MERITOCRACY VS. NEPOTISM: EVALUATING RECRUITMENT/SELECTION POLICIES AND ORGANIZATIONAL OUTCOMES IN NIGERIAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES (2018–2025)

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ABSTRACT: This study examined Meritocracy vs. Nepotism: evaluating recruitment/selection policies and organizational outcomes in Nigerian public universities (2018–2025). In an effort to achieve the objective of the study, the researcher's employee survey research design and questionnaires were the primary data collection tool. The data collected were presented in tables and analysed using simple percentages and Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients. The population of this study is made up of the entire permanent staff of Imo State University, from where 262 respondents were sampled using a simple random sampling technique. However, only 240 copies of the questionnaire were returned and used. The result indicated that there is a significant relationship between recruitment/selection policy and the level of turnover in Nigerian organizations; recruitment/selection policy affects productivity in Nigerian organizations, and there is a significant impact of recruitment/selection policy on industrial peace and harmony in Nigerian organizations. Based on the findings, it was recommended that organizations seeking employee retention should always adopt an internal recruitment/selection policy so as to reduce the rate of job turnover. Furthermore, organizations that want to achieve high productivity and high output should use external recruitment/selection policy.

Keywords: Meritocracy, Nepotism, Recruitment and Selection, Organizational Outcomes, Public Universities in Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

This study investigates how recruitment/selection policies at Imo State University influence turnover, productivity, and industrial harmony (2018–2025), addressing gaps in merit-based hiring practices in Nigerian public institutions. For organization to be successfully, they need manpower to manage and harness other organizational resources into achieving the goals. For that, effective manpower planning is required so as to attract, recruit, select, and employ qualified personnel. Ikwesi (2020) opined that the process of recruitment and selection begins with the manpower plan, which indicates areas in the organization where there are likely to be shortages of people, and the number of people to be recruited to meet anticipated employment needs. This is why Jacins (2022) puts it that if recruitment/selection policies and practices are to be effective exercise, it must seek to attract the right manpower. This is because one of the most effective ways of ensuring high standard

of performance in any organization is through recruitment and selection of qualified and well-motivated candidates.

The general focus of recruitment and selection is to employ credible manpower which could be utilized to achieve organizational performance. Organizational performance simply means that an organization is stable, profitable, attracts customers, very productive and contributes to the well-being of its stakeholders - government, shareholders/owners, management, employees and partners

(Agu, 2014, p.12). To measure organizational performance, level of profitability, issue of productivity, employee effectiveness, level of goal achievements, level of patronage, level of expansion and industrial peace and harmony come to mind. Recruiting and selecting staff is a very costly exercise and is also an essential part of any business, and it pays to do it properly (Ballantyne, 2019). When organizations choose the right people for the job, train them well, and treat them appropriately, these people not only produce good results, which lead to organizational growth but also tend to stay with the organization longer.

Here, if an organization must achieve its goals, succeed and survive, or compete effectively in the global economy, employers must be in the position to propound and practice recruitment and selection of employees in the best way. Every organization has its own requirements in acquiring employees. It is vital that organizations select people with the quality essential for continued success in this competitive global village. The only means of achieving this success is through proper recruitment and selection practices, because the success of an organization is directly linked to the performance of those who work for that organization (Adu-Darkoh, 2014). If recruitment and selection must achieve the desired goals, the human resources department and managers must play their functions positively. According to Adebayo (2020), the functions of human resources department and human resources manager include recruitment, selection, training and development, job evaluation and formulation of manpower policies in an organization. According to Mullins (2020), for the Human Resource Management (HRM) function to remain effective, there must be consistently good levels of teamwork, plus ongoing co-operation and consultation between line managers and the HR manager.

Statement of the Problem

In spite of the importance of recruitment and selection to the achievement of organization's set goals; it has been observed that candidates are not only recruited on merit bases, but also on non-merit criteria in some organizations. This means that recruitment into the Nigerian organization was no longer what it used to be. Here, the tendency is always to recruit people with little or no experience and with poor academic background, resulting from the people being affiliated to the party in power. Mistakes and blunders made by such an employee are always covered by those who helped them to attain such post.

Most people employed are recruited without being considered along with others who are also qualified. Despite the institutional devices standing against this abuse of office during recruitment,

favour to one's immediate relation is deep rooted in the Nigerian culture still linger on. This tendency affects the quality of the people recruited and has an adverse impact on the morale of the people who are more qualified or feel, they are better than the people favoured.

Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to investigate the influence of recruitment/selection process on organizational performance (2018-2025). Specifically, the research sought:

1. To identify the relationship between recruitment/selection policy and level of turnover in Nigeria organizations.
2. To determine the extent recruitment/selection policy affects productivity in the Nigeria organizations.
3. To examine the impact of recruitment/selection policy on industrial peace and harmony in Nigerian organizations.

Research Questions

The under-listed research questions serve as a guide to the study.

