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Evaluating recruitment efficiency, transparency, compliance, strategic alignment, and quality of hires in the National Historical Commission of the Philippines: Basis for an evidence-based recruitment plan

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Abstract

Aim: Public sector recruitment is a critical governance function that strengthens institutional capacity, promotes merit-based appointments, and enhances public service delivery. This study evaluated the recruitment process of the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP) by assessing recruitment efficiency, transparency, compliance with Civil Service Commission (CSC) policies, strategic alignment, quality of hires, and recruitment-related challenges. It also examined the relationship between recruitment performance and recruitment challenges and developed an evidence-based NHCP Recruitment Plan to support governance and institutional strengthening.

Methodology: The study employed a sequential explanatory mixed-methods research design. Quantitative data were collected through a structured survey administered to 158 permanent NHCP employees using total enumeration and were supplemented by documentary analysis of recruitment records from 2023–2025. Qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with purposively selected Human Resource Management Section personnel, Human Resource Merit Promotion and Selection Board members, and hiring supervisors. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation, while qualitative data were examined through thematic analysis. Findings from both phases were integrated through methodological triangulation.

Results: The findings revealed that NHCP's recruitment system was generally perceived as effective, obtaining an overall mean rating of 2.959 ("Agree"). Compliance received the highest assessment, demonstrating strong adherence to merit-based recruitment principles and CSC regulations. Quality of hires, efficiency, and strategic alignment were likewise rated favorably, whereas transparency received the lowest rating, indicating opportunities to strengthen applicant communication, feedback mechanisms, and recruitment visibility. Documentary and qualitative findings identified organizational challenges, including prolonged recruitment timelines, limited human resource capacity, approval constraints, communication gaps, and difficulties attracting specialized heritage professionals. Pearson's correlation analysis further revealed significant positive relationships between recruitment performance and recruitment-related challenges, with transparency demonstrating the strongest association.

Conclusion: The study concludes that NHCP maintains a generally effective and compliant recruitment system; however, organizational improvements are necessary to enhance efficiency, transparency, responsiveness, and strategic workforce management. The proposed NHCP Recruitment Plan provides an evidence-based governance framework integrating standardized recruitment workflows, digital recruitment monitoring, applicant communication mechanisms, workforce planning, and capacity-building initiatives. The findings contribute to governance and public administration scholarship by demonstrating how strategic human resource management can strengthen institutional capability, support evidence-informed policy development, and advance merit-based recruitment reforms in specialized government institutions.

Keywords: *recruitment process, public sector human resource management, recruitment efficiency, transparency, strategic alignment, NHCP, recruitment plan*



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INTRODUCTION

Human resources constitute a strategic asset of public institutions because the competence, availability, and commitment of government personnel directly influence institutional capability, governance performance, and the quality of public service delivery. Contemporary public administration recognizes recruitment not merely as an administrative staffing function but also as a strategic governance mechanism that strengthens institutional capacity, promotes transparency and accountability, and ensures that public organizations possess the human capital necessary to achieve policy objectives (Armstrong, 2014; Riccucci, 2024). Effective recruitment systems generate public value by ensuring that positions are filled through merit-based, competency-oriented, transparent, and equitable processes that support organizational effectiveness and sustainable public sector performance (Rosenbloom et al., 2020).

Recent international governance reforms have further reinforced the strategic importance of public sector recruitment. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2023) emphasizes that modern civil services must be agile, resilient, digitally enabled, and evidence-driven to address increasingly complex governance challenges. Correspondingly, the United Nations (2015) identifies effective, accountable, and inclusive public institutions as central to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions). Similarly, Hasnain et al. (2023) emphasize that strategic public employment, workforce planning, institutional capacity development, and public sector modernization are essential for improving government effectiveness, addressing evolving competency requirements, strengthening organizational resilience, and supporting sustainable development. Collectively, these international governance frameworks position recruitment as a critical governance process that strengthens organizational resilience, public trust, evidence-informed policymaking, and sustainable institutional development (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2015; Hasnain et al., 2023; OECD, 2023).

The emergence of digital government and open government initiatives has transformed public sector recruitment across many countries. Governments increasingly utilize digital recruitment platforms, electronic human resource management (e-HRM) systems, competency-based assessment methods, and workforce analytics to improve recruitment efficiency, transparency, accessibility, and organizational responsiveness (Bondarouk et al., 2017; Campion et al., 2020). Consistent with this trend, Hasnain et al. (2023) emphasize that digital transformation and modern human resource management systems enhance public sector recruitment and workforce management only when supported by sound governance arrangements, institutional capacity, effective leadership, and strategic workforce planning. These reforms reflect broader efforts to modernize public administration through innovation, digital transformation, governance performance evaluation, and strategic workforce planning. Hence, recruitment has evolved from a procedural personnel function into a strategic component of governance that contributes to institutional resilience, organizational sustainability, and improved public service delivery.

Review of Related Literature and Studies

Public Sector Recruitment as a Governance Function

Recent public administration scholarship increasingly conceptualizes recruitment as a strategic governance function rather than merely an administrative personnel activity. Across contemporary governance frameworks, scholars consistently argue that recruitment systems shape institutional capability, governance performance, organizational legitimacy, and public trust by determining the quality and integrity of the public workforce (OECD, 2023; UN DESA, 2023). Despite differences in institutional contexts, the literature converges on the view that merit-based recruitment remains a defining characteristic of effective democratic governance because appointments are grounded in competence, qualifications, and objective assessment rather than political patronage or personal connections (Van Thiel, 2014; Rosenbloom et al., 2020).

