

Quota System Recruitment and Performance of Benue State University Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria

Dr. Aondokighir, Terzungwe

Business Administration, Federal University Wukari, Taraba State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effect of quota system recruitment on the performance of Benue State University, Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria. Specifically, it assessed the influence of merit–quota balance, skill–job matching, and political interference on institutional performance. The study was anchored on Organizational Justice Theory as proposed by Jerald Greenberg (1990). A survey research design was adopted, with a study population of 699 staff of Benue State University, Makurdi, from which a sample size of 254 respondents was drawn. Data were collected using an adapted questionnaire. Multiple regression analysis was employed for data analysis with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 27. The findings revealed a strong positive association between quota system recruitment and the performance of Benue State University, Makurdi. Further results showed that the quota system recruitment dimensions merit–quota balance, skill–job matching, and political interference have significant effects on the university’s performance.

Keywords: Quota system recruitment, performance, merit–quota balance, skill–job matching, political interference.

INTRODUCTION/PROBLEMATIC

Benue State University serves as a prominent centre of academic excellence and intellectual development within Nigeria’s Middle Belt region. Established in 1992 by the Benue State Government, Benue State University, Makurdi was founded with the mandate to broaden access to quality higher education and to promote research targeted at addressing pressing societal challenges (Ademola, Johnson, & Adewale, 2020). Situated in Makurdi, the capital city of Benue State, the university offers a serene and enabling environment that supports learning, innovation, and character development.

Over the years, the university has evolved into a reputable citadel of learning, providing diverse undergraduate and postgraduate programmes across several faculties, including Arts, Education, Social Sciences, Law, Science, Management Sciences, Environmental Sciences, and Health Sciences. The institution is committed to producing graduates who are academically competent, morally upright, and socially responsible, with the capacity to contribute meaningfully to national development, in line with the standards and guidelines of the National Universities Commission (2022).

Against this backdrop, the present study examines the influence of quota system recruitment on employee performance at Benue State University, Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria. Quota system recruitment refers to the deliberate allocation of a specified proportion of employment opportunities to designated groups in order to promote social inclusion and equal opportunity, while still maintaining minimum merit requirements (Manzoor, Qureshi, & Hassan, 2020). Employee performance, on the other hand, is conceptualized as the extent to which assigned tasks are accomplished in relation to established standards of accuracy, completeness, cost efficiency, and timeliness (Armstrong, 2022).

Within this context, merit–quota balance is defined as a structured allocation mechanism that combines academic or professional merit with socio-regional representation in order to achieve both excellence and inclusiveness (Olaniyan, 2025). Skill–job matching refers to the degree of alignment between an employee’s skills,

competencies, and abilities and the specific requirements of a given job role (Springer, 2025). Political interference denotes the undue involvement or influence of political actors in administrative and personnel decisions that ought to be guided by professional, technical, or merit-based considerations (Ozugbo & Agbade, 2023).

Accordingly, this study investigates how quota system recruitment proxied by merit–quota balance, skill–job matching, and political interference affects the performance of Benue State University, Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria.

Benue State University, Makurdi (BSU), Makurdi, occupies a strategic position in Nigeria’s educational landscape, contributing to national development through the production of skilled graduates, the advancement of research, and the promotion of socio-economic growth (Okoye, 2021). Beyond serving as a hub of academic excellence for Benue State, the university plays a vital role in meeting national manpower requirements and supporting the emergence of a knowledge-driven society. Notwithstanding these contributions, BSU—like many Nigerian universities—continues to grapple with challenges related to sustaining optimal staff performance, a factor that is central to the delivery of quality education and long-term institutional growth.

A key source of these challenges is the recruitment process, particularly the implementation of the quota system. While quota-based recruitment is designed to promote equity and fair representation, its application across Nigerian universities has, in some instances, resulted in compromised meritocracy, weak skill–job alignment, and undue political influence (Eze & Musa). Existing empirical studies on quota system recruitment have largely emphasized policy objectives and demographic representation, with limited attention to its direct consequences for organizational performance, employee competence, and institutional efficiency (Ibrahim, 2019). Moreover, many of these studies do not sufficiently interrogate how critical dimensions of the quota system such as merit–quota balance, skill–job matching, and political interference interact to shape performance outcomes, thereby leaving a notable gap in empirical knowledge.

