

RECRUITMENT-SELECTION CRITERIA AND NIGERIANS' ACADEMIC JOB PERFORMANCE

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Abstract

In the last one (1) decade, the graduates of Nigerian Universities have come under searchlight wherein their employability has been questioned in the Nigerian labor market and this explains the rationale behind the focus of the study that set out to examine the relationship between components of recruitment and selection criteria and job performance academic in the State-owned Universities in the Southwest of Nigeria as the unit of analysis. The study identified criteria such as age, qualification, and experience as well as technology, political consideration, and indigene to be in use in these State-owned Universities. The questionnaire was randomly administered to collect data from 343 respondents chosen through a proportional sampling technique for 8 months. The results showed that there is strong relationship between qualification, experience and job performance where qualification ($r = 0.652$, $p < 0.05$), experience ($r = 0.612$, $p < 0.05$) and that of political consideration and indigene criteria were inversely correlated at ($r = -0.231$, $p < 0.01$) and ($r = -0.211$, $p < 0.01$) respectively. The findings of the study revealed that employment decision was greatly influenced by political consideration and indigene criteria which made the employment decision to be devoid of objectivity. Thus, concluded that employment decision in the academic environment of the Nigerian labor market was not merit-based as political interests have been used to substitute meritocracy with mediocrity without recourse to consequences.

Keywords: recruitment and selection criteria; stakeholders; job performance; academic staff; KSAO.

1. INTRODUCTION

It has been established over the ages that every organization is as good as the quality of employees in its fold and such is the attainment of its primary objectives. The implication is that organization should be highly interested in the 5Ws of the recruitment process i.e. what, who, where, when, and why as well as how otherwise actualizing the primary objective will become a mirage (Oginni, Ogunlusi & Faseyiku, 2013). Although University is not a business organization with a profit maximization motive, it also has its primary objective which is centered around the advancement of knowledge to make life worth living through different scientific discoveries and the provision of manpower into the labor market to accelerate economic growth and development of a nation. University as an educational institution is a community of scholars/researchers who are constantly annexing existing knowledge, recreating or reinterpreting economic, social, cultural, scientific, or technological

findings in existence for mankind's benefit. Just like a business organization, University will not grow beyond the quality of people (human resources) in its fold because it also relied on the human resource to attain its objective and by extension with overall bearing influence on the well-being of the nation as a whole (Akindele, Oginni & Omoyele, 2012).

For this reason, recruitment and selection processes become the cardinal focus and integral part of management strategy to meet and satisfy the interest of the stakeholders. The strategy revolves around how to gain competitive advantage through effective utilization of human resources in its fold who can neither be imitated nor substituted thus, directed the strategy at what is to be done; who is the person that will do the job without any or less economic loss, where can this person be reached, when exactly is the right time to bring the person on board, why do the organizations need the person without prejudice or diminishing return in the productivity and how can this person be reached? It is the focus of this strategy that explains why recruitment and selection are central to the overall resourcing strategies of every organization in terms of needs required to ensure survival and secure the future both in the short and long terms. By implication, every organization should show consideration to their respective line of business and develop appropriate recruitment and selection criteria that would activate and enable the actualization of maximizing stakeholders' interests i.e. recruitment and selection criteria should be peculiar, distinct, and unique to each organization as this is the only way to bring in people that will contribute to the overall interests of the organization.

This informed the need on the part of the University Management through the unit in charge of attracting and choosing people to fill academic vacant positions in the organization to look beyond the traditional approach to recruitment and selection processes by developing human resource management policies that would usher in reliable criteria that derives its strengths from business and corporate objectives such that the criteria can absolve job description in totality and be situated in the knowledge, skills, ability and other requirements (KSAO) regarding research, teaching, and community services (STC). The job performance of academic staff who are also known as lecturers are usually assessed through the quality of STC, the depth of knowledge exhibited by their graduates in the labor market, and the world of work among other criteria put in place. The assessment can be at individual and or institutional levels, either way, it is still the output of the academic staff that is under review and this had made the job performance of academic staff in the Nigerian University to be quite demanding in contrast to what is obtainable in industrial organizations. In the University recruitment and selection process, emphasis is usually placed on academic qualifications, experience, and age as well as communication skills for all the strata in academic ranks.

