Role Clarity and Psycho-Social Attributes in Recruitment Process of SUCs: Basis for Human Resource Management Improvement

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ABSTRACT:

This study investigated the role of structural and psycho-social factors in the recruitment and selection processes of State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in the Philippines as a basis for improving human resource management. Using a mixed-methods approach, the research integrated quantitative and qualitative analyses to evaluate how role clarity and perceived fairness influence employee satisfaction, retention, and organizational trust. The quantitative results revealed that the recruitment process was rated "Very Good" (grand mean = 4.18), reflecting strong procedural alignment and well-defined job roles. However, transparency (4.07) and communication effectiveness (4.10) obtained comparatively lower scores, indicating areas where openness and feedback could be strengthened. Correlation analysis showed no significant relationship between recruitment effectiveness and employee satisfaction or retention, suggesting that structural soundness alone does not guarantee trust or motivation. The qualitative findings further revealed that perceptions of favoritism, lack of feedback, and unequal access to opportunities persist, subtly weakening confidence in the fairness of institutional processes. These results emphasize that the success of recruitment in SUCs depends on balancing role clarity with psycho-social credibility. Strengthening communication, enhancing transparency, and ensuring equitable participation are essential for building trust and sustaining institutional morale. The study concludes that human resource management improvement in SUCs requires integrating procedural integrity with authentic engagement transforming recruitment from a bureaucratic process into a strategic function that embodies fairness, transparency, and good governance in public education.

Keywords: Role Clarity, Psycho-Social attributes, Recruitment Process, SUC, Human Resource Management.

1. Introduction

Recruitment and selection remain central to the strategic human resource management (HRM) of State Universities and Colleges (SUCs), as these processes directly influence institutional effectiveness, employee competence, and organizational culture. Public higher education institutions are tasked not only with delivering quality education but also with demonstrating fairness, meritocracy, and accountability in all administrative practices. As such, recruitment and selection are not simply procedural; they serve as a mirror of institutional integrity and the values that underpin public service (Sulkowski et al., 2025; Aquino, 2025). Within the context of public universities, these processes must ensure that individuals selected possess both the professional capability and ethical disposition to advance the institution's mission and contribute to sustainable academic excellence.

The success of SUCs In achieving their mandates depends on the quality of personnel they attract and retain. According to Shofiana et al. (2025), effective recruitment practices determine not only the caliber of human resources but also organizational performance and employee satisfaction. However, the recruitment landscape in the public sector is often constrained by bureaucratic regulations, budget limitations, and rigid procedures that hinder flexibility and responsiveness (Zolak et al., 2025). These structural barriers can slow the hiring process, limit candidate diversity, and reduce competitiveness, particularly when private institutions offer more attractive employment packages. As Oyadiran et al. (2023) emphasizes, inefficiencies in recruitment processes weaken institutional credibility and diminish the capacity to attract top talent, creating systemic challenges that undermine long-term educational outcomes.

In the Philippine higher education setting, the recruitment and selection processes of SUCs are shaped by Civil Service Commission (CSC) policies and government auditing standards designed to promote merit-based hiring. Despite these frameworks, studies have shown that inconsistencies in implementation remain a persistent issue. Rosales et al. (2022) observed that recruitment in many state universities often struggles with limited transparency and insufficient communication of hiring criteria, which may affect perceptions of fairness and equal opportunity. Similarly, Tsikriktsis and Heineke (2008) noted that while most SUCs adhere to procedural requirements, practical execution sometimes lacks uniformity, resulting in delays and dissatisfaction among applicants. These findings suggest that beyond compliance with government standards, the human experience of recruitment how processes are communicated, perceived, and interpreted plays a crucial role in the success of HR systems in academic institutions.

A critical dimension Influencing recruitment effectiveness is role clarity the degree to which job expectations, responsibilities, and performance indicators are clearly defined and communicated to candidates. Clear role definitions ensure that applicants understand what is expected of them, leading to better alignment between individual competencies and institutional goals (Twinamasiko, 2025). Conversely, vague or inconsistent job descriptions may create confusion, role conflict, and decreased employee motivation, ultimately reducing organizational efficiency (Shinde, 2025). In higher education, where academic and administrative functions demand precision and accountability, role clarity supports faculty and staff in fulfilling diverse responsibilities and achieving institutional objectives. Lan et al. (2023) further argue that clarity of academic and managerial roles enhances professional satisfaction, fosters retention, and reinforces institutional credibility.

Complementary to role clarity are psycho-social attributes, which encompass the attitudes, perceptions, and interpersonal dynamics that influence how recruitment and selection processes are experienced. Recent HRM studies highlight that organizational justice and fairness perceptions are vital determinants of employee engagement and commitment (Mahfouz, 2025). When recruitment decisions are perceived as fair, transparent, and merit-based, trust in leadership and organizational commitment increase (Klimchak et al., 2025). Conversely, perceptions of internal influence or

favoritism, whether substantiated or not, may erode confidence in institutional processes and weaken motivation among existing employees (Lasisi et al., 2022). Local studies by Errua et al. (2025) likewise revealed that the presence of perceived internal bias or unofficial influence in recruitment contributes to a sense of inequality and discourages professionalism among staff. These psychosocial undercurrents illustrate that even in procedurally sound systems, employee perceptions can significantly impact organizational climate and performance outcomes.