Recent empirical studies (e.g., Meyer-Sahling et al., 2021; Kristof-Brown et al., 2023; OECD, 2023) reinforce this consensus by consistently reporting positive associations between competency-based recruitment and organizational outcomes, including improved workforce quality, ethical behavior, organizational performance, and institutional resilience. However, these studies differ in their analytical focus. Some evaluate recruitment primarily through organizational performance indicators, whereas others emphasize governance outcomes such as accountability, legitimacy, or citizens' trust. Methodologically, most employ cross-sectional surveys or institutional case studies, providing valuable contextual insights but offering limited evidence regarding how multiple dimensions of recruitment interact within a single governance framework. Consequently, although the literature establishes the importance of recruitment for public governance, comparatively fewer studies simultaneously examine efficiency, transparency, compliance, and quality of hires as complementary indicators of recruitment performance.

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Another notable gap concerns the geographical concentration of existing evidence. Much of the recent scholarship originates from OECD member countries or broader comparative governance studies, where institutional environments, administrative capacity, and digital infrastructure differ substantially from those of many developing public organizations. Therefore, the applicability of these findings to specialized government agencies operating under distinct legal and organizational contexts remains insufficiently examined. The present study addresses this gap by evaluating recruitment within the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP), a specialized cultural institution operating under the Philippine civil service merit system. By integrating governance principles with multidimensional recruitment performance indicators, the study contributes to the literature by providing a more comprehensive assessment of recruitment as a governance mechanism that supports institutional effectiveness.

Strategic Human Resource Management in Public Institutions

Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) has evolved into a central component of contemporary public governance by aligning workforce capabilities with organizational priorities and long-term institutional objectives. While earlier public personnel administration emphasized staffing and regulatory compliance, recent scholarship views recruitment as part of an integrated human resource strategy encompassing workforce planning, competency-based recruitment, succession planning, talent management, and organizational capability development (Armstrong, 2014; Knies, 2021; Riccucci, 2024). Across these perspectives, scholars consistently argue that effective recruitment contributes not only to filling vacancies but also to sustaining organizational adaptability, innovation, and long-term institutional capacity.

Although there is broad agreement regarding the strategic role of recruitment, recent scholarship differs in explaining the mechanisms through which strategic human resource management (SHRM) enhances organizational performance. Beddeau (2023) emphasizes that SHRM strengthens organizational resilience through strategic workforce planning and competency alignment, while Knies (2021) highlights the importance of integrating strategic human resource management with employment relations to improve public sector performance. Furthermore, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2023) and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA, 2023) emphasize that adaptive human resource practices, leadership capacity, and workforce planning are essential for enabling public organizations to respond effectively to increasingly complex governance environments. Moreover, Hasnain et al. (2023) argue that effective public sector employment depends on integrating workforce planning, human resource management, and broader governance reforms to address demographic change, evolving competency requirements, and shortages in specialized occupations. Collectively, these perspectives demonstrate that strategic recruitment is a multidimensional governance function requiring alignment among organizational strategy, workforce planning, and institutional governance rather than isolated recruitment initiatives.

Digital transformation has further expanded the strategic role of public sector recruitment. Governments increasingly utilize electronic human resource management (e-HRM) systems, digital recruitment platforms, workforce analytics, artificial intelligence-assisted screening, and online assessment technologies to improve recruitment efficiency, transparency, and accessibility (Bondarouk et al., 2017; Campion et al., 2020). While the literature consistently reports operational benefits associated with digital recruitment, findings differ regarding its organizational impact. Bondarouk et al. (2017) argue that the effectiveness of e-HRM depends not only on technological adoption but also on organizational implementation and integration with human resource management practices. Correspondingly, the OECD (2023) and Hasnain et al. (2023) emphasize that digital technologies enhance public sector recruitment and workforce management only when supported by adequate institutional capacity, effective leadership, sound governance structures, and workforce competencies. In organizations with limited digital readiness, technological investments often yield only modest improvements. Collectively, these findings suggest that technology functions as an enabling rather than a determining factor in recruitment performance.

Despite substantial advances in SHRM research, existing studies predominantly examine strategic workforce planning, digital transformation, or competency management as separate areas of inquiry. Comparatively limited attention has been given to evaluating how these strategic initiatives collectively influence recruitment performance within specialized public institutions operating under highly regulated civil service systems. The present study contributes to this literature by examining recruitment through an integrated governance perspective that incorporates efficiency, transparency, compliance, and quality of hires while considering the institutional realities of a Philippine government agency responsible for preserving national cultural heritage.



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Recruitment Transparency and Accountability

Transparency is universally recognized as a foundational principle of good governance and an essential determinant of public confidence in government institutions. Within public sector recruitment, transparency encompasses the open publication of vacancies, clearly articulated qualification standards, objective selection procedures, timely communication with applicants, and accessible grievance mechanisms that collectively promote fairness and accountability (Breaugh, 2016). Across governance scholarship, transparency is consistently viewed as extending beyond procedural disclosure to include institutional practices that strengthen public legitimacy, reduce opportunities for favoritism and corruption, and reinforce merit-based decision-making (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2015).