In the last one (1) decade, there had been public outcry over the quality of University graduates in the Nigerian labor market which had even been described as non-employable in some quarters as they were found to be deficient in some vital areas of knowledge about their specializations. The focus of concern now is to narrow the searchlight of investigation to recruitment and selection criteria to know its relationship with academic job performance since many scholars that have carried out similar studies focused on other variables to explain the rationale behind the non-employability of Nigerian graduates such as incessant strikes (Ejike, 2015; Ogbette, Eke & Ori (2017); Monogbe & Monogbe, 2019), learning environment (SHAMAKI, 2015; Dhanapala, 2021), the proliferation of university through private establishment (Akindele, et al 2012; Otoo, Assuming & Agyei, 2018) while others whose studies were on recruitment and selection criteria focused on organizational performance (Osemeke, 2012; Joy, Ugochukwu & Ndubuisi, 2015; Adeyemi, Dunmade & Fadare, 2016;) as well as employees' performance and productivity (Okoye, & Ezejiofor, 2013; Onyeaghala & Hyacinth, 2016). The study, therefore, seeks to identify the recruitment and selection criteria used in the State Universities of the Southwest, Nigeria, and the relationship between recruitment and selection criteria components and the job performance of academic staff.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Conceptual Clarification

2.1.1 Recruitment and Selection Process

Recruitment and selection had been described in so ways by different authors or better still say that the description of Recruitment and selection are legion in number because of the number of people who had

contributed to the concept. However, despite a series of authors describing the concept in different ways, analysis of these descriptions revealed the same meaning without prejudice to the literary or technical meaning of the concept (Usman & Okafor, 2015). Recruitment can be summarised to mean the process of attracting a pool of qualified candidates to fill an existing vacant position in an organization while selection is all about choosing the most suitable candidates for existing vacant positions. The focus of these two concepts is getting qualified and competent personnel to fill existing vacancies. It then entails that how to get qualified and competent personnel is never a science rocket or cast iron, there is a procedure to be followed or adopted to get the expected result. This procedure to be followed or adopted is known as the recruitment and selection process and varies from organization to organization which is contingent upon the nature of the organization, size of the organization, beliefs, philosophy, and values of the business owners as well as the type of the skill required and legal requirements (Oginni & Ogunyomi, 2012). Ofori and Aryeetey (2011) asserted that the recruitment and selection process contained a series of steps to be followed in sequential order but not a rigid step while Joy et al, (2015) opined that the set criteria and choice of vacancy to be filled will determine what constitutes the steps and how long the step would be. The position of Onyeaghala and Hyacinth (2016) summed everything where it was opined that recruitment and selection process are Siamese twins as the two are complementary i.e. recruitment and selection process criteria dictate what should be the process while the process ensures non-compromise of the set criteria.

2.1.2 Recruitment and Selection Criteria

This is described as the pillar upon which employment decision is based wherein the information contained in the criteria would take into consideration the interests of the stakeholders, the image of the organization, and the availability of the human element requirements in the labor market without any prejudice as well as legal requirements (Adeyemi et al, 2016). Richardson (2012) believed that criteria information on employment processes cannot be outside the policy of the organization on employment and identified four (4) criteria to include qualification, special/specific skills, and potential growth as well as work experience and any organization who made employment decision based on the criteria will succeed. This was also corroborated by Onyeaghala and Hyacinth (2016) with a few additions such as technology required for the job, physical appearances/attributes, and the vision of the organization in question. However, Maimuna (2020) using the peculiarity of Nigeria provided much more different criteria. Maimuna, believed that those criteria identified by Richardson (2012) and Onyeaghala and Hyacinth (2016) were in the merit region which cannot always be used in all situations in Nigeria as consideration was being given to other variables to include the Federal character principle, political consideration and government discretion i.e. in Nigeria employment decision is not based on merit alone while technology requirement has been part of the criteria, COVID - 19 further popularised the use in the Nigerian labor market. The rationale behind this was to reflect and satisfy the heterogeneous nature of a country blessed with multi-cultural diversity. This position was also buttressed by Hillary, Josephine, and Casmir (2019) where it was posited that in Nigeria, the employment process is subjective because candidates' assessment was not always based on any of the objectivity parameters. Oginni and Afolabi (2012) identified cultural fit, employee potential, and legal requirements as well as an indigent factor, age, educational qualification, gender, job experience, and organizational policy as the common recruitment and selection criteria in the Nigerian labor market with the overriding influence of 'godfatherism'. It was argued further that the politicians were able to hijack the recruitment and selection processes because the processes had been left in hands of non-professionals (Otoo, Assuming & Agyei, 2018). Bratton and Gold (1999) believed that employment criteria can be classified into two namely broad and narrow. Broad criteria were loosely defined to accommodate any activity that would lead to attracting people to fill any existing vacancies while narrow criteria were job-specific i.e. the matching of individual candidates with the expectation of the job. Bratton and Gold concluded that where employment decision is based on narrow criteria the success rate in terms of performance is always very high and where it is broad criteria based, the success rate is usually very low. This met what Onwe, Abah, and Nwokwu (2015) described as the political patronage being determined by the political class which constantly circumvents the conventional recruitment and selection practice to sustain their political interests.

