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Recruitment and Selection Processes in Nigeria's Public Sector: Challenges and Opportunities in the Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NiMet)

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Abstract

The efficiency and integrity of recruitment and selection processes are pivotal to the operational effectiveness of public institutions. In Nigeria, recruitment into government agencies has been subjected to multiple criticisms due to issues such as lack of transparency, political interference, and the perceived imbalance between the Federal Character principle and meritocracy. This study investigates the recruitment and selection processes in the Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NiMet), assessing the alignment of its practices with public service regulations and Federal Character requirements. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, incorporating qualitative interviews and a quantitative survey to explore staff perceptions and institutional realities. The theoretical framework is built on Open Systems Theory and Structural Functionalism, allowing a nuanced exploration of how environmental pressures and institutional roles influence recruitment. The findings reveal a disconnect between policy intent and actual practices, with implications for organizational performance, employee morale, and public trust. Recommendations are provided to enhance the transparency, fairness, and effectiveness of recruitment systems in Nigeria's public institutions.

Keywords: Recruitment; Selection; Public Sector; Federal Character; Meritocracy; Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NiMet); Human Resource Management; Institutional Performance

1 Introduction

Recruitment and selection serve as foundational elements of human resource management, especially in public sector institutions where fairness, representation, and transparency are constitutionally mandated. The Nigerian public service employs thousands of individuals across diverse federal, state, and local agencies. As such, recruitment practices are not merely administrative tasks; they serve as instruments of state policy and tools for national integration. However, several public institutions in Nigeria have been criticized for recruitment practices that seem to prioritize personal, ethnic, or political affiliations over merit and institutional needs (Adebayo, 2001; Okafor, 2012). The Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NiMet) was established in 2003 by the NiMet Act to provide accurate weather and climate information to support socioeconomic planning. Its mandate is critical to sectors such as agriculture, aviation, water resources, and disaster management. Consequently, the recruitment and retention of highly skilled personnel are essential to the agency's mission. However, given the politically sensitive nature of federal appointments and the diversity-oriented federal character policy, it becomes necessary to investigate how recruitment practices are conducted and whether they align with broader national and institutional objectives.

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This paper aims to explore the recruitment and selection processes in NiMet, identifying key gaps and offering policy recommendations for improving these systems. In doing so, the study contributes to the broader literature on public sector human resource management and governance in Nigeria.

Recruitment and selection are integral to institutional success, forming the basis for human capital acquisition and deployment. In the Nigerian context, the public sector operates under the supervision of several regulatory bodies such as the Federal Civil Service Commission (FCSC), which defines recruitment guidelines in line with national laws and policies (FCSC, 2020). The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, in Section 14(3), mandates the adoption of the Federal Character principle to ensure equitable representation of ethnic and regional groups in public appointments (Federal Government of Nigeria, 1999).

Despite these provisions, the implementation of recruitment policies often deviates from their intended objectives. Institutions like NiMet face challenges such as external political pressure, nepotism, and inconsistencies in interpreting the Federal Character principle. These challenges undermine institutional autonomy and contribute to perceptions of unfairness and inefficiency in public service delivery. Several scholars have argued that recruitment failures contribute to weak institutional capacity and erosion of public trust (Igbuzor, 2016; Ezeani, 2015).

NiMet operates within a technical and specialized domain that requires competent and well-trained personnel. The quality of staff, therefore, plays a crucial role in determining the accuracy of meteorological data, the credibility of forecasts, and the overall effectiveness of the agency. As such, the recruitment and selection process must be merit-based, transparent, and guided by the dual imperatives of representational equity and professional excellence.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

While the Nigerian public sector has a formalized recruitment structure, its implementation across various institutions is riddled with inconsistencies. At NiMet, anecdotal evidence and internal evaluations suggest that the recruitment process is often influenced by informal networks, political patronage, and personal affiliations. This raises critical questions about fairness, transparency, and the effectiveness of the Federal Character policy in balancing diversity with merit.

Several staff members report dissatisfaction with the recruitment and promotion processes, citing favoritism and lack of clear communication. This has implications for morale, productivity, and institutional reputation. Moreover, the misalignment between recruitment practices and organizational goals can result in a skills mismatch, with long-term consequences for service delivery and stakeholder confidence.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to evaluate the recruitment and selection practices at the Nigerian Meteorological Agency. Specifically, the study aims to:

- Examine the formal procedures guiding recruitment at NiMet.
- Assess the extent to which the Federal Character principle is adhered to.
- Investigate the impact of recruitment practices on employee performance and organizational effectiveness.
- Identify key challenges in the implementation of recruitment policies.
- Recommend strategies for improving recruitment and selection processes in line with best practices.