Recent empirical literature generally supports the positive relationship between recruitment transparency and governance outcomes, although scholars differ in how transparency is conceptualized and operationalized. Kristof-Brown et al. (2023) emphasize that transparent and consistent recruitment practices facilitate person-organization fit by aligning applicants' values and competencies with organizational expectations, thereby enhancing perceptions of procedural fairness and organizational legitimacy. Comparably, Meyer-Sahling et al. (2021) demonstrate that merit-based and transparent recruitment systems strengthen public service motivation and reinforce confidence in public institutions. Complementing these perspectives, Beddeau (2023) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2023) highlight transparency, standardized selection procedures, and effective communication as essential components of strategic human resource management and good public governance. Collectively, these studies indicate that transparent recruitment enhances perceptions of fairness, strengthens organizational credibility, improves applicant confidence, and supports merit-based public sector employment.

However, the literature also identifies unresolved challenges. Many empirical studies evaluate transparency independently of other governance dimensions, making it difficult to determine how transparency interacts with recruitment efficiency, regulatory compliance, and workforce quality. Furthermore, transparency is frequently assessed through compliance-based indicators rather than stakeholder perceptions, potentially overlooking applicants' and employees' experiences of fairness and openness throughout the recruitment process. This methodological emphasis creates an important gap between procedural compliance and perceived governance quality.

The present study addresses these limitations by examining transparency as one component of a multidimensional governance framework rather than as an isolated administrative requirement. Specifically, transparency is evaluated alongside efficiency, compliance, and quality of hires to provide a more comprehensive assessment of recruitment performance within a specialized Philippine public institution. By integrating governance principles with stakeholder perceptions, the study contributes empirical evidence on how transparency functions within the broader recruitment system and informs the development of strategic recruitment policies that strengthen institutional accountability, organizational effectiveness, and public trust.

Research Gap

Although recent studies have examined merit-based recruitment, strategic human resource management, digital public administration, governance reforms, and organizational performance, these areas have largely been investigated in isolation. Relatively few empirical studies published between 2021 and 2026 have examined how recruitment efficiency, transparency, regulatory compliance, strategic alignment, quality of hires, and organizational challenges collectively shape recruitment governance within a single analytical framework, particularly in specialized public sector institutions. Moreover, existing research has focused predominantly on general government agencies, leaving cultural heritage organizations and other knowledge-intensive public institutions substantially underrepresented despite their distinctive workforce requirements, specialized competency demands, and complex institutional mandates.

Accordingly, previous studies have provided limited empirical evidence on how an integrated governance-based assessment of recruitment can inform strategic workforce planning and organizational reform in specialized public organizations. The absence of such evidence constrains the development of context-specific recruitment policies that strengthen institutional capability, workforce sustainability, organizational resilience, and public sector performance.

Addressing these gaps, the present study evaluates the recruitment process of the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP) through a comprehensive governance-oriented framework that integrates recruitment efficiency, transparency, regulatory compliance, strategic alignment, quality of hires, and organizational challenges. The study provides empirical evidence on how these governance dimensions interact within a specialized public sector institution and translates the findings into an evidence-based Recruitment Plan. In doing so, it

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contributes to governance scholarship by extending the empirical literature on recruitment governance in specialized government organizations and offers a context-specific framework that may inform strategic workforce planning, institutional capacity development, and continuous improvement in public sector recruitment.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in three complementary theories: Merit System Theory, New Public Management (NPM) Theory, and Person–Organization Fit Theory. Collectively, these theories provide the conceptual foundation for understanding recruitment as a governance function that promotes institutional capability, organizational effectiveness, and quality public service.

Merit System Theory provides the governance foundation of the study by emphasizing competence-based, impartial, and objective recruitment. The theory asserts that appointments should be based on qualifications and demonstrated competence rather than political patronage or personal influence, thereby promoting professionalism, accountability, transparency, and public trust (Rosenbloom et al., 2020; Van Thiel, 2014). In this study, Merit System Theory primarily supports the variables of recruitment compliance and transparency, as adherence to constitutional provisions, Civil Service Commission (CSC) policies, and the Omnibus Rules on Appointments and Other Human Resource Actions (ORAOHRA) ensures that recruitment decisions are conducted fairly, consistently, and in accordance with merit and fitness principles. By reinforcing regulatory compliance and transparent recruitment practices, the theory contributes to the legitimacy and integrity of public sector governance.

New Public Management (NPM) Theory explains recruitment as a strategic management function that emphasizes efficiency, performance, accountability, customer orientation, and continuous organizational improvement (Hood, 1991; Dunleavy et al., 2006). NPM provides the theoretical basis for the study's variables on recruitment efficiency and strategic alignment, highlighting the importance of streamlining recruitment processes, adopting digital innovations, utilizing performance measurement, and implementing evidence-based decision-making to improve organizational responsiveness and workforce planning. Contemporary public management scholarship further recognizes that strategic human resource management is integral to institutional performance and governance excellence (Ricucci, 2024; Knies, 2021). From this perspective, recruitment is viewed not merely as an administrative function but as a strategic governance mechanism that aligns human capital with organizational goals and long-term institutional priorities.

Person–Organization Fit Theory posits that recruitment performance depends not only on matching applicants' knowledge, skills, and abilities with job requirements but also on aligning individual values, competencies, and behaviors with organizational culture and strategic objectives (Breaugh, 2016; Armstrong, 2014). This theory provides the conceptual foundation for the study's quality of hires variable by emphasizing that successful recruitment extends beyond technical competence to include compatibility between employees and the organization's mission and work environment. It also provides insight into the personal and organizational challenges associated with recruitment, recognizing that mismatches between employee attributes and organizational expectations may affect recruitment outcomes, employee retention, and long-term organizational performance. This perspective is particularly relevant for specialized government agencies such as the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP), where technical expertise and commitment to heritage conservation are essential for organizational success.

