism and Nepotism in an Organization: Causes and Effects. *Procedia-Econ. Financ.* **2015**, *23*, 630–634. [[CrossRef](#)]
13. Büte, M. The Effects of Nepotism and Favoritism on Employee Behaviors and Human Resource Management Practices: A Research on Turkish Public Banks. *Amme İdaresi Derg.* **2011**, *44*, 135–153.
14. Wang, K.Y. Valuable nepotism? The FCPA and Hiring Risks in China. *Columbia J. Law Soc. Probl.* **2016**, *49*, 459–493.
15. Wated, G.; Sanchez, J.I. Managerial Tolerance of Nepotism: The Effects of Individualism-collectivism in a Latin American Context. *J. Bus. Ethics* **2015**, *130*, 45–57. [[CrossRef](#)]
16. Onoshchenko, O.; Williams, C.C. Evaluating the Role of Blat in Finding Graduate Employment in Post-Soviet Ukraine: The “Dark Side” of Job Recruitment? *Empl. Relat.* **2014**, *36*, 254–265. [[CrossRef](#)]
17. Branco, M.C.; Delgado, C.; Turker, D. Liability of foreignness and anti-corruption reporting in an emerging market: The case of Turkish listed companies. *J. Clean. Prod.* **2019**, *232*, 118–126. [[CrossRef](#)]
18. Kumar, A.; Moktadir, Z.; Rhaman Liman, A.; Gunasekaran, K.; Hegemann, S.; Khan, A.R. Evaluating sustainable drivers for social responsibility in the context of ready-made garments supply chain. *J. Clean. Prod.* **2020**, *248*, 119231. [[CrossRef](#)]
19. Eldakak, S.; Al-Hadithy, T. A front-foot approach to conflict triggered by favouritism. *Int. J. Value Chain Manag. (IJVCM)* **2017**, *8*, 363–377. [[CrossRef](#)]

20. Sroka, W.; Lőrinczy, M. The perception of ethics in business: Analysis of research results. *Procedia Econ. Financ.* **2015**, *34*, 156–163. [[CrossRef](#)]
21. Mohr, L.A.; Webb, D.J.; Harris, K.E. Do consumers expect companies to be socially responsible? The impact of Corporate Social Responsibility on buying behaviour. *J. Consum. Aff.* **2001**, *1*, 45–72. [[CrossRef](#)]
22. Androniceanu, A. Ethical values and the human resources behaviour in public management. *Adm. Manag. Public* **2013**, *20*, 49–61.
23. Todorovic, S.; Radisic, M.; Takaci, A.; Borocki, J.; Kliestikova, J. Impact of Internal Additional Compensations Policy on Revenues in Cross-sectoral SME environment. *Eur. J. Int. Manag.* **2019**, *13*, 843–863. [[CrossRef](#)]
24. Lansberg, I. Family Firms That Survived Their Founders. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management, San Diego, CA, USA, 11–14 August 1985.
25. Rees, A. Information Networks in Labor Markets. *Am. Econ. Rev.* **1966**, *56*, 559–566.
26. Donnelley, R. The Family Business. *Harv. Bus. Rev.* **1988**, *1*, 427–445. [[CrossRef](#)]
27. Popczyk, W. Family social capital versus nepotism in family businesses. In Proceedings of the 5th RSEP International Conferences on Social Issues and Economic Studies, Barcelona, Spain, 7–10 November 2017; pp. 47–52. [[CrossRef](#)]
28. Ewing, D.W. Is Nepotism so Bad? *Harv. Bus. Rev.* **1965**, *43*, 22.
29. Chervenak, F.A.; McCullough, L.B. Is Ethically Justified Nepotism in Hiring and Admissions in Academic Health Centers an Oxymoron? *Phys. Exec.* **2007**, *33*, 42–45.
