

Recruitment Practices and Perceptions of Fairness in the Namibian Police Force: A Qualitative Assessment

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Abstract: Recruitment is a critical human resource management function in law enforcement because the quality, competence, and integrity of personnel entering a police organisation have implications for organisational performance and public confidence. The Namibian Police Force (NAMPOL) operates a formal recruitment system involving vacancy advertising, application screening, shortlisting, physical assessments, interviews, and final selection. However, concerns remain regarding the efficiency of manual recruitment procedures, consistency in implementation, transparency, and perceptions of fairness. This study qualitatively assessed current recruitment practices and perceptions of fairness within NAMPOL. The study adopted a constructivist philosophy and a qualitative case study design. Purposive sampling was used to select participants with direct knowledge or experience of recruitment activities. Fifteen questionnaires were distributed and 11 were completed, representing a response rate of 73.3%. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics for closed-ended responses and thematic analysis supported by ATLAS.ti for qualitative responses. The findings indicate that NAMPOL has a structured and formal recruitment system, with public advertising, screening, standardised interviews, panel selection, and defined job requirements identified as important strengths. However, the system remains substantially manual and paper-based, resulting in delays, administrative inefficiencies, and difficulties in processing large numbers of applications. Perceptions of fairness were mixed. Although 54.6% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that recruitment decisions were based on merit and objective criteria, 18.2% strongly disagreed and 27.3% remained neutral. Similar variation was observed regarding consistency across departments. Participants identified favouritism, leadership influence, limited feedback, inconsistent communication, and inadequate transparency as concerns affecting trust in recruitment outcomes. The study concludes that NAMPOL possesses an established recruitment framework, but improvements in consistency, transparency, communication, technological support, and competency-based assessment are required to strengthen perceptions of fairness and recruitment effectiveness.

Keywords: Recruitment Practices, Recruitment Fairness, Police Recruitment, NAMPOL, Transparency, Merit-based Recruitment, Human Resource Management, Namibia

I. Introduction

Recruitment is a fundamental component of human resource management because it determines the quality and capabilities of individuals who enter an organisation. Armstrong and Taylor (2023) describe recruitment as an important organisational process through which institutions attract and select individuals whose knowledge, skills, and capabilities align with organisational requirements. In law enforcement, recruitment assumes particular importance because police officers exercise significant public authority and are expected to demonstrate competence, integrity, professionalism, and commitment to public service.

Police organisations operate within environments that are increasingly complex. Contemporary policing requires personnel who can respond to traditional forms of crime while also addressing cybercrime, digital evidence, information management, data analysis, and other technology-related challenges. Gerding and Hines (2021) argue that recruitment systems must increasingly account for changing competency requirements and the growing importance of technology in the workplace. Consequently, recruitment procedures that focus primarily on traditional qualifications and physical capabilities may not always identify the full range of competencies required in modern policing.

The Namibian Police Force (NAMPOL) operates a formal recruitment system involving several stages, including vacancy advertising, application, screening, shortlisting, interviews, and final appointment. The formal structure provides a basis for accountability and standardisation. However, this research found that recruitment activities remain largely manual and paper-based. Participants identified delays, administrative inefficiencies, manual shortlisting, limited technological support, and communication difficulties as significant concerns.

Efficiency is only one dimension of recruitment quality. Fairness is equally important, particularly within public institutions where recruitment decisions may be subject to scrutiny by employees, applicants, oversight institutions, and the wider public. Wright and Pullen (2021) argue that perceptions of fairness are closely associated with transparency, equal treatment, and consistent application of recruitment criteria. When applicants perceive recruitment decisions as objective and impartial, they are more likely to accept recruitment outcomes.

Conversely, perceptions of favouritism, inconsistent treatment, or unclear selection criteria may weaken trust in recruitment processes. Langer et al. (2021), emphasise that perceptions of fairness are influenced not only by the existence of formal procedures but also by how consistently and transparently those procedures are implemented.