Collectively, these theories provide an integrated framework that explains the interrelationships among the study variables. Merit System Theory underpins recruitment compliance and transparency; New Public Management Theory explains recruitment efficiency and strategic alignment; and Person–Organization Fit Theory supports the quality of hires while providing insight into recruitment-related personal and organizational challenges. Together, these theoretical perspectives conceptualize recruitment as a multidimensional governance process in which regulatory compliance, operational efficiency, transparency, strategic workforce alignment, and employee–organization compatibility collectively strengthen institutional capability, organizational resilience, and the quality of public service delivery.

Conceptual Framework

This study adopts the Input–Process–Output (IPO) Model to analyze the recruitment system of the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP) and serves as the foundation for developing an evidence-based Recruitment Plan.

The input component consists of the key recruitment governance dimensions examined in the study: recruitment efficiency, transparency, compliance with Civil Service Commission policies, strategic alignment, quality



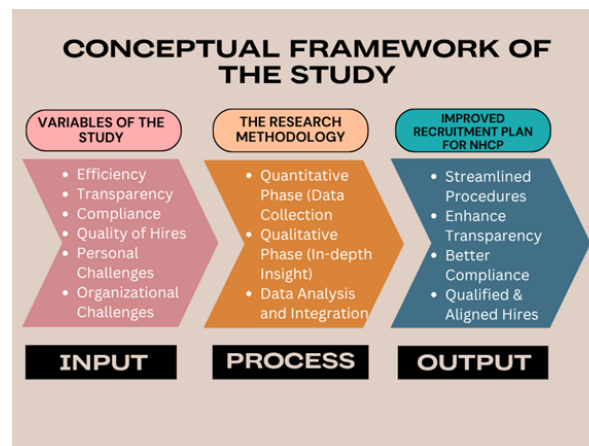
of hires, and recruitment-related personal and organizational challenges. These factors represent the institutional conditions and operational practices that influence recruitment outcomes.

The process component involves the implementation of a sequential explanatory mixed-methods approach. Quantitative data from employee surveys and institutional recruitment records were analyzed to determine recruitment performance and relationships among variables. Qualitative interviews were subsequently conducted to explain the organizational factors underlying the quantitative findings. The integration of multiple data sources through methodological triangulation provided a comprehensive assessment of NHCP's recruitment system.

The output component is the development of an evidence-based NHCP Recruitment Plan. The plan provides strategic interventions focused on improving recruitment efficiency, strengthening transparency, enhancing digital recruitment systems, improving workforce planning, and sustaining compliance with CSC policies and merit-based recruitment principles.

The framework assumes that effective management of recruitment processes and organizational challenges contributes to improved recruitment outcomes, stronger institutional capacity, and enhanced capability of NHCP to fulfill its mandate of preserving and promoting Philippine historical and cultural heritage.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study



Statement of the Problem

Effective recruitment is fundamental to ensuring that public sector organizations possess the human capital necessary to achieve organizational objectives and deliver quality public services. Although the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP) implements recruitment and selection procedures in accordance with Civil Service Commission (CSC) policies and the constitutional principles of merit and fitness, persistent challenges such as prolonged hiring timelines, unfilled Plantilla (government-authorized permanent positions established under the Philippine civil service system) positions, and difficulties in recruiting highly specialized professionals raise concerns regarding the efficiency and strategic responsiveness of its recruitment system. These challenges may affect workforce capability, organizational performance, and the agency's ability to fulfill its mandate of preserving, promoting, and protecting the nation's historical and cultural heritage. More broadly, strengthening recruitment systems contributes to evidence-based governance by enabling informed human resource policy decisions, enhancing institutional resilience through the development of a competent and sustainable workforce, and advancing public sector reform by promoting transparency, accountability, and merit-based human resource management. Consequently, improving recruitment processes is not only an organizational imperative but also a governance strategy that supports effective public administration and sustainable institutional performance.

Against this backdrop, the present study evaluates the effectiveness of NHCP's recruitment process from a strategic human resource management and governance perspective. Specifically, it assesses the recruitment system in terms of efficiency, transparency, compliance, and quality of hires; identifies the personal and organizational challenges that influence recruitment implementation; examines the relationship between recruitment performance and recruitment-related challenges; and, based on the empirical findings, develops an evidence-based Recruitment Plan to strengthen recruitment performance, strategic workforce planning, and institutional capacity within the NHCP.



Research Objectives

General Objective:

To evaluate the recruitment process of the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP) in terms of efficiency, transparency, compliance, strategic alignment, and quality of hires, and to develop an evidence-based Recruitment Plan that strengthens recruitment governance and institutional capacity.

Specific Objectives:

1. To assess the effectiveness of NHCP's recruitment process in terms of:
 - efficiency;
 - transparency;
 - compliance with Civil Service Commission recruitment policies and regulations;
 - strategic alignment with organizational workforce requirements; and
 - quality of hires.
2. To determine the extent of recruitment-related challenges experienced by NHCP in terms of:
 - personal-level challenges; and
 - organizational-level challenges.
3. To examine the relationship between recruitment performance and recruitment-related challenges.
4. To explore organizational and personal factors influencing recruitment implementation through qualitative inquiry.
5. To integrate quantitative and qualitative findings to develop an evidence-based NHCP Recruitment Plan.