1. What is the relationship between recruitment/selection policy and level of turnover in Nigerian organisations?
2. To what extent does recruitment/selection policy affect productivity in Nigerian organisations?
3. How does recruitment/selection policy impact industrial peace and harmony in Nigerian organisations?

Research Hypotheses

Based on the objective of the study and research questions, the following research hypotheses guided the study.

H_01: There is no significant relationship between recruitment/selection policy and level of turnover in Nigerian organisations.

II_02: Recruitment/selection policy does not affect productivity in Nigerian organisations.

H_03: There is no significant impact of recruitment/selection policy on industrial peace and harmony in Nigerian organisations.

Scope of the study

The study is delimited to Imo State University, Owerri, Imo State Nigeria. Imo State University was used because it is a public university and staff therein can provide information on the subject matter.

Conceptual Review

Recruitment

Recruitment has been defined by scholars and human resources professionals in different ways. It's true that the availability of competent and efficient labor force does not happen by gambling but through an articulated recruitment exercise. Alugbuo (2007) opined that recruitment can simply be defined as the process of finding sources of manpower to match job requirements and specification. It includes actions taken by an organization to attract sufficient numbers of high caliber manpower to enable adequate selection to be made. According to Peretomode and Peretomode (2021) in human resources management, recruitment is simply the process of identifying and attracting or encouraging individuals with the needed skills (potential candidates) to apply to fill existing or future recent position in the organization by making them aware that such vacancies exist. The task of recruitment is concern with the reliability of a pool of potentially employable personnel from which to make selection. Recruitment is the process of generating a pool of capable candidates applying to an organization for employment (Gold, 2017). This suggests that applicants with experience and qualifications most closely related to job specifications may eventually be selected.

El-Kot and Leat (2018), observation is that recruitment begins with advertising existing vacancies. According to Eze (2022), recruitment is the process of finding and attempting to attract job candidates who are suitably qualified and therefore capable of filling vacancies in job positions effectively. The purpose is to encourage them to apply for the vacant position. Costello (2016) affirmed that recruitment is a set of activities and processes used to legally obtain adequate number of qualified applicant at the right place and time to enable applicant and the organization to select each other for their own optimum interest. Judging from the above various definition of recruitment as given by professional and scholars, it is apparent that recruitment borders or deals with the plan advertisement of exiting vacant position in an organization in order to wool or attract suitable and qualify applicant to apply for the vacant position or offices for employment in the said organization.

Sources of Recruitment

Scholars have identified two major sources of recruitment, which are internal and external sources. There are many strategies and approaches use in both internal and external sources, and there are fully discussed in this work.

1. Internal sources of recruitment: Internal recruitment is done when the vacant positions are filled with present employees in the organization (Adu-Darkoh, 2014; and Ibrahim, 2014). This is usually done by promoting people to fill the vacant higher positions. For example, where a director resigned, a deputy director can be promoted to fill the position instead of employing a new director.

This is a good example of an internal recruitment. Aspects of recruitment under internal sources are as follows:

Promotions: It refers to promoting or upgrading an employee who is already existed in the pay roll and contributed to the organizational performance. It is shifting an employee to a higher position with high responsibilities, facilities, status and pay. Usually, many organizations fill higher job vacancies by promoting employees who are considered fit for such positions (Adu-Darkoh, 2014). This is due to the fact that it has a great psychological impact over other employees for their motivation towards better performance. Internal recruitment efforts very often result in promotions. Promotion signifies reward for past performance and encourages employees in their efforts (Sherman, Bohlander, & Snell, 2018).

Transfers: It's an internal source of recruitment which motivates employees for better performance. It refers to the process of interchanging the job duties and responsibilities of employees from one place to another or from one department to another without any promotion in their position or grade. It is a good source of generating qualified employees from over-staffed departments (Keshav, 2013). Transfer is a lateral shift causing movement of individuals from one position to another. Branine (2018), consider transfers as being affected when the need for people in one job or department is reduced or increased, if the work load reduced employees would want to relocate to other areas where they can have enough tasks to perform. Under it, employees are recruited internally through transfer from one work place to another.

Job posting: Job posting is an open invitation to all employees in an organization to apply for the vacant position (Adu-Darkoh, 2014). It provides an equal opportunity to all employees currently working in the organization. Today it has become a very common practice in many organizations across the world. Under this, vacancy announcement is made through bulletin boards or in lists available to all employees. Interested employees, then apply for the post being advertised. In this way, it has become one of the cost saving techniques of recruitment (Keshav,2019).

Job bidding: Is more effective when it is part of a career development program in which employees are made aware of opportunities available to them within the organization. For example, HR departments may provide new employees with literature on job progression that describes the lines of job advancement, training requirements for each job, and skills and abilities needed as they move up the job-progression ladder.