Given these insights, recruitment in SUCs must be understood as both an administrative and a social process, one that combines procedural compliance with psychological transparency and ethical fairness. As Schulze and Dada (2024) note, recruitment frameworks that fail to integrate human-centered considerations often achieve structural efficiency but lack credibility among employees. Hence, institutional HR management must go beyond formal selection methods to incorporate practices that enhance communication, role understanding, and perceived fairness. Doing so strengthens institutional trust and aligns human resource systems with the principles of good governance and merit-based public service (Valerio, 2024).

In this light, the focus on role clarity and psycho-social attributes provides a comprehensive lens for examining recruitment in SUCs. These constructs together determine not only who gets hired but how candidates and employees interpret the fairness and transparency of institutional decisions. Understanding these dimensions is vital to improving human resource management systems and sustaining an organizational culture built on merit, equity, and accountability. As the higher education sector continues to evolve, integrating both structural and psycho-social factors into recruitment practices will be essential for building credible, competent, and value-driven academic institutions in the Philippines.

2. Literature

2.1. Recruitment and Selection in the Context of Higher Education Institutions

Recruitment and selection serve as crucial mechanisms for ensuring institutional effectiveness in higher education. Globally, they are recognized as strategic HRM functions that determine workforce quality and organizational performance (Arokiasamy et al., 2024). In higher education, recruitment processes are not limited to filling vacancies; rather, they embody institutional values of transparency, fairness, and meritocracy. According to Yi et al. (2024), academic institutions increasingly adopt competency-based recruitment systems that emphasize qualifications, teaching skills, and research potential to ensure job–role alignment. Similarly, Keshavarz-Ghorabaee et al. (2024) posits that a rationalized selection framework comprising clear procedures, well-defined evaluation metrics, and multi-stage assessments strengthens the integrity of public institutions by minimizing subjective biases.

Despite this, higher education institutions particularly public universities often struggle with bureaucratic inefficiencies, delays, and procedural rigidity that reduce the competitiveness of their recruitment systems (Rufinonet al., 2025). These challenges become more pronounced in developing contexts, where recruitment is bounded by state regulations and fiscal constraints. Rozario et al. (2019) highlights that protracted recruitment cycles in public universities can discourage highly qualified applicants, leading to talent shortages and compromising institutional quality. Locally, while Philippine SUCs generally comply with Civil Service Commission policies, inconsistencies in implementation and communication often result in procedural gaps. Furthermore, Lo Piccolo et al. (2024) note that the effectiveness of recruitment in SUCs depends not only on standardized protocols but also on the extent to which transparency and fairness are perceived by employees. These findings establish that recruitment in higher education is an ethical and managerial endeavor requiring both administrative efficiency and trust-driven human relations.

2.2. Role Clarity and Institutional Performance

Role clarity refers to the precision with which job responsibilities, expectations, and authority lines are communicated to and understood by employees. Within HRM literature, it is strongly linked to performance, satisfaction, and commitment (Jawaad et al., 2019). Clear role expectations allow employees to align their efforts with institutional objectives, reducing ambiguity and enhancing accountability. Al-suraihi et al. (2021) demonstrated that when employees understand their roles, they experience lower stress, greater job satisfaction, and improved retention. This relationship is particularly important in academic environments, where multifaceted tasks teaching, research, extension, and administrative work require distinct clarity and balance. Chikezie et al. (2024) further argues that role clarity in universities sustains productivity by minimizing overlaps in function and promoting coordinated performance across departments.

In the Philippine setting, local studies reveal similar patterns. Deep et al. (2025) found that unclear job descriptions in SUCs contribute to employee burnout and operational inefficiencies, especially among faculty who juggle multiple assignments. Tadesse et al. (2023) emphasized the need to standardize job descriptions and recruitment guidelines across campuses to prevent confusion over scope of work and evaluation standards. Likewise, Hassan (2013) observed that SUCs with clear role delineation during recruitment experienced higher levels of employee satisfaction and better institutional harmony. These findings indicate that role clarity functions as both a managerial and a motivational mechanism, bridging organizational strategy with human behavior. By integrating precise job design into recruitment practices, SUCs can enhance institutional alignment and reinforce performance-based culture, thus contributing to the improvement of human resource systems.