Research Questions:

1. How effective is the recruitment process of the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP) in terms of:
 - Efficiency;
 - Transparency;
 - Compliance with the recruitment policies and regulations of the Philippine Civil Service Commission;
 - Strategic alignment; and
 - Quality of hires?
2. To what extent are recruitment-related challenges experienced by NHCP in terms of:
 - Personal-level challenges; and
 - Organizational-level challenges?
3. Is there a statistically significant relationship between the effectiveness of NHCP's recruitment process and recruitment-related challenges in terms of personal-level and organizational-level challenges?
4. What organizational and personal factors explain the quantitative findings regarding the effectiveness of NHCP's recruitment process and the recruitment-related challenges encountered?
5. How can the quantitative and qualitative findings be integrated to inform the development of an evidence-based Recruitment Plan for NHCP?

Research Hypothesis

Null Hypothesis (H₀): There is no statistically significant relationship between the effectiveness of NHCP's recruitment process and recruitment-related challenges.

Alternative Hypothesis (H₁): There is a statistically significant relationship between the effectiveness of NHCP's recruitment process and recruitment-related challenges.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a sequential explanatory mixed-methods research design to evaluate the recruitment system of the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP). The design was selected because it enabled the quantitative assessment of recruitment performance using established governance indicators, followed by a qualitative inquiry to explain the organizational factors underlying the quantitative findings. Compared with other



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mixed-methods approaches, the sequential explanatory design is particularly suitable for governance evaluation because it prioritizes objective performance measurement before exploring contextual explanations, thereby generating evidence-informed insights for organizational improvement and policy development.

Population and Sampling

The study was conducted at the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP), Manila, Philippines.

For the quantitative component, total enumeration sampling was employed. All 177 permanent Plantilla employees were invited to participate in the survey, yielding 158 valid responses that were included in the analysis.

For the qualitative component, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with seven key informants who possessed direct knowledge of and substantive involvement in the implementation of the NHCP recruitment process. The key informants comprised:

- 1 Human Resource Management Section personnel;
- 2 Human Resource Merit Promotion and Selection Board (HRMPSB) members;
- 2 Division chiefs; and
- 2 Hiring supervisors.

Institutional documents—including recruitment accomplishment reports, vacancy records, appointment processing data, Plantilla inventories, and relevant Civil Service Commission (CSC) issuances—were also reviewed to supplement the primary data.

Instruments

Data were collected using two researcher-developed instruments: (1) a structured survey questionnaire and (2) a semi-structured interview guide.

The structured survey questionnaire was developed based on the literature on public sector recruitment, strategic human resource management, governance, and relevant Civil Service Commission (CSC) policies, particularly the Omnibus Rules on Appointments and Other Human Resource Actions (ORAOHRA). The instrument measured six constructs: recruitment efficiency, transparency, regulatory compliance, strategic alignment, quality of hires, and recruitment-related challenges, using a four-point Likert scale.

To establish content validity, the questionnaire was evaluated independently by two experts with demonstrated expertise in public administration, human resource management, and research methodology. The experts assessed the instrument for relevance, clarity, comprehensiveness, and alignment with the study objectives and the operational definitions of the constructs. Their recommendations were incorporated through revisions that improved item wording, eliminated ambiguities, and ensured consistency with applicable CSC policies and the conceptual framework of the study.

Table 1

Internal Consistency Reliability of the Survey Instrument

Variables	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
Current Recruitment Process Indicators			
Efficiency	3	0.759	Acceptable
Transparency	5	0.892	Good
Compliance	4	0.922	Excellent
Quality of Hires	5	0.907	Good
Issues and Challenges			
Personal-level	6	0.809	Good
Organizational-level	9	0.768	Acceptable

The revised questionnaire was pilot-tested among 20 NHCP personnel who were not included in the final survey sample. Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The results indicated acceptable to excellent reliability across all constructs, with coefficients ranging from 0.759 to 0.922, exceeding the recommended minimum threshold of 0.70.



The semi-structured interview guide was developed to complement the quantitative findings by exploring participants' experiences and perspectives regarding recruitment practices, organizational challenges, institutional constraints, and opportunities for strengthening the NHCP recruitment system. The interview questions were aligned with the study objectives and the key quantitative constructs to facilitate integration during the qualitative phase of the sequential explanatory mixed-methods design.

Data Collection

Data collection commenced after obtaining institutional approval from the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP) and ethical clearance from the Polytechnic University of the Philippines–University Research Ethics Center (PUP-UREC).

During the quantitative phase, the validated survey questionnaire was administered to permanent Plantilla employees from April to May 2026. Concurrently, documentary records covering NHCP recruitment activities from 2023 to 2025 were obtained and analyzed to provide objective indicators of recruitment performance.

Following the preliminary analysis of the quantitative findings, semi-structured interviews were conducted from April to May 2026 with seven key informants who had direct knowledge of and involvement in the implementation of the NHCP recruitment process. Conducting the survey and interviews within the same data collection period facilitated the timely capture of participants' perceptions and organizational experiences while allowing the qualitative data to provide contextual insights into the quantitative findings. The quantitative and qualitative data were subsequently integrated during the interpretation stage of the sequential explanatory mixed-methods design.

Treatment of Data

Quantitative data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and standard deviation, were used to summarize respondent characteristics and assess recruitment performance. Instrument reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, while Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation was employed to examine the relationships between recruitment performance and recruitment-related challenges. Statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$.