The NAMPOL study identified precisely this tension. Participants generally recognised that formal recruitment procedures exist and identified public advertising, structured interviews, screening, and panel selection as strengths. At the same time, participants raised concerns regarding favouritism, leadership influence, delays, limited feedback, and lack of transparency.

This article therefore examines current recruitment practices and perceptions of fairness within NAMPOL. It focuses on three related dimensions: the structure and effectiveness of the current recruitment system, the strengths and weaknesses identified by participants, and perceptions regarding merit, consistency, transparency, and fairness.

II. Objective of the Study

To explore the current recruitment practices and perceptions of fairness within the Namibian Police Force.

III. Literature Review

Current Recruitment Practices

Traditional recruitment practices commonly involve vacancy advertising, application screening, shortlisting, interviews, testing, background checks, and final selection. Armstrong and Taylor (2023) note that recruitment processes should align employee selection with organisational requirements while maintaining appropriate procedures for assessing candidates. In public-sector institutions, recruitment procedures may be highly formalised because organisations are required to comply with regulations, accountability requirements, and established administrative processes.

Meijer and Wessels (2021) observe that public-sector processes can involve strict administrative structures designed to promote accountability and compliance. While formalisation can strengthen consistency, excessive reliance on administrative procedures may also reduce flexibility. Human judgement continues to play an important role in recruitment despite increasing technological developments (Nikolaou, 2021).

Traditional recruitment processes may therefore remain dominant even where digital technologies could improve some administrative activities. The continued use of manual recruitment is also associated with technological and resource constraints. Wirtz et al. (2021) argue that public institutions in developing countries may experience difficulties adopting modern technologies because of infrastructure limitations and resource constraints.

Baker et al. (2021) similarly identify limited technological capacity and digital infrastructure as barriers to advanced recruitment systems. In law enforcement, traditional recruitment methods may include physical fitness assessments, written examinations, interviews, and background screening. These methods remain relevant because policing requires physical and cognitive capabilities.

However, Gerding and Hines (2021) suggest that recruitment systems must also adapt to emerging competency requirements. The increasing importance of technology in policing means that recruitment systems may need to identify candidates with digital literacy, analytical thinking, data-related skills, and problem-solving capabilities. The findings similarly indicate that these competencies may receive less attention than conventional qualifications and physical fitness requirements.

Recruitment Fairness

Fairness is an important dimension of effective recruitment. It involves equal treatment of applicants, consistent application of criteria, transparency, and decisions based on relevant and objective considerations.

Wright and Pullen (2021) associate recruitment fairness with transparency, equal treatment, and consistent application of criteria. When applicants perceive recruitment decisions as objective and impartial, they are more likely to trust and accept outcomes.

Transparency is particularly important within public institutions because recruitment decisions may be scrutinised by employees, applicants, and the public. Chowdhury et al. (2021) argue that clear processes can help applicants understand the basis of evaluation and contribute to organisational credibility.

However, formal procedures do not automatically produce perceptions of fairness. Langer et al. (2021) indicate that applicants' trust is influenced by whether procedures are implemented transparently and consistently. Poor communication and unclear selection criteria may therefore undermine confidence even where formal recruitment policies exist.

Wright and Pullen (2021) further suggest that perceptions of unfairness may affect organisational morale, employee engagement, and institutional reputation. This is particularly significant for law enforcement organisations, where public confidence is an important component of institutional legitimacy.

Human Judgement and Recruitment Fairness

Human judgement remains central to conventional recruitment. Recruitment panels assess candidate responses, interpersonal qualities, motivation, professionalism, and other characteristics that may not be fully captured through objective measurements.

However, reliance on human judgement may also create variability. Gorla (2020) identifies subjectivity as an important consideration in human resource decision-making. Different assessors may interpret the same information differently, potentially resulting in inconsistent outcomes.

This does not imply that human judgement should be eliminated. Rather, effective recruitment requires an appropriate balance between structured procedures and professional judgement. In police recruitment, human assessment remains important because characteristics such as integrity, attitude, professionalism, and suitability for policing roles may require contextual evaluation.

