



Public Service Recruitment and Selection in Tanzania: Are Regulatory Frameworks for E-Recruitment and Selection Effective?

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Abstract

The advent of e-recruitment and selection in Tanzania aimed at significantly lessening or stopping inherent features such as low penetration of job accessibility, corruption, delayed recruitment and selections, nepotism and fraud. It required changes in the regulatory framework for improved recruitment and selection. Otherwise, efficient and effective conventional recruitment and selection would be inherent. Consequently, it could continue to jeopardise the effective identification of potential and talented workforce for socio-economic development in Tanzania. Extant studies on this topic rarely covered issues concerning e-recruitment and selection regulatory frameworks. Therefore, this paper examined how employment regulatory frameworks enhance effective e-recruitment and selection in the Public Service Recruitment Secretariat –Tanzania. The study employed a qualitative approach. A case study design with purposive and convenient sampling was used. The sample size included 17 key individuals. Five (5) respondents were selected purposively and interviewed, while for Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), (3) three groups, each with (4) four participants, were conveniently involved. The findings revealed that the linkage between recruitment regulatory frameworks and ICT use is hardly managed. However, to some extent, it has facilitated effective e-recruitment and selection. Reasons for complex linkage are that the PSRS still uses recruitment regulatory frameworks, which were used in the traditional era, which were scarcely coined for ICT services and the inadequacy of the ICT system's interoperability. Thus, linking ICT services with recruitment regulatory frameworks still needs to be maintained to prevent unreliable workforces in the public service.

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1.0 Introduction

The world market is highly competitive and has welcomed the use of artificial intelligence, binary computer language, robots, and distance working (Vrabie, 2023). These have changed the working model in the private sector and led to the emergence of e-government in public entities where e-recruitment works as its counterpart service (Fernandez, et al., 2023; Deo & Ishengoma, 2023). E-government refers to applying Information Communication Technology (ICT) in government transactions (Tefurukwa, 2019). The approach seeks to increase efficiency, public trust, and greater transparency by facilitating easy access to resources and simplifying business transactions (Adnan, 2022). Although e-government has tremendous potential, its application faces difficulties (Abdul & Amran, 2023; Al Sayegh, 2023). The obstacles include but are not limited to e-government infrastructure, trust, financial constraints, insufficient data security, a shortage of skilled personnel, and a supportive regulatory framework and political commitments (Adnani, 2022; Mudawi, 2022; Waleed, 2022). All this may reduce the potential of e-government and undermine perceived advantages.

According to the African Union Digital Transformation Strategy (AUDTS) (2020) and Roztocki and Weistroffer (2022), the relationship between regulatory frameworks and ICT circumstances is critical in alleviating issues with e-government services. Regulatory frameworks, according to Bach (2023) and the Centre for Integrity in the Defence Sector (CIDS) (2015), refer to the laws, policies, regulations, and standards established to regulate behaviour and processes to achieve the desired services. While regulatory frameworks for e-services, e-recruitment and selection are essential for recruitment and selection, Gairola (2019) and AUDTS (2020) perceive their absence or inadequate as leading to nepotism, corruption and delays in recruitment decisions, ultimately resulting in a skewed human capital. The registered consequences are poor service delivery and incompetent workforces.

Successful e-government practices may rely upon its economic, social, political, ICT and institutional supports (Tefurukwa, 2019; 2023 & Bwaki and Tefurukwa, 2021). E-government, particularly e-recruitment, will be effective if it operates in a supportive regulatory framework (United Nations, 2022). The regulatory framework sets actor behaviours towards the desired e-services outcomes (Kubar *et al.*, 2021 & Mashayekhi, 2012). However, studies by Ahmed *et al.* (2021) in Nigeria, Hashiyana *et al.* (2021) in

Namibia, and Kebede (2017) in Ethiopia show that unproductive ICT regulatory frameworks hinder the operation of e-government services. In the same manner, the study by Ahmed and colleagues (2021), Hashiyana and team (2021), and Ibrahim (2020) spotted the causes of inefficient and ineffective e-recruitment as a mismatch between e-recruitment and the existing regulatory frameworks. Similarly, Kubar et al. (2021) and Mashayekhi (2012) exemplify the need to link employment regulatory frameworks and ICT services to attract active use of e-recruitment. Scholars (i.e., Sultan, 2019; Ogohi, 2019; Ouizgani, 2020) assert that e-recruitment is still characterised by corruption, nepotism, and delays. The seismic pressure threatening the quality of the workforce is the risk of falling back into a colonial crisis characterised by inadequate shelter, infrastructure, education and dependence on Western aid. As perceived by the African Union Digital Transformation Agenda by 2030, Tanzania and other African countries will continue to be ridden by foreign countries in a couple of services if today's digital innovation and working policies remain unaddressed (AUDTS, 2020).