2. External sources of recruitment: External source makes it possible to draw a wide range of talent and provide the opportunity to bring new ideas and experience people into organization. It is useful to attracting competent applicants to apply for advertised positions in various organizations. For that, organizations should fully assess the kinds of positions they want to fill and select the recruiting methods that are likely to produce the best results. Here, external sources of recruitment refer to attracting applicants from outside a particular organization to fill vacant positions. Broad varieties of methods are available for external recruiting. External source of recruitment include advertisement, e-recruitment, employment agencies, labour office, education and training

establishment (Beardwell, 2017; Cober & Brown, 2016). Details of these sources are discussed in this section.

Advertisement: This is the most common form of external sources of recruitment. Organizations advertise vacant position on both electronic, print, and broadcast media to access a larger pool of applicants. An advertisement has communication as its basic underlying principle and it should be worded in a manner that triggers responses from job seekers. Recruiters should formulate the wording of advertisements in a manner that is not discriminatory. Advertisements are expensive but attract a larger pool of applicants than internal recruitment processes. It is, however, more difficult to evaluate external applicant than those that are already employed within the organizations.

E-recruitment: This is also called online recruitment, and it uses web-based tools such as a firm's public internet site or its own intranet to recruit staff. . Armstrong (2019) defines e-recruitment as a process that uses the internet to advertise or post vacancies, provide information about the jobs and the organization and enable e-mail communication to take place between employers and candidates. The function of e-recruitment is to make the processes more productive as well as less expensive. Online recruitment can attract a larger pool of potential employees and smoothens the selection process (Ugo and Ikechukwu, 2017). E-recruitment is a new technological mean for selecting the organizational most crucial resources, i.e. human resource. This technological innovation improves the process of recruiting knowledge sources by using the internet (Amusan and Oyediran, 2016).

Employee referrals: An employee referral program is a system where existing employees recommend prospective candidates for the job offered, and in some organizations if the suggested candidate is hired, the employee receives a cash bonus (Walker, 2019). Under this method, a candidate, is appointed on the recommendation of some currently working employees.

Employment agencies: Employment agencies, sometimes referred to as labour brokers, even though they can face criticism from labour unions, tend to be fast and efficient in recruiting applicants for specialized positions. For a fee collected from either the employee or the employer, usually the employer, these agencies do some preliminary screening for the organization and put that organization in touch with applicants. Private employment agencies differ considerably in the level of service, costs, policies, and types of applicants they provide. Employers can reduce the range of possible problems from these sources by giving a precise definition of the position to be filled (Sims, 2022).

Labour offices: They are sources of certain types of workers. In some organizations, such as tertiary institutions, unions have traditionally supplied workers to employers. This is because such union like ASUU plays good part in the training of such prospective employees (Keshav, 2019). A labour pool is generally available through a union, and workers can be dispatched to particular jobs to meet the needs of the employers. In some instances, the union can control or influence recruiting and staffing needs. An organization with a strong union may have less flexibility than a non-union organization in deciding who will be hired and where that person will be placed.

Educational and training establishments: Managers of organizations may visit educational institutions such as universities and colleges to attract top students, especially during their final years of study to apply for vacant positions. This method of recruitment is also referred to as campus recruiting and is one of the cheapest methods of recruitment. It introduces final year students to the institution. The recruiter normally makes a presentation to final year students and invites desirable students to visit public institutions exposing them to different areas within the organization.

Selection

After attracting candidates through recruitment process, the next stage is to select from the pool those that will be employed. Here, Selection is the process of choosing from the pool of applicants, those to be hired by the organization based on the specified organizational requirements. This stage in the recruitment circle is very crucial as it is through this that the employers made decisions on who is the most appropriate candidate to be employed of all the job applicants (Zaneer, 2018). Traditionally, it was assumed that organizations could choose amongst applicants and that they would accept all job offers. However, attracting a large number of applicants was not the problem, but recruiting the right applicants became the main concern amongst employers (Branine, 2018). With the oversupply of unskilled applicants (Nzukuma & Bussin, 2021), it can be assumed that employers would be very careful before selecting any applicants. Employer decisions about the selection of employees are central to the operation of organizations and to a series of outcomes that matter to individuals, organizations, and society.

Similarly, Drucker (2021) sees selection as the process that represents the final stage of the decision-making in the recruitment process. He further explained that a wide range of technique is available to assist in carrying out selection which include among others, the interview test and references. Selection as access of screening of candidate may involves going into records, data sheet

and curricula vitae (CV). Testing may be introduced to examine the quality of human resources relevant to perform available jobs or the task. According to Olulekan (2016), some of the tests usually used in selection of human resource are aptitude test, achievement, vocational interest and personality tests. The final stage of the selection process is what may be called the decision and offer employment. Normally a decision is made to offer employment to the most suitably qualified candidates after completion of the entire screening exercise.