Traditional Recruitment and Emerging Competencies

The changing nature of work creates pressure on recruitment systems to identify new competencies. Armstrong and Taylor (2023) emphasise the importance of aligning recruitment with organisational skill requirements. For NAMPOL, this issue is particularly relevant because policing increasingly involves information and communication technologies. Candidates may require digital literacy, data interpretation, analytical thinking, and problem-solving skills in addition to traditional policing competencies. The findings suggest that existing recruitment practices may not fully capture these emerging capabilities. Participants indicated that conventional qualifications and physical fitness receive substantial attention, while digital literacy, emotional intelligence, analytical thinking, and problem-solving may receive less attention. This suggests a potential competency gap between the skills emphasised during recruitment and those required in contemporary policing environments.

IV. Theoretical Framework

Diffusion of Innovation Theory

The study was informed by Rogers' (2003) Diffusion of Innovation Theory. Although DOI is particularly relevant to technological adoption, it also provides a useful framework for understanding how organisations respond to changes in established practices.

Rogers (2003) identifies five characteristics influencing innovation adoption: relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability. In the context of recruitment, these characteristics can help explain why established procedures persist even when alternative approaches are available. Existing recruitment practices may be perceived as compatible with NAMPOL's institutional structure and regulations. At the same time, changing established practices may be perceived as complex or disruptive. The theory is particularly relevant because recruitment modernisation involves organisational change. New approaches must demonstrate clear benefits, fit existing institutional requirements, and be understood by personnel responsible for implementation.

Technology Acceptance Model

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), developed by Davis (1989), provides an additional perspective concerning users' acceptance of new technologies. TAM emphasises perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use as important determinants of technology acceptance (Venkatesh & Bala, 2022).

Although Article 1 focuses primarily on existing recruitment practices rather than AI adoption, TAM provides useful contextual understanding because the study investigates perceptions of a recruitment system operating within an environment where technological modernisation is being considered. Marler and Boudreau (2017) indicate that employee and managerial acceptance of technology is influenced by perceived benefits, trust, organisational support, and understanding of functionality.

V. Methodology

Research Philosophy

The study adopted a constructivist research philosophy. Constructivism recognises that individuals develop meanings and interpretations based on their experiences and interactions within social environments (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This philosophical position was appropriate because the study sought to understand how NAMPOL personnel perceive recruitment practices and fairness rather than assuming that fairness has a single objectively experienced meaning.

Research Approach

A qualitative approach was adopted to obtain detailed perspectives concerning recruitment practices, experiences, and perceptions. Qualitative research is appropriate where the objective is to understand meanings, experiences, and organisational processes rather than produce statistical generalisations (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Research Design

The study employed a qualitative case study design. Yin (2018) explains that case study research is appropriate for examining contemporary phenomena within their real-life contexts. Stake (2020) similarly identifies case studies as useful for understanding organisational processes and practices in depth. NAMPOL constituted the bounded institutional case, while recruitment practices and perceptions of fairness constituted the phenomenon under investigation.

Population

The target population consisted of 86 human resource personnel within NAMPOL, based on the NAMPOL Annual Report (2023). These personnel were considered appropriate because of their direct or indirect involvement in recruitment planning, candidate selection, supervision, and policy implementation.

Sampling

Purposive sampling was used to identify participants with relevant knowledge and experience of NAMPOL recruitment processes. Palinkas et al. (2015) describe purposive sampling as appropriate for qualitative studies where participants are deliberately selected because they possess information relevant to the research question.

Fifteen questionnaires were distributed and 11 completed responses were received, producing a response rate of 73.3%. Most participants had direct involvement in recruitment activities. Specifically, 90.9% had experience in activities such as shortlisting, interviewing, or recruitment decision-making.

Data Collection

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire containing closed-ended and open-ended questions. The instrument enabled the researcher to obtain descriptive information concerning recruitment efficiency, merit, consistency, and fairness while also allowing participants to provide explanations concerning strengths and weaknesses of the recruitment system.

