

**EMPLOYEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND
MERIT-BASED RECRUITMENT IN PUBLIC
UNIVERSITIES: IMPLICATIONS FOR
ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCY IN ABIA
STATE UNIVERSITY, UTURU**

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Abstract

Merit-based recruitment remains a critical determinant of organizational efficiency especially in public tertiary institutions where workforce quality directly influences institutional performance. However, growing concerns persist regarding the increasing reliance on employee recommendations and informal recruitment channels in many Nigerian public universities. This study examined

the influence of employee recommendation practices on merit-based recruitment and organizational efficiency in Abia State University. The study adopted a survey research design anchored on Herbert Simon's Decision-Making Theory. A sample size of 682 respondents was selected from a population of 1,364 academic and non-academic staff using stratified and simple random sampling techniques while 564 properly completed questionnaires were analyzed. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and key informant interviews. Quantitative data were analyzed using percentages, Chi-square statistics and contingency coefficients, while qualitative data were analyzed using thematic content analysis. Findings revealed that employee recommendations constitute one of the dominant recruitment channels within the institution and significantly influence recruitment outcomes. The findings further revealed that excessive reliance on informal recruitment practices weakens transparency, reduces equal access to employment opportunities and contributes to perceptions of favouritism within recruitment exercises. However, respondents strongly agreed that transparent and merit-based recruitment systems positively improve workforce quality, employee confidence and organizational efficiency. The study concludes that although employee recommendations may provide organizational familiarity and reduce recruitment uncertainty, excessive dependence on informal recommendation systems undermines meritocracy and institutional credibility. The study therefore recommends stricter adherence to transparent recruitment procedures, open advertisement of vacancies

and competency-based recruitment frameworks in public universities.

Keywords: Merit-Based Recruitment; Organizational Efficiency; Public Universities; Recruitment Transparency; Workforce Quality.

Introduction

Recruitment and selection remain central functions of human resource management because they determine the quality, competence and productivity of employees within organizations. In tertiary institutions, the effectiveness of recruitment systems significantly shapes administrative performance, academic productivity, service delivery and institutional sustainability. Contemporary human resource management literature emphasizes that merit-based recruitment systems enhance workforce quality, institutional credibility and organizational efficiency by ensuring that qualified individuals are selected through transparent and objective procedures (Dessler, 2020; Armstrong & Taylor, 2023). Recent scholarship further indicates that competency-based recruitment systems, digital recruitment frameworks and structured selection procedures have become increasingly important for improving workforce effectiveness and organizational competitiveness in both public and private institutions. Despite these advancements, recruitment practices within many developing societies continue to face institutional and administrative challenges. Studies on public sector recruitment increasingly reveal concerns

relating to weak transparency, prolonged hiring procedures, informal recruitment channels and politically influenced appointment systems. In several public organizations, recruitment decisions are sometimes shaped by employee recommendations, institutional familiarity, patronage networks and internal influence rather than strictly objective merit principles. Although employee referrals may reduce recruitment costs and accelerate hiring procedures, excessive dependence on informal recommendation systems may compromise equal opportunity, transparency and institutional fairness.

The use of employee recommendation systems has generated considerable debate within organizational and human resource management literature. Some scholars argue that employee referrals improve organizational trust, reduce uncertainty and enable institutions to identify candidates who fit organizational culture and expectations (Boxall & Purcell, 2016). Employee recommendations may also improve early employee adjustment because referred individuals often possess prior knowledge of institutional processes and work environments. However, critics maintain that informal recruitment systems frequently encourage favouritism, patronage and biased hiring decisions that undermine meritocracy and workforce diversity (Guest, 2017; Dobbin & Kalev, 2021). Recent studies further suggest that recruitment systems lacking transparency may weaken organizational legitimacy, reduce employee morale and negatively affect institutional performance.

In public universities, recruitment practices are particularly sensitive because tertiary institutions are expected to maintain objective and merit-driven systems capable of attracting highly skilled academic and administrative personnel. Recruitment decisions within universities significantly affect teaching quality, research productivity, administrative efficiency and institutional reputation. Biedma-Ferrer and Medina-Garrido (2023) argue that merit-based recruitment remains fundamental within knowledge-driven institutions because workforce competence directly influences innovation, academic performance and organizational sustainability.