2 Literature Review

Recruitment and selection have been widely recognized as fundamental components of effective human resource management, especially in the public sector, where systems must ensure equity, transparency, and competency (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014). According to Dessler (2020), recruitment is the process of attracting qualified individuals to apply for job vacancies, while selection involves choosing the most suitable candidates from the pool of applicants. In an ideal scenario, these processes are guided by objective criteria, job analyses, and fair assessment tools. However, in many developing countries, including Nigeria, the implementation of such principles often faces structural and political challenges.

The Nigerian public service operates within a unique framework informed by the Federal Character principle, which aims to ensure equitable representation of the country's diverse ethnic and regional groups in public appointments (Ayoade, 1980). While this principle is well-intentioned, scholars argue that it sometimes clashes with meritocratic

ideals (Olaopa, 2017; Okafor, 2012). For instance, a candidate who is objectively more qualified may be sidelined in favor of a less qualified individual based on ethnic representation needs. This dynamic presents a critical tension that must be managed for sustainable public sector performance.

Studies by Ezeani (2005) and Gbervbie (2010) underscore the prevalence of favoritism and patronage in Nigeria's recruitment systems. These scholars contend that appointments are frequently influenced by political affiliations rather than institutional needs or technical competencies. This has led to a situation where many public institutions are staffed with individuals who may not fully meet the job requirements, leading to inefficiencies and diminished public trust. In addition, the influence of ethnic loyalty and kinship networks has been identified as a major challenge to professionalized public sector hiring in Nigeria (Igbuzor, 2016).

Ekwoaba, Ikeije, and Ufoma (2015) further argue that recruitment strategies lacking structured assessment tools and clear competency frameworks tend to result in poor performance outcomes. Public sector organizations, in their view, must integrate psychometric testing, structured interviews, and behavioral evaluations to ensure consistency and fairness. Moreover, the use of electronic recruitment (e-recruitment) platforms has been suggested as a way to mitigate human interference and enhance transparency (Okolie & Irabor, 2017).

Beyond Nigeria, comparative insights from other developing countries offer valuable lessons. For example, in Kenya and Ghana, reform efforts have focused on decentralizing recruitment, introducing third-party verification, and using digital platforms to streamline selection (World Bank, 2020). These reforms have shown modest improvements in public confidence and efficiency. However, they also reveal that technical innovations must be coupled with political will and institutional accountability to yield lasting improvements.

Public perception studies such as those by Adeniji and Osibanjo (2012) show that employees who believe they were selected based on competence demonstrate higher organizational commitment and job satisfaction. On the contrary, perceptions of unfair selection are linked to high attrition and internal conflict. The Nigerian public service, being highly unionized, has also witnessed industrial disputes triggered by concerns over non-transparent recruitment.

NiMet, as a technically specialized agency, relies heavily on accurate meteorological data for service provision in critical sectors such as aviation and agriculture. Therefore, any compromise in the recruitment process could have far-reaching implications for national safety and economic stability. Despite this, there is limited academic inquiry into how NiMet's recruitment practices align with national HRM principles or whether they are affected by broader systemic inefficiencies found across the public sector.

In light of the foregoing, this study contributes to closing that gap by focusing specifically on NiMet, using it as a case study to interrogate the practical tensions between Federal Character implementation and merit-based hiring. It provides empirical evidence to support calls for a more balanced, structured, and accountable approach to public sector recruitment in Nigeria.

3 Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in two complementary theoretical perspectives: Open Systems Theory and Structural Functionalism. These frameworks offer a multidimensional lens through which the recruitment and selection practices in the Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NiMet) can be critically analyzed, especially in relation to external pressures, institutional goals, and systemic functionality.

3.1 Open Systems Theory

Open Systems Theory conceptualizes organizations as entities that continuously interact with their external environment (Katz & Kahn, 1978). This interaction encompasses the input of resources, the transformation of those resources through organizational processes, and the output of goods or services. Within this framework, public organizations such as NiMet are not self-contained units; they are influenced by legal mandates, political dynamics, socio-cultural expectations, and economic conditions.