Selection Process

Managers can make their selection decisions with a fuller awareness of the applicants' strengths and weaknesses (Tjosvold and Newman, 2022). The selection processes therefore include;

Screening: Screening, popularly known as short listing, is the first step after the recruitment process is completed and applications received (Adu-Darkoh, 2014). In this step, all the applications received by the due date are screened and those that do not correspond to the requirements stipulated in the advertisement are immediately eliminated in this step. Selection panels have to be careful not to discriminate against applicants with potential. Their decisions should be guided by short-listing

criteria that is developed against the job requirements stipulated in the advertisements. Furthermore, they need to ensure that enough time is set aside for short-listing.

Selection tests: Selection tests are often used as part of a selection procedure for occupations where a large number of recruits are required and where it is not possible to rely entirely on examination results or information about previous experience as the basis for predicting future performance. Tests are seen as the most objective method of judging applicants, provided they are well exposed to the same test under the same conditions. Tests are increasingly becoming an integral part of the selection process because of their obvious advantages (Adu-Darkoh, 2014). There are different types of tests, and the one chosen by an organization depends on what that organization is engaged in and the type of personnel it wants to employ. Tests usually form part of an assessment centre procedure. Intelligence tests are particularly helpful in situations where intelligence is a key factor, but there is no other reliable method of measuring it. Aptitude and attainment tests are most useful for jobs where specific and measurable skills are required, such as typing or computer programming.

Reference and background checks: Usually, advertisements require that applicants provide the names and contact details of people who can serve as referees to them if their applications are considered. Reference checks are used to verify the information that is supplied by the applicant and are usually done telephonically. However, most referees are reluctant to respond to certain questions (Mathis & Jackson, 2016). Reference checks can be used to gather as much information as possible to decide whether to appoint or decline to appoint the applicants. References provide the organization with other people's perceptions of the candidate's professional ability. The organizations can contact the candidate's previous employers and colleagues. Questions to ask references might address the candidate's creativity and initiative. This is mostly the reason why conditional job offers are given in other to check the authenticity of what the candidate provided on the application form (Snell and Bohlander, 2020). References are one of the more popular and "traditional" tools in the selection process.

Interview: Interviews are by far the most widely used personnel selection procedure. With the use of interviews, managers of organizations get an opportunity to meet the applicants directly. The interview also provides the applicants with an opportunity to also learn more about the public institution. The purpose of the selection interview is to gather as much information and to use such information to arrive at a selection decision (Fwaya, 2016). During the interview, panel members (interviewers) normally pose questions to which the interviewee is expected to respond. Responses to the questions are often captured by means of scores as determined the interviewers. The applicant that obtains the highest score is recommended for appointment. Because of interview ambiguity, efforts must be made to ensure that all interviewees are being asked the same questions (Gomez-Majia et al., 2014:175).

Physical examination: Applicants are often expected to undergo test(s) to determine if they are fit to perform the job, should they be appointed. The most common example of the employment tests that applicants often undergo is a medical examination. Medical examination, also referred to as

pre-placement medical testing, is conducted only where the applicants are required to use physical strength to successfully perform their duties (Mathis & Jackson, 2016).

Job offer: The next step in selection process is job offer to those applicants who have crossed all the previous hurdles. In other words, it is the last step in the selection process. Development of an offer via e-mail or letter is sometimes a more formal part of this process.

Organisational Performance

Many authors have examined the concept of organisational performance. Organisational performance is concerned with the overall productivity in an organisation in terms of stock turnover, customers, profitability and market share. Organizational growth simply means that an organization is stable, profitable, attract customers, is very productive and contributes to the well-being of its stakeholders — shareholders/owners, management, employees and partners (Agu, 2014). Ogunna (2019) observed that a growing organisation is a stable organisation. To him, when we say that there is organisational growth, it does not mean that economic problems like recession do not affect the organization, but that the organisational management is effective in handling environmental and external factors affecting the organisation and notwithstanding any challenge, there is improvement in the system.

Performance is the goal of every organisation. Any organisation that cannot operate to a degree of significant growth is an unimportant entity. A growing organisation enriches the owners, the management and the staff. It serves as a source of inspiration and motivation to the organisation and appropriates the fruit of their labour (Ogunna, 2020). The concept of organisational growth is core to businesses because the major objective of businesses is to make profits (Fwaya, 2016). Based on the foregoing, it can be noted here that high organisational growth includes the way and manner in which the organisation achieves its set objectives. The variables used in measuring organizational growth include organisational productivity, profitability and stability. Ugwu (2013) believed that employee effectiveness and efficiency are variables which could be used to measure organisational growth. This is true because when the workers do their work well, the organization will achieve reasonable growth as it concerns high sales, increased market share, increased productivity and organizational expansion.