Hillary et al (2019) pointed out that for any recruitment and selection criteria to be effective in terms of productivity on the part of the employees, job analysis should be a basis for developing the employment criteria with a strong emphasis on the job description and job specification. Maimuna (2020) corroborated this position

and asserted that MAN should be fitted to the characteristics of the job and not the characteristics of the job being fitted to the MAN. It is the first scenario that will protect the interests of the stakeholders, increase productivity, and at the time enhance the image of the organization, thus, becoming a weapon to attract qualified and competent candidates into the organization from where a suitable choice could be made. However, where characteristics of a job are bent to suit MAN such is considered a recruitment error and could be corrected through adequate training and development exercise, relevant job exposure, and self-commitment to the job (Onyeaghala & Hyacinth, 2016). Oginni, Erigbe, Ogunlusi, and Laosebikan (2018) asserted that deviation from the recruitment and selection criteria would result in recruitment errors, and the time lag for employees under such employment decisions to learn and adjust would represent colossal losses on the part of the organization and the nation as well which should not be encouraged nor practiced. It was argued further that the bane of all of the problems in Nigeria as of today, is the wrong placement of employees as a result of recruitment errors in all sectors of the Nigerian economy. The works of Aremu, Oginni, and Awobona (2021) agreed with this position and argued further that objectivity in employment processes decision represents fairness and this is among the best human resource management practices that can herald sustainable development both in the present and in the future. All these arguments and positional stands further confirm the earlier work of Okoye and Ezejiofor (2013) that investment in employees in terms of training, seminars, and workshops represents an investment with long term returns and where employees under such investment could not remain with the organization over a long period, then, it represents double losses to the organization i.e. the time of production hours used for training and finance expended on the employees. To Okoye and Ezejiofor, training in whatever form is good but should be for employees with prerequisite and core skills otherwise organizational productivity would constantly experience variation in their quality and loss of organizational values.

2.1.3 Job Performance

Job performance is a supporting pillar of organizational performance because it is a function of many variables upon which organizational performance depends such as; Quantity of work (productivity level, time management, meeting up with deadlines), working relationships (human relations, ability to work with others, openness, and communication skills), job knowledge (skills, experience, attitude and understanding of the expected work) and quality of work (competence, dexterity, thoroughness, and accuracy) i.e. it is an integral element of organization performance (Oginni, Ajibola & Olaniyan, 2022). This position is in line with the earlier views expressed by Motowidlo (2003) that job performance is an aggregated property of multiple and discrete behaviors that occur over time in line with the expected value of the organization i.e. totality of how individuals perform in their respective tasks, assignment, and duties concerning the quality of work, the quantity of work done, work relationships and job knowledge (Putri, Triatmanto, & Setiyadi, 2018). In a nutshell, an employee's job performance is how the employee fulfills the duties of their role, completes required tasks, and behaves in the workplace in the course of transforming organizational resources into the goods or services profitably to ensure the attainment of the predetermined objective of the organization. Ng and Feldman (2015) agreed with the variables of employee's job performance (quality, quantity, relationship, and knowledge) and postulated that each of the variables is affected by age, organizational tenure, and job tenure, as well as, experience and socialization process. To Keith and Boris (2015) organizational tenure was a better predictor than age in employee's job performance which was anchored on the understanding of the corporate policies and the culture of the organization although it was argued that how age is defined would determine the variety of outcomes in the workplace, especially in areas such as innovative behavior, safety behavior, and absenteeism. Putri et al (2018) believed that age is insignificant in employees' job performance on account of stereotype belief that assumed old employees do have lower levels of job performance than the young employees and made use of the "Peter Principle" to explain any variation in the work rate or output of old employee and young employee. Peter's principle is an upward movement in employees' responsibilities by promotion to a level above their level of competence and by implication, it is the old employees that are more likely to have reached their level of incompetence in relative comparison to young employees. Mahiri and Bula (2016) agreed that Peter's principle might set in where an employee lacks basic skills, knowledge, and experience as well as training required to sustain the performance and that occupational stress was a chieftain among factors affecting employees' job performance. In the earlier work of Onwe et al (2015), aside from the occupational stress, it was asserted that environmental factors have played their part as well, especially in the political environment where political interests have been used to substitute meritocracy with mediocrity without recourse to consequences.