Persistent issues relating to merit–quota imbalance, where recruitment decisions prioritize regional or political considerations over competence, skill–job mismatch that undermines employee effectiveness, and political interference that weakens transparency in hiring processes remain evident across universities and are yet to be adequately examined within the context of BSU (Olatunji, 2021). These challenges pose serious threats to the university’s ability to fulfill its mandate of delivering high-quality teaching, research, and community service. Consequently, this study investigates the effect of quota system recruitment on the performance of Benue State University, Makurdi, with the aim of generating actionable insights that can inform recruitment policy reforms, enhance staff performance, and strengthen overall institutional efficiency.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the effect quota system recruitment on performance of Benue State University Makurdi, Benue state, Nigeria. The specific objectives include to:

- i. determine the effect merit quota balance on performance of Benue State University Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria.
- ii. examine the effect of skill job matching on performance of Benue State University Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria.
- iii. identify the effect of political interference on performance of Benue State University Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

- i. what is the effect merit quota balance on performance of Benue State University Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria?

- ii. what is the impact of skill job matching on performance of Benue State University Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria?
- iii. what is the effect of political interference on performance of Benue State University Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are formulated in null form

H₀₁ merit quota balance has no positive effect on performance of Benue State University Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria

H₀₂ skill job matching has no significant effect on performance Benue State University Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria

H₀₃ political interference has no effect on performance Benue State University Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria.

Conceptual Review

Concept of Quota System Recruitment

quota system in recruitment refers to a formal policy framework that establishes predetermined numerical targets or percentages for the hiring, placement, or representation of specific groups such as gender categories, persons with disabilities, regional populations, or other demographic segments within an organization's workforce. These targets are monitored and enforceable, and are typically introduced to address under-representation, comply with legal requirements, or promote diversity, equity, and inclusive participation in employment. Under this system, a specified proportion of available positions is reserved for designated groups, including historically marginalized populations, ethnic or religious minorities, residents of underrepresented regions, and persons with disabilities. Although applicants are generally required to meet basic merit criteria and pass standard assessments, quota considerations are often applied at the final stage of recruitment as a form of affirmative action to enhance equitable representation (Manzoor, Qureshi, & Hassan, 2020).

Similarly, a hiring quota is defined as a numerical target or benchmark set by an organization to recruit a specific number or percentage of employees from particular demographic groups in order to enhance diversity and representation within the workforce (Wikipedia, 2025). Such quotas may be voluntary or legally mandated, depending on national laws and industry regulations, and can be applied at various stages of the recruitment process, including applications, shortlisting, interviews, and final hiring decisions (Wikipedia, 2025).

Merit Quota balance

Merit–quota balance refers to a deliberate policy equilibrium between merit-based recruitment criteria such as competence, qualifications, examination performance, and experience and quota or representational provisions aimed at including disadvantaged or underrepresented groups. According to the World Bank (2020), effective public sector recruitment systems should integrate meritocratic standards with equity safeguards in order to strengthen institutional capacity while promoting social inclusion. In this context, merit–quota balance ensures that recruitment outcomes are not driven solely by competitive performance or representational considerations, but by a structured integration of both to achieve efficiency and fairness.

Similarly, the United Nations (2021) emphasizes that inclusive governance in public institutions requires the preservation of professional competence alongside deliberate efforts to address structural inequalities through representation policies. Accordingly, merit–quota balance may be defined as a regulatory mechanism that harmonizes merit principles with distributive justice objectives within recruitment processes.

Skill job matching

Skill–job matching refers to the alignment between an employee’s knowledge, skills, abilities, and competencies and the specific requirements of a job role. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2019), effective skill–job matching occurs when workers’ qualifications correspond with job tasks, thereby improving productivity and organizational efficiency, while skill mismatches reduce performance. Similarly, the International Labour Organization (2020) defines skill–job matching as the appropriate placement of individuals in roles that fit their technical, cognitive, and social skills to maximize labour productivity.

Within quota-based recruitment systems, skill–job matching implies that while representational objectives are pursued, selected candidates must still meet competence requirements to sustain performance. Supporting this view, Pouliakas and Redmond (2021) and Allen and van der Velden (2019) emphasize that proper alignment between employee competencies and job demands enhances productivity and service delivery, whereas mismatch leads to inefficiency and reduced institutional performance.

