

# **Rational Choice Model and Social Capital viz-a- viz Employment: A Quantitative Analysis of Perceptions of Employees**

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## **Abstract**

The study seeks to examine the attitudes of employees in public and private sectors, including males and females with respect to the role of social capital in gaining economic opportunities in terms of getting paid work, job and promotions. The phenomenon under study has been conceptualized and theorized with the help of Rational Choice Model. Under the quantitative approach, the structured questionnaire was devised to assess the opinions, attitude and experiences of respondents. Purposive sampling was employed to identify and reach out the respondent as that was considered realistic and affordable in terms of requirements and resources for the conduct of the study. The sample size was 140 while 70 respondents were taken from each public and private sector. The study concluded that there is a strong and positive association between the social capital and availing of employment opportunities. The social actors or the individuals develop social networks for the sake of their personal welfare and maximize their gains on the basis of cost and benefit analysis.

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## Introduction

The phenomenon of social relationships has been widely expanded in almost in every field of life in this modern world. In contemporary times, the bulk of social networks are coming into existence and further influencing the lives of the people in multiple ways such as socio-political and socio-economic gains. However, the individuals build social networks based in their respective choices and priorities. In this regard, few societies constitute the primary form of association like family and kinship rooted in traditionalism while other has strong formal associations based on modernization (Fukuyama, 1997).

The concept of social capital is not new and indeed is quite multifarious. The intellectual history of social capital is deep-rooted and can be traced back to the scholarly works of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (Fernandez & Moore, 2000). The phenomenon of social capital is studied in Sociology, however; it is also used in fields such as business, economics, organisational behavior, political science, and human resource management that explain the connection of individuals, groups or organisations within and between social networks. First, the concept of social capital was used implicitly in the work of Max Weber in his famous essay *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, although he did not explicitly introduce the term of social capital rather he conceived the idea of social network that impacts the phenomenon of development on the individual and collective levels (Trigilia, 2001). In modern literature, Hanifan was the author who used the concept of social capital in 1916 to analyze the rural West Virginia community (Farr, 2004). French Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu discussed the same phenomenon in the sixties, nevertheless, the formal conceptualization of the idea of social capital appeared in the 1980s (Portes, 1998). According to

Bourdieu, social capital is not uniformly distributed among members of a group or collective. Instead, it is accessible to those who actively endeavor to acquire it through the attainment of positions of power and status, as well as through the cultivation of goodwill within social networks.

Until the 1990s, most of the theories of development did not give much significance to the role of social relationships with respect to economic development, and in this manner, the literature on social capital could not suggest a constructive policy mechanism as well (Moore, 1997). In the early 1990s, there was a significant rise of the idea of social capital across the social science disciplines and it was taken as part of the norms and values that convince and put together people to act collectively and support each other for material gains in the relevant fields (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000).

The idea of social capital gained the attention of many scholars belonging to various disciplines such as political science (Putnam & Leonardi, 1993), sociology (Coleman 1988) and economics (Knack & Keefer, 1997). Analyzing the literature on social capital indicates that it has variety of meanings and significantly, this diversity generates debate among various schools of thought as it becomes difficult to get formal acquaintance with this concept. For instance, there is no consensus among scholars for a clear and vivid definition of social capital as multiple methodological and theoretical frameworks practiced in various disciplines make the same phenomenon different with respect to traits of the respective fields (Adler & Kwon 2002). Nevertheless, the definition by Putman seems more reliable and relevant as Putnam (1995) illustrated; "Social capital refers to the social connections, for instance, the features of social life, groups, networks, norms and trust which make participants capable to act together in an effective way to pursue shared objectives."