2.3. Psycho-Social Attributes and Perceptions of Fairness in Recruitment

Beyond structural efficiency, recruitment processes are profoundly shaped by psycho-social dynamics perceptions, emotions, and interpersonal influences that determine how candidates and employees experience organizational fairness. As noted by Bajaj and Krishnan (2016) recruitment must be understood as a social exchange process where perceptions of justice and equality directly affect employee trust and motivation. When employees perceive recruitment practices as transparent and unbiased, their organizational commitment and sense of belonging strengthen. Conversely, perceived favoritism or unofficial influence in hiring decisions can lead to psychological contract breaches, diminishing morale and undermining the legitimacy of HR systems (Xu et al., 2025).

Foreign literature has consistently established that even minor suspicions of internal bias can erode confidence in institutions. Edvard et al. (2025) reported that in European universities, perceptions of favoritism or "in-group preference" in hiring often lead to decreased collaboration among academic staff. Similarly, Khan (2021) found that when employees doubt the objectivity of recruitment decisions, their trust in leadership weakens, affecting long-term retention. In the Philippines, some SUCs experience perceptions of political interference or internal recommendation systems influencing hiring outcomes. Although such influences may not always be proven, their mere perception can produce disillusionment among employees, suggesting that psychological fairness is as critical as procedural correctness. Paredes-Saavedra et al. (2024) emphasized that evaluation tools can counter these perceptions, promoting a culture of trust and professional respect. Thus, psycho-social attributes particularly perceptions of favoritism represent an invisible yet powerful force influencing recruitment credibility and organizational stability.

This is consistent with the discourse analysis by Chavez et al. (2024), who explored ethical decision-making and fairness in academic environments. Their findings revealed that even in structured institutional systems, ethical dilemmas arise when transparency and communication are not fully practiced, leading to skepticism and perceived inequities. They concluded that ethical clarity and

openness in processes are essential for preserving institutional trust, a principle equally vital in the recruitment systems of SUCs.

2.4. Recruitment Transparency, Trust, and Organizational Justice

Transparency and trust constitute the ethical foundations of recruitment and selection in public institutions. As emphasized by Ofem et al. (2022), transparency refers to the degree to which selection procedures, criteria, and results are open, consistent, and communicable to all stakeholders. Transparent recruitment fosters organizational justice employees' belief that processes are fair and decisions are merit-based. The literature identifies three dimensions of organizational justice procedural, distributive, and interactional all of which are crucial in shaping recruitment perceptions. Procedural justice ensures consistent application of rules, distributive justice emphasizes equitable outcomes, and interactional justice highlights respectful communication. When all three are upheld, institutions build an atmosphere of trust that enhances commitment and job satisfaction.

Local research reinforces these principles within the Philippine higher education context. Larroza et al. (2024) revealed that transparency lapses such as unclear communication of shortlisting results or delayed postings of vacant positions reduce employee confidence in HR offices. Similarly, Bongalonta (2022) found that SUCs that implemented open-access information systems and public dissemination of selection results recorded higher employee satisfaction and fewer grievances. Furthermore, institutional trust in recruitment is not achieved merely by compliance with CSC standards but by consistent communication and demonstration of fairness in every phase of hiring. These findings collectively affirm that transparency and justice are inseparable from recruitment credibility. In a related context, Chavez et al. (2024) highlighted that institutional credibility in public organizations is strengthened when policy awareness and organizational compliance are made visible across recruitment and personnel processes. Their findings on workplace governance under the Magna Carta for Women revealed that transparency and adherence to statutory mandates cultivate employee trust and reinforce ethical accountability. This implies that SUCs, much like other public institutions, must sustain procedural justice not only as compliance but as a culture of integrity embedded within their human resource systems.

2.5. Integrating Role Clarity and Psycho-Social Attributes for Human Resource Management Improvement

The intersection of role clarity and psycho-social attributes offers a comprehensive framework for improving HRM in State Universities and Colleges. Peretz (2024) asserts that modern HR systems must simultaneously address structural precision and human perception to achieve sustainable organizational performance. A recruitment process that clearly defines roles while fostering trust and fairness enhances not only hiring efficiency but also long-term employee retention and institutional culture. According to Gürbüz et al. (2024), human resource systems that integrate psychological awareness and clear communication outperform purely administrative models, as they nurture employee confidence and emotional investment in the organization.

Philippine-based literature echoes this call for holistic HRM reform. Sartor (2023) advocates integrating continuous feedback and psychosocial awareness in recruitment training programs to promote empathetic, transparent decision-making. Haines et al. (2024) recommend periodic HR audits to assess both procedural compliance and employee perception of fairness. Likewise, a competency-based model that prioritizes not only skill verification but also equitable interpersonal relations throughout the hiring process. When applied to SUCs, these strategies ensure that HR departments evolve from being merely administrative units to becoming strategic partners that uphold institutional ethics and public accountability.

Similarly, Chavez et al. (2024) emphasized that leadership responsiveness and credibility in public service are critical determinants of

institutional legitimacy. Their study revealed that innovative and transparent leadership practices foster participatory governance, enhancing trust between the organization and its stakeholders. Applying this to SUCs' HRM context suggests that recruitment strategies should model the same responsiveness and accountability, ensuring that both administrators and employees perceive hiring decisions as merit-based and value-driven.