Tanzania experiences a similar situation whereby the aim of e-recruitment is at the core function of the President's Office of Public Service Management and Good Governance (PO-PSM & GG). The Public Service Recruitment Secretariat is mandated to handle recruitment and selection in Tanzania. By using e-recruitment and selection through *the Ajira* portal and aptitude and psychometric tests, the secretariat had stopped the lousy image that blurred features of good governance, which the government stands for. In line with this, the government introduced regulatory institutions. Drawing from the Ruling Party's (i.e., Chama Cha Mapinduzi-CCM) General Election Manifesto of 2020 (CCM, 2020), e-government and all its features, the Ministry Department and Agencies (MDAs) and Local Government Authorities (LGAs) are mandatory for improved services. Additionally, the party declared zero tolerance for corruption, nepotism, and ghost workers (ibid). In addressing all these, the government's dedication resulted in establishing the e-Government Act in 2019; the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Commission-TCRA in 2003; the Tanzania E-Government Authority-eGA in 2019; E-GA-Strategic Plans (2012/2013-2016/2017 & 2020/2021-2025/2026); the Cyber-Crime Act in 2015; and the PSRS Rules of operations in 2021. Despite these efforts, e-recruitment in the Tanzanian public service failed to meet the intended objective. Anduru *et al.* (2021) and Baker (2017) have proclaimed the expressivity of e-recruitment to be accommodated by job seekers. According to scholars, e-recruitment may lead to the

recruitment of unsuitable candidates (Mwasha, 2013), inadequate employee retention (Mshanga, 2020), and inadequate organisational performance (Reward, 2020), which could impede the country's development plans. With the explained challenges, empirical studies on e-recruitment in Tanzania (i.e., Mwasha, 2013; Mshanga, 2020; Reward, 2020; Mahamoud, 2021; Malekano, 2021; Okoille & Ilabor, 2017; Michael & Chalu, 2020) have not addressed the nexus between ICT and recruitment regulatory frameworks for effective e-recruitment and selection. Accordingly, the difficulty in addressing the link between recruitment regulatory frameworks and e-recruitment has made the researcher determine whether the regulatory frameworks for recruitment and selection in Tanzania Public service are adequate to accommodate effective e-recruitment and selection.

2.0 Theoretical Premises

This study used Institutional Theory as the theoretical framework to describe the context of the recruitment regulatory framework in Tanzania's public services. Institutional theory is premised on normative, cognitive, and regulative assumptions. However, this study used only one of them, the regulative assumption. This is because the study intended to explore the regulatory framework as one of the requirements for promoting e-recruitment in Tanzania. Thus, the remaining two theory assumptions were least considered in the study.

During the 1960s, Sociologist John Meyer developed Institutional Theory, which examines the social rules, norms, and practices that impact organisations. The theory considers political, economic, social-cultural, and technical factors influencing information technology changes and their impact on public organisations (Tefurukwa, 2023). According to studies (i.e., Wicander, 2011; Bakunzibakers *et al.*, 2019; Madrid *et al.*, 2022), Institutional Theory provides a comprehensive analysis of the implementation of e-government services, in which e-recruitment acts as its counterpart service. As Tefurukwa (2023; 2019) and Bwaki and Tefurukwa (2022) argue, the theory probes into internal and external factors that affect an organisation's behaviours and considers the broader social, political, and economic environment within which organisations operate. They further suggest that organisations must adapt the existing institutional frameworks to survive and prosper (*ibid*). The United Nations (2022) realised that the institutional

framework influences actors' behaviour in shaping e-government. Institutional frameworks provide social norms, values, and rules of operations that figure out organisational structures and practices, while organisations, in turn, shape and reinforce institutional frameworks (Meyer, 2006). As a result, institutional forces form ICT regulations; coercive pressure encompasses regulations, policies, and agreements influencing individuals' interactions with institutions (UN, 2022). These regulations are based on fundamental principles of the institutional structure, strategies, and procedures. Government agencies enforce these regulations and dictate citizens' behaviour (URT, 2015). In line with the theoretical demands, the government oversees the implementation of e-recruitment using the public service recruitment secretariat rules of operations of 2021 and other employment regulatory frameworks such as the e-government Act of 2019 and its regulations of 2020 as well as the National Employment Policy of 2008 (PSRS-RO, 2021). Despite the usefulness of Institutional Theory in promoting the practical and efficient use of e-recruitment through cultural norms and regulatory frameworks (Bjork, 2004; Jensen & Shu, 2008), the theory has been criticised for failing to explain how actors make sense of and support e-government initiatives in specific contexts, such as those of MDAs and LGAs.

3.0 Literature Review

The implementation of e-recruitment, according to Ballon and Van Heesvelde (2011), has brought about changes in regulatory frameworks to facilitate the seamless delivery of employment services. Abia and Brown (2020) see regulatory frameworks as policies, principles, laws, rules, procedures, and processes that guide organisational operations. They promote desirable user behaviour by defining the expected performance standards for job tasks (Walinda, 2013). E-recruitment is also defined as among the services in the package of e-government regulatory frameworks (URT, 2023). E-recruitment involves utilising online techniques to attract potential candidates for organisational positions (Reward, 2020). For the effectiveness of employment procedures, e-recruitment and selection should focus on avoiding unethical practices such as bias, discrimination, nepotism, delays in decision-making, and corruption (Mao, 2023). According to Tefurukwa (2023), Anduru *et al.* (2021) and URT (2023), all ill-gotten agendas of unethical bureaucrats can be diffused by the regulatory framework for e-recruitment and selection processes. Hence, improved efficient and effective recruitment in public organisations.