Data Analysis

Closed-ended responses were analysed using descriptive statistics, while open-ended responses were analysed thematically. ATLAS.ti was used to support the organisation and analysis of qualitative data. Thematic analysis facilitated identification of recurring themes relating to recruitment structure, efficiency, transparency, fairness, favouritism, delays, communication, and modern competency requirements.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in qualitative research was considered through credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. Lincoln and Guba (1994) identify these criteria as important for assessing qualitative research quality. Shenton (2004) similarly emphasises systematic approaches to establishing trustworthiness. The selection of participants with direct recruitment experience contributed to the credibility of the findings. The majority of respondents had substantial organisational experience, with 63.6% reporting more than 10 years of service in NAMPOL.

VI. Findings

Participant Characteristics

The participants demonstrated substantial experience relevant to the research topic. Most respondents were drawn from Human Resources, with one participant from Administration. The concentration of HR personnel was appropriate because these employees are directly involved in recruitment planning, candidate selection, and policy implementation. Regarding organisational experience, 63.6% had worked in NAMPOL for more than 10 years, 27.3% had between five and ten years of service, and 9.1% had between one and five years. No participant had less than one year of service. The educational profile was also relatively strong. Postgraduate qualifications were reported by 72.7% of respondents, while the remaining participants reported certificate/diploma, degree, or other qualifications. These characteristics suggest that participants possessed substantial institutional and professional experience from which to assess NAMPOL's recruitment practices.

Structure of the Current Recruitment System

The findings indicate that NAMPOL operates a formal, structured, and multi-stage recruitment system. Participants described a process involving workforce planning, public advertising, application, screening, interviews, recommendations, and final appointment. One participant described the system as centralised, formal, and multi-staged, with strict eligibility checks, physical fitness, interviews, and background screening. Another described the recruitment process as structured and guided by public-service regulations. The findings therefore demonstrate that NAMPOL does not operate an entirely informal recruitment system. Rather, formal procedures provide a framework for recruitment decisions. This finding is consistent with Meijer and Wessels (2021), who note that public-sector institutions commonly operate within formal administrative structures intended to support accountability and compliance.

Perceived Efficiency of Recruitment

Participants expressed mixed perceptions concerning the efficiency of NAMPOL's recruitment process. A total of 54.6% agreed or strongly agreed that the recruitment process was efficient. However, 27.3% disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 18.2% remained neutral.

The results therefore suggest that although a modest majority viewed the system positively, a substantial proportion experienced or perceived efficiency problems. The qualitative findings explain these perceptions. Participants repeatedly referred to lengthy procedures, manual processing, delays, and administrative burdens. One participant referred to the manual shortlisting of more than 40,000 applications, while another described the process as lengthy and slow. These

findings are consistent with Nikolaou (2021), who observed that traditional recruitment systems continue to be used despite increasing technological developments. They also support Wirtz et al. (2021), who identify infrastructure and resource limitations as factors that may slow digital transformation within public institutions.

Recruitment Practices That Work Well

Despite the challenges identified, participants acknowledged several positive characteristics of the NAMPOL recruitment system. The most frequently identified strengths included public advertising of vacancies, structured recruitment procedures, systematic screening and shortlisting, standardised interviews, clear job descriptions, panel selection, and formal eligibility requirements. Public advertising was considered particularly important because it promotes equal access to employment opportunities and allows qualified candidates to compete for available positions. Similarly, standardised interview questions were viewed as useful mechanisms for promoting consistency in the assessment of candidates. Panel interviews were also regarded as contributing to fairness and accountability because recruitment decisions are shared among several individuals rather than being left to a single decision-maker. Overall, these findings indicate that NAMPOL already possesses several institutional mechanisms associated with fair and structured recruitment. The principal challenge, therefore, is not necessarily the absence of formal recruitment procedures, but ensuring that these procedures are implemented consistently, transparently, and objectively across recruitment exercises.