Recent empirical evidence consistently demonstrates that transparent and merit-based recruitment systems positively influence employee performance, organizational commitment and institutional productivity. Studies on public sector organizations and universities show that objective recruitment frameworks improve workforce efficiency and reduce organizational conflict associated with perceived unfairness. Furthermore, recent discussions on AI-supported recruitment systems emphasize transparency, fairness and accountability as increasingly important components of modern recruitment systems.

However, despite growing scholarship on recruitment transparency and organizational performance, limited empirical attention has been given to how employee recommendation practices influence merit-based recruitment and organizational efficiency within Nigerian public universities, particularly in southeastern Nigeria. Existing studies have concentrated more on

private organizations, corporate institutions and generalized public sector systems with limited institution-specific evidence from public tertiary institutions.

In many public universities, vacancies are not always openly advertised and internal recommendations sometimes dominate recruitment exercises. Such practices may restrict access to qualified external applicants and create perceptions of unfairness among employees and stakeholders (Dobbin & Kalev, 2021). Where recommendation-based recruitment supersedes objective assessment procedures, institutions risk appointing under qualified personnel thereby, weakening workforce quality, administrative efficiency and organizational effectiveness.

It is against this background that this study examines employee recommendations and merit-based recruitment practices in Abia State University with emphasis on their implications for organizational efficiency. The study specifically evaluates the extent to which recruitment processes are influenced by employee referrals and how such practices affect recruitment transparency, workforce quality and institutional effectiveness.

Statement of the Problem

Public universities are expected to maintain transparent and merit-based recruitment systems that promote workforce quality and organizational efficiency. However, concerns persist over the growing influence of employee recommendations and informal recruitment

practices in many Nigerian public universities, including Abia State University. Recruitment vacancies are sometimes inadequately advertised, while internal networks and recommendations may influence employment decisions beyond objective merit principles. This situation may weaken transparency, encourage favouritism and reduce equal access to employment opportunities.

Although merit-based recruitment has been widely linked to improved organizational performance, limited empirical studies have examined how employee recommendation practices affect recruitment transparency and organizational efficiency within Nigerian public universities. This study therefore examines the relationship between employee recommendation practices, merit-based recruitment and organizational efficiency in Abia State University.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine employee recommendations and merit-based recruitment practices in public universities using Abia State University as a case study.

The specific objectives are to:

1. examine the extent to which employee recommendations influence recruitment exercises in the university;
2. determine whether recruitment processes are conducted based on merit principles;

3. assess the effect of employee recommendations on recruitment transparency;
4. evaluate the influence of merit-based recruitment practices on organizational efficiency;
5. examine the relationship between recruitment transparency and workforce efficiency in the university.

Literature Review

Concept of Employee Recommendation in Recruitment

Employee recommendation, also known as employee referral recruitment, refers to the process whereby existing employees recommend candidates for vacant positions within an organization (Dessler, 2020). Organizations often adopt this approach because it reduces recruitment costs and hiring time while increasing familiarity with prospective employees (Armstrong & Taylor, 2023). Similarly, Noe et al. (2021) and Boxall and Purcell (2016) argue that referral recruitment may improve organizational cohesion and reduce recruitment uncertainty.

Despite these advantages, excessive reliance on employee recommendations may weaken transparency and meritocracy. Guest (2017) maintains that informal recruitment systems can encourage favouritism and limit equal access to employment opportunities. Likewise, Frank Dobbin and Alexandra Kalev (2021) argue that weak recruitment transparency may reinforce

institutional inequality and reduce organizational legitimacy. In public universities, merit-based recruitment remains essential because workforce quality directly affects teaching, research and institutional credibility (Biedma-Ferrer & Medina-Garrido, 2023).

Merit-Based Recruitment and Organizational Efficiency

Merit-based recruitment refers to a system where employment decisions are based on competence, qualifications and objective assessment procedures rather than personal relationships or political influence (Robbins & Judge, 2021). Studies show that merit-oriented recruitment improves workforce productivity, employee morale and organizational efficiency (Dessler, 2020; Armstrong & Taylor, 2023).