According to the statement by the African Head of state made in Dar-es-Salaam on July 2023 admitted that people in charge of hiring, whether in government or other recruitment authorities, should evaluate the e-recruitment process and regulatory frameworks to ensure they can attract a diverse pool of qualified candidates from the labour market (African Head of States Summit on Human Capital Investment (AUHSSHC, 2023; AUDTS, 2020). A combination of ICT practices in recruitment procedures and recruitment regulatory framework is now regarded under this study as e-recruitment regulatory frameworks. E-recruitment regulatory frameworks harmonise human, technological, and organisational processes to ensure efficient recruitment and selection (Chigwedere et al., 2022). Institutional theory suggests that proper organisational practices require regulatory frameworks. Jain (2006) observes that implementing ICT services such as e-recruitment would be successful with regulatory frameworks (Jain, 2006).

In Tanzania, e-recruitment is accompanied by e-government regulatory frameworks whereby ICT regulatory frameworks and authorities such as the ICT Policy of 2016, e-government Agency established in 2016, E-government Act No. 10 of 2019, e-government regulations No. 37 of 2020, E-government Guidelines of 2017 and any other related employment institutions frameworks remain to emphasise the need for all MDA's and LGA's to use ICT as a pathway to delivering services to the people (URT, 2016). The Recruitment Regulatory Frameworks in Tanzania, including the National Employment Policy of 2008, the Public Service Standing Order of 2009, and the PSRS-Rules of Operations of 2021, admitted that employment procedures in the public service are transparent and competitive to all job seekers in a fairly and transparent process, without any hint of corruption, to make timely recruitment decisions and optimise costs, irrespective of the candidates' ideologies, religions, physical characteristics, gender, ethnicity, or age (URT, 2008; 2009; 2021). Additionally, the People with Disability Act of 2010 demands that the recruiting agency or organisation provide 10per cent of their employment vacancies to those with disabilities but eligible for the job (URT, 2010).

Thus, it is imperative to examine how recruitment procedures were executed and the extent to which qualified candidates were chosen based on their merit and performance within the available regulatory framework (URT, 2021). Despite the available e-government institutional frameworks allowing public institutions to design, review and implement regulations and strategies as initiatives to foster e-government activities, the survival of e-recruitment in

Tanzania still needs to be improved (Mshanga, 2022; Mwashu, 2013). Empirical studies on e-recruitment (i.e., Mwashu, 2013; Mshanga, 2020; Reward, 2020; Mahamoud, 2021; Malekano, 2021; Okoille & Ilabor, 2017; Michael & Chalu, 2020) are silent as to whether the regulatory frameworks for e-recruitment and selection are effective. The available regulatory frameworks on recruitment are the same, which guided traditional recruitment, such as the National Recruitment Policy of 2008, the Public Service Act of 2002, the Public Service Regulation of 2008, the Public Service Scheme of 2008, and the Public Service Standing Order of 2009.

Nevertheless, a few new designated employment frameworks, such as the PSRS Rules of Operation 2021 and the PSRS Client Service Charter of 2022, still need to integrate ICT into the recruitment and selection processes fully. The current status quo needs improvement, leaving the employment process vulnerable to problems. Thus, this paper examined the effectiveness of current regulatory frameworks for e-recruitment using five criteria: providing a diverse range of job opportunities, promoting fairness and transparency, preventing corruption, ensuring timely recruitment decisions and maximising cost-efficiency.

4.0 Methods

The study explored how employment regulatory frameworks enhance effective recruitment and selection. Specifically, it explored social phenomena on e-recruitment by gathering participants' views, experiences, beliefs, perceptions, attitudes, opinions, behaviours, and interactions in natural settings via interviews and focused group discussion.

4.1 Study Area

To capture in-depth and relevant information with e-recruitment, a small area with authority or more experience in running recruitment matters in the country was best used as a case study for research. Thus, the researcher selected the Public Service Recruitment Secretariat in Dodoma-Tanzania, which owed its mandate to facilitate recruitment matters in the Tanzania Public Services as stipulated under section 29 of the Public Service Act of 2003.

4.2 Sample size and sampling procedures

Throughout the data collection process, the researcher targeted specific positions such as Director of Administration and Human Resource Management, Principal Administration Officer, Principal Human Resource Officer, and employees from the ICT and Legal

Service Units. From these data sources, the researcher gathered insights from 17 individuals who were part of the Public Service Recruitment Secretariat (PSRS) and participated in interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). From this group, five individuals were selected for individual interviews, namely D1, HR1, HR2, I1, and LO1. The remaining 12 were divided into three groups of four employees each for further FGDs. These groups were labelled as GROUP "A," consisting of HR3, HR4, HR5, and HR6 from the Administration and HR department; GROUP "B," including I2, I3, I4, and I5 from the ICT unit; and GROUP "C," made up of four members from the Legal unit with the codes LO2, LO3, LO4, and LO5.