Recruitment Decisions and Merit

Participants expressed divided views regarding whether recruitment decisions were consistently based on merit and objective criteria. A total of 54.6% agreed or strongly agreed that recruitment decisions were based on merit and objective criteria. However, 18.2% strongly disagreed and 27.3% remained neutral. The results reveal an important distinction between the existence of merit-based procedures and confidence in their consistent implementation. The majority perception is positive, but the combined proportion of participants who were neutral or strongly disagreed represents 45.5%. This indicates considerable uncertainty concerning whether recruitment outcomes are always experienced as objective. Participants associated concerns about merit with perceived external influence and favouritism. The research findings indicate that some participants believed recruitment outcomes could sometimes be influenced by personal connections rather than objective criteria. This finding is consistent with Langer et al. (2021), who emphasise that perceptions of fairness are shaped by transparency and consistency as well as formal procedures.

Consistency across Departments

The findings also demonstrate mixed perceptions concerning consistency. A total of 54.6% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that recruitment procedures were applied consistently across departments. However, 27.3% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 18.2% remained neutral. The findings suggest that NAMPOL has standardised procedures, but implementation may vary across organisational contexts. This distinction is important because consistency is a key element of perceived fairness. If similar applicants are assessed differently across departments or recruitment exercises, perceptions of unequal treatment may emerge. Wright and Pullen (2021) associate fairness with consistent application of recruitment criteria. Langer et al. (2021) similarly emphasise that transparency and consistency influence confidence in recruitment outcomes.

Favouritism and Leadership Influence

Favouritism emerged as one of the most important concerns in the qualitative findings.

Some participants raised concerns about leadership influence and the possibility that personal connections could affect recruitment outcomes. The findings do not establish that favouritism actually occurs as a systematic practice; rather, they demonstrate that participants perceive it as a potential problem. This distinction is important in interpreting the qualitative evidence. The study measures perceptions rather than independently verifying individual allegations of recruitment interference. Nevertheless, perceptions themselves are significant because they can affect trust in institutional procedures. If employees or applicants believe that personal relationships influence recruitment decisions, confidence in merit-based selection may decline.

The research findings concur with Langer et al. (2021), who argue that applicants are more likely to trust recruitment systems when decision-making processes are transparent and consistently applied.

Transparency and Communication

Transparency was another recurring theme. Participants identified limited feedback and communication as weaknesses within the recruitment process. Candidates may not always receive sufficient information concerning the status or outcome of their applications.

Limited feedback can affect perceptions of fairness because applicants may not understand why they were unsuccessful or how decisions were reached.

Chowdhury et al. (2021) argue that transparency in recruitment helps applicants understand the basis on which they are evaluated and can strengthen organisational credibility. Wright and Pullen (2021) similarly link transparent recruitment processes to perceptions of objectivity and impartiality. The NAMPOL findings therefore suggest that improving

communication may be a relatively immediate mechanism for strengthening confidence in the recruitment system, even before major technological reforms are introduced.

Manual and Paper-Based Recruitment

Despite the challenges identified, participants acknowledged several positive characteristics of the NAMPOL recruitment system. The most frequently identified strengths included public advertising of vacancies, structured recruitment procedures, systematic screening and shortlisting, standardised interviews, clear job descriptions, panel selection, and formal eligibility requirements. Public advertising was considered particularly important because it promotes equal access to employment opportunities and allows qualified candidates to compete for available positions. Similarly, standardised interview questions were viewed as useful mechanisms for promoting consistency in the assessment of candidates. Panel interviews were also regarded as contributing to fairness and accountability because recruitment decisions are shared among several individuals rather than being left to a single decision-maker. Overall, these findings indicate that NAMPOL already possesses several institutional mechanisms associated with fair and structured recruitment. The principal challenge, therefore, is not necessarily the absence of formal recruitment procedures, but ensuring that these procedures are implemented consistently, transparently, and objectively across recruitment exercises.