In the context of recruitment and selection, Open Systems Theory suggests that external forces such as government regulations, political patronage, public expectations, and civil service frameworks directly affect organizational decisions. For example, the application of the Federal Character principle is an environmental input that must be negotiated within recruitment policies. Moreover, external actors such as lawmakers, political appointees, and civil service commissions serve as environmental stakeholders who influence how recruitment decisions are made.

This theory highlights the vulnerability of public institutions to environmental disturbances. When political interference or regional favoritism overrides standardized recruitment procedures, the organization's internal processes become distorted. The output, in this case the workforce, may then fail to meet the demands of the job, resulting in inefficiencies and reduced public value. Thus, Open Systems Theory offers an explanatory framework for understanding how external constraints shape internal HRM practices and how those practices, in turn, affect institutional performance.

3.2 Structural Functionalism

Structural Functionalism, originating from the works of Emile Durkheim and later developed by Talcott Parsons, views society as a system of interconnected parts that work together to maintain stability and social order (Parsons, 1951). When applied to organizations, this theory posits that every component of an institution serves a specific function that contributes to the overall health and equilibrium of the system.

Within the Nigerian public sector, recruitment and selection fulfill the function of ensuring that qualified individuals are placed in appropriate roles to achieve institutional goals. Structural Functionalism suggests that when this function is disrupted for instance, by nepotism or non-meritocratic hiring practices, the entire system experiences dysfunction. Inefficiencies arise, morale diminishes, and the organization becomes less capable of delivering its mandate.

The theory also supports the idea of normative integration, that is, aligning individual roles with institutional expectations. In the case of NiMet, ensuring that employees are recruited based on technical competence rather than regional affiliation aligns personnel functions with the agency's broader mission of providing accurate meteorological services. Failure to do so creates misalignments that compromise institutional effectiveness and societal trust.

By integrating Open Systems Theory and Structural Functionalism, this study constructs a robust framework for evaluating recruitment practices not only in terms of internal efficiency but also in relation to external political, legal, and social pressures. This dual-theoretical approach enhances our understanding of how NiMet's recruitment systems operate within Nigeria's unique political-administrative context.

4 Methodology

This study adopted a mixed-methods research design to comprehensively examine the recruitment and selection practices within the Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NiMet). A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods was utilized to capture both the subjective experiences of staff members and objective data patterns within the agency's recruitment system.

4.1 Research Design

A convergent parallel design was employed, enabling the collection and analysis of both quantitative survey data and qualitative interview responses independently before merging the findings for interpretation. This approach was chosen to enhance the validity of the results and to provide a holistic understanding of the recruitment challenges at NiMet.

4.2 Population and Sample Size

The target population comprised all full-time staff of NiMet across various departments and geographic locations in Nigeria. From a staff population of approximately 1,500, a purposive sampling technique was used to select 263 respondents for the quantitative survey. This sample was considered adequate based on the scope of the research and logistical considerations. In addition, 10 key participants, including HR managers, departmental heads, and administrative officers, were selected for in-depth interviews.

4.3 Data Collection Instruments

The study employed two primary data collection tools:

- A structured questionnaire designed to assess perceptions of fairness, transparency, and merit in the recruitment process. The questionnaire included both closed and Likert-scale questions covering recruitment procedures, staff satisfaction, policy awareness, and perceived external influences.
- A semi-structured interview guide used for the qualitative component. The interviews explored deeper insights into the recruitment practices, experiences with political interference, and challenges in implementing the Federal Character principle.

4.4 Validity and Reliability

To ensure validity, the instruments were subjected to expert review and pilot testing among a small group of NiMet staff not included in the final sample. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha for internal consistency of the questionnaire items, yielding a coefficient of 0.82, indicating high reliability.

4.5 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, and means were calculated to summarize the data. Inferential statistics, including chi-square tests and correlation analysis, were also employed to examine relationships between key variables.

Qualitative data from interviews were analyzed thematically. Thematic coding was carried out manually to identify recurrent patterns, categories, and emerging themes related to recruitment practices, external influence, and institutional challenges. The findings from both quantitative and qualitative strands were then triangulated to enrich the discussion and ensure a balanced interpretation.

4.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the appropriate review board. All respondents provided informed consent before participating. Confidentiality was maintained throughout the data collection and reporting processes. Participants were assured that their responses would be used solely for academic purposes and reported anonymously.