4.3 Data collection

To discover equitable information on e-recruitment, interviews and FGDs were employed as data collection methods; both the interview and FGD's guides were constructed to capture themes from the Institutional Theory that directly insists on the values of regulatory frameworks towards e-recruitment implementation. In-depth interview was used in collecting data from the Director of PSRS, PAO and PHO, the Head of the ICT unit and the Head of the Legal Unit. In contrast, Focused Group discussions (FGDs) were used to collect data from employees from the Administration Department, ICT Unit and Legal Section, who were divided into three groups.

4.4 Data analysis

The researcher transcribed and converted interview and FGD responses into a literal format to uncover their meaning. The data were collected in audio and text formats and analysed thematically, focusing on key concepts such as cost, corruption, nepotism, a range of access, and timely decisions. Thematic analysis was chosen because it enables the researcher to delve into the intricacies of the data and derive significant insights that may need to be discernible through conventional analysis methods. Ultimately, the qualitative researcher found thematic analysis valuable for exploring, interpreting, and comprehending the collected data.

4.5 Credibility and Confirmability

Credibility and confirmability were ensured to establish confidence in the truth value of data value, interpretation and findings while shaping the findings using data rather than the researcher's biases. To ensure this, the study employed multiple data collection

methods (Interviews and FGDs), which helped in cross-checking findings and linking the findings. Moreover, the researcher spent adequate time of more than one month understanding the field context and its participants for a more nuanced analysis. The engagement between the researcher and critical informants focused on relevant aspects of the phenomenon, such as e-recruitment and recruitment regulatory frameworks, with their measured dimensions. Notwithstanding the explained concepts, peer debriefing and case analysis through findings from empirical studies were also considered. In a case of confirmability, the study employed an audit trail by reviewing records of findings of other related studies. Similarly, the study adhered to proper data collection, transcription, coding and analysis as the study passed under reviewer's scrutiny.

4.6 Ethical Concern

In studying the roles of regulatory frameworks on e-recruitment in Tanzania, the researcher advocated ethical standards by ensuring informed consent from key informants who were employees of the PSRS. With clear communication about the study's purpose and their right to withdraw, key informants participated fully. Confidentiality was maintained through securing data management and anonymisation of sensitive information while respecting cultural norms and treating all participants with dignity. Integrity and transparency in reporting findings were managed, along with disclosing any funding sources to avoid conflicts of interest. Adherence to Tanzanian laws and obtaining necessary ethical approvals were taken into consideration.

5.0 Result and Discussions

The study explored the role of recruitment regulatory frameworks in examining the effectiveness of e-recruitment and selection in the public service in Tanzania. Interviews and FGDs provide the findings on how the recruitment regulatory framework facilitates effective recruitment and selection, as presented and discussed in the subsequent sections.

5.1 Access to employment opportunities

In this aspect, respondents were asked to explain how recruitment regulatory frameworks enhance access to employment opportunities and how the available recruitment regulatory frameworks facilitate access to employment opportunities.

Among the vast comments and views from most key informants, one of them comes from respondent D₁, who reported this experience,

E-recruitment regulations are limited to the e-Government Act of 2019 for public offices using ICT. We follow other employment regulations such as the Public Service Act, National Employment Policy, and Standing Order. Our recruitment process is governed by the PSRS Rules of Operation, which include e-recruitment and job ads on our website, Ajira portal, and government channels. We also advertise on social media. E-recruitment has made job opportunities accessible via mobile phones, laptops, and desktops, reaching 98% of candidates (Respondent D₁, April 24 2023).

A similar observation was made by Respondent I₁, revealing excellent employment accessibility played by the existing regulatory frameworks by avowing:

The Public Service Recruitment Secretariat Rules of Operation, 2021, emphasise the importance of effective recruitment and selection processes in the public service. E-recruitment has been established, utilising ICT to facilitate a comprehensive, open, competitive, and fair running of employment practices. The government has also started using video conferencing for oral interviews in administrative positions. In 2023, the PSRS Secretary led an oral interview for a specific USCAF position via video conferencing at TAGLA-Dar as Salaam. This strategy promotes more comprehensive access to job opportunities (Respondent I₁, April 27 2023).

The interviewee's response admitted the importance of the role played by e-recruitment regulatory frameworks on job accessibility; comments from FGDs expressed similar views,

Despite the e-government Act of 2019 and PSRS rules of operation of 2021, new laws have yet to be introduced for e-recruitment. The PSRS rules require using ICT in various aspects of recruitment, including job advertisement, application reception, selection, and job replacement. The government's official automated websites, such as the Ajira portal and the agency's website, provide diverse employment opportunities. Since 2014, all employment ads have been posted on automated websites, and candidates can apply through the e-recruitment government portal. The government is currently training LGAs for the upcoming e-recruitment system, which will simplify the employment process. The PSRS has launched the *Ajira Kiganjani* Program, allowing access to job information via smartphones and even analogue mobile phones (known as *Kochi*) (FGD's "B" April 28, 2023).