This study defines the social capital as the relationship among the social actors (individuals) and organisations at lower or higher level that often interact and endeavor to integrate with each other in achieving similar interests and objectives. Scholars believe that social capital has become a valuable and significant factor in shaping the social and economic status of the social actors. The linkages between individuals and the social networks provide access to desired resources and knowledge and assist them in identifying the respective opportunity. The nature of the relationship or type of interaction influences the individuals in accomplishing their goals in a particular community. However, the differences, misunderstandings, and lack of information among the various stake holders affect the chances of recognition of opportunity (Mohebi & Rabiee, 2014). Identifying and availing the opportunity is a combine function of individual and the environment (Shane, 2000). It is pertinent to mention that the ties among individuals do not guide to identify the problems, opportunities, or social needs automatically, but instead it is the strong links and relationships between people that lead to a formulation of a social network and in fact, this phenomenon of social network becomes one of the significant determinants with respect to opportunity recognition (Ardichvili & Cardozo, 2000).

Social relations have many dimensions and one of them is to fulfill the economic needs of individuals. The linkages between individuals and the networks give access to desired resources and knowledge and help in identifying the relevant opportunities. The nature of the relationship or type of interaction influences the individuals in accomplishing their goals in a particular community. However, the differences, misunderstandings and lack of information affect the chances of recognition of opportunity (Arnious, 2004). Individuals, acting as rational agents, engage in purposeful conduct aimed at advancing their objectives and maximizing their utility. This rationality extends to their cultivation of social relations, wherein individuals

judiciously establish and maintain connections with others to further their interests.

Identifying the opportunity and availing it, is a combined function of individual and the environment (Sigh, 2000). The ties among individuals do not automatically guide to identify the problems, opportunities, or social needs, but strong links and relationships between people will lead to a social network and social network is one of the factors of opportunity recognition (Ardichvili, 2000). The role of social capital is not limited merely to getting jobs, but employees can also get better pay, and early promotion based on strong relationships with relevant authorities (Seibert, 2001). The promotion of someone in his organisation, getting a better job, better pay, higher opportunities, higher authority, and a higher rank have also been linked with social capital in this study. So, based on social capital, the social actors can seek huge support to improve their financial, political, or social position. Individuals, in their quest to optimize utility, may forge bonds with peers, colleagues, mentors, or influential figures within their social networks. These affiliations serve multifaceted functions, including the acquisition of valuable information, the expansion of professional opportunities, and the garnering of support during times of exigency. Rational agents acknowledge the potential dividends of robust social bonds, recognizing them as vehicles for gaining a competitive edge in negotiating social milieus and realizing their objectives.

In this regard, there is a need to explore and investigate its significance and impacts on individuals, groups, and society. Therefore, there is a need to ponder the issues to get a comprehensive understanding of the people/employees on social capital and whether it is influencing the professional life of the people or not. Thus, the topic has been selected to understand the complexity of the issue and certainly, this study would be helpful for the benefit of society. The significance of social capital is

increasing and in particular, it has started to vividly influence the economic welfare of individuals. As social actors, living in society endeavor to avail themselves of economic (material) opportunities and in this regard, social capital may play an imperative role. Furthermore, the promotion of employees is indeed a continuous process, and usually employees grumble that the organisations did not treat them as per their knowledge, skills, and competency. This means that skills and knowledge are important things alone but there might be some other factors that are playing their role in the professional life of the individuals to secure a job or for employees to gain upward movement in their career. The existence and the lack of social capital directly or indirectly impact the professional life of the individuals in either way. Therefore, the relationship between the social actors and the organisations needs to be explored and investigated. The article aims to explore the existence of the relationship between social capital and availing employment opportunities focusing on the question; what is the role of social capital in getting employment opportunities? The study hypothesizes that social relations with organisations (representatives) facilitate the social actors in availing employment opportunities. In addition, it is also assumed that social capital helps employees in receiving promotions in organisations.

## **An Insight into Social Capital Dynamics: A Global Review**

Despite the limited availability of literature pertaining to the subject within the specific context of Pakistan, an extensive review of global scholarship has been conducted to facilitate the investigation at hand. While the existing body of literature may not directly address the nuances of the Pakistani context, insights gleaned from international studies provide valuable frameworks, theoretical perspectives, and empirical findings that can inform and enrich the current study.