2.2. THEORETICAL REVIEW

2.2.1 Human Capital Theory

This theory was propounded by Schultz (1961) while Becker (1962) and Rosen (1983) further expounded the theory as one of the apologist of the theory. The theory was based on the assumption that training as a subset of education represents an investment that could bring about an increase in productivity. This was adduced forward to mean that employees in organizations have a set of knowledge, talents, skills, experience, abilities, intelligence, judgment, and wisdom that could be used for the economic advantage of the organization provided the interests of employees are paramount. The interest in question is a function of the amount of money expended on them to acquire knowledge, talents, skills, experience, abilities, intelligence, judgment, and wisdom which is being considered by employees as loyalty and punctuality are to the employers.

The theory was however criticized by some scholars such as Bowels and Gintis (1975); Freeman (1976); Fadiora (2012); Fix (2018). Bowels and Gintis argued that making people who were part of labor to be seen in the light of capital thus squashing arguments in favor of efforts to empower workers' rights and class conflict. Freeman argued that talent and ability were just an integral part of the human capital and that productivity in the real sense would be realized afterward through motivation, equipment, and training. Therefore, human capital should not be projected as one of the elements in the factors of production. To Fadiora, knowledge, talents, skills, experience, abilities, intelligence, judgment, and wisdom represents incurred cost to the employer in the course of improving them, and such cost would be a loss where the employee in this category cannot be identified with the organization over a long period while Fix (2018) believed that human capital theory was greedy reductionist as caused by hierarchical ranks which often explains people's wages all the time through the connection between productivity and income using human capital as the baseline. Training through education poorly explained income distribution and could not be used for productivity as there were other factors not measured (Ejike, 2015).

Despite this criticism against the theory, the human capital theory remained valid for the study considering the assumptions of the theory which forms the crux of the study under investigation.

Recruitment and Selection Criteria

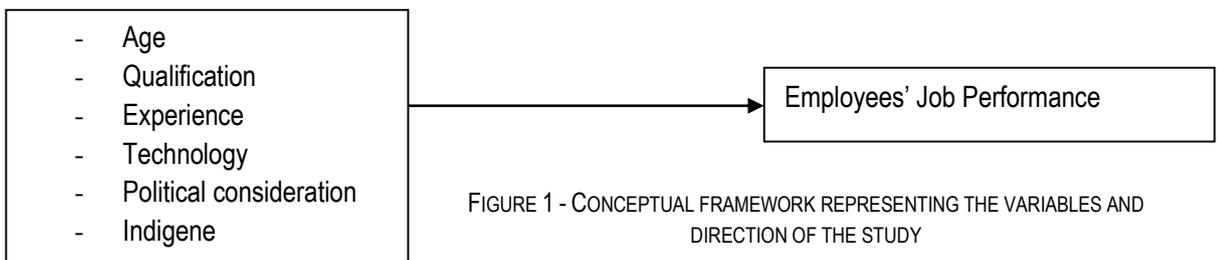


FIGURE 1 - CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK REPRESENTING THE VARIABLES AND DIRECTION OF THE STUDY

3. METHODOLOGY

The study made use of a survey research design method and data were obtained through both primary and secondary sources of data collection. A structured questionnaire as a research instrument was chosen over other primary sources of data collection because of its numerous advantages to elicit relevant information on recruitment and selection criteria and job performance from the respondents selected from State Universities in the Southwest, Nigeria. The Southwest of Nigeria is made up of six (6) States (Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ondo, and Ekiti) and each of the States has one (1) State University which has been chosen as the sample for the study totaling six (6) State universities. The population of the sample was 2430 academic staff from where the sample size of 343 was chosen at a 0.05 error level. Proportional and random sampling techniques were used for both the selected sample size and the administration of the questionnaire respectively. The structured questionnaire used was a close-ended type which was developed in line with the Likert 5point rating scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. This afforded the respondents to provide optional responses representing their opinions on all the information contained in the three sections of the questionnaire labeled section A (biodata of the respondents), B (relevant question on recruitment and selection criteria, - Age, Qualification, Experience, Technology, Political consideration, and Indigene), and C (relevant questions on job

performance, - Quality of work, Quantity of Work, Work Relationship, and Job knowledge). A period of eight (8) months (July 2021 - February 2022) was used to collect data from the respondents spread across the six (6) State Universities in the Southwest, Nigeria and for easy administration, a research coordinator was appointed to oversee the administration and collection of the questionnaire after duly filled, although the first 6 weeks of the 8 months were for the pilot study. Descriptive (frequency tables showing mean and percentages) and inferential (correlation and regression) statistics were used to analyze the data collected.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1 has information on the demographic characteristics of the respondents ranging from gender, marital status, educational qualifications, age, and work experience. It was evident that male gender respondents (70%) were more than the female gender respondents (30%) and marital status was also dominated by married respondents (60%) and by extension 88% although some of the respondents represented 8% and 20% had divorced and lost their partners respectively. For educational qualification, Ph.D. accounted for the highest qualification among the respondents with 56% and work experience has respondents with over 21 years and above experience with 43%. The implication of this is that the respondents were emotionally stable, literate, and mature for the study while the academic environment was domiciled by the male gender which was noted by Oginni, Ajibola, and Olaniyan (2022).