30. Mutlu, K. Problems of Nepotism and Favouritism in the Police Organization in Turkey. *Polic. Int. J. Police Strateg. Manag.* **2000**, *23*, 381–389. [[CrossRef](#)]
31. Ferlazzo, F.; Sdoia, S. Measuring Nepotism through Shared Last Names: Are we Really Moving from Opinions to Facts? *PLoS ONE* **2012**, *7*, e43574. [[CrossRef](#)]
32. Karakose, T. The Effects of Nepotism, Cronyism and Political Favoritism on the Doctors Working in Public Hospitals. *Stud. Ethno-Med.* **2014**, *8*, 245–250. [[CrossRef](#)]
33. Jones, R.G.; Stout, T. Policing Nepotism and Cronyism without Losing the Value of Social Connection. *Ind. Organ. Psychol. Perspect. Sci. Pract.* **2015**, *8*, 2–12. [[CrossRef](#)]
34. Jaskiewicz, P.; Uhlenbruck, K.; Balkin, D.B.; Reay, T. Is Nepotism Good or Bad? Types of Nepotism and Implications for Knowledge Management. *Fam. Bus. Rev.* **2013**, *26*, 121–139. [[CrossRef](#)]
35. Zulfiqar, S.; Sadaf, R.; Popp, J.; Vveinhardt, J.; Máté, D. An Examination of Corporate Social Responsibility and Employee Behavior: The Case of Pakistan. *Sustainability* **2019**, *11*, 3515. [[CrossRef](#)]
36. Kerse, G.; Babadag, M. I'm out if nepotism is in: The relationship between nepotism, job standardization and turnover intention. *Ege Acad. Rev.* **2018**, *18*, 631–644. [[CrossRef](#)]
37. Simplicio, J.S. A Closer Look at the Truth Behind the Hiring Process: How Colleges Really Hire. *Education* **2007**, *128*, 256–261.
38. Kraiger, K.; Ford, J.K. A Meta-analysis of Race Effects in Performance Appraisal. *J. Appl. Psychol.* **1985**, *70*, 56–65. [[CrossRef](#)]
39. Padgett, M.Y.; Morris, K.A. Keeping it “All in the Family:” Does Nepotism in the Hiring Process Really Benefit the Beneficiary? *J. Leadersh. Organ. Stud.* **2005**, *11*, 34–45. [[CrossRef](#)]
40. Chandler, T.D.; Gely, R.; Howard, J.; Cheramie, R. Spouses Need not Apply: The Legality of Antinepotism and No-spouse Rules. *San Diego Law Rev.* **2002**, *39*, 31–78.
41. Steiner, J.M.; Steinberg, S.P. Caught between Scylla and Charybdis: Are Anti-nepotism Policies Benign Paternalism or Covert. *Empl. Relat. Law J.* **1994**, *20*, 253–267.
42. Crow, M.S.; Hartman, S.J. A Case Study of Organizational Decline: Lessons for Health Care Organizations. *Health Care Manag.* **2003**, *22*, 256–264. [[CrossRef](#)]
43. Pearce, J.L. Cronyism and Nepotism are Bad for Everyone: The Research Evidence. *Ind. Organ. Psychol.* **2015**, *8*, 41–44. [[CrossRef](#)]
44. Al-Aiban, K.M.; Pearce, J.L. The Influence of Values on Management Practices. *Int. Stud. Manag. Organ.* **1993**, *23*, 35–52. [[CrossRef](#)]
45. Nadeema, M.; Ahmadb, R.; Ahmadc, N.; Rabia Batoold, S.; Shafique, N. Favoritism, nepotism and cronyism as predictors of job satisfaction: Evidences from Pakistan. *J. Bus. Manag. Res.* **2015**, *8*, 224–228.
46. Hayajenh, A.F.; Maghrabi, A.S.; Al-Dabbagh, T.H. Research Note: Assessing the Effect of Nepotism on Human Resource Managers. *Int. J. Manpow.* **1994**, *15*, 60–67. [[CrossRef](#)]

47. Scoppa, V. Intergenerational transfers of public sector jobs: A shred of evidence on nepotism. *Public Choice* **2009**, *141*, 141–167. [CrossRef]
48. Vveinhardt, J. Nepotism Variations: Public and Private Sectorsx. 2012. Available online: http://www.rusnauka.com/29_DWS_2012/Psihologia/12_121000.doc.htm (accessed on 25 January 2020).