It is assumed that people, who possess the skills and knowledge, are likely to create synergy because of their wide, varied, and strong network of relationships (Itami, 1992). Social capital helps create and promote valuable information and knowledge among different people (Adler, 2002). Njagi (2012) stated that social networking is becoming important in the context of employment opportunities. He further added that individuals enjoy different types of relations with each other, and few people have more social capital than others. The relationship between social capital and employee promotion exists within the organisation. However, Njagi was of the view that those employers need to be very careful to promote the employees just based on relationships or any social influence as it can harm the functionality of organisation.

Nielsen (2000) illustrated that communication and social interaction with workers have a significant importance and it significantly impacts the professional life of workers. Burt (2000) argued that the more effectively people are connected, the higher will be the social capital, however in higher social capital, there may arise many complications as the expansion in social associations at a wider level increases the complexity in various socio-economic dimensions. Buerkle and Guseva, (2002) expressed that social capital is a private asset that individuals develop through interaction with other individuals, groups, and networks. As a result, they may strengthen their relationships with each other and join particular groups or networks to get benefits throughout their life; however, the outcome of social networking all depends upon their nature of interaction for productivity. Narayan (2002) shared that the significance of social capital is evident as social networks are useful in combating with poverty and vulnerability.

Isham and Kahkonen (1999) explored that by realizing the importance of social capital, organisations may grow and progress easily. Gabbay and Zuckerman (1997) were of the view

that the strong ties of individuals with each other combined with structural holes were highly valuable for a few businessmen at the early stage of their business. However, this is not necessary as it will also work in the long run as there as there may come many complications with the expansion of the business.

Brass and Labianca (1999) confirmed that individuals' negative ties within the organisation do not work better but rather become obstacles in the way of their promotions. Wilson (1997) found that for people who do not have much or rich social capital, their social or economic matters may be influenced badly. Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) narrated that various benefits can be obtained by social capital such as access to useful information, identifying opportunities, and availing it through relationships. Coleman (1988) clarified that social capital gives power to social actors that promote responsibility, reliability, and trustworthiness in social settings. Woolcock and Narayan (2000) stated that social capital made its place in the economic debate by asserting the view that it is a self-sufficient and independent factor of production. Therefore, this factor should never be ignored in economic debate as the increasing role of social capital has changed the old paradigms. For instance, by incorporating the role of social capital in economics, a reliable and inclusive analysis can be made.

Buerkle & Guseva, (2002) expressed that social capital is a private asset that individuals develop through interaction with other individuals, groups, and networks. As a result, they may strengthen their relationships with each other and join particular groups or networks to get benefits throughout their life, however, it all depends upon their nature of interaction. The education helps people in getting skills and knowledge as well as they may create their social capital while in colleges and universities which further impact their social and economic life. Social capital has an association with the income of the individuals and this effect is different for different individuals



depending on their education and experience levels. The research reveals that there is a direct relationship between social capital and status attainment.

Seibert et al. (2001) articulated that social actors can earn the social capital through different means; directly or indirectly. Mostly they try to become the part of social networks to utilize social capital appropriately. Besides, the access to social capital can make people more prosperous, wealthy and wellbeing. Employees with high income or high social status may enjoy social relations more as compared to employees with lower income or social status.

Melanthious et al (2015) highlighted that recruitment or paid work through social media is becoming common in this age. Many people have their existence on social media, and they not only use it for entertainment but also, they use it for their careers. Multiple social networking sites are being used for advertisement of jobs and consultancies and they are attracting the attention of users. People on social media are usually not reliable but those who enjoy better relations on social media may get paid work.