TABLE 1: - RESPONDENTS' DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

| Variables | Frequency Distribution | Percentage |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|-------------|
| Gender | | |
| Male | 241 | 70% |
| Female | 102 | 30% |
| Total | 343 | 100% |
| Marital Status | | |
| Single | 109 | 32% |
| Married | 206 | 60% |
| Divorced | 8 | 2% |
| Widow | 20 | 6% |
| Total | 343 | 100% |
| Educational Qualifications | | |
| M. Sc. | 95 | 28% |
| PhD | 193 | 56% |
| Professor | 55 | 16% |
| Total | 343 | 100% |
| Age Bracket | | |
| Less than 30 years | 31 | 9% |
| 31yrs – 40yrs | 49 | 14% |
| 41yrs – 50yrs | 74 | 22% |
| 51yrs – 60yrs | 126 | 37% |
| 65yrs & above | 63 | 18% |
| Total | 343 | 100% |
| Work Experience | | |
| Less than 5years | 33 | 10% |
| 6yrs - 10yrs | 82 | 24% |
| 11yrs - 20yrs | 80 | 23% |
| 21yrs and above | 148 | 43% |
| Total | 343 | 100% |

Source: Survey 2022

Objective 1: Identify the recruitment and selection criteria used in the State Universities of the Southwest, Nigeria

From the review of extant literature, many recruitment and selection criteria were identified and some of these criteria were a reflection of what was obtainable in the Nigerian labor market while some were not. However, the peculiarity of the unit of analysis which was academic staff in State-Owned Universities in the Southwest, Nigeria, deviated somewhat from what the literature contained. The following were found to be in operation through the administered questionnaire as filled by the respondents.

1. Age,
2. Qualification,
3. Experience
4. Technology
5. Political consideration and
6. Indigene

TABLE 2 - DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION CRITERIA USED IN THE STATE UNIVERSITIES OF THE SOUTHWEST, NIGERIA

| S/N | Variables | Measurement Scales / Percentage | | | | | Mean Scores | Standard deviation | Rank Score | Remarks |
|-----|-------------------------|---------------------------------|--------|---------|---------|---------|-------------|--------------------|------------|---------|
| | | SD(1) | D(2) | N(3) | A(4) | SA(5) | | | | |
| 1 | Age | 38(11) | 89(26) | 121(35) | 40(12) | 55(16) | 2.956 | 1.097 | 6 | D |
| 2 | Qualification | - | - | 21(6) | 135(39) | 187(55) | 4.484 | 1.343 | 1 | A |
| 3 | Experience | - | 35(10) | 29(8) | 146(43) | 133(39) | 4.099 | 1.148 | 3 | A |
| 4 | Technology | 16(5) | 56(16) | 85(25) | 96(28) | 90(26) | 3.548 | 0.941 | 5 | A |
| 5 | Political consideration | - | 7(2) | 27(8) | 186(54) | 123(36) | 4.239 | 1.171 | 2 | A |
| 6 | Indigene | 10(3) | 48(14) | 52(15) | 111(32) | 122(36) | 3.837 | 1.123 | 4 | A |

Remark, where Agreement (A) is ≥ 3.0 and Disagreement (D), is ≤ 3.0

Source: Field Study, 2021

For Objective 1, descriptive statistics showing percentage, mean, and standard deviation with deduction through ranking were used to achieve the objective, and the scale of measurement used was Likert's scale while the benchmark criterion for the decision was set for agreement at the weighted mean of ≥ 3.0 and that of disagreement was set at the weighted mean of ≤ 3.0 . The Kendall's W coefficient of concordance (level of agreement) was also applied to the data to know the level of agreement among the respondents of the study as presented in Table 3.

From Table 2, it was evident that qualification has the highest mean score of 4.484 with a standard deviation of 1.343, political consideration was ranked after qualification with a mean score of 4.239 with a standard variation of 1.171 and this was followed by experience which has a mean score of 4.099 and standard deviation was 1.148. Indigene as a criterion was ranked after the experience with a mean score of 3.8337 with a standard deviation of 1.123 and this was followed by technology with a mean score of 3.548 and standard deviation of 0.941 while age was ranked last with a mean score of 2.596 with a standard deviation of 1.097.