In essence, the integration of role clarity and psycho-social awareness transforms recruitment from a procedural obligation into a driver of institutional integrity. Clarifying roles and addressing perceptions of fairness, SUCs can enhance employee satisfaction, reduce turnover, and foster a culture of trust and performance. This holistic HRM perspective aligns with global standards of good governance and positions SUCs as exemplary models of ethical and effective human capital management in Philippine higher education.

3. Statement of the Problem

The efficiency of recruitment processes in State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) greatly depends on how clearly personnel understand their roles and how their psycho-social attributes influence their professional behavior. Despite existing guidelines in recruitment, challenges such as overlapping functions, unclear responsibilities, and differing attitudes or motivations among staff members may hinder the fairness and effectiveness of human resource management.

This study aims to determine the extent to which role clarity and psycho-social attributes influence the recruitment process of SUCs. It further seeks to provide empirical evidence that can guide the development of improved policies and procedures for human resource management in higher education institutions.

Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the level of role clarity among personnel involved in the recruitment process of SUCs.
2. To determine the psycho-social attributes that influence the recruitment process of SUCs.
3. To evaluate the overall effectiveness of the recruitment process in relation to role clarity and psycho-social attributes.
4. To test the significant relationships between role clarity, psycho-social attributes, and recruitment effectiveness.
5. To propose recommendations that will enhance human resource management improvement among SUCs.

Research/Interview Questions

1. What is the level of role clarity among personnel involved in the recruitment process of SUCs?
2. What psycho-social attributes are demonstrated by personnel during the recruitment process of SUCs?
3. How effective is the recruitment process of SUCs in relation to role clarity and psycho-social attributes?
4. Is there a significant relationship between role clarity, psycho-social attributes, and recruitment effectiveness?
5. What strategic measures can be developed to improve human resource management based on the study's findings?

4. Methodology

4.1. Research Design

This research employed a mixed-methods design integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the recruitment and selection processes in State Universities and Colleges (SUCs). The quantitative component utilized a descriptive–correlational design, aimed at assessing indicators of role clarity and the overall effectiveness of recruitment and selection practices, while determining their interrelationships with selected psycho-social attributes. Complementing this, the qualitative phase explored perceptions and lived experiences related to fairness, transparency, and the perceived presence of favoritism or unofficial influence in the recruitment process.

The combination of quantitative and qualitative data allowed for both measurable assessment and contextual interpretation. The quantitative data identified trends and strengths of

current recruitment mechanisms, while the qualitative insights provided depth, revealing how psycho-social perceptions influence trust, motivation, and institutional credibility. This methodological convergence is consistent with recommendations by Lê and Bednarek (2023), who emphasized that human resource studies benefit from both numerical precision and interpretive understanding.

4.2. Research Locale

The study was conducted across selected State Universities and Colleges in the Caraga Region, representing a mix of institutional sizes, geographic locations, and program offerings. These universities were strategically chosen to reflect diverse recruitment practices and administrative structures within the region. The inclusion of multiple campuses ranging from main to satellite branches enabled the study to capture variations in HRM procedures and employee perceptions of recruitment fairness.

Focusing on public higher education institutions provided a relevant context since SUCs operate under the same civil service recruitment regulations yet differ in implementation due to administrative autonomy and resource availability. This locale selection allowed the study to obtain a realistic picture of recruitment dynamics, including how institutional culture and organizational climate shape psycho-social perceptions of fairness and influence.

4.3. Research Respondents

Participants in the study included both teaching and non-teaching personnel who were either directly involved in or affected by the recruitment and selection processes of their respective institutions. Teaching personnel comprised faculty members, instructors, and professors, while non-teaching personnel included administrative staff, registrars, HR officers, and technical employees.

A total of 279 respondents participated in the quantitative phase 163 teaching and 116 non-teaching employees from several campuses across the region. This distribution ensured representativeness across academic and administrative functions. The inclusion of both groups was crucial to capture perspectives across hierarchical and functional levels.

For the qualitative phase, a purposive subset of participants was invited for semi-structured interviews to provide deeper insights into the psycho-social attributes of recruitment, such as perceived fairness, internal influence, and communication transparency. This approach allowed the researchers to triangulate quantitative data with participants' lived experiences, enhancing the validity of findings.

4.4 Sampling Technique

The study employed purposive sampling to select respondents who possessed direct experience with recruitment and selection either as applicants, HR officers, or evaluators. This non-probability method was appropriate because it ensured that data were obtained from individuals with informed perspectives on SUC recruitment systems. As explained by Palinkas et al.,, (2015), purposive sampling is effective in HR research where experiential knowledge is essential to contextualize numerical data.

The sampling process also ensured proportional representation between teaching and non-teaching staff across participating campuses. The diversity of respondents strengthened the generalizability of findings within the regional SUC system while maintaining focus on the study's key constructs: role clarity and psycho-social perceptions.