Although many broad studies have been conducted with respect to the influence of social capital on employment; however, there is a need to carry out a study that focuses on how social capital is influencing professional life including getting jobs or paid work and promotion of employees in organisations. The above studies have different contexts and backgrounds and much of the mentioned research relied on theoretical and qualitative research. Moreover, very few focused on the organisation or groups' perspective regarding social capital and in fact, studied the macro-level approach. However, this study has been conducted at the micro-level as the individual was taken as the unit of analysis. Therefore, this study has a distinct orientation from already conducted studies and focuses on the phenomenon of social capital with a unique approach. The study anticipates that the findings will be used to increase knowledge

on the role of social capital in availing economic opportunities. There will be policy implications for not only the employees but for the organisations as well, therefore this study will add knowledge on the social capital regarding employment opportunities. The findings will further augment the understanding of academicians, researchers, policymakers, representatives of international institutions, etc. Hence, the relevant stakeholders will be capable to apprehend the multiple factors influencing the issue and utilize these results effectively.

### **Rational Choice Framework and Social Capital**

Rational Choice Theory has been employed in this research study to explain the opinions, attitudes, and experiences of people around social capital. The Rational Choice Theory adopts a Utilitarian belief that man is a reasoning actor who weighs means and ends, costs and benefits, and makes a rational choice. It assumes that all people try to actively maximize their advantage in any situation and therefore, consistently try to minimize their losses. The theory is based on the idea that all humans base their decisions on rational calculations, act with rationality when choosing, and aim to increase either pleasure or profit. Rational Choice Theory also stipulates that all complex social phenomena are driven by individual human actions. Therefore, if an economist wants to explain social change or the actions of social institutions, the researcher needs to look at the rational decisions of the individuals that make up the whole. The focus of Rational Choice Theory is on actors and actors are seen as being purposive or as having intentionality i.e. actors have ends or goals towards which their actions are aimed. Actors are also seen as having preferences (utilities). The theory assumes that individuals have some goals and meanings like they may have actions to achieve the particular desired goals (Coleman & Fararo, 1992). Abell (2000) argued about the key assumptions of the Rational Choice Theory such as individualism, optimality, and self-regard. By individualism, the author means that ultimately the individual

decides or takes social action. Optimality means that the individual actions are optimally chosen by focusing on the supreme priorities or preferences for achieving the desired outcomes. Finally, self-regard, means that the social actions of the individuals are merely concerned with their own welfare.

In the context of this study, the theoretical framework adopts the Rational Choice Model as the primary lens for understanding the perspectives, attitudes, and experiences of social actors, specifically employees within various organisational settings. This model posits that individuals, in this case, employees, rationally make decisions by carefully weighing the costs and benefits associated with different options. Moreover, it suggests that individuals actively engage in developing connections and relationships with other groups, organisations, or social networks, with the overarching goal of maximizing their economic or material gains.

Within this framework, employees are viewed as strategic decision-makers who consistently seek to optimize their outcomes by maximizing benefits and minimizing losses across various situations. This rational decision-making process guides their actions not only within their immediate work environment but also in their interactions with external entities such as other groups or organisations. Furthermore, the study assumes that employees actively pursue social connections and affiliations to extract the greatest possible economic or material advantages from these relationships. These ties are perceived as instrumental means to achieve individual goals, whether they pertain to career advancement, access to resources, or other tangible benefits.

## **Methodological Approach**

The geographical coverage of the study was Islamabad Capital Territory and the public and private organisations located in Islamabad were selected for the data collection. The study

followed the quantitative approach and a purposive sampling technique was employed as particular organisations or departments were selected. For instance, the selective government departments were; the Ministry of Planning Development and Reform and Capital Development Authority whereas the employees working in the private sector such as Punjab College and GNN News Channel were selected as a representation of the private sector.

A sample of 140 including 70 respondents from private and 70 from government officials were selected to get their opinions about the significance of social capital and its relationship with the gaining of employment opportunities. The individual, either enjoying or lacking the social capital, was taken as a unit of analysis in this study. With the quantitative mode of research, a survey method was used to collect the data. The data was systematically collected with the help of an instrument comprised of close-ended questions, and further based on the Likert scale, the intensity of the response was assessed and recorded.