This methodology provided a comprehensive and context-sensitive framework for evaluating recruitment and selection practices at NiMet, allowing for both breadth and depth of analysis.

5 Results

This section presents the key findings from the quantitative and qualitative components of the study and discusses their implications for recruitment and selection practices at the Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NiMet).

5.1 Quantitative Findings

A total of two hundred and sixty-three (263) copies of questionnaire were administered to respondents and all were satisfactorily completed and retrieved. The demographic breakdown of respondents showed a balanced representation across departments, job levels, and geopolitical zones, ensuring broad insights into organizational recruitment experiences.

5.1.1 Recruitment Process Transparency

Table 1 Vacancy in the organization is made public and announced via the appropriate channels

Responses	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	S.A	53	20.2	20.2
	A	85	32.3	52.5
	U	85	32.3	84.8
	D	26	9.9	94.7
	S.D	14	5.3	100.0
	Total	263	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2020

In *table 1* above, 53 representing 20.2% of the respondents strongly agree that vacancy in the organization is made public and announced via the appropriate channels, 85 representing 32.3% agree, 85 representing 32.3% are undecided, 26 representing 9.9% disagree while 14 representing 5.3% strongly disagree. This shows that majority of the respondents (cumulative of 52.5%) agree that vacancy in the organization is made public and announced via the appropriate channels.

Table 2 Standardized and transparent selection process ensures employees are placed on the right job in the organization

Responses	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	S.A	57	21.7	21.7
	A	83	31.6	53.2
	U	80	30.4	83.7
	D	34	12.9	96.6
	S.D	9	3.4	100.0
	Total	263	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Furthermore, *table 2* shows that 57 representing 21.7% of the respondents strongly agree that standardized and transparent selection process ensures employees are placed on the right job in the organization, 83 representing 31.6% agree, 80 representing 30.4% are undecided, 34 representing 12.9% disagree while 9 representing 3.4% strongly disagree. This analysis shows that majority of the respondents (cumulative of 53.2 %) agree that standardized and transparent selection process ensures employees are placed on the right job in the organization.

Table 3 Standardized and transparent selection process allows the organization to prepare for replacing key positions in the organization

Responses	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	S.A	73	27.8	27.8
	A	99	37.6	65.4
	U	59	22.4	87.8
	D	19	7.2	95.1
	S.D	13	4.9	100.0
	Total	263	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Similarly, from *table 3*, 73 representing 27.8% of the respondents strongly agree that standardized and transparent selection process allows the organization to prepare for replacing key positions in the organization, 99 representing 37.6% agree, 59 representing 22.4% are undecided, 19 representing 7.2% disagree while 13 representing 4.9% strongly disagree. This analysis shows that majority of the respondents (cumulative of 65.4%) agree that standardized and transparent selection process allows the organization to prepare for replacing key positions in the organization.

Table 4 Adopting a standardized and transparent selection process attracts the best applicants to the organization

Responses	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	S.A	66	25.1	25.1
	A	93	35.4	60.5
	U	57	21.7	82.1
	D	24	9.1	91.3
	S.D	23	8.7	100.0
	Total	263	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Lastly, *table 4* shows that 66 representing 25.1% of the respondents strongly agree that adopting a standardized and transparent selection process attracts the best applicants to the organization, 93 representing 35.4% agree, 57

representing 21.7% are undecided, 24 representing 9.1% disagree while 23 representing 8.7% strongly disagree. This analysis shows that majority of the respondents (cumulative of 60.5%) agree that adopting a standardized and transparent selection process attracts the best applicants to the organization.

5.1.2 Influence of Federal Character Policy

Table 5 The principle of Federal Character has an effect on the quality of selected candidates in the Nigerian Meteorological Agency

Responses	Frequency	Percent		Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	S.A	137	52.1	52.1	52.1
	A	90	34.2	34.2	86.3
	U	27	10.3	10.3	96.6
	D	7	2.7	2.7	99.2
	S.D	2	0.8	0.8	100.0
	Total	263	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2020

When asked about the role of the Federal Character policy in recruitment, 137 representing 52.1% of the respondents strongly agree that the principle of Federal Character has an effect on the quality of selected candidates in the Nigerian Meteorological Agency, 90 representing 34.2% agree, 27 representing 10.3% are undecided, 7 representing 2.7% disagree while 2 representing 0.8% strongly disagree. This shows that majority of the respondents (cumulative of 86.3%) agree that the principle of Federal Character has an effect on the quality of selected candidates in the Agency.