The study showed that the PSRS needs a specific regulatory framework for e-recruitment. However, the existing recruitment laws, the PSRS rules of operation, and the Client Service Charter still make accessing employment opportunities through electronic means

possible. These legal frameworks have been adapted from the traditional recruitment era to accommodate e-recruitment practices and are supported by the e-Government Act of 2019.

The incorporation of technology in recruitment has the potential to enhance the availability of employment opportunities, primarily through e-recruitment platforms. Recent research conducted in India by Monica and Priyusha (2020) revealed that e-recruitment can be a valuable tool in streamlining recruitment and selection processes during the pandemic if accessible to a diverse range of job seekers. Similarly, Malekano's study (2021) in Tanzania indicated that TANAPA's e-recruitment system attracted many candidates and provided seamless access to job-related information. These findings align with the observations from the PO-PSM and GG meeting 2019 and the e-government conference 2019, which emphasised the importance of unifying ICT resources for industrial growth and promoting equitable access to e-services. Along with the extract mentioned earlier, the study supports the National Five-Year Development Plan III 2020/21-2025/26, prioritising increased ICT users to improve service delivery. It is essential to recognise that the technical components of ICT cannot be separated from regulatory frameworks that ensure a broad range of job opportunities, particularly in the realm of e-recruitment, which is both legally required and permitted under the Public Service Act 2003 (Revised in 2017, section 29).

5.2 Fair and transparent recruitment

The data in these aspects were provided in response to the interview question, " How do the available e-recruitment regulatory frameworks facilitate fair and transparent recruitment and selection? The confirmation of how e-recruitment regulatory frameworks respond to fair and transparent recruitment matters was revealed by respondent D1,

It is essential to ensure that laws are followed to provide efficient services to customers. For instance, the e-government Act no. 10 of 2019, section 34, requires all MDAs and LGAs to use digitalised systems. Similarly, the Tanzania Public Service Standing Order of 2009, section D (6) 31-34, states that all employment positions in public services should be open to qualified men and women. The salary, salary scales, and other terms of service should be the same between men and women with equivalent qualifications and experience in the same post. Rule 9 of the Public Service Recruitment Secretariat Rules of Operation 2021 also emphasises the need for open, competitive, and transparent employment for all candidates. Unlike the traditional recruitment era, there is no leeway for

candidates who fail to submit their applications on time, as they can now apply digitally (Respondent D1, April 24 2023).

In reflecting on the reliability of the data by respondent D1, a similar observation is made by respondent I₁,

The regulatory frameworks governing recruitment, including the Public Service Standing Order of 2009 and the Public Service Recruitment Secretariat Rules of Operation in 2021, ensure that hiring practices are fair, competitive, and transparent. To this end, Section D.9 (1) of the standing order requires all job advertisements to be open and non-discriminatory to eligible candidates. In addition, Section D.10 (1) mandates that all written applications be submitted through the official government channel, which is currently the e-recruitment portal known as the *Ajira* portal. These e-recruitment practices, which align with the public standing order and the PSRS Rules of Operation, have successfully decreased the incidence of injustice, unfairness, and other unethical behaviours that have previously hindered the provision of public service employment. For example, Rule 38 of the PSRS requires government officials overseeing the hiring process in the interview room to disclose any relationships they have with panel members. It allows the panel to evaluate whether the relationship may bias or unfairly influence a candidate's interview performance and decide accordingly. Failure to report such a relationship can result in disciplinary action against the panellist (Specified by Respondent I1 on April 27, 2023)

HR1's comment emphasises the strict adherence of the public service to recruitment regulatory frameworks, which is reported to have significantly improved fairness and competitiveness during the recruitment process. HR 1 noted,

The PSRS Client Service Charter 2022 strongly emphasises e-recruitment to ensure comprehensive employment access and fair and transparent hiring practices that do not discriminate based on gender, religion, region, colour, or physical appearance. Additionally, it outlines various communication channels for candidates to contact PSRS in case of confusion, unsatisfactory service, or recruitment decisions (HR1, April 24, 2023)

In addition to the feedback gathered through interviews, the remarks shared during a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) can also serve as valuable evidence, as one informant reported,

The legal directives by the government and recruitment practices have ensured fairness and transparency in employment practices as, first, all job opportunities via electronic advertisement official channels are eligibly accessed by all candidates regardless of their colour, religion, ideology, gender or physical disabilities. To ensure this, the government has restricted any recruiting government sector, department, ministry,

agency or office from receiving manual applications that make a loop of physical meetings. (FGD ‘C’, April 28th 2023).