The respondents were instructed to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with statements or questions by selecting one option from a scale of five choices. These choices range from “Strongly Disagree” at one end of the spectrum to “Strongly Agree” at the other. The scale also includes intermediary options such as “Disagree,” “Neutral,” and “Agree,” allowing respondents to express varying degrees of agreement or disagreement with the statements or questions presented to them. This scale provides a structured method for capturing the attitudes, opinions, or perceptions of respondents in a quantitative format. Finally, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was employed for the analysis of frequency distribution. This involved the systematic examination of how often particular values or categories occur within a dataset. Therefore, on the basis of the statistical data, meaningful

conclusions were drawn in the context of the hypothesis of the study.

**The Power of Social Capital in Shaping Employment Pathways**

The investigation delved into multifaceted dimensions surrounding social capital, encompassing an array of interrelated themes ranging from the catalytic function of social connections in facilitating individuals’ access to employment opportunities to the intricate interplay between social capital and meritocracy within organisational contexts. Fundamental to this exploration was an examination of the indispensability of social networks as conduits for professional advancement and the inherent mechanisms governing the promotion processes within organisational structures.

Table 5.1 shows that 75.5 percent (106 out of 140) are male respondents while 24.3 percent (34 out of 140) are female respondents who have contributed to this research on the relationship between social capital and employment opportunities.

**Table 5.1 Frequencies and Percentage of Gender**

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	106	75.7
Female	34	24.3
Total	140	100.0

*Source: Developed by the Authors*

Table 5.2 shows that 45 percent (63 out of 140) confirmed and 29.3 percent (41 out of 140) strictly confirmed that social capital has great significance in the life of the people whereas 7.1 percent (10 out of 140) and 2 percent (3 out of 140) disagreed and shared that social capital does not matter more for people and 16.4 percent (23 out of 140) stayed neutral to the question.

The second row of the given table suggests that 47.9 percent (67 out of 140) agreed and 16.4 percent (23 out of 140) strongly agreed with the opinion that everyone should earn social capital even by investing money and time as it benefits in the end. However, 4.3 percent (6 out of 140) rejected this opinion along with 23.6 percent (33 out of 140) strongly discarded. Further, 7.9 percent (11 out of 140) did not answer the question and remained undecided.

The third row of the table illustrates that 39.3 percent (55 out of 140) respondents agreed and 8.6 percent (12 out of 140) strictly in agreement that people around are trustworthy and they can be used as a tool to get any kind of paid work or jobs, but the trust takes a time. In opposition to this opinion, 25.7 percent (36 out of 140) respondents suggested that people are not trustworthy, 4.3 percent (6 out of 140) also endorsed it. While 22.1 percent (31 out of 140) respondents remained undecided.

The last statement of Table 5.2 shows that 42.9 percent (60 out of 140) respondents along with 12.9 percent (18 out of 140) believed that they have enough social capital, whereas 3.6 percent (5 out of 140) and 25.7 percent (36 out of 140) were not satisfied with the quantity of their social capital. And, 15 percent (21 out of 140) of respondents were neutral.

**Table 5.2 Perception of People about the Importance of Social Capital**

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Social Capital is important	2.1	7.1	16.4	45	29.3
Time and Money should be invested to earn Social Capital	4.3	23.6	7.9	47.9	16.4
People can be trusted	4.3	25.7	22.1	39.3	8.6
You have sufficient Social Capital	3.6	25.7	15	42.9	12.9
Total Number of Respondents					140

*Source: Developed by the Authors*

Table 5.3 shows that 42.9 percent (60 out of 140) respondents believed that if a man has good links with the organisations, he or she may have more chances to avail the opportunity while 15.7 percent (22 out of 140) respondents opposed this view. Moreover, 37.1 percent (52 out of 140) respondents strictly believed that relations with social networks matter, and 0.7 percent (1 out of 140) strictly rejected.