49. Tsobanoglou, G.O. Aspects of European Socio-economic Integration: Labour Conditions in Greece. *J. Knowl. Econ.* **2015**, *6*, 929–945. [CrossRef]
50. Reed, C.M.; Bruce, W.M. Dual-Career Couples in the Public Sector: A Survey of Personnel Policies and Practices. *Public Pers. Manag.* **1993**, *22*, 187–199. [CrossRef]
51. Williams, C.C.; Onoshchenko, O. Evaluating the prevalence and nature of blat in post-Soviet societies: A case study of the education sector in Ukraine. *Int. J. Soc. Econ.* **2014**, *41*, 747–759. [CrossRef]
52. Coates, D.; Naidenova, I.; Parshakov, P. Determinants of governmental support of Russian companies: Lessons on industrial policy, rent-seeking and corruption. *Const. Political Econ.* **2019**, *30*, 438–466. [CrossRef]
53. Ponzio, M.; Scoppa, V. A simple model of favouritism in recruitment. *Res. Econ.* **2011**, *65*, 78–88. Available online: <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1090944310000621> (accessed on 1 December 2019). [CrossRef]
54. Ignatowski, G.; Sułkowski, Ł.; Stopczyński, B. The perception of organisational nepotism depending on the membership in selected Christian churches. *Religions* **2020**, *11*, 47. [CrossRef]
55. Religijność i Aktywność Kobiet w Kościele Katolickim w Polsce. Warszawa. 2015. Available online: http://iskk.pl/images/stories/Instytut/dane/ISKK_Kobiety_Religijnosc_2015.pdf (accessed on 25 January 2020).
56. Mohammed Abubakar, A.; Hejraty Namin, B.; Harazneh, I.; Arasli, H.; Tunç, T. Does Gender Moderates the Relationship between Favoritism/Nepotism, Supervisor Incivility, Cynicism and Workplace Withdrawal: A Neural Network and SEM Approach. *Tour. Manag. Perspect.* **2017**, *23*, 129–139. [CrossRef]
57. Arasli, H.; Tumer, M. Nepotism, Favoritism and Cronyism: A Study of Their Effects on Job Stress and Job Satisfaction in the Banking Industry of North Cyprus. *Soc. Behav. Personal.* **2008**, *36*, 1237–1250. [CrossRef]
58. Vveinhardt, J.; Petrauskaitė, L. Intensity of Nepotism Expression in Organizations of Lithuania. *Organizacijų Vadyba Sisteminių Tyrimai* **2013**, *66*, 129–144. [CrossRef]
59. Liu, C.W.; Eubanks, D.L.; Chater, N. The Weakness of Strong Ties: Sampling Bias, Social Ties, and Nepotism in Family Business Succession. *Leadersh. Q.* **2015**, *26*, 419–435. [CrossRef]
60. Padgett, M.Y.; Padgett, R.J.; Morris, K.A. Perceptions of nepotism beneficiaries: The hidden price of using a family connection to obtain a job. *J. Bus. Psychol.* **2015**, *30*, 283–298. [CrossRef]
61. Goel, P. Gender differences in perception of ethical practices. Empirical study of selected sectors in India. *J. Gen. Manag. Res.* **2018**, *5*, 28–38.
62. Kiser, A. Workplace and leadership perceptions between men and women. *Gend. Manag. Int. J.* **2015**, *30*, 598–612. [CrossRef]
63. Burke, R.J.; Koyuncu, M.; Singh, P.; Alayoglu, N.; Koyuncu, K. Gender differences in work experiences and work outcomes among Turkish managers and professionals: Continuing signs of progress? *Gend. Manag. Int. J.* **2012**, *27*, 23–35. [CrossRef]
64. Caputo, A. Religious motivation, nepotism and conflict management in Jordan. *Int. J. Confl. Manag.* **2018**, *29*, 146–166. [CrossRef]
65. Santas, F.; Santas, G.; Ozer, O.; Gulec, M.B. A Research on the Relationship between Organizational Cronyism and Employee Performance in Health Employees. *Eskisehir Osmangazi Universitesi İlib Dergisi-Eskisehir Osmangazi Univ. J. Econ. Adm. Sci.* **2018**, *13*, 37–54.
66. Ockey, J. Thai Political Families: The Impact of Political Inheritance. *TRaNS Trans. Reg. Natl. Stud. Southeast Asia* **2015**, *3*, 191–211. [CrossRef]
67. Gorji, Y.; Carney, M.; Prakash, R. Indirect nepotism: Network sponsorship, social capital and career performance in show business families. *J. Fam. Bus. Strateg.* **2019**, 100285. [CrossRef]
68. Gevrek, D.; Gevrek, Z.E. Nepotism, incentives and the academic success of college students. *Labour Econ.* **2010**, *17*, 581–591. [CrossRef]
69. Abramo, G.; D'Angelo, C.A.; Rosati, F. Relatives in the same university faculty: Nepotism or merit? *Scientometrics* **2014**, *10*, 737–749. [CrossRef]
70. Wong, L.C.; Kleiner, B.H. Nepotism. *Work Study* **1994**, *43*, 10–12. [CrossRef]
71. Bozionelos, N. Careers Patterns in Greek Academia: Social Capital and intelligent Careers, but for whom? *Career Dev. Int.* **2014**, *19*, 264–294. [CrossRef]

72. Chao, C.C.; Ya-Ru, C.; Xin, K. Guanxi Practices and Trust in Management: A Procedural Justice Perspective. *Organ. Sci.* **2004**, *15*, 200–209. [[CrossRef](#)]
73. Cygler, J. Structural Pathology in Inter-organizational Networks and the Decision-making Autonomy of its Members. In *Management of Network Organizations. Theoretical Problems and Dilemmas in Practice*; Sroka, W., Hittmar, S., Eds.; Springer: Heidelberg, Germany; New York, NY, USA, 2015; pp. 181–195.