Organizational efficiency refers to the ability of an institution to achieve its goals through effective use of available resources (Daft, 2020). In universities, it is reflected in effective teaching, research productivity and administrative performance. Empirical studies indicate that transparent recruitment systems strengthen employee confidence, institutional trust and workforce productivity, while favouritism and weak recruitment transparency reduce morale and organizational effectiveness (Salman et al., 2024). Recent human resource management studies also emphasize competency-based and digital recruitment systems as important strategies for promoting transparency and organizational efficiency (Wu et al., 2025; Ogba-Amaugo, 2024).

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Decision-Making Theory developed by Herbert A. Simon. In *Administrative Behavior*, Simon (1977) argues that organizational decisions are made under conditions of limited information, institutional constraints and bounded rationality. According to the theory, decision makers do not always operate with complete objectivity because organizational decisions are often shaped by institutional pressures, personal judgment, administrative discretion and organizational culture. The theory explains that recruitment decisions within organizations are not always determined solely by competence and objective standards. Factors such as institutional familiarity, internal recommendations, political influence and social relationships may influence recruitment outcomes. Simon argues that because organizations operate within practical limitations, decision makers often adopt satisfactory rather than perfectly rational alternatives during organizational processes.

The relevance of the theory to this study lies in its explanation of how recruitment decisions may be influenced by both formal and informal considerations within institutions. In public universities, recruitment decisions are expected to be guided by merit principles, transparency and objective assessment procedures. However, where employee recommendations and informal networks dominate recruitment exercises, organizational decisions may deviate from purely merit-based standards. The theory therefore provides a useful framework for understanding how employee

recommendation practices influence recruitment transparency and organizational efficiency within Abia State University. It further explains how organizational effectiveness may be affected when recruitment decisions are shaped more by institutional familiarity and informal influence than by competence and professional qualifications.

Empirical Review

Empirical studies generally show that transparent and merit-based recruitment systems improve workforce quality, employee productivity and organizational efficiency. Studies by Awu et al. (2025) and Chali (2026) found that structured recruitment and selection practices significantly enhance employee performance and institutional effectiveness in public organizations. Similarly, Ayango, Kibet and Mwangi (2018) reported that competency-based recruitment positively influences employee satisfaction and organizational performance.

Conversely, studies indicate that excessive reliance on employee referrals and informal recruitment systems may weaken meritocracy and organizational fairness. Frank Dobbin and Alexandra Kalev (2021) argue that informal recruitment channels often promote favouritism and social exclusion. Likewise, Salman, Khan and Iqbal (2024) found that weak recruitment transparency negatively affects employee trust, morale and organizational productivity.

Recent studies on digital and competency-based recruitment systems further emphasize transparency and

accountability as important factors in improving organizational performance and reducing recruitment bias (Wu, Zhang & Li, 2025). Similarly, Biedma-Ferrer and Medina-Garrido (2023) maintain that merit-based recruitment is essential in universities because workforce competence directly influences teaching quality, research productivity and institutional credibility.

Despite these contributions, limited empirical studies have examined how employee recommendation practices influence merit-based recruitment and organizational efficiency in Nigerian public universities, particularly Abia State University. This study therefore seeks to fill this gap.

Methodology

This study adopted the survey research design because it enabled the collection of quantitative and qualitative data from a large number of respondents regarding employee recommendation practices and merit-based recruitment in Abia State University. The population of the study comprised 1,364 academic and non-academic staff of the university. A sample size of 682 respondents was selected using stratified and simple random sampling techniques to ensure adequate representation of different staff categories. Out of the 682 questionnaires distributed, 564 were properly completed and returned, representing a response rate of 82.7%. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and key informant interviews involving administrative officers and senior staff connected to recruitment processes within the institution. The instruments were subjected to

face and content validity through expert review while reliability testing using Cronbach Alpha produced a coefficient of 0.81, indicating high internal consistency and reliability of the research instrument. Quantitative data were analyzed using frequency tables, percentages, Chi-square statistics and contingency coefficients at the 0.05 level of significance with the aid of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), while qualitative data generated from interviews were analyzed using thematic content analysis involving coding, categorization and interpretation of recurrent themes. For ease of interpretation, responses categorized as Strongly Agree and Agree were merged as Agree, while Strongly Disagree and Disagree were merged as Disagree during analysis. Ethical principles guiding social science research including voluntary participation, confidentiality and anonymity of respondents were strictly observed throughout the study.