The second row of the table elucidates that 47.1 percent (66 out of 140) respondents agreed social relations matter more than Knowledge and merit, and 10.7 percent (15 out of 140) respondents also strongly agreed with the same opinion. But 27.9 percent (39 out of 140) did not agree with 1.4 percent (2 out of 140). And 12.9 percent (18 out of 140) respondents were undecided.

The third row shows that 60 percent (84 out of 140) respondents agreed that individuals should become members or part of different social networks to avail opportunities, and 16.4 percent (23 out of 140) further strongly endorsed this stance. While 1.4 percent (2 out of 140) did not agree with the statement and 13.6 percent (19 out of 140) rejected such kind of association. Nevertheless, 8.6 percent (12 out of 140) respondents did not share their responses.

The last row of Table 5.3 shows that 20 percent (28 out of 140) respondents confirmed that they utilized their social relations in gaining jobs, paid work, or consultancies. Only 4.3 percent (6 out of 140) strongly agreed with this opinion, whereas 45 percent (63 out of 140) and 9.3 percent (13 out of 140) respondents did not use their social capital to get paid work. Further, 21.4 percent (30 out of 140) respondents expressed their neutral stance.

**Table 5.3 Role of Social Capital and Employment (N=140) Percent**

<b>Statements</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
Relationships with organisations may be helpful in availing employment opportunity	0.7	15.7	3.6	42.9	37.1
Social relations matter more than merit for the organisations	1.4	27.9	12.9	47.1	10.7
It is necessary to have relations with the representatives of organisations	1.4	13.8	8.6	60	16.4
You ever used Social Capital to avail any employment opportunity	9.3	45	21.4	20	4.3

*Source: Developed by the Authors*

Table 5.4 illustrates that 39.3 percent (55 out of 140) respondents perceived that organisations give preference to a candidate who is referred by someone. And 11.4 percent (16 out of 140) respondents also confirmed this view. While 18.6 percent (26 out of 140) shared that the organisations follow their own priorities, 2.1 percent (3 out of 140) respondents stated that the organisations strictly follow their policies. Interestingly, 49.3 percent (40 out of 140) respondents decided not to answer this critical question.

The second row of Table 5.4 presents the data around the question that the promotion of employees is dependent on good relations with the senior relevant management. While 50.7 percent (71 out of 140) agreed and 15.7 percent (22 out of 140) strongly agreed that social relations matter in employee's promotion, although 21.4 percent (30 out of 140) disagreed with this statement and only 0.7 percent (1 out of 140) strongly rejected



this belief. Further, 11.4 percent (16 out of 140) did not give any answer.

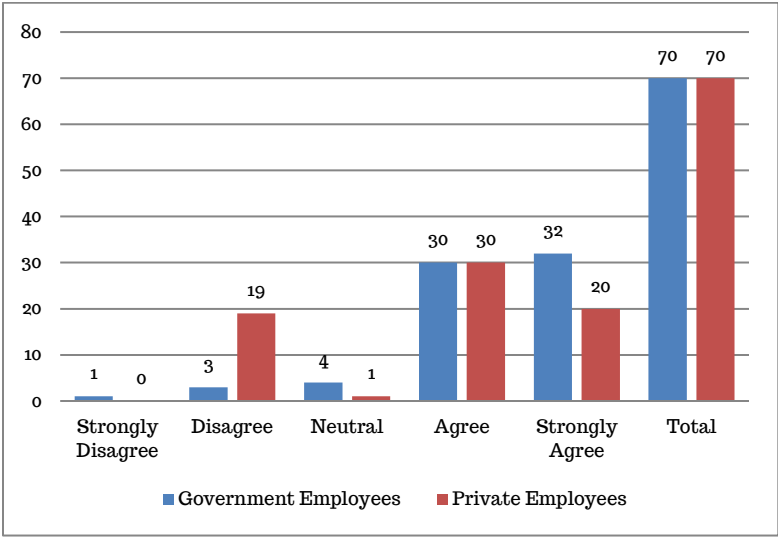
**Table: 5.4 Role of Social Capital in Organisations for Hiring and Promotion (N=140) Percent**