Objective 1 was achieved with the identification of six (6) major recruitment and selection criteria that were in use in all the State-Owned universities in the Southwest, Nigeria i.e. age, qualification, experience, technology, political consideration, and indigene. It revealed that the qualification of academic staff was among many criteria put in place to facilitate employment decisions and this was buttressed with the highest mean score. This implies that qualification was sacrosanct in the employment decision without which no employment admittance into the academic environment at the expense of godfatherism and the minimum entry qualification was Ph.D. but accept M. Sc. degree for lower cadre positions. This can then be adduced forward to explain why the mean score of political consideration was high and close to that of qualification which was ranked second. Any act of lobby or maneuver would be based on the ability of the candidate to meet the set qualification before this can be utilized and the presence of a high mean score shows that political consideration was a strong force in the recruitment and selection criteria for the employment decision. These positions were buttressed by the benchmark criterion for the decision which was set for agreement at the weighted mean of ≥ 3.0 wherein 94% of the respondents agreed that qualification has not been substituted despite the political influences prevailing in the Nigerian labor market, especially in the Southwest, Nigeria. Similarly, 90% of the respondents also agreed that political consideration was held so high even above experience on the job. The implication is that once you are qualified, political consideration must be sought to get the necessary connection for a job placement although there was still evidence of a place for experience with 81% of respondents in agreement, political consideration gains more attention than experience especially when indigene criterion was considered as part of political consideration. However, age was a criterion that was relegated to the background because

it was a criterion in use but concerning legal requirements i.e. confinement to capacity to enter into the contract of employment and retirement which were set at 18years and 70years respectively. This was evident in the respondents' responses where 36% declared that age was not a strong criterion used while 35% could not ascertain the place of age in recruitment and selection criteria although 27% believed that it was in use. However, this position buttressed the benchmark criterion for the decision that was set for disagreement at the weighted mean of ≤ 3.0 . The implication was that age among the recruitment and selection criteria could not be ruled out but would only become operational in employment decision under statutory provision i.e. what does the law says whether, at National, State, or Local levels from where organizations derived their human resource policies and wherein the recruitment and selection criteria evolved.

TABLE 3 - KENDALL'S W TEST AND MEAN RANK STATISTICS

| Variable factors | N | Mean Rank | Kendall's W ^a | Chi-Square (X ²) | Df | Asymp. Sig. | Rank Score |
|-------------------------|-----|-----------|--------------------------|------------------------------|----|-------------|------------|
| Age | 343 | 2.543 | .711 | 165.565 | 5 | .000 | 6 |
| Qualification | 343 | 4.332 | | | | | 1 |
| Experience | 343 | 3.623 | | | | | 4 |
| Technology | 343 | 3.126 | | | | | 5 |
| Political Consideration | 343 | 4.113 | | | | | 2 |
| Indigene | 343 | 3.864 | | | | | 3 |

Source: Field Study, 2022

Table 3 was put in place to further validate the extent of agreement among the respondents with all the recruitment and selection criteria identified in Table 2. The information in Table 2 was compared with the information in Table 3 and it shows that there was a difference in the mean scores and could be said not to be the same but has more information in common. The ranking of the mean score was almost the same except that of indigene and experience that takes 3 and 4 positions respectively which were the other way in Table 2. The reason for the difference could be traced to the classification of the indigene criterion as an extension of political consideration which was placed above experience. Despite the difference, the two analyses met the benchmark criterion that was set at a weighted mean score of ≥ 3.0 for agreement and ≤ 3.0 for disagreement for decision and was satisfied adequately. Therefore, the Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance statistics has that $W = 0.711$, $X^2 = 165.565$, $Df = 5$ and $Sig. = 0.000$ from where it was deduced that the level of concordance among the respondents was very high and strong to further imply strong belief in the use of these recruitment and selection criteria in the State-Owned Universities in the Southwest, Nigeria.

Objective 2: Relationship between Components of Recruitment and Selection Criteria and Job Performance

TABLE 4 - CORRELATIONAL MATRIX OF COMPONENTS OF RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION CRITERIA AND JOB PERFORMANCE

| Variables | A | Q | E | T | PC | I | JP |
|-----------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------|
| Age(A) | 1.000 | | | | | | |
| Qualification(Q) | 0.553** | 1.000 | | | | | |
| Experience(E) | 0.643** | 0.546** | 1.000 | | | | |
| Technology(T) | -0.341* | 0.655* | 0.431** | 1.000 | | | |
| Political Consideration(PC) | 0.633 | 0.673** | -0.226* | -0.167* | 1.000 | | |
| Indigene(I) | 0.772** | 0.661** | -0.342* | -0.111* | 0.832* | 1.000 | |
| Job Performance(JP) | 0.543** | 0.652** | 0.612** | 0.452** | -0.231* | -0.211* | 1.000 |