Results, Data Analysis and Interpretation

Employee Recommendations and Recruitment Practices

Table 2: Employee Recommendation and Merit-Based Recruitment Practices (N = 564)

S/N	Items	Agree Frequency (%)	Disagree Frequency (%)
1	Employee recommendations significantly influence	468 (82.98%)	96 (17.02%)

	recruitment decisions in the university		
2	Recruitment vacancies are always openly advertised	188 (33.33%)	376 (66.67%)
3	Merit principles are consistently followed during recruitment exercises	214 (37.94%)	350 (62.06%)
4	Employee recommendations sometimes override objective assessment procedures	442 (78.37%)	122 (21.63%)
5	Informal recruitment practices reduce transparency in recruitment exercises	457 (81.03%)	107 (18.97%)
6	Merit-based recruitment improves workforce quality and organizational efficiency	501 (88.83%)	63 (11.17%)
7	Recommendation- based recruitment contributes to perceptions of	473 (83.87%)	91 (16.13%)

	favouritism		
8	Transparent recruitment procedures improve employee confidence in the institution	516 (91.49%)	48 (8.51%)
9	Recruitment processes in the university are sometimes influenced by internal networks	438 (77.66%)	126 (22.34%)
10	Non-merit recruitment practices negatively affect organizational performance	489 (86.70%)	75 (13.30%)

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

The findings in Table 2 reveal that a significant majority of respondents (82.98%) agreed that employee recommendations significantly influence recruitment decisions within the university, while only 17.02% disagreed. This finding indicates that employee referral practices constitute one of the dominant channels influencing recruitment outcomes in the institution.

The results further show that only 33.33% of respondents agreed that recruitment vacancies are always openly advertised whereas 66.67% disagreed. This suggests that many respondents perceive recruitment exercises as lacking adequate transparency and openness. Similarly, 62.06% of respondents disagreed that merit

principles are consistently followed during recruitment exercises, indicating widespread concerns regarding the objectivity of recruitment procedures within the institution.

The study also found that 78.37% of respondents agreed that employee recommendations sometimes override objective assessment procedures. This finding implies that informal recommendation systems may weaken merit-based standards within recruitment exercises. Furthermore, 81.03% of respondents agreed that informal recruitment practices reduce transparency within recruitment processes, while 83.87% agreed that recommendation-based recruitment contributes to perceptions of favouritism.

Data further reveal that 88.83% of respondents agreed that merit-based recruitment improves workforce quality and organizational efficiency. This finding supports broader human resource management literature which emphasizes that objective recruitment systems positively influence employee competence, productivity and organizational effectiveness. Similarly, 91.49% of respondents agreed that transparent recruitment procedures improve employee confidence in the institution.

The findings additionally indicate that 77.66% of respondents agreed that recruitment processes are sometimes influenced by internal networks, while 86.70% agreed that non-merit recruitment practices negatively affect organizational performance. Overall, the results demonstrate that excessive reliance on

employee recommendation systems weakens recruitment transparency and may negatively affect workforce quality and institutional efficiency within the university.

Qualitative Findings

The qualitative findings generated through key informant interviews reveal important insights regarding employee recommendation practices, recruitment transparency and organizational efficiency within the university. Several recurring themes emerged from the responses of administrative officers, senior staff and employees interviewed during the study.

Theme One: Dominance of Informal Recommendation Networks

Many respondents acknowledged that employee recommendations significantly influence recruitment exercises within the institution. Several participants explained that internal referrals and institutional familiarity often shape recruitment decisions, especially for non-academic positions.

One respondent stated:

“In many cases, people already know who will likely get the job before the recruitment process is concluded.”

Another participant explained:

“Recommendations from influential staff members sometimes carry more weight than open competition.”

The findings suggest that informal institutional networks continue to play major roles in recruitment outcomes within the university. Although some respondents considered recommendations helpful for identifying trusted candidates, many argued that excessive dependence on such systems weakens merit-based standards.

Theme Two: Weak Recruitment Transparency

A major concern repeatedly expressed by respondents relates to inadequate transparency during recruitment exercises. Several participants stated that vacancies are not always sufficiently advertised to external applicants, thereby limiting equal access to employment opportunities

One respondent noted:

“Some vacancies are circulated internally before outsiders even become aware of them.”