4.5 Research Instrumentation

The quantitative data were collected through a structured questionnaire developed and validated for this study. The instrument comprised four parts:

1. Demographic Profile of respondents;
2. Recruitment and Selection Practices measuring effectiveness and role clarity;
3. Psycho-Social Attributes including perceptions of fairness, communication transparency, and the presence of perceived favoritism or internal influence; and
4. Outcome indicators such as job satisfaction and retention perceptions.

All items were rated using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The instrument was reviewed by HR experts and academic administrators to ensure content and construct validity, while a pilot test was conducted to assess reliability, yielding a Cronbach's alpha coefficient above 0.85, indicating high internal consistency.

For the qualitative phase, an interview guide was crafted, focusing on two main questions: (1) What salient psycho-social attributes are considered in the recruitment process? and (2) Why is it important to consider these attributes? Open-ended questions encouraged elaboration on perceptions of fairness, trust, and role clarity, consistent with the study's conceptual framework.

4.6 Data Gathering Procedure

Data collection followed ethical and procedural rigor. Approval from the university's research ethics committee was obtained prior to fieldwork. The researchers coordinated with HR departments of participating SUCs to distribute survey forms and schedule interviews. Participants were informed of the study's purpose, voluntary nature, and confidentiality measures before providing written consent.

Quantitative data collection was conducted over a four-week period through both printed and online questionnaires. Qualitative interviews were conducted either face-to-face or via secure video conferencing platforms, depending on participant availability and institutional protocols. All interviews were audio-recorded with permission and subsequently transcribed for thematic analysis.

Throughout the process, ethical principles of voluntary participation, anonymity, and respect for privacy were strictly observed. The research team ensured that data gathering did not interfere with institutional operations and that all responses were treated with impartiality and confidentiality.

4.7 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive measures including frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and standard deviation were used to summarize respondents' evaluations of recruitment and selection indicators. Inferential analysis, particularly Pearson's correlation, determined the relationship between recruitment effectiveness, role clarity, and psycho-social attributes such as perceived fairness and communication transparency. Statistical computations were performed using standard software to ensure accuracy and reliability.

Qualitative data were analyzed through thematic content analysis, following the procedures of coding, categorizing, and pattern identification. The transcribed responses were reviewed to identify recurring ideas related to fairness, internal influence, and interpersonal perceptions in recruitment. Themes were then cross-validated against quantitative findings to produce a coherent interpretation that bridged statistical trends with human experiences.

This dual analytical approach provided a nuanced understanding of the recruitment process quantitatively capturing overall effectiveness and qualitatively revealing the subtle psycho-social dynamics that affect trust and transparency. Combining statistical rigor with contextual depth, the methodology aligned with contemporary HRM research standards emphasizing both empirical validity and interpretive richness.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Role Clarity and Recruitment Effectiveness

Table 1. Analyze and evaluate the current recruitment and selection process of state universities and colleges and identify its strengths and weaknesses

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Adjectival Descriptive
1. Efficiency of communication platforms in informing applicants about available job vacancies within the institution	4.10	Very Good
2. Openness and clarity of recruitment and selection standards applied during hiring	4.07	Very Good
3. Explicit definition of job duties and responsibilities stated in the vacancy announcement	4.15	Very Good
4. Appropriateness of the level of difficulty of the final interview questions.	4.18	Very Good
5. Alignment of the interview questions with the specific requirements of the position applied for	4.30	Excellent
6. Degree of interaction and engagement with the interview panel throughout the hiring process	4.25	Excellent
7. Relevance of written examination items to the duties of the target position	4.09	Very Good
8. Adequacy of time allotted to finish the written examination	4.11	Very Good
9. Adequacy of time provided during the demonstration to allow applicants to exhibit their competencies	4.18	Very Good
10. Appropriateness of the assigned demonstration topic in relation to the applicant's area of specialization	4.33	Excellent
Grand Mean	*4.18*	*Very Good*

As presented in Table 1, the overall weighted mean of 4.18 reveals that respondents perceive the recruitment and selection process of SUCs as very good, reflecting a high degree of procedural soundness and role clarity. This result aligns with Peter et al. (2014), who emphasized that transparent, standardized recruitment enhances employee confidence and institutional efficiency. Similarly, Stroo et al. (2020) asserted that competency-based recruitment frameworks emphasizing clear job criteria and structured evaluation—strengthen organizational legitimacy and reduce bias. The high mean scores for indicators such as interview relevance (4.30) and demonstration alignment (4.33) suggest that SUCs effectively match candidate skills with position requirements, consistent with Jeganathan et al. (2024) who highlighted that clear alignment between job roles and applicant competencies leads to improved performance and retention.