Table 6 The practice of Federal Character reduces the importance placed on qualifications and promotes mediocrity

Responses	Frequency	Percent		Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	S.A	75	28.5	28.5	28.5
	A	68	25.9	25.9	54.4
	U	71	27.0	27.0	81.4
	D	21	8.0	8.0	89.4
	S.D	28	10.6	10.6	100.0
	Total	263	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 6 shows 75 representing 28.5% of the respondents strongly agree that the practice of Federal Character reduces the importance placed on qualifications and promotes mediocrity, 68 representing 25.9% agree, 71 representing 27% are undecided, 21 representing 8% disagree while 28 representing 10.6% strongly disagree. This analysis shows that majority of the respondents (cumulative of 54.4%) agree that the practice of Federal Character reduces the importance placed on qualifications and promotes mediocrity.

5.1.3 Perception of Meritocracy

Table 7 There is reduced employee turnover when employees are sure of meritocracy in the selection process for vacancies in higher job positions

Responses	Frequency	Percent		Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	S.A	66	25.1	25.1	25.1
	A	69	26.2	26.2	51.3
	U	105	39.9	39.9	91.3
	D	16	6.1	6.1	97.3

	S.D	7	2.7	2.7	100.0
	Total	263	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2020

In *table 7*, 66 representing 21.5% representing of the respondents strongly agree that there is reduced employee turnover when employees are sure of meritocracy in the selection process for vacancies in higher job positions, 69 representing 26.2% simply agree, 105 representing 39.9% are undecided, 16 representing 6.1% disagree while 7 representing 2.7% strongly disagree. This analysis shows that majority of the respondents (cumulative of 51.3 %) agree that there is reduced employee turnover when employees are sure of meritocracy in the selection process for vacancies in higher job positions.

5.2 Qualitative Findings

Insights from the semi-structured interviews complemented the survey data, offering deeper context on the internal dynamics of recruitment at NiMet.

5.2.1 Themes of Political Interference and Nepotism

Interviewees commonly cited political pressure from external actors, including ministerial officials and lawmakers, as a factor influencing staff recruitment. One senior administrator remarked, "Sometimes, the list comes from above. We don't even know the candidates until we see them on the employment roster." Such comments highlight the limited autonomy of HR units in executing transparent and independent recruitment.

5.2.2 Skills Mismatch and Organizational Impact

Respondents also discussed the prevalence of skills mismatch, noting that several recruits lacked the technical proficiency required for meteorological functions. This often-necessitated additional training, which delayed project timelines and strained departmental budgets. One departmental head noted, "It's frustrating when you get someone who can't use basic data analysis tools; we spend months retraining them."

5.2.3 Internal Frustration and Low Morale

A recurring theme was frustration among existing staff, particularly those who joined through open competition and rose through the ranks. These individuals expressed disillusionment with perceived favoritism in the recruitment of new hires. "We feel overlooked, even though we've been consistent performers," one staff member shared.

6 Discussion

This study identifies significant gaps and opportunities within the recruitment and selection processes at NiMet, providing empirical clarity on staff perceptions and underlying practices within the agency. While formal procedures for publicizing job vacancies (Table 1) are acknowledged by approximately 52.5% of respondents, there remains a considerable percentage who were uncertain or disagreed, indicating inconsistencies in transparency or inadequate communication of recruitment announcements. The mixed responses imply that, while standardized channels exist, their effective utilization and reach might be limited, thus prompting reliance on informal channels.

Further analysis highlights that a slight majority (53.2%) recognize that standardized and transparent selection processes positively influence job placement (Table 2). This aligns with literature advocating that clear selection frameworks ensure organizational effectiveness (Ekwoaba et al., 2015). Moreover, about 65.4% respondents agreed that transparent selection mechanisms facilitate better succession planning (Table 3), reflecting broad understanding among employees of transparency's critical role in sustainable organizational continuity.

The potential of standardized recruitment and selection processes to attract highly qualified applicants is also reinforced by the findings, with 60.5% of participants concurring (Table 4). Nevertheless, there remains a notable level of uncertainty and disagreement that underscores persistent skepticism regarding the efficacy of existing practices. This skepticism may stem from historic or ongoing experiences of informal and political influences documented during qualitative interviews.