Another participant explained:

“Many qualified applicants may never get the opportunity to apply because recruitment information does not always reach the public adequately.”

The findings indicate that weak transparency contributes significantly to perceptions of favouritism and institutional unfairness. Respondents further maintained that open advertisement and objective assessment procedures would improve confidence in the recruitment system.

Theme Three: Meritocracy and Workforce Quality

Many participants strongly emphasized the importance of merit-based recruitment for organizational efficiency and workforce productivity. Respondents argued that universities require highly competent personnel because academic and administrative performance directly affects institutional reputation and service delivery.

One respondent stated:

“A university system can only function effectively when competent people are employed based on qualification and performance.”

Another participant explained:

“When recruitment is based on merit, employees are more productive because people believe the system is fair.”

The findings therefore suggest that merit-based recruitment positively influences employee morale, workforce competence and institutional effectiveness.

Theme Four: Organizational Consequences of Non-Merit Recruitment

Several respondents linked recommendation-based recruitment practices to declining organizational efficiency, low morale and reduced confidence in institutional processes. Participants argued that where recruitment decisions are perceived as unfair, employee commitment and trust may weaken considerably.

One respondent explained:

“When people believe employment is based on connections rather than competence, confidence in the institution reduces.”

Another participant stated:

“Employing under qualified personnel eventually affects productivity and administrative performance.”

The findings indicate that weak recruitment transparency and excessive reliance on informal recommendation systems may negatively affect workforce quality, institutional credibility and organizational efficiency within the university.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

H₀:

There is no significant relationship between employee recommendations and recruitment transparency in the university.

Table 3: Chi-Square Test of Employee Recommendation and Recruitment Transparency

Variables	χ^2 Calculat ed	χ^2 Critic al	Level of Significa nce	Decisio n
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Employee recommendations and recruitment transparency	41.52	9.49	0.05	Significant
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Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Since the calculated Chi-square value of 41.52 is greater than the critical table value of 9.49 at the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that a significant relationship exists between employee recommendation practices and recruitment transparency within the university. The finding implies that excessive dependence on employee recommendations significantly affects openness, fairness and transparency during recruitment exercises.

Hypothesis Two

H₀:

There is no significant relationship between merit-based recruitment and organizational efficiency in the university.

Table 4: Chi-Square Test of Merit-Based Recruitment and Organizational Efficiency

Variables	χ^2 Calculated	χ^2 Critical	Level of Significance	Decision
Merit-	47.84	9.49	0.05	Signifi

based recruitment and organizational efficiency				cant
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Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Since the calculated Chi-square value of 47.84 is greater than the critical value of 9.49 at the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that a significant relationship exists between merit-based recruitment and organizational efficiency within the university. The finding suggests that transparent and objective recruitment procedures significantly improve workforce quality, employee productivity and institutional effectiveness.

Hypothesis Three

H₀:

There is no significant relationship between recruitment transparency and workforce efficiency in the university.

Table 5: Chi-Square Test of Recruitment Transparency and Workforce Efficiency

Variables	χ^2 Calculated	χ^2 Critical	Level of Significance	Decision
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Recruitment transparency and workforce efficiency	39.63	9.49	0.05	Significant
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Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Since the calculated Chi-square value of 39.63 is greater than the critical value of 9.49 at the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that a significant relationship exists between recruitment transparency and workforce efficiency within the university. The finding indicates that transparent recruitment procedures positively influence employee morale, workforce competence and organizational productivity.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study reveal that employee recommendation practices significantly influence recruitment exercises within Abia State University and have important implications for recruitment transparency, workforce quality and organizational efficiency. The quantitative findings demonstrate that employee recommendations constitute one of the dominant channels influencing recruitment outcomes within the institution. The findings further reveal that recruitment vacancies are not always openly advertised

and that internal networks sometimes shape recruitment decisions.

The results indicate that employee recommendations significantly influence recruitment decisions within the university and constitute one of the dominant channels shaping recruitment outcomes. This finding supports existing organizational literature which argues that informal referral systems remain common within many public institutions because organizations often rely on trusted internal networks during recruitment exercises (Boxall & Purcell, 2016). While employee recommendations may reduce uncertainty and simplify recruitment procedures, the present findings demonstrate that excessive dependence on such informal systems weakens meritocracy and institutional transparency.