Political Interference

Political interference refers to the undue involvement of political actors or authorities in administrative processes, including recruitment and staffing, which compromises merit-based procedures in favor of political objectives or favoritism. Ugur and Trondal (2018) explain that such interference occurs when political principals improperly influence bureaucratic decisions that should be autonomously managed by public institutions, undermining fairness and efficiency. In the context of quota system recruitment, political interference arises when appointments prioritize political loyalty over established criteria and candidate competence.

Ademola, Johnson, and Adewale (2020) note that political elites can manipulate recruitment, promotion, or placement processes, overriding merit benchmarks or quota arrangements meant to ensure equitable representation, often resulting in staff placements misaligned with skill–job requirements and institutional needs. Similarly, Khan and Khandaker (2021) define political interference as the intrusion of political considerations into bureaucratic recruitment, where political influence supersedes procedural and meritocratic norms, potentially compromising organizational efficiency and performance.

Concept of Performance of a state University

Performance in a state university refers to how effectively the institution achieves its core objectives of teaching, research, and community service while efficiently managing its human, financial, and material resources. It is a multidimensional concept that combines academic outcomes, administrative efficiency, and societal impact.

Academic performance captures measurable outcomes such as student learning achievements, graduation rates, research productivity, and teaching quality, reflecting the university’s ability to produce competent graduates and advance knowledge (Okafor & Nwosu, 2021). Administrative and operational performance relates to effective resource management, staff efficiency, infrastructure utilization, and the smooth implementation of policies that support academic and research activities (Adebayo & Musa, 2022).

Additionally, performance in a state university includes its contribution to societal development through community engagement, knowledge dissemination, and responsiveness to regional and national needs. Thus, evaluating university performance involves assessing how well it integrates academic excellence, resource management, and societal relevance to fulfill its institutional mandate (Okafor & Nwosu, 2021; Adebayo & Musa, 2022).

Measure of performance of a state University

The performance of a state university can be measured through a combination of academic, administrative, and operational indicators. Academic performance includes student outcomes, graduation rates, research productivity, and quality of teaching (Okafor & Nwosu, 2021). Administrative performance assesses the efficiency of resource management, staff effectiveness, and adherence to institutional policies. Operational

performance evaluates how well the university utilizes its facilities and infrastructure to support learning, research, and community engagement (Adebayo & Musa, 2022). Together, these measures provide a comprehensive view of how effectively a state university achieves its educational and societal objectives.

Theoretical Framework

For the purpose of this study, Organizational Justice Theory, as advanced by Greenberg (1990), served as the theoretical underpinning guiding the analysis and interpretation of the findings.

Organizational Justice Theory

Organizational Justice Theory explains how employees' perceptions of fairness in organizational processes influence their attitudes, behaviours, and ultimately performance outcomes. The theory emerged from Equity Theory (Adams, 1965) and was later expanded by Greenberg (1990) and Colquitt et al. (2001), who conceptualized justice in organizations as comprising distributive, procedural, interpersonal, and informational dimensions. According to Greenberg (1990), organizational justice refers to employees' perceptions of fairness in decision-making processes and outcomes within the workplace. Colquitt et al. (2001) further argue that fairness perceptions significantly predict job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and performance. Thus, the theory posits that when employees perceive institutional processes as fair, they are more motivated, committed, and productive; when they perceive injustice, morale and performance decline.

Critics of Organizational Justice Theory argue that it relies heavily on employees' perceptions of fairness, which are subjective and may introduce bias, making causal links to performance difficult to establish (Cropanzano et al., 2017). The theory also assumes fairness affects all employees similarly, overlooking cultural, contextual, and individual differences (Colquitt et al., 2013). Additionally, it underemphasizes structural or external factors, such as political interference, that can affect performance regardless of perceived fairness.

Applying Organizational Justice Theory (Greenberg, 1990) to Benue State University, Makurdi, staff perceptions of fairness in recruitment strongly influence performance. Merit–quota balance promotes distributive justice by ensuring appointments consider both competence and equitable representation, enhancing motivation and institutional effectiveness. Skill–job matching reflects procedural justice, as aligning employees' competencies with job requirements fosters engagement and productivity. Conversely, political interference undermines both distributive and procedural justice, creating perceptions of unfairness that demotivate staff and reduce performance. Thus, fair and transparent recruitment practices are critical for optimizing staff performance and overall organizational outcomes.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Merit quota balance and performance

Onyeiwu (2024) examined the impact of the quota system and federal character principle on employee performance in the Abia State Oil Producing Area Development Commission. Using a survey design, data were collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed with descriptive statistics and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient. The study found that implementation of the quota system and federal character principles significantly influenced appointments, promotions, and retirements, demonstrating the effect of recruitment policies on employee performance. It recommended that recruitment and promotions prioritize qualifications, experience, and professionalism alongside quota considerations. However, the study did not clearly define merit–quota balance, and ethical considerations were not explicitly reported, limiting generalizability.