Qualitative interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis through data familiarization, coding, theme development, and interpretation. The quantitative and qualitative findings were integrated during the interpretation phase of the sequential explanatory mixed-methods design, with qualitative themes used to explain and contextualize the quantitative results. This integration provided a more comprehensive understanding of NHCP's recruitment system and informed the development of the proposed NHCP Recruitment Plan.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to established ethical standards for research involving human participants. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Polytechnic University of the Philippines–University Research Ethics Center (PUP-UREC), and institutional permission was secured from the NHCP before data collection.

Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents prior to their participation. Participants were informed of the study's objectives, procedures, potential risks and benefits, and their right to withdraw at any stage without penalty. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained by excluding personally identifiable information from the dataset and presenting findings only in aggregate or anonymized form. All research data were securely managed in accordance with the provisions of the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2

Recruitment Process

Recruitment Indicators	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
Compliance	3.106	Agree	1
Quality of Hires	2.985	Agree	2
Efficiency	2.937	Agree	3
Transparency	2.808	Agree	4



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Grand Mean

2.959

Agree

Note: 3.51–4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.51–3.50 = Agree; 1.51–2.50 = Disagree; 1.00–1.50 = Strongly Disagree.

The overall mean of 2.959 indicates that respondents generally perceived NHCP's recruitment system as effective, with all recruitment dimensions receiving an "Agree" rating. Among the indicators, compliance obtained the highest mean (3.106), suggesting that respondents recognized the organization's strong adherence to Civil Service Commission regulations, merit principles, and standardized recruitment procedures. This finding is comparable with the cross-national study of Meyer-Sahling et al. (2021), which demonstrated that merit-based recruitment enhances perceptions of fairness, professionalism, and public service motivation across public organizations. In the same manner, Riccucci (2024) argued that compliance with merit principles remains the cornerstone of effective public personnel management because it strengthens institutional legitimacy and reduces opportunities for political patronage.

However, while the present findings support previous research emphasizing the importance of regulatory compliance, they also differ from studies conducted in several developing public administrations where legal compliance alone has not translated into positive employee perceptions of recruitment performance. For example, the OECD (2023) reported that many government organizations maintain legally compliant recruitment systems but continue to experience concerns regarding procedural transparency, applicant engagement, and communication throughout the recruitment process. Similarly, UN DESA (2023) observed that contemporary public sector reforms increasingly emphasize governance quality beyond regulatory compliance by incorporating transparency, responsiveness, and citizen-centered service delivery into human resource management practices. The present study reflects this distinction. Although NHCP respondents perceived compliance very positively, transparency received the lowest rating (2.808) among the recruitment dimensions despite remaining within the "Agree" category.

This finding may reflect the NHCP's institutional context as a specialized cultural heritage agency operating under highly standardized Civil Service Commission procedures. Compliance mechanisms are well institutionalized and regularly monitored, resulting in strong perceptions of procedural fairness. In contrast, transparency depends not only on adherence to legal requirements but also on proactive communication with applicants, timely dissemination of recruitment updates, and accessible feedback mechanisms. These governance practices often require greater organizational resources and digital capabilities than regulatory compliance alone. Thus, the findings suggest that while NHCP has successfully institutionalized merit-based recruitment, further improvements in applicant communication and digital recruitment practices could strengthen transparency without compromising compliance. This distinction contributes to the growing international literature suggesting that effective recruitment governance requires balancing procedural accountability with applicant-centered public service delivery rather than treating legal compliance as the sole indicator of recruitment quality.

Table 3

Issues and Challenges

Issues and Challenges	Overall Mean	Interpretation	Rank
Organizational Level Challenges	2.447	Disagree	1
Personal Level Challenges	2.366	Disagree	2
Grand Mean	2.406	Disagree	

Respondents generally disagreed that recruitment-related challenges were prevalent within NHCP, although organizational-level challenges received slightly higher ratings than personal-level challenges. These findings generally support Knies (2021), who emphasized that organizational systems, leadership support, and workforce planning exert greater influence on recruitment outcomes than individual employee characteristics. In addition, UN DESA (2023) identified organizational capacity—including institutional processes, governance arrangements, and human resource capability—as a critical determinant of recruitment performance in public institutions.

Nevertheless, the present findings differ from many recent empirical studies conducted in larger government agencies where organizational challenges were perceived as substantial barriers to effective recruitment. For example, the OECD (2023) documented that public organizations in many countries continue to experience significant recruitment difficulties arising from workforce shortages, budget limitations, administrative complexity, and increasing competition for highly qualified professionals. In contrast, NHCP respondents generally perceived these challenges as relatively limited, as reflected in the overall "Disagree" rating.



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Several contextual factors may explain this difference. First, NHCP is a relatively small and specialized government institution with well-established recruitment procedures and centralized human resource management practices, which allows for greater procedural consistency compared to larger agencies with decentralized recruitment systems. Second, respondents evaluated challenges from an internal organizational perspective rather than comparing NHCP with broader public sector conditions. Finally, the existence of standardized Civil Service Commission recruitment guidelines may have reduced perceived organizational uncertainty despite the agency's continuing operational constraints. These findings therefore suggest that organizational size, governance structure, and institutional specialization may moderate how recruitment challenges are perceived, highlighting the importance of organizational context when interpreting recruitment governance outcomes across different public institutions.