It is crucial to follow principles of fairness and clarity when hiring staff. Regulations ensure that all candidates have an equal chance of job opportunities, regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, religion, physical appearance, or sex.

With the rise of e-recruitment systems, remote interactions during the initial hiring stages have become more efficient than traditional methods, often influenced by personal connections and biases. As a result, candidates are now selected based on their qualifications and merit. A study by Benson (2020) has shown that e-recruitment methods can increase transparency in accessing job services. Additionally, integrating information and communication technology (ICT) systems with employment policies can improve hiring process success rates. These findings align with a Reward (2020) study, which revealed that e-recruitment promotes transparency and accountability in Tanzania's public service employment.

E-recruitment has effectively enhanced transparency and accountability in Tanzania's human resource management (HRM) realm. In other words, the study findings contrast with findings in a study by Mwasha (2013), which revealed nepotism as a sign of unfairness and uncompetitive features in public service recruitment. The controversy arose between the two studies due to time interval differences whereby the study by Mwasha was conducted when a reshuffle and emphasis on e-government frameworks were in low penetration. Thus, the use of technology in Tanzania employment was at an infant stage with many malfunctions. Furthermore, even the implementation of e-recruitment was at a low pace in the public service since the system gained momentum in 2014.

In another study, Mwasha (2013) revealed that nepotism existed within the public service recruitment process, leading to an unfair and non-competitive system. The findings are in contrast with the findings in the current study that have demonstrated that adopting e-government frameworks in 2014 has led to significant recruitment improvements. The discrepancy in findings can be attributed to a study by Mwasha (2013) before the widespread adoption of e-government frameworks in Tanzania. Since then, noteworthy progress has been achieved, with e-recruitment being employed in the public service sector. Moreover, the operation of information and communication technology (ICT) within the government has been influenced by institutional frameworks such as the e-

Government Act of 2019, the e-Government Regulation of 2020, the e-Government Guidelines of 2017, and the e-Government Strategy of 2022, as noted by Reward (2020).

The Public Service Recruitment Secretariat Rules of Operations of 2021 and the great awakening on industrial development demanded initiatives towards using ICT in all MDA's and LGA's operations. The Public Service Recruitment Secretariat established rules for its operations. There has also been a push for industrial development emphasising the need to include ICT in all government agencies and Local Government Authorities (LGAs) operations. However, studies by Mwakasungula (2018) and Malekano (2021) on the effectiveness and efficiency of recruitment and selection in Tanzania show that there is still a need to address the issue of fair and transparent employment.

5. 3 Corruption

The study also wanted to find out how the framework can facilitate effective e-recruitment and selection by addressing the issue of corruption that hinders traditional recruitment processes. One of the respondents, D1, provided additional insights on the role of regulatory frameworks in preventing corruption in recruitment procedures and decisions as follows:

Although it is still being determined whether a specific regulatory framework for e-recruitment exists to combat corruption, the process is designed to minimise and prevent corruption during recruitment in Tanzania by reducing unnecessary physical meetings with candidates and e-recruitment safeguards against potential misconduct. Moreover, the government currently implements traditional recruitment regulatory frameworks to prohibit corruption in the public service of Tanzania. Citizens, government offices, and special government agencies such as the PCCB and the Government Security Office share responsibility to combat corruption within the country. To ensure a fair and transparent recruitment and selection process, the government has adopted The Public Service Recruitment Secretariat Rules of Operation, 2021, which outlines various strategies to prevent corruption, including rule 38, which prescribes penalties for officers engaging in cheating. (Interview with the Key informant D1, on April 24th, 2023)

D1's comments echoed those of respondent LO1, stating that the e-recruitment regulatory framework not only limits employment corruption but has also helped reduce public service corruption by minimising physical interaction. The response of LO1 reads,

When applying for a job, it is essential to reveal any indications of corruption related to the position to the PSRS Secretary, along with any proof. The PSRS secretariat will conduct a comprehensive investigation into the matter and cooperate with other government security agencies. The company's CEO, whom the accused panellist employed, will also be notified. Meanwhile, the accused may be suspended from public service until the court or government authority decides (Respondent LO1, May 2 2023).

Apart from the comment of the respondent in the interview, similar views were generated in FGDs,

Implementing e-recruitment has considerably reduced face-to-face interactions between applicants and recruitment agencies, significantly reducing corrupt practices. The PSRS employs various laws to prevent any form of malpractice, making it challenging for individuals to engage in such activities. The PSRS oversees the recruitment procedures with other government security agencies and sectors. To prevent corruption, we adhere to different laws, including rule 38 of the PSRS Rules of Operation of 2021, which prohibits any form of deception, favouritism, or discrimination between candidates and government officials during the hiring process. Public servants in the interview room must disclose their relationship with candidates to ensure compliance. Additionally, the reasons for the interview examination marking ratings are moderated to ensure fairness to all applicants. (FGD's "A", April 28th 2023)