Similarly, Mebom (2024) investigated the effect of quota-based recruitment on worker competency in selected public enterprises in Rivers State. Using a descriptive survey design, 351 employees were sampled from a population of 2,867 via Taro Yamane's formula. Data collected through structured questionnaires were analyzed using frequency distributions, percentages, and Pearson correlation. The study found no significant positive relationship between quota-based recruitment and employee competency, suggesting that overemphasis on

representation may undermine technical capabilities. Recommendations included reinforcing merit-based recruitment while ensuring relevant experience and competence. Limitations included a narrow operationalization of performance and lack of clear ethical reporting.

Obiora and Asogwa (2025) examined the impact of the federal character principle and quota system on employee performance across federal parastatals in Enugu State. A descriptive survey design was employed, sampling 328 respondents from a population of 1,815 staff members using Yamane's formula. Data were collected via structured questionnaires and analyzed with frequencies, percentages, and t-tests. Findings showed that quota and federal character policies significantly influenced recruitment and affected employee performance, with inefficiency and low morale where merit was overshadowed by representational goals. The study recommended balancing quota implementation with merit-based recruitment to enhance performance. Despite a robust sample and coverage of multiple institutions, the study relied heavily on self-reported data and did not explicitly report ethical safeguards, which may introduce bias.

Skill job matching and performance

Zhang, Salm, and van Soest (2021) examined the effect of job match quality in the Netherlands using a longitudinal panel design with over 8,000 observations from the LISS panel. Data on education–job and skills–job alignment were collected through surveys and analyzed using dynamic panel data models with the Generalized Method of Moments (GMM). The study found that skill–job matching significantly affected performance and recommended that organizations implement skill development programs aligned with job requirements. While offering strong longitudinal evidence, the focus on perceived match and the European labor market context may limit direct applicability to Nigerian higher education institutions.

Okeke et al. (2025) investigated skill–task mismatch and employee performance among staff in selected ministries in Anambra State. Using a descriptive survey, 329 valid responses were analyzed with Pearson correlation and regression. Results showed a significant negative relationship between skill–task mismatch and performance ($r = -0.720$, $p < 0.05$), with mismatch accounting for 51.8% of performance variance. The study recommended aligning skills with job requirements through recruitment and training but relied on self-reported data and lacked explicit ethical reporting, which may affect validity.

Similarly, a 2025 study in Nigeria's banking sector assessed the impact of skill alignment on organizational performance among 220 employees. Using surveys and regression analysis, the study found that employees whose skills did not match job requirements exhibited lower performance, including reduced operational efficiency and service quality. The study recommended targeted training to close skill gaps. However, limited methodological detail and the banking-sector focus may constrain generalizability to university settings.

Political interference and performance

Bashir (2025) examined the impact of politicization on personnel management and staff performance in selected local government councils in Nigeria. Using a quantitative survey with randomly selected respondents, data were collected via structured Likert-scale questionnaires and analyzed with regression techniques in SPSS. Results indicated that political interference significantly undermines performance, leading to inadequate staffing, unqualified appointments, and inefficient service delivery. The study recommended minimizing political involvement in staffing decisions to enhance organizational effectiveness. However, the sample size and ethical protocols were not clearly reported, limiting transparency and generalizability.

Ifaka and Odigie (2021) investigated political interference and bureaucratic performance in the Delta State Oil Producing Areas Development Commission (DESOPADEC) using a mixed-methods approach. Quantitative analysis of recruitment outcomes and qualitative interviews revealed that 86% of recruits were politically influenced rather than merit-based, resulting in compromised bureaucratic performance and reduced efficiency. The authors recommended independent oversight and merit-based recruitment. Limited reporting on sampling, instruments, and inferential testing reduces the study's methodological rigor.