Impact of Recruitment and Selection Policy on Organizational Performance

Growth, sustainability, and Performance are increasingly important issues for all organizations. Such organizational growth is achieved when effective workers are employed; hence, the effectiveness of workers leads to organizational growth. Such effectiveness is the level of an individual's work achievement after having exerted effort. Hayward (2015) stated that individual performance is a product of ability multiplied by motivation. HR practices are positively correlated with profitability, and it is suggested that the management of the organization focus on these HR practices (recruitment and selection), which results in improved organizational growth. In order to get maximum output from employees, it is important to consider a fit between successful candidates and the organization. This is made possible by the use of selection criteria as basis and the questions

asked by the selection panel and in interviews. By selecting the required candidates for positions in respective departments, line managers could help achieve a better fit between job and candidate (Zhuand Bowling, 2022). Other researchers such as Ochienta (2021) have found a positive relationship between the extensiveness of recruiting, selection test validation and the use of formal selection procedures and firm productivity.

Other studies have shown that implementing an effective staffing process is positively related to organizational performance. Koch and McGrath (2016) also found that sophisticated recruitment and selection procedures are positively related to labour productivity. Recruitment and selection, as a human resource management function, is one of the activities that impact most critically on the performance of an organization in terms of achieving its ultimate goal (Costello, 2016). Recruitment and selection also have an important role to play in ensuring worker performance and positive organizational outcomes. It is often claimed that selection of workers occurs not just to replace departing employees or add to a workforce but rather aims to put in place workers who can perform at a high level and demonstrate commitment (Dessler, 2020). While it has always had the capacity to form a key part of the process of managing and leading people as a routine part of organizational life, it is suggested here that recruitment and selection has become ever more important as organizations increasingly regard their workforce as a source of competitive advantage. However, there is evidence of increased interest in the utilization of employee election methods which are valid, reliable and fair.

According to Foot and Hook (2016), the primary aim of the recruitment and selection processes is to ensure that the best applicants are appointed into positions. This implies that the recruitment and selection processes can assist in predicting applicants" future performance and the period the applicant will stay as an employee. As evidenced, human resources should be partners in strategic planning to determine the types of skills and competencies that are required to achieve objectives (Cascio, 2021). Inappropriate selection decisions also reduce organizational effectiveness, invalidate reward and development strategies. Recruitment and selection is very important for the survival of every organization but that does not end there, new recruit need to be develop and appraised from time to time in order for them to be abreast with new trends and challenges. When credible employees are employed, it helps increase their performance and sustain the growth of the organization. According to Adu-Darkoh (2014), Poor recruitment practices and recruiting poor performing employees can have several negative effects on the organization. Employees with limited role specific capabilities take time to become productive and need more training to build their skills, good employees hit the ground running and they are interested in learning.

Challenges of meritorious Recruitment/Selection which hinder organizational outcome

A number of challenges serve as the barriers hindering effective recruitment and selection of workers. They include:

1. Poor human resource (HR) planning: Kaplan and Norton (2014) indicate that a common problem in recruitment and selection is poor Human Resource Planning (HRM). According to Cooper et al (2013) recruitment and selection of employees is the most important job of a Human

Resource person. The key goal of HR planning is to get the right number of people with the right skills, experience and competencies in the right jobs at the right time at the right cost. Detailed and robust recruitment and selection policies, such as recruitment and selection procedures, assessing criteria, talents auditing and processing the information about the labour market are important in recruiting and deploying appropriate employees at the right time. In tendon with the above, Kaplan and Norton (2014) stated that a common problem in recruitment/ selection is poor HR planning. Rigorous HR planning translates- organizational strategies into specific HRM policies and practices.

2. **Corruption:** Corruption affects recruitment/selection in Nigeria. This is because the issue of meritocracy is very much lacking. This manifested as a result of consistent corruption and interference of political office holders in the issue of recruitment/selection. This eventually leads to recruiting staff that are in most cases incompetent (Walker, 2020). It is however, a well-known fact that for any organization to achieve its objectives it must have people with proven competence (Ibrahim, 2014). It was on the realization of the need for competence in organizations that made Max Weber the greatest exponent of bureaucracy to state that candidates for positions in organizations must be selected on the basis of technical qualifications. However, in the case of Nigeria, recruitment/selection are based purely on sentimental reasons. The principle of federal character has also compounded the problem, since it has legalized nepotism and segregation in employment in the form of ethnic balancing, especially in public sector organizations (Akpanabia, 2012).

3. **Ineffective job analysis:** Ineffective job analysis is a problem of recruitment and selection. Effectively conducting job analysis and targeting right potential candidates ensures a good match between applicants and the jobs. Argument has been given that under qualified employees may not be able to effectively perform their job positions due to lack of knowledge and competencies, while on the other hand over qualified employees tend to experience less job satisfaction due to their higher qualification than a desired level for a given job.

4. **Competency level on the part of employee:** Recruitment in Nigeria is mostly based on the skills and technical know-how of the person to be employed without giving due considerations to the attitudes and character that the applicant possess. It is good to note here, that employees with improper or negative attitude in most cases do not strive hard towards the realization of the organizational goals. Their personal interest is superior to that of the organization. This has a strong and negative effect as it leads to workplace tension and also lowers productivity.