The use of ICT services alongside robust regulatory frameworks can effectively combat corruption in the recruitment processes. ICT can reduce the need for face-to-face interactions during service delivery, while regulatory frameworks can prevent and penalise corrupt practices. According to a discussion between Clouds Media and former president Jakaya Kikwete in 2023, implementing e-government has strengthened the use of ICT in public services. It would be a viable solution to combat corruption. However, it is crucial to establish robust regulatory frameworks and e-government infrastructures to combat corruption. Rupilya (2017) observed that the existing ICT systems must connect with promising regulatory frameworks governing sector operations to avoid corruption. This observation is consistent with the East Africa Community (EAC, 2020) when highlighting the importance of transitioning from old regulatory frameworks to current e-services to improve digital hygiene among member states. Moreover, the report by Mwananchi (May 2011) had that regulatory frameworks must be upheld and strengthened to promote transparency, accountability, and ethical behaviour in the public and private sectors.

5.4 Time

During the interview, respondents were asked about the efficacy of current recruitment regulations in expediting the hiring process in the public sector. In response, D1 conveyed their insights and first-hand experience, highlighting how the regulatory frameworks in the realm of ICT have proven instrumental in enabling swift recruitment determinations. The following was reported,

Thanks to the emergence of e-recruitment through e-government, the Tanzanian Government can now handle recruitment matters, and issue permits to hiring organisations in weeks rather than the previous months. This revolutionary development has ended recruitment delays, candidates' distrust of the government, and difficulties in hiring many applicants. The PSRS Client Service Charter of 2022 and the Public Service Recruitment Secretariat Rules of Operation of 2021 mandate that all recruitment and selection processes be completed within 52-59 days from the day a recruiting agency, organisation, sector, department, or office receives employment permits from the President's Office Public Service Management (PO-PSM), ensuring timely and efficient public service recruitment decisions, all monitored by the PSRS. (Respondent D1, April 24th 2023)

The findings reveal the advantages of the efficiency and effectiveness of e-recruitment versus traditional recruitment modes. The enforcement of e-recruitment and employment regulatory frameworks has reduced the time cycle of the entire process and adequately informs employment decisions. More people are using the internet to improve their skills and knowledge, increasing online hiring. It makes it easier for managers to find top talent and for candidates to choose preferred companies. Ghana has integrated an e-recruiting system and regulatory frameworks, resulting in successful and timely recruitment. However, the process can still be improved. Recruitment and selection are faster than traditional methods (Campbell et al., 2012; Mohammed, 2019). E-recruitment attracts job applicants quickly and reduces recruitment time. Tanzania's government used to take over three months to complete recruitment, but e-recruitment updated the regulatory framework to complete the process within 52 to 59 days. However, Reward (2018) opines that there is a need for improvements to ensure timely feedback, allocate budgets for infrastructure, and minimise political interference. Previous manual practices caused public service recruitment to take three to six months, but updated regulations by PSRS in 2021 require completion within 52 to 59 days of obtaining an employment permit from PO-PSM. According to Indira and Rathika (2020), e-recruitment can attract many

job applicants quickly, while technology's efficiency can reduce recruitment time, impacting the regulatory framework. With e-recruitment in Tanzania, the process has been reduced to 52-59 days, prompting regulation updates. However, a study by Reward (2018) revealed that despite its benefits, e-recruitment in Tanzania still needs to improve, such as delayed feedback, insufficient budgets for e-government infrastructure maintenance, and political interference. The controversy surrounding the lengthy recruitment duration in Tanzania's public service is attributed to manual recruitment methods that previously would take three to six months. New regulations were implemented in 2021. Recruitment and selection processes must be completed within 52-59 days of obtaining an employment permit.

5.5 Cost optimisation

In this theme, the researcher wanted to know if the state employment regulatory frameworks improved the effectiveness of e-recruitment and selection by promoting employment cost optimisation in the country. Specifically, the study sought to determine how the available e-recruitment regulatory frameworks facilitate cost optimisation in public service employment. One of the respondents had the following to say,

Implementing employment regulations in recruitment has yielded significant cost savings for job seekers and the government. Following these regulations, government offices must now advertise job opportunities through a government recruitment portal or other recognised websites. As a result, the need for costly materials such as paper, stamps, and post office applications has been eliminated and the need for candidates to travel to recruitment agencies physically. The government has also realised considerable savings by eliminating the 3,000,000 Tsh cost per one-page advertisement in the gazette, which can now be allocated to other priority areas such as health. Furthermore, using a secure database to store all candidates' employment information has reduced the need for ample storage space and mitigated the risk of data loss. Overall, these regulations have significantly improved the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the recruitment process (Respondent D₁, April 24 2023).