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 4 has information about the existing relationship between the recruitment and selection criteria variables (independent variable) and employees' job performance (dependent variable). The Pearson's correlation coefficient values for age ($r = 0.543$, $p < 0.05$), qualification ($r = 0.652$, $p < 0.05$), experience ($r = 0.612$, $p < 0.05$), technology ($r = 0.452$, $p < 0.05$) shows positive relationship with employees' job performance although that of qualification and experience appears to show very strong relationship while that of age was moderate and that of technology was weak. Similarly, the correlation coefficient values for political consideration ($r = -0.231$, $p < 0.01$) and indigene ($r = -0.211$, $p < 0.01$) which implies inverse relationship. It is therefore evident that qualification, experience, and technology would contribute positively to the job performance of academic staff in the State-Owned Universities by improving the quality of work, quantity of work, work relationship, and

job knowledge which were the four basic elements of job performance. Age will also contribute when linked with experience but has a moderate effect when it's stand alone. However, the use of indigene and political consideration criteria would adversely affect the quality of work, quantity of work, work relationships, and job knowledge since the selection was not based on merit.

This was carried out to ascertain the impact of independent variables (recruitment and selection criteria - age, qualification, experience, technology, political consideration, and indigene) on the dependent variable (employees' job performance)

TABLE 5 - REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF INDEPENDENT AND DEPENDENT VARIABLES OF THE STUDY

| Variables Path | Adjusted R² | F Value | Beta (β) Value | Sig. Value P |
|--|-------------------------------|----------------|--|---------------------|
| Age Job Performance | 0.160 | 58.377 | 0.210 | 0.004 |
| Qualification Job Performance | 0.386 | 42.785 | 0.445 | 0.000 |
| Experience Job Performance | 0.417 | 56.953 | 0.628 | 0.000 |
| Technology Job Performance | 0.316 | 82.693 | 0.372 | 0.000 |
| Political Consideration Job Performance | 0.218 | 59.374 | 0.282 | 0.000 |
| Indigene Job Performance | 0.159 | 78.478 | 0.165 | 0.000 |

p < 0.01 and 0.05 level of Sig.

Table 5 shows the results of regression analysis on the impact of the recruitment and selection criteria and employees' job performance. The F values of the analysis were interpreted to mean that the model was a good fit. It shows that the values of adjusted $R^2 = 0.160$ and $\beta = 0.210$ for age, imply that there is a 16% the variation in the employee's job performance as a result of age and the beta value of 0.210 indicates that 21% of positive change occurs in employees' job performance due to age. The adjusted $R^2 = 0.386$ and $\beta = 0.445$ values for qualification implies that 39% of the variation in the employee's job performance as a result of qualification while the beta value signifies that 1 unit increase in qualification at the workplace, there is an increase of 0.445 units in employees' job performance. Experience the values of the adjusted $R^2 = 0.417$ and $\beta = 0.628$ which implies that experience has a 42% impact on employees' job performance and the beta value shows that 63% of positive change occurs in employees' job performance because of experience. For technology, the values of adjusted $R^2 = 0.316$ and $\beta = 0.372$ imply that there is a 32% the variation in technology to explain the impact of technology on employees' job performance while the beta value implies that for 1 unit increase in technology in the workplace, there is an increase of 0.372 units in employees' job performance. The adjusted $R^2 = 0.218$ and $\beta = 0.282$ values for political consideration imply that 22% of the variation in employees' job performance is due to political consideration and the beta value shows that 28% of positive change occurs in employees' job performance due to political consideration. Lastly, the indigene criterion values of adjusted $R^2 = 0.159$ and $\beta = 0.165$ show that there is a 16% the variation in the employee's job performance as a result of the indigene criterion and the beta value of 0.165 indicates that 17% of positive change occurs in employees' job performance due to indigene criterion. The overall implication of the analysis is that management of these State-Owned Universities should concentrate more on the use of qualification, experience, and technology as recruitment and selection criteria considering the level of their significant impact on the employees' job performance although age, indigene and political consideration cannot be completely ruled out, qualification, experience, and technology should not be sacrificed otherwise academic environment would be polluted with mediocre personality who has no business in the academic environment.

5. DISCUSSIONS

The demographic characteristics of the respondents showed that the academic environment was dominated by the male gender, emotionally stable, highly educated, and mature as noted by Oginni, Ajibola, and Olaniyan

(2022) that business organization in Nigeria is dominated by the male gender and by extension, the outcome of this study revealed that academic environment is not exempted from men employment dominance.