5. **Cost of recruitment and selection of employees:** The financial involvement of external and internal recruitment is always very high and discourages organizations. For that, Ikwesi (2010) stated that sometimes, the use of internal recruitment has some challenges. Here, internal recruitment does not always produce the number or quality of personnel needed. In such an instance, the organization needs to recruit from external sources. Such could either be by encouraging walk-in applicants; advertising vacancies in newspapers, magazines and journals, and the visual and/or audio media; using employment agencies to "head hunt"; advertising on-line via the Internet; or through job fairs and the use of college recruitment.

6. Lack of effective human resource department: The success of recruitment depends upon finding the people with the right skills, qualifications and expertise to deliver organizational objectives and the ability to make a positive contribution to the values and aims of the organization (CIPD, 2009). The ineffectiveness of HR managers and department negatively affects recruitment/selection. Previous research shows that the competency level of HR managers have a major influence on recruitment/selection and experienced HR experts within the HR department will not only shorten vacancy duration, but also improve the quality of the applicants. Moreover, effective recruitment/selection is possible only if there is a dedicated and competent HR team (Kaplan & Norton, 2014).

Empirical Review

Some past studies used were summarized thus;

Ikwesi (2020) assesses the effects of recruitment/selection procedures on the efficiency of the public service in Nigeria using Oshimili South Local Government as a case study. Survey design was used, a total of 128 was used as population and sample. The data used in the study was collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary method or sources of data collection included the use of a research instrument, (the questionnaire) and interview. The study adopted the use of simple percentage, tables and descriptive content approach for data analysis. The data analysis revealed that; the recruitment and selection procedures in public service in Nigeria are not strictly followed during employment of staff; politicization and other informal processes dominate the established recruitment and selection procedures during employment of staff; merit principle do not always count to secure employment in public service rather the use federal character, quota system, indigeneship, son of soil syndrome, etc. are mostly considered; there is an established relationship between inefficiency of the Nigerian public service and weak recruitment and selection processes. Based on the above findings, the study recommended that more strict measures should be introduced to ensure meritocracy in staff recruitment and selection in the public service in Nigeria.

Aminchi, Amina, Abba and Salau (2014) writes on Recruitment, Selection and Placement of Human Resource in Adult Education Organization: Implications for the Management of Adult Education Borno State Nigeria. Descriptive survey design was used, and a population of 2300 and 38 adult education students and teachers respectively were used. From the population, 200 respondents were sampled. The data were collected through questionnaire and interview system. The data collected were analysed using SPSS. The study discovered that recruitment, selection and placement of human resource is a major part of an organization overall resourcing strategies which identify and secure people needed for the organization to survive and succeed. Better recruitment and selection procedure results in improved organizational outcomes. The work concludes that it is important to determine the strategy by which the recruit, select and place organization employee and the contingent workforce in terms of their skills and technical abilities, especially in adult education organization.

Djabatey (2022) analyzed recruitment and selection practices of organizations, a case study of HFC Bank Ltd. The purpose of this study was to assess the effectiveness of the recruitment and selection

practices and procedures of HFC Bank, Accra. Cross sectional survey design was used. The study obtained information from one hundred (100) respondents from staff of HFC Bank in the Greater Accra Region through the use of questionnaires. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS. The results indicated that, advertising of job vacancies and employee referrals are mostly the mode for recruiting potential employees, it was also realized that the method used in the recruiting and selection process was very effective and moreover helped improve employee performance. The study revealed that the selecting and recruitment process are also characterized with lots of challenges. Among the recommendations made were that potential employees should all be treated fairly in the recruitment and selection process, more so employees must be appraised constantly to ensure that they improve upon their performance.

Omisore and Okofu (2019) researched on Staff Recruitment and Selection Process in the Nigerian Public Service: What is to be done? The general objective is based on the examination of the process of staff recruitment and selection in the public service of Nigeria. Five relevant research questions were raised and addressed. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data collected from respondents to the questionnaire designed for this purpose. The results obtained showed that merit is often jettisoned on the altar of ethnicity and religion in recruitment into the public service in Nigeria. Since the public service is directly controlled and regulated by the government, the Nigerian Federal Character Principle was largely complied with. The study also reveals that though there are stipulated periods for recruitment and selection into the public service, these are often sidelined. This study concludes by recommending that for government to operate the most efficient administrative service that would be beneficial to all, her recruitment and selection policies into the Nigerian public services should be unfettered. It should be able to absorb the most qualified, technically sound, disciplined and committed human resource that would in turn help government achieve the objectives of governance.

Theoretical Framework

Human Capital Theory

According to Njoku (2017), the human capital theory was developed by A.W. Lewis in 1930s in his book Economic Development with limited supply of labour. Similarly human capital theory was popularized by Gary Becker and Jacob Minear in 1960. According to the theorists human capital refers to the stock of knowledge, habits, social and personality attributes, including creativity, embodied in the ability to perform a task so as to produce economic value. Thus, human capital theory is a theory that focuses on human factor in an organization or the workforce of the organization as an asset and not liability.