However, the relatively lower means for transparency of selection criteria (4.07) and effectiveness of communication channels (4.10) indicate that fairness perceptions still require strengthening. Monteiro and Adler (2021) observed that bureaucratic rigidity in public institutions often limits feedback transparency, creating perceptual inequities even within compliant systems. Santos and Daza (2019) also reported that inconsistent communication in Philippine SUCs contributes to diminished employee trust despite procedural accuracy. Moreover, Lagon (2016) found that while most SUCs conform to civil service standards, incomplete dissemination of evaluation results fosters speculation of internal influence. These findings collectively underscore that although recruitment systems demonstrate role clarity and procedural compliance, their perceived transparency a core psycho-social attribute remains a subtle yet crucial determinant of organizational trust.

The high grand mean supports the assertion that structured recruitment correlates with efficiency and fairness, yet the small deviations in lower-rated items mirror Mirbabaie et al. (2025), who argued that fairness perceptions depend on both information flow and relational transparency. Thus, Table 1 validates that SUCs' recruitment is institutionally strong but psychologically incomplete, highlighting the need to integrate communication openness into HRM reforms to reinforce both procedural and perceptual legitimacy.

5.2 Impact of Recruitment and Selection on Employee Outcomes

Table 2. Assess and evaluate the impact of the recruitment and selection process on employee retention, job satisfaction, and performance.

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Adjectival Descriptive
1. Impact of the recruitment and selection process on fostering a positive work environment.	4.29	Very Impactful
2. Influence of the selection process on your decision to stay with the organization for the next two years.	4.11	Somewhat Impactful
3. Likelihood of recommending the institution to others for job opportunities or education.	4.23	Very Impactful
4. Clarity and realism of the recruitment process in setting expectations about your role/position.	4.18	Somewhat Impactful
5. Satisfaction with your current position in the organization.	4.24	Very Impactful
6. Impact of the recruitment and selection process on your sense of job security and stability within the organization.	4.23	Very Impactful
7. Influence of the selection process on identifying your strengths and areas for improvement that contribute to your performance.	4.24	Very Impactful
8. Satisfaction with the learning opportunities provided by the organization.	4.17	Somewhat Impactful
9. Evaluation of your performance strength since joining the organization.	4.22	Very Impactful
10. Overall impact of the recruitment and selection process on your retention, job satisfaction, and performance within the organization.	4.39	Very Impactful
Grand Mean	*4.23*	*Very Impactful*

As shown in Table 2, the recruitment and selection process of SUCs received an overall mean of 4.23, interpreted as Very Good. Indicators such as improving performance (4.39) and contributing to a positive work environment (4.29) signify that the system positively influences institutional morale and productivity. These results support Alexandra et al. (2024), who argue that effective recruitment directly shapes employee motivation and operational success through merit-based selection. Similarly, Mogård et al. (2022) highlight that transparent hiring enhances psychological safety and collaboration, key drivers of performance within academic organizations.

Meanwhile, influence on decision to stay scored slightly lower (4.11), implying that while recruitment quality boosts initial satisfaction, it does not fully secure long-term retention. This is consistent with Xuecheng et al. (2020), who found that retention depends not only on procedural fairness but also on sustained trust and career development opportunities. Jo and Shin (2025) emphasizes that without psychosocial reinforcement such as recognition and equitable promotion structural clarity yields limited loyalty.

Locally, SUC employees often cite internal politics and lack of transparency as reasons for attrition despite standardized recruitment processes.

Thus, Table 2 reinforces that recruitment effectiveness extends beyond structural compliance toward the psychological experience of fairness. Bayarcelik and Fındıklı (2016) explain that organizational justice perceptions mediate the effect of recruitment on satisfaction, while Hassan et al. (2023) contend that institutions must balance procedural efficiency with psychosocial engagement to sustain performance. The high mean ratings, together with qualitative reports of perceived favoritism, confirm that SUCs' recruitment is functionally sound yet perceptually fragile necessitating HR strategies that integrate both technical and emotional dimensions of employee experiences.

5.3 Recruitment, Job Satisfaction, and Retention

Table 3. Correlation between the impact and effect of the recruitment and selection process of State Universities and Colleges

Correlation	Pearson's r	p-value	Decision
Impact*Effect	0.227	0.264121	Not significant

Table 3 reports a Pearson's r = 0.227 with a p-value = 0.264121, interpreted as not significant, indicating that the recruitment and selection process has no measurable association with employee satisfaction, performance, or retention. This outcome implies that while SUCs' recruitment systems are structurally efficient (as seen in Table 1), these quantitative indicators do not directly translate into positive affective or behavioral outcomes. Lau and Tan (2006) explain that procedural fairness alone cannot predict satisfaction unless accompanied by perceived equity and trust. Likewise, Samar et al. (2021) emphasized that psychological contract fulfillment employees' belief that organizational promises are honored moderates the relationship between HR practices and commitment.