For objective 1, age, qualification, experience, technology, political consideration, and indigene were identified as recruitment and selection criteria in use by the Management of the State-Owned Universities for employment decisions. These reflected the earlier work of Richardson (2012) where four basic criteria were identified which were less than six (6) criteria found to be in use in these State-Owned Universities but Onyeaghala and Hyacinth (2016) also corroborated the position of Richardson with the addition of technology requirements for the job as one of the criteria for employment decisions among other recruitment and selection criteria while Oginni and Afolabi (2012) identified nine (9) criteria that were in operation in the Nigerian labor market and criteria identified by Maimuna (2020) represented the peculiarity of employment decisions regarding Federal character principle, political consideration, and government discretion. It was therefore evident that recruitment and selection criteria used by the Management of the State-Owned Universities for employment decisions represented a summary of the works of Richardson (2012); Oginni and Afolabi (2012); Onyeaghala and Hyacinth (2016); Hillary et al (2019); Maimuna (2020). The results presented in Tables 2 and 3 showed that political consideration and indigene as recruitment and selection criteria were prevalent in the employment decisions of these State-Owned Universities above experience, technology, and age. The positions of Richardson (2012) and Onyeaghala and Hyacinth (2016) negated the use of such criteria on account that employment decisions in such situations would not be merit-based which might harm the success of the organization although Maimuna (2020) did not subscribe to this on account that Nigeria cannot jettison federal character principle, political consideration, and government discretion because of merit considering the heterogeneous nature of Nigeria which is contingent on cultural diversity. The same is the outcome of the study as State Universities in the Southwest are owned by the government in each of the states and often extend their political influence to interfere in the employment decisions although the qualification is still considered a sacrosanct requirement that cannot be compromised. Therefore, based on recruitment and selection criteria found operational in these State-Owned Universities, employment decision is not based on objectivity parameters.

The relationship existing between the components of recruitment and selection criteria and job performance was found to have a positive correlation for qualification, experience, age, and technology while political consideration and indigene criteria were inversely correlated. It shows qualification and experience to have a strong relationship with job performance, while that of age was moderate and technology was weak. Qualification and experience having a strong relationship with job performance corroborated the position of Richardson (2012) that organizations that based their employment decisions on qualification, special/specific skills, and potential growth, as well as work experience, will succeed since employees' job performance is always viewed from the level of productivity of an individual employee vis-à-vis his/her peers on several job-related behaviors and outcomes (Onyeaghala & Hyacinth, 2016). The relationship between age and job performance was found to be moderate and the position of Keith and Boris (2015) that and Putri et al (2018) can be used to support this outcome. Keith and Boris (2015) opined that organizational tenure was a better predictor than age in employee's job performance while Putri et al (2018) used made used Peter Principle to explain any variation in the work rate or output of old employees and young employees. The relationship between technology and employees' job performance was found to be weak and this is in line with the position of Maimuna (2020) who believed that technology requirement was not a new criterion but the emergence of COVID-19 however, placed a premium on it. This emerging trend in the world of employment has made organizations including academic institutions embrace technology whose patronage has been relatively low. On the relationship between political consideration, indigene criteria, and job employment that were with the inverse relationship it means whenever there is an increase in political consideration, employees' job performance will decrease and so also is indigene criterion i.e. an increase in the consideration of indigene as a factor in the employment decision, employees' job performance will decrease. The positions of Onwe et al (2015) and Hillary et al (2019) validated this. Onwe et al (2015) stressed that environmental factors played a significant role in employees' job performance, especially in the political environment where political interests have been used to substitute meritocracy with mediocrity without recourse to consequences while Hillary et al (2019) posited that in Nigeria, employment process is subjective because candidates' assessment was not always based on any of the objectivity parameters rather satisfy their political interests.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The study focused on the recruitment and selection criteria and employees' job performance of academic staff in all the State-Owned Universities in Southwest Nigeria. It set out to examine the recruitment and selection criteria in use in these Universities and the relationship between components of the recruitment and selection criteria and job performance using the academic staff of State-Owned Universities in the Southwest of Nigeria as the unit of analysis. The study identified age, qualification, and experience as well as technology, political consideration, and indigene as the major criteria in the course of making employment decisions in the academic environment of the Nigerian labor market. Among these criteria, qualification and political consideration were found to be used more than the rest and the relationship between the components of the recruitment and selection criteria showed that qualification, experience, technology, and age were positively correlated with job performance although with different strengths while that of political consideration and indigene were inversely correlated. The relationship between qualification, experience, and job performance was strong while that of age was moderate and technology was weak and political consideration and indigene that were inversely correlated imply an increase in the political consideration will lead to a decrease in employees' job performance and so also is indigene criterion. However, the results of the study showed that employment decisions are influenced greatly by political consideration which made the decisions to be devoid of objectivity. It was therefore concluded that employment decisions in the academic environment of the Nigerian labor market were not merit-based as the political interests have been used to substitute meritocracy with mediocrity without recourse to consequences.

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