Ibeh and Onwuzuruike (2025) conducted a qualitative review of political interference in the Nigerian civil service, analyzing policy documents, government reports, and academic literature. Their findings highlighted that favoritism and unstable leadership structures erode professionalism, lower motivation, and weaken service delivery. Recommendations included enforcing merit-based recruitment and strengthening anti-corruption measures. While providing broad theoretical insights, the reliance on secondary data and absence of direct performance measures limit empirical generalizability.

Critiquing of the Empirical Studies

The empirical studies on quota systems, skill–job matching, and political interference reveal important links to employee performance but have notable limitations. Quota system studies (Onyeiwu, 2024; Mebom, 2024; Obiora & Asogwa, 2025) often lacked clear operationalization of merit–quota balance, relied heavily on self-reported data, and did not report ethical safeguards, limiting reliability and generalizability. Skill–job matching research (Zhang et al., 2021; Okeke et al., 2025; 2025 banking study) faced contextual constraints, measurement biases, and limited methodological detail, reducing applicability to Nigerian universities. Political interference studies (Bashir, 2025; Ifaka & Odigie, 2021; Ibeh & Onwuzuruike, 2025) showed negative effects on performance but often had weak methodological rigor, reliance on secondary data, and limited generalizability. Overall, these studies highlight the effects of recruitment and governance factors on performance but underscore the need for more rigorous, context-specific research in higher education.

Research Method

This study employed a survey design with a population of 699 staff (Benue State University Human Resource Records, 2025) and a sample of 254, selected using stratified random sampling to ensure representation across faculties and staff categories. Primary data were collected via a structured questionnaire, and multiple regression analysis was used to examine the effects of merit–quota balance, skill–job matching, and political interference on staff performance at Benue State University, Makurdi.

DATA ANALYSIS

Test of Hypotheses

The results of the test of hypotheses are presented in this section as indicated below.

Decision Rule: If the P-value is less than 0.05 (i.e., $p < 0.05$), the null hypothesis (H_0) should be rejected. Conversely, if the P-value is larger than 0.05 (i.e., $P > 0.05$), the null hypothesis should be accepted.

Table 1: Model Summary^a

Model	R	R Squartae	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate	Dubin Watson
1	.997 ^a	.994	.994	.11450	1.237

Source: Source: SPSS v27 output 2026

a. Predictors (Constant) MQB, SJM, PIN

b. Dependent Variable: Performance.

The results in Table 1 show a very strong positive relationship between quota system recruitment and the performance of Benue State University, Makurdi, with an R value of 0.997. The R^2 and Adjusted R^2 values of 0.994 indicate that 99.4% of the variance in performance is explained by the study’s quota system variables. A low standard error of 0.11450 suggests high predictive accuracy, while the Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.237 indicates mild positive autocorrelation in the residuals, warranting cautious interpretation. Overall, the findings

highlight the significant influence of merit–quota balance, skill–job matching, and political interference on institutional performance under the quota system recruitment policy.

Table 2 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA^a)

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
1 Regression	581.1411	3	193.804	14756.707	.000 ^b
Residual	3.690	281	.013		
Total	585.102	284			

Source: Source: SPSS v27 output 2026

a Predictors (Constant) MQB, SJM, PIN

b. Dependent Variable: Performance

The ANOVA results in Table 2 show that the regression model assessing the effect of quota system recruitment on Benue State University, Makurdi’s performance is statistically significant. An F-value of 14,756.707 with a significance level of 0.000 indicates that the combined predictors—merit–quota balance (MQB), skill–job matching (SJM), and political interference (PIN)—have a highly significant impact on performance. The large regression sums of squares (581.1411) relative to the residual sum of squares (3.690) demonstrates that the model explains most of the variation in performance outcomes. These findings confirm that the studied dimensions of quota system recruitment are key determinants of institutional efficiency and effectiveness.

Table 3 Regression Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standard Coefficient	T	Sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	3.536	.174		20.283	.000
MQB	.154	.029	.153	5.213	.000
SJM	.337	.035	.333	9.761	.000
PIN	.508	.038	.515	13.325	.000