Assets as a factor of production or fixed assets of the organization whose current value can be improved for future value through training, human capital development and capacity building in order to increase productivity and over all organizational performance. This theory was employed because the achievement of organizational goals in Imo State University and other organizations depends on the extent to which qualified staff are recruited to teach and perform administrative functions. If the right manpower are recruited, it means that the goal of the tertiary education will

be achieved. But if the right manpower are not recruited, such will hinder the achievement of organizational goals. This theory was used because human capital theory brings to limelight the need for investment in the right humans in a organizations.

Prospecting Theory of Recruitment and Selection

Prospecting theory of recruitment and selection developed by Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky in 1979 and popularized by Cascio (1981) was also used. This theory considers recruitment and selection as a one- way process. That is, when there is the need for organizations to expand or replenish available personnel, they go searching for prospective employees. The theory suggest that individuals place more emphasizes on gains rather than losses and as a result will try to make decisions that contribute to gains, since it's the organization that is seeking for employees. The prospect theory lumps risks into two categories: those that contribute to gains and ones that contribute to losses. Under this theory, people treat the two sections of risk totally different in order to receive a positive outcome. Prospect theory is a theory in cognitive psychology that describes the way people chooses between probabilistic alternatives that involve risk, where the probabilities of outcomes are uncertain. The theory states that people make decisions based on the potential value of losses and gains rather than the final outcome, and that people evaluate these losses and gains using some heuristics.

This theory was applied in Nigeria form the post-independence era until the late 1990s. Then, it is the organizations that seek for workers. This made it possible that unemployment was not even the issue since there are few skilled manpower. For that prospective employees have the choice of choosing the most suitable job, hence many employers go for few employees. In this study, this theory was used because this is an era of technology and competition amongst individual, firms, and organizations. In this era, organizations still go for employees using many recruitment and selection process. This is so because, the success of these establishments lies in selecting/attracting skilled and qualified persons towards them and such type of recruitment directly or indirectly help in progressing the companies. Recruitment and selection here is treated as if it were a one-way process — something organizations do to search for prospective employees. It is termed as prospecting theory of recruitment, because organization seeks out employees.

The success of recruitment and selection planning depends on two major factors, namely, the timing of organizational and applicant's job search. The two must meet; else recruitment and selection from the organization's perspective and job search success from the applicant's perspective will be a failure. The actual meeting of both organizations and applicants however, is dependent on the satisfaction of three other conditions:

- There must be a common communication medium (e.g. the organization advertises in the media journal read by the job seeker). The organization advertises must ensure that candidates are reading that trade journal.
- The job seeker must perceive a match between his or her personal characteristics and stated job requirements. The issue of matching personal characteristics of the candidates with the

job requirements is very significance. The candidates should be able to understand that his characteristics do matching with requirements of the asked jobs.

Research Methodology

The survey research method was adopted by the researcher. According to Nwodu (2006), Survey is a research method that focuses on using primary data through questionnaire. To him, in survey, we study a large number of units and try to reach generalization on the basis of data so collected.

The population of this study is made up of the entire 755 Permanent staff in Imo State University Owerri, Imo State (**Source:** personal unit, Imo State University Owerri, Imo State, 2023). The simple random sampling technique was adopted from the probability method which entails random selection of respondents. ;Also, members of the population have equal chance of being selected. This method was adopted by the researcher because of its simplicity and to avoid bias judgment.

262 questionnaires were administered, was collected and properly arranged for further statistical processing. To determine the sample size the formula of Taro Yamane was used. The formula is given as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where;

n = the sample size

N = population of staffs. An estimated population of 262 was used.

e^2 = square of maximum allowance for sampling error at 5% level of significance.

$$n = \frac{755}{1+(755)\,(0.05)^2}$$

$$\frac{755}{1+(755)\,(0.005)}$$

$$\frac{755}{2.8875}$$

n $\quad$ = $\quad$ 261.45

n $\quad$ = $\quad$ 262

Primary data through questionnaire was used for this study. To analyze the data collected in the study, the researcher used mean frequency in line with simple percentage and Chi-Sqaure.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

Out of 262 copies of the questionnaire distributed, only 240 copies were returned and used

Item 1: There is significant relationship between recruitment policy and level of turnover in Nigeria organizations.

Table 1: Responses on if there is significant relationship between recruitment policy and level of turnover in Nigeria organizations.

