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Human Resource Management Practices of the Philippine National Police: Basis for an Enhanced Recruitment and Selection Strategy

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Abstract

This study assessed the Human Resource Management (HRM) practices, specifically recruitment and selection, of the Police Regional Office Bangsamoro Autonomous Region (PRO BAR) to inform an enhanced strategic framework. Employing a descriptive-quantitative design, the research analyzed the level of implementation of current practices, their resulting effectiveness, and the degree of seriousness of challenges encountered. Findings reveal that PRO BAR's contemporary recruitment and selection practices are Largely Implemented, particularly regarding the use of the "Faceless and Nameless" system and comprehensive testing. This high-level implementation directly translates into Highly Effective personnel outcomes across all competency domains, including Job Knowledge, Cognitive Ability, Personality, Integrity, and Physical Fitness. Crucially, the analysis refuted the perception of a lack of qualified regional applicants. However, the efficacy of the system is severely threatened by Very Serious (VS) challenges that are structural and logistical. The most critical impediments are budgetary constraints limiting thorough background and medical investigations, geographical/security issues impeding on-the-ground vetting, and pervasive IT infrastructure deficiencies causing procedural delays. Challenges related to political intervention were rated as only Moderately Serious, suggesting the success of internal systemic buffers. The study concludes that while the policy framework is sound and effective, its full potential is constrained by resource scarcity and operational logistics in the BARMM environment. Recommendations focus on securing strategic funding and upgrading CORES infrastructure to ensure the integrity and speed of the personnel acquisition process.

Keywords: *Human Resource Management, Recruitment, Selection*

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INTRODUCTION

The Strategic Imperative for Human Capital Acquisition. The foundational efficacy of any security institution, particularly within the dynamic and often contentious operational context of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region (BARMM), is intrinsically linked to the caliber and suitability of its personnel. For the Police Regional Office Bangsamoro Autonomous Region (PRO BAR), the mandate to uphold peace and order necessitates a workforce distinguished by high levels of job knowledge, cognitive ability, integrity, discipline, and physical fitness. Consequently, the initial human capital acquisition processes, specifically Recruitment and Selection, are not merely administrative functions but critical strategic determinants of organizational performance and legitimacy in this complex environment.

Strategic Importance of Human Resource Management in Security Sector Governance. Globally, the effectiveness of public service delivery in law enforcement depends heavily on the quality of its human capital, establishing Human Resource Management (HRM) as a central strategic imperative (Mustari et al., 2024; Profiroiu & Negoiță, 2022). Recruitment and selection are recognized worldwide as the critical front-end mechanism for securing the right fit—a foundational element for sustained institutional success (Reiner, 2020; Wilson & Grammich, 2024). International research consistently highlights the need to rigorously assess five critical competencies: Job Knowledge, Cognitive Ability, Integrity (Discipline), Personality, and Physical Fitness, to ensure recruits can meet the complex demands of modern policing.

Risk Profile. Systemic vulnerabilities or inadequacies in these HRM practices pose a tangible risk, potentially leading to the onboarding of sub-optimal personnel and thereby eroding the agency's operational readiness, public confidence, and adherence to professional standards. The contemporary global policing landscape is defined by a significant workforce crisis, marked by increased retirements and a notable decrease in qualified applications, exacerbated by public scrutiny (IACP, 2020; PERF, 2020). The erosion of impartiality, objectivity, and honesty in the public sector further amplifies the need for strategic HRM to reinforce these values.

Research Intervention. This study is precisely situated at the intersection of HRM effectiveness and security sector governance. It conducts a rigorous, empirical evaluation of the current state of HRM practices within PRO BAR, specifically focusing on the implementation (Q1) and impact (Q2) of officer entry policies, while concurrently analyzing the degree of seriousness of encountered challenges (Q3). The overarching objective is to utilize this granular analysis to formulate a highly targeted and enhanced PNP recruitment and selection strategy, structurally reinforcing PRO BAR's capacity to consistently attract and secure competent, ethical, and fully qualified personnel, ensuring sustained operational excellence and contributing vigorously to regional stability.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework. The study is anchored on a synthesis of three critical management theories to analyze the strategic intent, value creation, and operational effectiveness of the PRO BAR's personnel acquisition system.

Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM). The SHRM framework serves as the primary theoretical lens, asserting that HRM practices must be vertically aligned with the organization's mission and horizontally integrated across functional areas to enhance organizational performance. In law enforcement, SHRM dictates that managing human capital is a strategic tool to achieve public service goals like accountability, efficiency, and safety. The assessment of implementation and effectiveness directly addresses this framework, recognizing effective recruitment and selection as antecedent practices that lead to superior organizational outcomes.