Identification of Modern Policing Competencies

Participants also raised concerns regarding the ability of the current recruitment system to identify emerging competencies required in contemporary policing. The existing approach was perceived to place considerable emphasis on educational qualifications, physical fitness, and traditional assessment methods, while competencies such as digital literacy, analytical thinking, emotional intelligence, problem-solving, and data analysis may receive comparatively less attention. This finding is particularly important given the increasing influence of technology and information management on modern policing. Gerding and Hines (2021) emphasise the need for recruitment systems to respond to changing competency requirements. The findings therefore suggest the need for NAMPOL to consider broadening its recruitment criteria beyond conventional indicators. Such an approach would not diminish the importance of physical fitness or established policing competencies; rather, it would complement these requirements by incorporating additional skills that reflect the evolving nature and demands of contemporary police work.

VII. Discussion

A Structured System with Implementation Challenges

The findings demonstrate that NAMPOL possesses a structured recruitment framework. Public advertising, screening, interviews, panel selection, and formal eligibility requirements provide important foundations for transparent recruitment. However, the existence of formal procedures does not guarantee that applicants and employees will perceive recruitment as fair. The findings reveal a gap between formal structure and perceived implementation.

This supports the argument by Meijer and Wessels (2021) that public-sector organisations often operate through formal administrative procedures. It also reinforces Langer et al.'s (2021) observation that fairness perceptions depend on transparency and consistency in implementation.

The implication is that NAMPOL may not necessarily need to replace its entire recruitment framework. Instead, attention should be directed toward improving implementation, communication, consistency, and accountability.

Efficiency versus Administrative Formality

The formal nature of public-sector recruitment can provide important safeguards, including accountability and procedural consistency. However, excessive dependence on manual processes can create delays. The NAMPOL findings demonstrate this tension clearly. More than half of participants considered the process efficient, yet more than one-quarter disagreed and qualitative responses repeatedly highlighted delays and manual administrative burdens. This suggests that efficiency problems do not necessarily mean the entire recruitment framework is ineffective (Waiganjo and Ambambi, 2026). Rather, some specific administrative components may require improvement. Nikolaou (2021) supports this interpretation by highlighting the continuing role of traditional recruitment systems despite technological advances. Wirtz et al. (2021) further demonstrate that public-sector organisations may face infrastructure and resource barriers when attempting to modernise.

Fairness as Both Procedure and Perception

The study demonstrates that recruitment fairness has both procedural and perceptual dimensions.

Procedurally, NAMPOL has mechanisms intended to promote fairness, including public advertising, standardised interviews, screening procedures, and panel selection. Participants recognised these features as strengths. Perceptually, however, confidence is less uniform. Concerns regarding favouritism, leadership influence, communication, and transparency demonstrate that employees may judge fairness partly by their interpretation of how procedures operate. This supports Wright and Pullen (2021), who associate fairness with equal treatment, transparency, and consistent

application of criteria. The implication is that NAMPOL's efforts to improve fairness should not focus exclusively on formal policy. Communication, feedback, consistent application, and accountability mechanisms are equally important.

Transparency and Trust

Transparency emerged as a central factor influencing confidence in recruitment.

Where candidates understand the recruitment requirements, stages, and criteria, they are more likely to regard the process as legitimate. Conversely, limited communication may lead unsuccessful applicants to speculate about why they were not selected. Chowdhury et al. (2021) argue that transparent recruitment can improve understanding of evaluation criteria and strengthen organisational credibility.

For NAMPOL, improving transparency could involve clearer communication concerning recruitment stages, selection criteria, application status, and general reasons for unsuccessful applications, subject to applicable administrative and confidentiality requirements.

Recruitment and the Changing Nature of Policing

The findings concerning modern policing competencies have important implications for recruitment strategy. Traditional recruitment criteria remain important, but contemporary police work increasingly involves technology, information analysis, and specialised knowledge. Gerding and Hines (2021) highlight the changing competency requirements associated with modern recruitment. The NAMPOL findings indicate that digital literacy, analytical thinking, problem-solving, emotional intelligence, and data analysis may not receive sufficient attention within the existing recruitment framework (Mulwa & Asilaza, 2026). This suggests that recruitment criteria should periodically be reviewed against operational requirements. A police recruitment system should evolve alongside the nature of policing itself.