Options Table	F	Percentage (%)	X	Percentage (%)
Strongly agreed	86	35	430	45.9
Agreed	70	29.3	280	29.91
Undecided	65	27	195	20.83
Disagreed	12	5	24	2.56
Strongly disagreed	7	2.9	7	0.75
Total	**240**	**100**	**936**	**100**

Source: field work 2025

$\underline{\sum X}$ $\quad$ = $\quad$ $\underline{936}$ $\qquad$ = $\quad$ 3.9

$\sum F$ $\quad$ = $\quad$ 240

Since our result in the above table is above 3.5, we therefore accept that there is significant relationship between recruitment policy and level of turnover in Nigeria organizations. This is because table 4.6 indicates that 45.94% of the respondents strongly agreed that there is significant relationship between recruitment policy and level of turnover in Nigeria organizations, whereas 29.91% of the respondents agreed. Also, 20.83% of the respondents were undecided, while 2.56%% of the respondents disagreed. However, 0.75% of the respondents strongly disagreed.

Item 2**:** Effective selection practices reduces turnover in Nigeria organizations.

Table 2: Responses on if effective selection practices reduces turnover in Nigeria organizations.

Options	F	Percentage (%)	X	Percentage (%)
Strongly agreed	78	32.5	390	45.45
Agreed	58	24.2	232	27.04
Undecided	56	23.3	168	19.58
Disagreed	20	0.3	40	4.66
Strongly disagreed	28	11.7	28	3.26
Total	**240**	**100**	**858**	**100**

Source: field work 2025

Since our result in the above table is above 3.5, we therefore accept that effective selection practices reduces turnover in Nigeria organizations. This is because table 4.7 indicates that 45.45% of the respondents strongly agreed that effective selection practices reduce turnover in Nigerian organizations, whereas 27.04% of the respondents agreed, 19.58% of the respondents were undecided, and 4.66% of the respondents disagreed. Also, 3.26% of the respondents strongly disagreed.

Item 3: Internal recruitment/selection leads to employee retention.

Table 3: Responses on if internal recruitment/selection leads to employee retention.

Options	F	Percentage (%)	X	Percentage (%)
Strongly agreed	79	32.9	395	47.71
Agreed	70	29.2	280	33.82
Undecided	21	8.8	63	7.61
Disagreed	20	8.3	40	4.83
Strongly disagreed	50	20.8	50	6.04
Total	240	100	828	100

Source: field work 2025

$$\frac{\sum X}{\sum F} = \frac{828}{240} = 3.5$$

Since our result in the above table is 3.5, we therefore accept that internal recruitment/selection leads to employee retention. This is because Table 4.8 indicates that 47.71% of respondents strongly agreed that internal recruitment/ selection leads to employee retention, 33.82% of respondents agreed, 7.61% of the respondents were undecided, 4.83% of the respondents disagreed while 6.04% of the respondents strongly disagreed.

Item 4: There is a relationship between internal recruitment/selection policy organizational stability.

Table 4: Responses on if there is a relationship between internal recruitment/selection policy organizational stability.

Options	F	Percentage (%)	X	Percentage (%)
Strongly agreed	88	36.7	440	45.88
Agreed	107	44.6	428	44.63
Undecided	21	8.8	63	6.57
Disagreed	4	1.7	8	0.83
Strongly disagreed	20	8.3	20	2.09
Total	240	100	959	100

    Source: field work 2025

$$\frac{\sum X}{\sum F} = \frac{959}{240} = 3.0$$

Since our result in the above table is below 3.5, we therefore reject that there is a relationship between internal recruitment/selection policy organizational stability. This is because table 4.9 indicates that 45.88% respondents strongly agreed that there is a relationship between internal recruitment/selection policy organizational stability, 44.63% of the respondents agreed, 6.57% of the respondents were undecided, 0.83% of the respondents disagreed while 2.09% of the respondents strongly disagreed.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

There is significant relationship between recruitment/selection policy and level of turnover in Nigerian organizations. Considering the above statement, Briggs (2017) stated that employee retention could be achieved through internal recruitment. Ochienta (2011) said that corrupt free process will reduce job turnover.

Recruitment/selection policy affects productivity in the Nigeria organizations. This confirmed the statement of Omisore and Okofu (2014) who believed that the output maximization could be achieved through good recruitment/selection policy.

Conclusion

This study focused on Meritocracy vs. Nepotism: Evaluating recruitment/selection policies and organizational outcomes in Nigerian public universities (2018–2025). The study concludes that recruitment/selection can play a pivotally important role in shaping an organization's growth, effectiveness and performance by ensuring worker performance and positive organizational outcomes. This is because recruitment/selection of workers occurs not just to replace departing employees or add to a workforce but rather to put in place workers who can perform at a high level and demonstrate commitment. Here, a well-articulated recruitment/selection of qualified staff will lead to an increase in productivity, heightened morale, reduced supervision, efficiency, effectiveness, and increased organisational growth and stability.

Recommendations

Based on our findings, the following recommendations were made.

1. Organizations seeking for employee retention should always adopt internal recruitment/selection policy, so as to reduce the rate of job turnover.
2. Organizations the wants to achieve high productivity and high output should use external recruitment/selection policy.
3. The organizational management should avoid all forms of corruption and other malpractices in the recruitment/ selection process.

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