The influence of Nigeria's Federal Character principle was another significant point of contention. While the majority (86.3%) concurred that the Federal Character principle influences candidate quality (Table 5), many respondents (54.4%) also indicated concerns that this policy potentially compromises the prioritization of qualifications, indirectly

promoting mediocrity (Table 6). This aligns with critiques in the broader literature that argue Federal Character's selective or improper application could lead to reduced performance and institutional inefficiencies (Okafor, 2012; Gberville, 2010).

Interestingly, employee perceptions on meritocracy indicated a complex landscape. Over half of respondents (51.3%) believed meritocratic selection processes significantly reduce employee turnover (Table 7). Yet, the considerable percentage of undecided respondents (39.9%) reveals ambivalence or a lack of clarity about the current meritocratic status within the institution. This ambiguity reflects deeper institutional challenges surrounding employee morale and perceived fairness, corroborating interview insights about internal frustrations and dissatisfaction due to perceived favoritism and political interference.

Qualitative data deepened the quantitative findings, clearly illustrating that external political interference and nepotism were major challenges affecting recruitment transparency and organizational effectiveness. These pressures undermine HR autonomy and foster an environment where qualifications and competencies become secondary considerations, leading to widespread employee dissatisfaction and feelings of injustice among meritocratic hires.

The thematic convergence of quantitative and qualitative findings strongly advocates for systemic reform. Key to these reforms is reinforcing HR autonomy, robust implementation of transparent, competency-based selection procedures, and refined operationalization of the Federal Character principle that does not compromise quality and merit. Furthermore, a strategic adoption of digital recruitment platforms can provide an added layer of transparency, effectively counteracting informal and politically influenced recruitment processes.

7 Conclusion

This study examined the recruitment and selection processes within the Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NiMet), with a focus on evaluating their transparency, fairness, and alignment with national HRM frameworks, particularly the Federal character principle. Using a mixed-methods approach, the research highlighted significant inconsistencies between the formal policies governing recruitment and the actual practices observed by employees.

Quantitative findings revealed that a majority of staff perceived recruitment processes as lacking in transparency and meritocracy. The influence of informal networks and political actors on hiring decisions was reported as pervasive, thereby undermining the credibility of the process. Qualitative data supported these findings, with interviewees citing skills mismatches, political interference, and widespread disillusionment among existing staff.

The study also emphasized the broader implications of flawed recruitment systems in the public sector, namely, reduced employee morale, diminished operational performance, and eroded institutional trust. These challenges are especially concerning in a technical agency like NiMet, where the quality of human capital directly influences national outcomes in aviation, agriculture, and disaster management.

Recommendations

To address the gaps identified and promote a more robust recruitment framework at NiMet, the following recommendations are proposed:

- **Institutionalize Transparent Recruitment Procedures:** NiMet should publish all job vacancies through its website, national newspapers, and official government portals. The use of standardized recruitment platforms can reduce reliance on informal networks and ensure equal access to opportunities.
- **Strengthen HR Autonomy:** The HR department should be empowered to manage recruitment independently, with minimal interference from external actors. Oversight mechanisms should be put in place to safeguard HR decisions and ensure they align with institutional needs.
- **Implement Competency-Based Selection Criteria:** Recruitment decisions should be guided by job-specific competency frameworks and objective assessments, such as aptitude tests, structured interviews, and technical evaluations. This will help minimize political and ethnic bias.
- **Review and Refine the Federal Character Policy:** While the Federal character principle remains important, its implementation should be refined to balance equity with merit. The use of minimum qualification thresholds and professional performance benchmarks should be incorporated into diversity-driven recruitment.
- **Enhance Training and Capacity Building:** For existing staff, continuous professional development should be institutionalized to address skills gaps. For new hires, induction programs must be standardized to ensure alignment with agency expectations and technical requirements.

- **Institutionalize Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E):** An internal M&E unit should periodically assess recruitment outcomes, document lessons learned, and issue policy briefs to guide reforms. Independent audits can further validate recruitment practices.
- **Leverage Technology for Recruitment:** The deployment of digital recruitment platforms and applicant tracking systems can improve record-keeping, reduce manipulation, and streamline the selection process.

By adopting these measures, NiMet and other public institutions in Nigeria can foster a more credible, fair, and effective recruitment system—one that meets constitutional mandates while also enhancing institutional performance and public service delivery.

The findings of this study contribute to the growing literature on public sector HRM in Nigeria and provide actionable insights for policymakers, administrators, and reform advocates committed to institutional transformation.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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