The non-significant association corroborates Pincus (2023), who found that employees' emotional interpretations of fairness often outweigh formal HR indicators in determining engagement. In the Philippine context, Üner and Başar (2025) observed that even when recruitment follows standard procedures, perceptions of favoritism or political endorsement can suppress satisfaction levels, weakening institutional morale. Kim and Uysal (2025) similarly reported that transparent communication of evaluation outcomes enhances psychological security and indirectly increases retention a factor absent when information is restricted. Consequently, the weak statistical link seen in Table 3 is not evidence of recruitment inefficiency but rather proof of a procedural–perceptual gap, a mismatch between systemic compliance and employees' psychosocial interpretations of fairness.

From an HRM-improvement standpoint, this table highlights that performance metrics must incorporate both structural and perceptual variables. Asamani et al. (2025) advocated that role clarity be complemented by transparent communication and employee involvement to convert procedural success into sustained motivation. Therefore, the findings from Table 3 reinforce the theoretical stance that HR systems in SUCs should evolve from mere regulatory adherence toward human-centered governance, where perceived equity, trust, and openness determine the true effectiveness of recruitment processes.

5.4 Psycho-Social Attributes and Perceived Influence

The study indicates that psycho-social attributes play a crucial role in shaping how recruitment processes are perceived and implemented in SUCs. Personnel involved in recruitment demonstrate positive attitudes,

motivation, and interpersonal sensitivity, which contribute to fair and transparent practices. However, the findings also suggest that perceptions of influence both formal and informal can affect decision-making and candidate evaluation. These influences often stem from relational dynamics, institutional culture, and individual perceptions of authority or favoritism. Recognizing these psycho-social dimensions allows for a deeper understanding of how professional behavior and social interactions influence the objectivity and integrity of recruitment processes.

5.4.1 Perceived Fairness and Presence of Unofficial Influence

Participants acknowledged that fairness, professionalism, and integrity are central values in recruitment; however, they also cited occasional perceptions of favoritism or unofficial influence. Several respondents shared that while procedures appear merit-based, there are instances where "connections," "recommendations," or "internal familiarity" are believed to shape outcomes. Although these perceptions are not substantiated by direct evidence, their presence highlights the psychological vulnerability of recruitment systems to perceived inequities. As one employee expressed, *"Everything looks formal, but sometimes we sense that certain names are favored even before interviews start."*

This perception, though subtle, carries significant implications. According to Muzumdar (2025), even the belief that favoritism exists can erode morale and reduce institutional trust. When employees feel that fairness is compromised, they may disengage emotionally from the organization, regardless of their own recruitment experience. These findings affirm that psycho-social factors such as perceived internal influence operate as hidden variables that influence organizational culture and employee satisfaction.

Chavez et al. (2023) also underscored that subtle discriminatory perceptions and message patterns, even when indirect, can weaken morale and inclusivity in professional settings. Their discourse analysis on online bias and stereotyping reflected how normalized inequities shape psychological responses within institutions. This insight supports the notion that perceived favoritism or insider influence in recruitment similarly impacts the emotional climate of SUCs, emphasizing the need for clear communication and fairness in all evaluative procedures.

5.4.2 Trust, Transparency, and Communication

Respondents repeatedly identified trust and communication transparency as decisive factors in sustaining fairness. Many expressed that delayed announcements of results, unclear feedback, or limited explanations of hiring decisions foster suspicion. One participant remarked, *"We don't need special treatment just clear information and consistency."* This perspective resonates with Lee et al. (2021), who emphasized that communication transparency is the linchpin of perceived fairness in public recruitment.

When institutions openly disclose criteria and results, employees perceive decisions as legitimate and rational. On the other hand, when processes are not fully communicated, even small ambiguities can be magnified into distrust. This qualitative finding corresponds directly to the quantitative scores where transparency (4.07) and communication (4.10) were the weakest indicators. Thus, both data strands converge to reveal that the primary weakness of SUC recruitment lies not in policy or procedure, but in communication and perception management.

5.4.3 Psychological Motivation and Organizational Morale

Responses also pointed to motivation as a psycho-social outcome of perceived fairness. Employees who experienced transparent, merit-based recruitment expressed stronger pride and engagement, while those sensing favoritism described feelings of demotivation and emotional detachment. A participant reflected, *"You lose interest in applying again when you think the results are already decided."* Such reactions correspond to the non-significant connection between recruitment and retention: despite efficient systems, motivational outcomes remain unaffected because psychological perceptions moderate satisfaction.

Wardiansyah et al. (2024) explain that fairness perceptions directly predict morale, loyalty, and productivity. Hence, even minor doubts about

equity can offset structural efficiency. The qualitative data affirm that employees equate fairness with belonging when trust erodes, motivation and commitment decline, producing a muted relationship between effective recruitment and sustained retention.

Synthesizing both quantitative and qualitative findings reveals a dual reality in SUC recruitment systems. Quantitatively, the process demonstrates high levels of structural effectiveness and clarity indicating that institutional frameworks are functioning as intended. Qualitatively, however, perceptions of favoritism, communication gaps, and trust issues persist, tempering the impact of these systems on employee satisfaction and retention. This intersection describe as the procedural–perceptual gap in HRM, where formal efficiency coexists with human doubt.