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Usually organisations higher a candidate who is referred	2.1	18.6	28.6	39.3	11.4
An employee who has good relations within organisations can easily get promotions	0.7	21.4	11.4	50.7	15.7

*Source: Developed by the Authors*

Figure 5.1 demonstrates that 32 government employees out of 70 strongly agreed that relationship organisations are beneficial in obtaining or securing jobs while 20 private employees also endorsed this view. Nevertheless, 30 respondents out of 70 from each sector that is government and private confirmed the association. Interestingly, only 1 respondent of the government strongly rejected this association, whereas 3 respondents from the government slightly rejected it along with the 19 private employees. The 4 respondents from the government sector and 1 respondent from the private sector decided not to share their opinion.

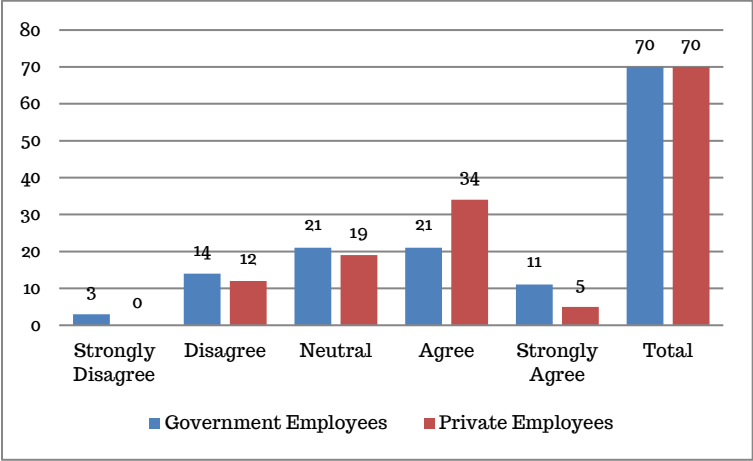
**Figure: 5.1 Perceptions of Government and Private Employees about the Relationships with Organisations (N=140)**



*Source: Developed by the Authors*

Figure 5.2 shows that out of 70 private respondents, 34 believed that organisations usually prefer a candidate for the job who is referred by some influential persons while 21 out of 70 government employees also stated the same opinion. In addition, 11 out of 70 government employees and 5 out of 70 from the private sector also strongly confirmed the statement. On the other side, 14 out of 70 government employees and approximately the same number of private employees that is 12 did not approve this statement along with 3 government employees who strongly opposed this opinion. 21 out of 70 government employees remained neutral and 19 out of 70 private respondents also did not decide to answer.

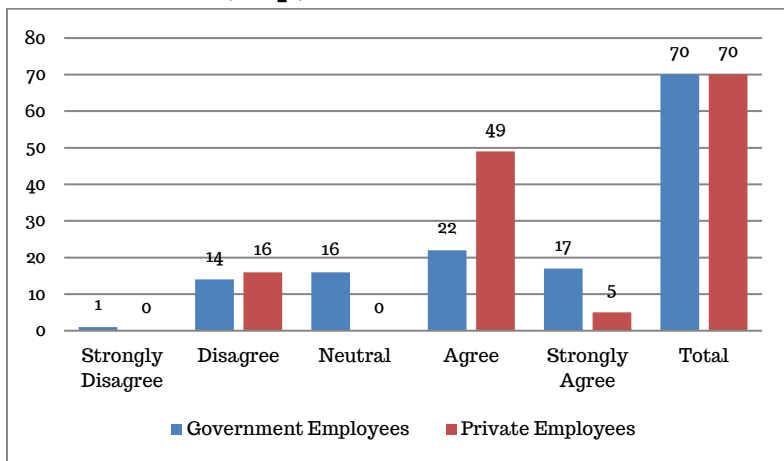
**Figure 5.2 Perceptions of Government and Private Employees about Hiring a Candidaten (N=140)**