Source: Source: SPSS v27 output 2026

a Predictors (Constant) MQB, SJM, PIN

b. Dependent Variable: Performance

The regression results in Table 3 confirm the relationship between quota system recruitment and the performance of Benue State University, Makurdi. The constant (B = 3.536, t = 20.283, p = 0.000) represents the baseline performance when all predictors are zero. Merit–quota balance (MQB) has a positive, significant effect on performance (B = 0.154, t = 5.213, p = 0.000), supporting that merit-based recruitment improves outcomes (H01 rejected). Skill–job matching (SJM) also positively influences performance (B = 0.337, t = 9.761, p = 0.000), indicating that aligning skills with roles enhances efficiency (H02 rejected). Political interference (PIN) has the strongest positive effect (B = 0.508, t = 13.325, p = 0.000), showing that political factors substantially impact

performance (H03 rejected). Overall, all three dimensions significantly affect university performance, with political interference exerting the greatest influence.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings from the first objective revealed that merit–quota balance has a positive and statistically significant effect on the performance of Benue State University, Makurdi, Nigeria. This implies that recruitment practices that balance merit with quota considerations enhance institutional effectiveness. This result aligns with the findings of Onyeiwu (2024), who reported that the implementation of the quota system and federal character principles significantly influenced appointment, promotion, and retirement outcomes, thereby demonstrating that recruitment policies directly affect employee performance. Furthermore, Organizational Justice Theory (Greenberg, 1990) supports this finding by emphasizing that staff perceptions of fairness in recruitment processes strongly influence performance. A balanced merit–quota system promotes distributive justice by ensuring that appointments are based on both competence and equitable representation, which in turn enhances employee motivation and overall institutional performance.

The findings also revealed that skill–job matching has a positive and significant effect on the performance of Benue State University, Makurdi. This suggests that aligning employees' skills and competencies with job requirements improves productivity and effectiveness. This result is consistent with the study by Zhang, Salm, and van Soest (2021), which found that appropriate skill–job matching significantly enhances organizational performance. In addition, Organizational Justice Theory (Greenberg, 1990) explains that skill–job matching reflects procedural justice, as fair and transparent placement decisions foster employee engagement, commitment, and higher performance levels.

Finally, the findings revealed that political interference has a significant effect on the performance of Benue State University, Makurdi, with evidence indicating that such interference negatively influences institutional outcomes. This finding is consistent with Bashir (2025), who revealed that political interference significantly undermines performance through inadequate staffing, unqualified appointments, and inefficient service delivery. From a theoretical perspective, Organizational Justice Theory (Greenberg, 1990) further explains that political interference undermines both distributive and procedural justice, creating perceptions of unfairness that demotivate staff and ultimately reduce organizational performance.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that quota system recruitment significantly influences the performance of Benue State University, Makurdi. Merit–quota balance, skill–job matching, and political interference all had positive, statistically significant effects. Merit–quota balance promotes fairness and equity in recruitment, while skill–job matching enhances efficiency by aligning staff competencies with their roles. Political interference, although typically viewed negatively, emerged as the strongest predictor, highlighting its substantial impact on administrative and operational performance.

In conclusion, effective quota system recruitment integrating merit, skills, and political considerations—is crucial for improving institutional performance. University management and policymakers should carefully balance these factors to optimize effectiveness and support sustainable organizational growth.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the study recommends that

1. Benue State University Makurdi should strengthen adherence to merit quota balance in recruitment to ensure that the most qualified candidates are appointed, thereby improving overall performance.
2. Management should regularly assess staff skills and align them with job roles to maximize efficiency and effectiveness. Training and professional development programs should be instituted to close skill gaps.

- University authorities should establish clear, transparent, and standardized recruitment procedures to minimize undue political interference and ensure fair and performance-oriented appointments.

Contribution to Knowledge

This study contributes to knowledge by empirically showing that quota system recruitment through merit–quota balance, skill–job matching, and political interference significantly affects university performance. It underscores the often-overlooked influence of political factors on recruitment outcomes in higher education. The findings offer a practical framework for Nigerian universities and similar contexts, providing evidence-based guidance for policymakers, administrators, and researchers to enhance institutional performance through strategic recruitment practices.

Limitation of the study

Despite its relevance, the study has some limitations:

The study is limited to Benue State University, Makurdi, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other Nigerian universities. Data were collected within a specific period and reflect current staff perceptions, without capturing the long-term effects of quota recruitment across multiple recruitment cycles. The reliance on self-reported responses may introduce response bias, as participants could overestimate or underestimate their experiences. The study focuses on quota recruitment and performance, excluding other relevant factors such as organizational culture, funding, infrastructure, and leadership that may also influence performance outcomes. The politically sensitive nature of quota recruitment may limit respondents' openness, potentially affecting the reliability of the data.

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