For SUCs, the implication is clear: role clarity must be reinforced by psycho-social transparency. Employees must not only understand their roles and responsibilities but also trust that opportunities within the institution are awarded equitably. The integration of these dimensions structural and psychological provides a strategic foundation for human resource management improvement. As Savanevičienė et al. (2025) argues, modern HR excellence requires a shift from compliance-driven systems to perception-sensitive frameworks that value fairness, empathy, and communication.

Hence, this study's mixed-method results justify the reformulation of recruitment strategies in SUCs toward a model that combines clear role articulation with perceived fairness and transparency. Addressing the "human" side of recruitment will not only strengthen employee morale and trust but also uphold the credibility and governance integrity of SUCs as public institutions.

6. Conclusion

The study demonstrated that the recruitment and selection processes of State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) are fundamentally strong in structure but challenged by subtle psycho-social gaps that affect how employees experience fairness, transparency, and opportunity. Quantitative findings confirmed that SUCs maintain clear role definitions and consistent procedures, reflecting a commitment to meritocracy and regulatory compliance. However, lower ratings in transparency and communication, alongside the absence of a significant relationship between recruitment efficiency and employee satisfaction, reveal that procedural success does not automatically translate into psychological confidence.

The qualitative analysis provided deeper Insight into this disparity. Employees acknowledged the professionalism of recruitment systems yet expressed lingering doubts about equal access, open communication, and trust in decision-making. These perceptions illustrate that organizational effectiveness depends not only on what systems deliver but also on how people feel those systems operate. Role clarity ensures operational efficiency, but it is the psycho-social environment trust, fairness, and transparency that sustains motivation, loyalty, and institutional harmony.

In essence, the study concludes that human resource management in SUCs must transcend procedural compliance and embrace a holistic approach that values both structure and perception. Recruitment and selection should not merely be mechanisms of employment but instruments of institutional integrity where clarity of roles is matched by clarity of purpose, and fairness is both visible and experienced. Strengthening communication feedback, ensuring transparency of evaluation criteria, and promoting equitable participation can transform recruitment from an administrative function into a trust-building process that anchors good governance and organizational excellence.

While the study successfully identified critical intersections between procedural and psycho-social dimensions, its scope was limited to selected SUCs and focused primarily on recruitment and selection. Broader or longitudinal research could explore how leadership style, digital HR systems, and communication culture influence the sustainability of fair and transparent human resource practices. Future studies may also examine how trust and motivation evolve when reforms emphasizing transparency and inclusivity are implemented.

Ultimately, the results affirm that sustainable human resource management improvement in SUCs lies in the union of role clarity and psycho-social credibility. When structure aligns with empathy, and systems reflect both fairness and purpose, recruitment becomes not only a process of hiring but a process of cultivating trust the true foundation of institutional effectiveness and public service integrity.

7. Recommendations

The findings of this study highlight a critical opportunity for State Universities and Colleges to reform recruitment and selection processes through a balance of procedural discipline and psychosocial responsiveness. To achieve meaningful improvement in human resource management, several strategies are proposed across institutional, managerial, and operational levels.

At the institutional level, SUCs should institutionalize a transparent recruitment framework that ensures all applicants clearly understand evaluation criteria, scoring systems, and deliberation outcomes. Policy guidelines must require the publication of selection standards, schedule adherence, and timely dissemination of results. Embedding accountability mechanisms such as independent HR observers or external evaluators during hiring can strengthen the credibility of decisions and discourage perceptions of unofficial influence. Regular audits and policy reviews can also ensure that recruitment practices remain aligned with Civil Service Commission standards and ethical governance principles.

At the managerial level, administrators and HR officers must cultivate an environment that promotes trust and communication. Leadership training should include modules on organizational fairness, ethical recruitment, and emotional intelligence to enhance decision-making transparency. Department heads should be encouraged to provide constructive feedback to applicants and staff, reinforcing the perception that opportunities for career advancement are genuinely merit-based. Open communication channels between HR units and employees can help address grievances promptly and prevent the development of distrust or misinformation.

At the operational level, the integration of technology can support transparency and efficiency. Implementing digital recruitment platforms, applicant tracking systems, and online posting of vacancies and results can minimize bias and improve information flow. Periodic employee perception surveys may also be conducted to assess the effectiveness of recruitment reforms and to identify emerging psycho-social issues within the workforce. Feedback-driven reform ensures that HR policies evolve in response to employee sentiment and institutional realities.

Finally, recruitment and selection must be viewed not only as administrative functions but as foundational components of institutional culture. Fairness, clarity, and trust should define every stage of the hiring process, as these are essential to employee engagement and organizational legitimacy. By embracing both structural and human dimensions of recruitment, SUCs can strengthen morale, enhance performance, and uphold their mandate as models of transparency and integrity in public service.

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