*Source: Developed by the Authors*

Figure 5.3 shows the response of the employees of government and private sectors regarding whether relationship matters for promotion within the organisation or not. From the private domain, 49 out of 70 respondents believed that good relations with senior employees can be helpful in promotion; also 22 out of 70 respondents have the same belief. And 17 out of 70 government employees and 5 out of 7 from the private sector strongly endorsed this view. Conversely, 14 out of 70 government employees and also 16 out of 70 private employees did not believe that relationships matter in the promotion of employees. One of the government employees strongly disapproved of this view whereas, 16 out of 70 government respondents remained neutral.

**Figure 5.3 Perceptions of Government and Private Employees about Promotions (N=140)**



*Source: Developed by the Authors*

Social Relations with organisations (representatives) facilitate people in availing the employment opportunities (H<sub>1</sub>). Those actors who enjoy links with multiple organisations usually have more chances to get jobs in comparison to the actors with less social capital. Social relationships always matter; however, this should not be taken as a categorical statement since there are many other factors like knowledge, skills, and qualifications that influence the job-obtaining process. But study proposes that the role of social relations is indeed critical as sometimes in a peculiar context social relations matter more than knowledge and merit for organisations. Nevertheless, this is contextual and depends upon the organisation, environment, and specific culture. Without having proper interaction with others, actors cannot get awareness about the surroundings and subsequently, cannot get the exact information on various social and economic affairs and opportunities. With no information, how someone can grasp the opportunity, so one should at least have relations or get membership in social networks to obtain information about any

job or consultancy. Hence, findings suggested that it is necessary to develop relations with small, big, government, or private organisations to get economic benefits. It is pertinent to mention that the problem with most people is that their opinions do not usually represent their experiences. Respondents in this study shared that social capital helps obtain paid work. However, their personal experience reveals that they could not get paid work through social relations. Few people do not even try to exploit or use the relations to get jobs and sometimes their social capital does not support them.

Social capital helps employees in receiving promotions in organisations (H2). The social capital within the organisation has also the great significance and immensely influenced the attitude of senior officers or management in this regard. The employees having good relations with the top management are more likely to get promotions and other benefits as compared to others who do not enjoy good relations with senior management. However, it was not always the same case as the organisations strived to maintain their merit as well. Nonetheless, this study exposed that merit in organisations is merely on papers and practically the candidates who were referred or enjoyed relations with the hiring authority were selected. Another reason is that organisations also showed reservations about the new unknown candidates. So, having healthy relationships is beneficial for the actors at every stage of life. Trust is one of the core things in relationships that create and promote cooperation between actors, groups, and organisations.

## Conclusion

The findings conclude the multilayered role of social capital within the Rational Choice Framework and the employees being rational actors, display a widespread acknowledgment of the critical role played by social connections and networks in facilitating access to employment opportunities and financial

benefits. Within the context of social interactions, employees make deliberate decisions regarding the establishment and maintenance of social connections. Moreover, it is assumed that social connections even often outweigh knowledge and merit in career advancement, and for recruitment in organisations, the senior management significantly prioritizes the candidates referred by social connections and influences employees' promotions as well. The social actors recognize that social connections can offer various financial advantages and thus, they strategically nurture relationships with individuals and groups who can provide these benefits. As revealed in this study a substantial percentage of both government and private sector respondents recognize the influence of influential referrals in the hiring process. The study assumes that social capital has great economic and social implications for the individual rational actors. Hence, the rationality of employees informs that social capital along with education and skills matters a lot to secure a job as well as to get promotions in the professional career of the employees or social actors.

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