74. Redding, S.G. *The Spirit of Chinese Capitalism*; De Gruyter: New York, NY, USA, 1990.
75. Pearce, J.L.; Huang, L. *Workplace Favoritism: Why it Damages Trust and Persists*; The Merage School of Business Working Paper; University of California: Irvine, CA, USA, 2014.
76. Manu, P.; Agyekum, K.; Mahamadu, A.M.; Olomolaiye, P.; Adinyira, E. Differences in stakeholder ability in addressing unethical practices: Insights from the surveying profession. *ASCE J. Prof. Issues Eng. Educ. Pract.* **2019**, *145*, 04019011. [[CrossRef](#)]
77. Sison, A.J.G.; Ferrero, I.; Redín, D.M. Some Virtue Ethics Implications from Aristotelian and Confucian Perspectives on Family and Business. *J. Bus. Ethics* **2019**, 1–14. [[CrossRef](#)]
78. Wachs, J.; Fazekas, M.; Kertész, J. Corruption risk in contracting markets: A network science perspective. *J. Data Sci. Anal.* **2020**. [[CrossRef](#)]
79. Ignatowski, G.; Stopczynski, B.; Trebska, J. Paradox of Nepotism in Enterprises in Poland and Ukraine: Social Capital Perspective. *Mark. Manag. Innov.* **2019**, *2*, 295–313. [[CrossRef](#)]
80. Pelletier, K.L.; Bligh, M.C. The Aftermath of Organizational Corruption: Employee Attributions and Emotional Reactions. *J. Bus. Ethics* **2008**, *80*, 823–844. [[CrossRef](#)]
81. Massey, G.; Klietikova, J.; Kovacova, M.; Dengov, V.V. The Perceived Accuracy of Fake News: Mechanisms Facilitating the Spread of Alternative Truths, the Crisis of Informational Objectivity, and the Decline of Trust in Journalistic Narratives. *Geopolit. Hist. Int. Relat.* **2018**, *10*, 37–43. [[CrossRef](#)]
82. Schwartz, M.S. The state of business ethics in Israel: A light unto the nations? *J. Bus. Ethics* **2012**, *105*, 429–446. [[CrossRef](#)]
83. Gkorezis, P.; Petridou, E. Corporate Social Responsibility and Pro-environmental Behaviour: Organisational Identification as a Mediator. *Eur. J. Int. Manag.* **2017**, *11*, 1–18. [[CrossRef](#)]
84. Vveinhardt, J. Identification of the reliability of methodological characteristics of quality in the diagnostic instrument for mobbing as discrimination in employee relations on purpose to improve the climate in Lithuanian organisations. *Transf. Bus. Econ.* **2012**, *11*, 218–232.
85. Beniušienė, I.; Vveinhardt, J.; Merkys, G.; Dromantas, M. Komandinio Darbo ir Organizacijos Klimato Sąryšio Ypatumai. *Soc. Tyrim. Soc. Res.* **2005**, *1*, 38–45.
86. Merkys, G.; Kalinauskaitė, R.; Beniušienė, I.; Vveinhardt, J.; Dromantas, M. Organisational climate crisis test for Lithuanian job organisations: Constructing and validation. *Soc. Moksl. Soc. Sci.* **2005**, *3*, 39–51.
87. Vveinhardt, J.; Petrauskaite, L. The Phenomenon of Nepotism and Organizational Microclimate: Case study of Lithuanian public and private sector. 2020; in press.
88. Comrey, A.L.; Lee, H. *A First Course in Factor Analysis*; Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.: Hillsdale, NJ, USA, 1992.
89. Keleş, H.N.; Ozkan, T.K.; Bezirci, M. A study on the effects of nepotism, favoritism and cronyism on organizational trust in the auditing process in family businesses in Turkey. *Int. Bus. Econ. Res. J.* **2011**, *10*, 9–16. [[CrossRef](#)]