VIII. Implications of the Findings

Human Resource Management Implications

The findings indicate that NAMPOL's HR function would benefit from strengthening the relationship between recruitment policy and implementation. HR personnel should ensure that formal recruitment criteria are consistently applied and adequately communicated. Recruitment panels should also receive appropriate guidance concerning objective assessment and consistent interpretation of selection criteria.

Policy Implications

NAMPOL should periodically review its recruitment policies to ensure that they remain responsive to both traditional policing requirements and the emerging competencies demanded by contemporary policing. Such reviews should focus on promoting consistency across recruitment exercises, enhancing the transparency of selection criteria, strengthening communication with applicants, and improving feedback mechanisms. The policies should also support competency-based assessment by giving greater consideration to skills such as digital literacy, analytical thinking, and problem-solving, while ensuring the appropriate and responsible use of technology throughout the recruitment process.

Organisational Implications

The findings suggest that improvements do not necessarily require immediate transformation of the entire recruitment system. Several relatively straightforward improvements could strengthen perceptions of fairness, including clearer communication, consistent implementation, standardised interview procedures, improved feedback, and stronger documentation. Digital transformation can subsequently address administrative inefficiencies and large-volume application processing.

IX. Recommendations

NAMPOL should strengthen the consistent application of recruitment procedures and selection criteria across departments and recruitment exercises by providing clear procedural guidance to recruitment personnel and selection panels. Recruitment communication should also be improved by providing applicants with clear information regarding recruitment stages, requirements, timelines, and application outcomes. In addition, appropriate feedback mechanisms should be established to provide applicants with meaningful information concerning recruitment outcomes, subject to organisational policies and confidentiality requirements.

NAMPOL should continue to emphasise merit-based selection by ensuring that recruitment decisions are guided by qualifications, competencies, and objective assessment criteria. Recruitment panels should be appropriately structured to minimise undue personal influence and promote impartial decision-making. The organisation should also progressively modernise recruitment administration by introducing digital recruitment systems that reduce reliance on paper-based processes. Initial digitalisation efforts should focus on areas associated with substantial administrative workloads, including application processing, screening, records management, and communication.

Furthermore, NAMPOL should periodically review its recruitment criteria to ensure that they capture competencies relevant to contemporary policing. In addition to conventional requirements, greater attention should be given to digital

literacy, analytical thinking, problem-solving, data-related capabilities, and emotional intelligence. Finally, personnel involved in recruitment should receive regular training on fair selection, objective assessment, structured interviewing, transparency, and the consistent application of recruitment criteria. These measures would contribute to a more consistent, transparent, merit-based, and effective recruitment system within NAMPOL.

X. Conclusion

This study examined recruitment practices and perceptions of fairness within the Namibian Police Force. The findings demonstrate that NAMPOL has an established and formal recruitment framework characterised by public advertising, application screening, shortlisting, standardised interviews, panel selection, and formal eligibility requirements.

These features were recognised by participants as important strengths. More than half of respondents also perceived the recruitment process as relatively efficient and believed that recruitment decisions were based on merit and objective criteria. However, the findings reveal important areas of concern. The recruitment system remains substantially manual and paper-based, contributing to delays, administrative inefficiencies, and difficulties associated with processing large numbers of applications. Participants also expressed concerns regarding favouritism, leadership influence, limited feedback, communication, and transparency. Perceptions of consistency were similarly mixed. The findings therefore suggest that the principal challenge facing NAMPOL is not the absence of a formal recruitment framework but the need to strengthen the implementation, consistency, transparency, and responsiveness of that framework. The study also identifies a potential competency gap. Traditional recruitment requirements remain important, but contemporary policing increasingly requires digital literacy, analytical thinking, problem-solving, data-related skills, and other capabilities that may receive insufficient attention under conventional recruitment approaches.

The study concludes that NAMPOL can strengthen recruitment fairness and effectiveness by improving the consistent application of existing procedures, enhancing transparency and communication, strengthening feedback mechanisms, modernising administrative processes, and broadening competency assessment. These improvements can provide a foundation for subsequent technological innovation while ensuring that recruitment remains grounded in merit, accountability, and public-service values.

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