Table 4
Documentary Analysis of Recruitment Performance (2023–2025)

Recruitment Indicator	2023	2024	2025	Interpretation
Vacancies Filled	30	17	13	Below annual targets
Publication-to-Assumption (Days)	172 days	165 days	154 days	Processing exceeded target
Deliberation-to-Assumption (Days)	52 days	72 days	75 days	Recruitment delays observed
Appointment Processing Target	47 days	47 days	47 days	Target not consistently achieved
Vacant Positions	56	58	59	Persistent vacancies

The documentary analysis revealed persistent vacancies and recruitment timelines that consistently exceeded organizational targets despite continued compliance with Civil Service Commission procedures. These findings are generally consistent with Riccucci (2024), who observed that public organizations frequently experience lengthy recruitment processes because of multiple administrative review stages, legal requirements, and merit-based selection procedures. Similarly, the OECD (2023) emphasized that recruitment performance should be evaluated using multiple governance indicators, including timeliness, workforce planning, vacancy management, and organizational responsiveness, rather than regulatory compliance alone.

Despite these similarities, the present study also demonstrates an important distinction from many international public organizations, where prolonged recruitment is primarily attributed to bureaucratic inefficiencies. At NHCP, recruitment delays appear to result not only from administrative processes but also from the agency's specialized workforce requirements. Positions frequently require expertise in history, cultural heritage conservation, archives management, archaeology, museum operations, and related disciplines, thereby substantially reducing the pool of qualified applicants compared with general administrative positions.

This institutional context provides an important explanation for the recruitment delays observed. Whereas international studies often associate prolonged recruitment with governance weaknesses, the present findings suggest that extended recruitment periods may also reflect labor market conditions and specialized competency requirements rather than deficiencies in recruitment governance alone. Hence, evaluating recruitment efficiency solely through processing time may underestimate the complexity of staffing knowledge-intensive public organizations. The findings, therefore, contribute to public administration scholarship by demonstrating that recruitment performance indicators should be interpreted alongside institutional mandates, workforce specialization, and labor market availability to avoid oversimplified assessments of organizational effectiveness.

Table 5
Relationship Between Recruitment Performance and Personal-Level, Organizational-Level, and Overall Recruitment Challenges

Recruitment Indicators	Personal-Level Challenges			Organizational-Level Challenges			Overall Recruitment Challenges		
	Pearson <i>r</i>	<i>p</i> -value	Decision	Pearson <i>r</i>	<i>p</i> -value	Decision	Pearson <i>r</i>	<i>p</i> -value	Decision
Efficiency	0.123	.122	Do not Reject <i>H</i> ₀	0.305	.0001	Reject <i>H</i> ₀	0.233	.0003	Reject <i>H</i> ₀
Transparency	0.304	.000	Reject	0.421	.0001	Reject	0.397	.0001	Reject



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Compliance	0.261	.001	Ho Reject	0.403	.0001	Ho Reject	0.363	.0001	Ho Reject
Quality of Hires	0.275	.000	Ho Reject	0.335	.0001	Ho Reject	0.335	.0001	Ho Reject
Overall	0.266	.001	Reject Ho	0.403	.0001	Reject Ho	0.366	.0001	Reject Ho

The correlation analysis demonstrated statistically significant positive relationships between recruitment performance and recruitment-related challenges, particularly organizational-level challenges, with transparency exhibiting the strongest association among the recruitment dimensions. These findings support Knies (2021), who argued that organizational practices, communication systems, and institutional leadership substantially influence employees' perceptions of human resource effectiveness. In addition, Meyer-Sahling et al. (2021) concluded that transparent and merit-based recruitment practices strengthen employee confidence, institutional legitimacy, and trust in public organizations.

However, the present findings extend previous research by demonstrating that transparency was more strongly associated with organizational challenges than efficiency or quality of hires. This suggests that employees' perceptions of recruitment performance are influenced less by recruitment outcomes themselves than by how recruitment processes are communicated, managed, and explained throughout the organization. This observation aligns with recent governance literature emphasizing transparency as an essential dimension of public sector accountability rather than merely a procedural requirement (OECD, 2023; UN DESA, 2023).

Another notable finding is the absence of a statistically significant relationship between efficiency and personal-level challenges. This differs from several studies that have linked recruitment delays to individual competencies, recruiter experience, or employee workload. A plausible explanation is that NHCP's recruitment process is governed by standardized Civil Service Commission procedures that minimize variation attributable to individual employees. Instead, recruitment timelines are more likely influenced by organizational approval processes, panel scheduling, documentary requirements, and the limited availability of qualified applicants for specialized positions. These findings reinforce the principles of New Public Management, which emphasize improving organizational systems, workflow integration, and governance processes rather than focusing solely on individual employee performance. They also suggest that future recruitment reforms should prioritize institutional process improvements, inter-office coordination, and digital workflow management to achieve sustainable improvements in recruitment efficiency.

Table 6
Thematic Categorization of Recruitment-Related Statements

Theme	Code
Strong Compliance with CSC Rules and Procedures	Regulatory compliance; proper record management; continuous compliance monitoring; capacity building for compliance; internal control measures.
Importance of Competency-Based Hiring and Employee Development	Merit-based hiring practices; effective selection mechanisms; adequate quality of hires; continuous capability development.
Recruitment Delays Due to Limited Manpower and Scheduling Constraints	Recruitment process has improved over time; human resource constraints; coordination and scheduling challenges; administrative bottlenecks; slow position-filling process.
Challenges in Recruiting Specialized and Technical Positions	Workforce integration challenges; scarcity of specialized talent; specialized position requirements; recruitment market constraints; competency requirements; external recruitment challenges.
Operational Impact of Prolonged Vacancies	Workforce strain; service delivery challenges; operational inefficiencies; reduced organizational effectiveness; human resource consequences.
Need for Improved Applicant Communication and Transparency	Accessibility of recruitment information; inadequate communication of selection criteria; lack of feedback mechanisms; communication



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Need for Enhanced Digitalization and
Recruitment Automation

gaps; perceived threats to transparency.
Digital recruitment processes; process automation; virtual
recruitment tools; improved communication; data-driven
recruitment management.