The comments from D₁ on the role of regulatory frameworks in reducing the cost of operation in recruitment procedures were contrary to the reported arguments by LO₁ hereunder:

At present, we conduct all written interviews online, resulting in a reduction in recruitment and selection costs. Our use of e-recruitment has notably decreased our operational expenses by eliminating the need for expensive job advertisements in traditional mediums such as gazettes or radio and the cost of storing physical application documents. E-

recruitment has reduced the need for stationary, travel to the post office, and timely reproduction of certification copies, further contributing to reduced costs. We intend to continue utilising these efficient cost-saving measures for future recruitment endeavours (Respondent LO₁, May 2 2023)

From the FGD responses, the arguments made reveal the recruitment regulatory framework to have advantages in reducing costs, whereby the asserted comments were as follows,

The PSRS has revolutionised the recruitment process by providing many job opportunities worth billions of dollars. In the past, the government had to shell out over 3000,000 TSH for a single page of advertisement in the gazette, and managing tons of candidate job application documents was a cumbersome and costly affair that involved transportation, sorting, marking, and selection processes. However, with ICT, the recruitment and selection processes and job replacement have become more efficient, cost-effective, and compliant with the law. The Public Service Recruitment Secretariat Rules of 2022 and the Public Service Recruitment Secretariat Client Service Charter of 2022 have helped optimise costs and streamline the process. (FGD's "B", April 28th 2023)

Drawing from the findings reported in the foregoing sections, the perceived advantages of e-recruitment include reduced employment costs, particularly in job advertisements for lower-paying positions.

According to Mwashu (2013), the invention of online recruitment in Tanzania has been devised to reduce the cost of operation in recruitment. A similar view is made by Malekano (2020), who observes that e-recruitment and selection have reduced unnecessary costs at TANAPA as fewer resources were incurred than would have been the case with conventional recruitment and selection practices. However, the interview findings contrasted with the views of respondent LO₁, who said there would be no total cost removal in Tanzania's recruitment process. The candidates and government continue to incur the costs of travelling to areas where interviews are conducted. The controversy that arose between the findings in this study and the findings in past studies is that the invention of e-recruitment and its regulatory frameworks somehow generated inefficiencies. Officials and interviewees still travel to conduct and attend interviews, respectively, because of inadequate ICT infrastructure. Therefore, this implies that there is still a need to invest in advanced ICT infrastructure to continue overcoming traditional

practices, as it avoids the cost of operations, particularly in job ads for lower-paying positions.

6.0 Conclusion

This paper explored how the recruitment regulatory framework enhances e-recruitment and selection in Tanzania's Public service. The reality from the findings indicates that the available employment regulatory frameworks facilitate effective e-recruitment and selection. For instance, the collaboration of e-recruitment and the existing recruitment regulatory frameworks have pushed for increased job opportunity accessibility. The PSRS Rules of operation allowed job accessibility by linking job information to electronic devices such as Mobile phones and laptops via the initiated ajira kiganjani application. The recruitment regulatory framework, such as the PSRS Rules of Operations and the Public Service Standing Order, has reduced interview distance in some high managerial positions by allowing video conferencing. Regarding job fairness and transparency, the regulatory frameworks to run e-recruitment have promoted justice and competitiveness and eliminated group and gender discrimination as the rules of operation restricted bias and subjected unfair screening. The PSRS Rules of Operations have been limiting nepotism by demanding panellists and job candidates to declare an interest when an uncompromising relationship in the interview process arises.

Moreover, e-recruitment regulatory frameworks go far by stipulating penalties and suspension for any person found to engage in recruitment corruption. Additionally, the available regulatory frameworks have increased the loop to recruitment time management and cost optimisation since costs on post offices, papers, stamps, advertisement by the government and recruitment time spent from 6 months to 59 days have properly been managed. Despite these steps, linking ICT services with recruitment regulatory frameworks still needs to be improved while bringing the available recruitment regulatory frameworks into more current ICT innovation to prevent unreliable workforces in the public service.

7.0 Recommendations

The current study indicated a need to align regulations for recruitment with ICT services and integrate government systems. The e-government Act requires specific rules for

organisations to disclose their use of ICT, while the public sector database must share and exchange information. However, relying solely on the e-government Act for guidance on e-recruitment without establishing a complete regulatory framework could limit accountability in employment matters. Therefore, there is a need for the PSRS to create a specific e-recruitment regulatory framework or provide more guidance on handling e-recruitment practices, processes, and strategies in employment matters within the PSRS rules of operation for 2021.

8.0 Limitation and Further Studies

The Institutional Theory emphasises the significance of legal frameworks that guide an organisation's practices, ensuring accountability and achieving desired outcomes. Additional research is needed to investigate the impact of employment regulations on effective e-recruitment and selection, explicitly examining the role of National Employment Policy and PSRS Rules of operation. It is important to note that the study was conducted in the Tanzania Public Service (PSRS), where recruitment and selection matters are under its authority. However, the study did not involve job seekers (candidates), as finding willing interview participants would be tough. It could have compromised the data quality and usefulness if locating suitable candidates had taken less time.

9.0 Contribution to The Literature

The study explored the effectiveness of e-recruitment and selection within its framework in Tanzania. It has updated the literature on the e-recruitment framework. The findings are generalisable within the theoretical framework employed and inform the e-government practitioners and decision-makers in e-government-related services.

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