Evidence from the study further suggests that employee recommendations sometimes override objective assessment procedures during recruitment exercises. This finding aligns with the position of Guest (2017) and Dobbin and Kalev (2021) who argue that informal recruitment systems often encourage favouritism, patronage and biased hiring decisions. The findings suggest that where internal recommendations dominate recruitment exercises, equal access to employment opportunities may become restricted, thereby weakening confidence in institutional fairness.

The qualitative findings particularly revealed that vacancies are sometimes internally circulated before wider public advertisement, limiting opportunities for external applicants. This finding supports broader

concerns regarding weak recruitment transparency within public institutions in developing societies. Recent studies further indicate that organizations characterized by weak recruitment transparency often experience declining employee trust and reduced organizational legitimacy.

The study also found that merit-based recruitment positively influences workforce quality and organizational efficiency. A significant majority of respondents agreed that transparent recruitment systems improve employee confidence, workforce competence and institutional productivity. This finding supports recent empirical studies which demonstrate that objective recruitment procedures significantly enhance organizational effectiveness, workforce commitment and employee morale. The findings further align with Armstrong and Taylor (2023), who maintain that merit-oriented recruitment systems improve employee motivation because workers perceive organizational procedures as fair and professionally managed.

The findings additionally indicate that non-merit recruitment practices negatively affect organizational performance within the university. Respondents linked weak recruitment transparency and recommendation-based hiring practices to reduced workforce productivity, declining staff morale and weakened institutional credibility. This finding supports Salman, Khan and Iqbal (2024) who argue that organizations characterized by patronage-oriented recruitment systems frequently experience administrative inefficiency and low workforce confidence.

The study further supports the relevance of Herbert Simon's Decision-Making Theory. The findings demonstrate that recruitment decisions within organizations are not always determined solely by objective standards but are sometimes influenced by institutional pressures, internal networks and administrative discretion. The findings therefore validate Simon's argument that organizational decision making often occurs under conditions of bounded rationality where informal considerations may shape institutional outcomes.

The major implication of the findings is that excessive dependence on employee recommendation systems may weaken meritocracy and compromise organizational efficiency within public universities. Universities are knowledge-driven institutions where workforce competence directly affects teaching quality, research productivity, administrative performance and institutional credibility. Consequently, recruitment systems lacking transparency and objective assessment procedures may negatively affect long-term institutional effectiveness.

The study therefore argues that while employee recommendations may provide certain organizational advantages such as familiarity and reduced recruitment uncertainty, they should not supersede transparent and merit-based recruitment procedures. Transparent advertisement of vacancies, competency-based assessments and objective recruitment frameworks remain essential for strengthening workforce quality,

organizational legitimacy and institutional efficiency within public universities.

Conclusion

The study found that employee recommendation practices significantly influence recruitment processes in Abia State University and often shape recruitment outcomes through informal institutional networks. Findings revealed that excessive reliance on such practices weakens recruitment transparency, encourages perceptions of favouritism and limits equal employment opportunities. The study further showed that merit-based recruitment positively enhances workforce quality, employee morale and organizational efficiency. It therefore concludes that transparent, fair and competency-based recruitment systems are essential for strengthening institutional credibility and long-term organizational effectiveness in public universities.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Public universities should strengthen transparent and merit-based recruitment procedures in order to improve workforce quality and organizational efficiency.
2. Vacancies within the university should always be openly advertised through official platforms to ensure equal access to employment opportunities for qualified applicants.

3. University management should establish stronger monitoring and oversight mechanisms to reduce excessive dependence on informal recommendation systems during recruitment exercises.
4. Recruitment decisions should be based primarily on competence, qualifications and objective assessment procedures rather than personal relationships and institutional familiarity.
5. Digital recruitment platforms, competency-based interviews and standardized evaluation procedures should be adopted to strengthen fairness and transparency in recruitment processes.
6. Staff involved in recruitment exercises should be regularly trained on ethical human resource management practices and merit-based recruitment principles.
7. Further empirical studies should be conducted on recruitment transparency, organizational fairness and workforce productivity within public tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

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