The thematic analysis identified seven dominant themes: strong regulatory compliance, competency-based hiring, recruitment delays caused by manpower and scheduling constraints, difficulty recruiting specialized professionals, operational impacts of prolonged vacancies, communication and transparency concerns, and the need for digital recruitment systems. These themes generally support Kristof-Brown et al. (2023), who emphasized that successful recruitment depends on achieving alignment between organizational competency requirements and applicant qualifications. Likewise, Beddeau (2023) argued that strategic human resource management should integrate recruitment with broader organizational objectives, while the OECD (2023) highlighted digital transformation as a critical mechanism for improving recruitment efficiency, transparency, and organizational responsiveness.

Although these themes align with recent international literature, the present study also highlights governance characteristics that are less frequently discussed in previous research. Most international studies focus on recruitment challenges associated with large civil service systems or general government agencies, whereas NHCP operates within a specialized cultural heritage environment requiring highly technical and profession-specific competencies. As a result, recruitment challenges identified in this study arise not only from organizational processes but also from the scarcity of qualified professionals in highly specialized occupational fields. This finding suggests that digitalization alone may not fully resolve recruitment delays if labor market supply remains limited.

Accordingly, recruitment reforms for specialized public institutions should extend beyond process automation to include long-term workforce planning, partnerships with higher education institutions, competency development initiatives, succession planning, and targeted talent attraction strategies. By integrating quantitative and qualitative evidence, the present study demonstrates that effective recruitment governance in knowledge-intensive public organizations requires balancing regulatory compliance, organizational efficiency, transparency, workforce planning, and specialized talent acquisition. This broader governance perspective represents a meaningful contribution to the international public administration literature by illustrating how institutional specialization shapes recruitment performance and governance outcomes in ways that differ from those observed in larger or more generalized public sector organizations.

Conclusions

The study concludes that the recruitment system of the National Historical Commission of the Philippines is generally effective and demonstrates strong adherence to merit-based recruitment principles and Civil Service Commission regulations. Nevertheless, organizational constraints—including prolonged recruitment timelines, limited human resource capacity, communication gaps, and difficulties in recruiting specialized professionals—continue to affect recruitment efficiency and institutional responsiveness. The findings demonstrate that recruitment performance is influenced not only by regulatory compliance but also by organizational capability, strategic workforce planning, and governance capacity. The study contributes to governance and public administration scholarship by conceptualizing recruitment as a strategic governance mechanism and by providing empirical evidence that informs institutional reform through an evidence-based NHCP Recruitment Plan. These conclusions are supported by the quantitative and qualitative evidence generated in the study and provide a foundation for strengthening recruitment governance within specialized government institutions.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, several recommendations are proposed to strengthen recruitment governance and support the long-term human resource management objectives of the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP).

First, NHCP should strengthen its digital recruitment systems by adopting technology-enabled recruitment mechanisms such as applicant tracking systems, electronic recruitment monitoring, digital recruitment records management, and automated applicant notification systems. The integration of these digital solutions can streamline recruitment processes, reduce administrative delays, improve transparency, enhance the accuracy of recruitment records, and generate reliable performance data to support evidence-based human resource decision-making.

Second, NHCP should enhance recruitment transparency and communication by establishing a structured applicant communication framework that provides regular recruitment status updates, standardized communication



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protocols, applicant feedback mechanisms, and accessible recruitment information channels. Strengthening communication throughout the recruitment process can improve applicants' understanding of recruitment procedures, increase transparency, reinforce perceptions of procedural fairness, and strengthen public trust and institutional credibility.

Third, the agency should improve the capacity of its Human Resource Management Section (HRMS) by ensuring adequate staffing support, providing specialized training in strategic human resource management, strengthening recruitment analytics capabilities, and promoting continuous professional development. Investing in HRMS capacity will better equip recruitment personnel to manage increasingly complex staffing requirements, implement strategic recruitment initiatives, and sustain effective compliance with Civil Service Commission policies and merit-based recruitment principles.

Fourth, NHCP should institutionalize strategic workforce planning by integrating recruitment planning with long-term organizational priorities. This may be achieved through competency mapping, workforce forecasting, succession planning, the identification of critical positions, and the development of targeted recruitment strategies for specialized heritage professions. A strategic workforce planning approach can reduce vacancy risks, improve workforce sustainability, and ensure that the agency maintains the specialized competencies necessary to fulfill its mandate of preserving and promoting Philippine historical and cultural heritage.

Finally, NHCP should establish a comprehensive recruitment performance monitoring system by developing measurable indicators such as recruitment cycle time, vacancy filling rate, applicant satisfaction, quality-of-hire measures, and compliance with Civil Service Commission policies. Regular monitoring and evaluation of these performance indicators will provide management with empirical evidence to support continuous process improvement, facilitate data-driven decision-making, and strengthen accountability and overall recruitment governance.

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