Resource-Based View (RBV) of the Firm. The RBV posits that a firm's competitive advantage stems from internal resources that are Valuable, Rare, Inimitable, and Non-substitutable (VRIN). In the public security context, the human capital—specifically the integrity, cognitive ability, and discipline of police officers—represents a critical VRIN resource. The study's focus on these specific competency dimensions is directly informed by the RBV, as the ability to secure these rare attributes is necessary for long-term credibility. An ineffective recruitment process (as measured by challenges encountered) jeopardizes the firm's ability to secure these resources.

Person-Job (P-J) Fit Theory. P-J Fit theory provides the micro-level foundation for evaluating the efficacy of the selection practices. It suggests that performance and retention are maximized when an individual's Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSA) align with the requirements of the job. The five competency factors assessed: Job Knowledge, Cognitive Ability, Personality (Discipline), Integrity, and Physical Fitness are the operational elements used to measure a successful match between the candidate and the police function.

Objectives

This study sought to determine the Human Resource Management Practices of PRO BAR as the basis for the formulation of an enhanced PNP recruitment and selection strategy.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of implementation of the HRM practices and recruitment and selection practices of PRO BAR?
2. What is the level of effectiveness of the HRM practices and recruitment and selection practices of PRO BAR?
3. What is the degree of seriousness of the challenges encountered in the current recruitment and selection practices?
4. Based on the findings, what recommendations may be formulated to enhance the PNP recruitment and selection strategy?

METHODS

Research Design and Method

The study employed a descriptive-evaluative research design. The descriptive component served to accurately detail the existing HRM practices related to recruitment and selection at PRO BAR. Building upon this, the evaluative component assessed the merit and effectiveness of these practices in achieving intended outcomes, such as attracting qualified candidates and ensuring a fair process. The research utilized a quantitative method, which was highly suitable for measuring variables such as the "level" of implementation and effectiveness and the "degree of seriousness" of challenges, enabling objective and generalizable statistical findings.

Research Locale and Population of the Study

The study was conducted within the jurisdiction of the Police Regional Office in Bangsamoro Autonomous Region (PRO BAR), which operates within the unique security and socio-political context of the BARMM. This locale was purposively chosen due to its strategic significance for peace and security in the region. The target population comprised the 8,486 uniformed personnel of the PNP assigned to PRO BAR. While the calculated target sample size using Slovin's formula (at a 0.05 margin of error) was $n=382$, the actual number of uniformed personnel who participated totaled 1,159 officers. The voluntary participation of a significantly larger sample size enhanced the

statistical power and external validity of the findings, ensuring that the results were a more accurate representation of the broader PRO BAR population

Data Gathering Tool and Statistical Treatment

The primary instrument was a structured survey questionnaire, developed through the adaptation and rigorous modification of validated items pertaining to human resource management in the police context. The instrument used a four-point Likert scale across its three parts (Implementation, Effectiveness, Challenges). The deliberate exclusion of a neutral midpoint in the scale was a methodological choice intended to mitigate the risk of central tendency bias, thereby compelling respondents to express a definitive inclination regarding the measured variables. The treatment of the collected data focused on descriptive statistics. The Median (Mdn) was utilized as the central tendency measure for all sub-indicators and aggregated clusters. The median is considered particularly appropriate for analyzing ordinal scale data, such as that derived from Likert scales, as it provides a reliable measure less susceptible to distortion by extreme outliers compared to the mean.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

Level of Implementation of the HRM Practices and Recruitment/Selection Practices

The findings demonstrate a high level of implementation fidelity across PRO BAR's HRM and recruitment/selection practices, generally achieving either a Largely Implemented (LI) or Fully Implemented (FI) status.

In the domain of Recruitment, the most successful element is the integrity buffer: The "Faceless and Nameless" approach is Fully Implemented (Mdn=4). This represents a significant institutional achievement in confronting the historical issue of the padrino system and bias, establishing organizational legitimacy. Crucially, the commitment to strategic inclusivity, such as actively targeting applicants from former Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) members, is rated as Largely Implemented (Mdn=3).

For Selection, the integrity of the medical screening process is paramount: Medical and dental examinations are conducted by certified and impartial health service personnel and are Fully Implemented (Mdn=4). The core practices of Selection Board training, standardized testing, rigorous document authentication, and comprehensive Background Investigation (BI) procedures are all Largely Implemented (Mdn=3).

The rigorous adherence to competency assessment reveals a systematic commitment to meritocracy: The assessment of Job Knowledge specifically concerning the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) and local context, along with ensuring that academic qualifications are relevant, are both Fully Implemented (Mdn=4). Similarly, in the physical domain, the Physical Agility Test (PAT) standards and requirements for demanding tasks are Fully Implemented (Mdn=4).

However, a critical implementation gap was identified in the behavioral vetting process. Indicators related to proactively predicting future behavior were assessed as only Partially Implemented (PI). For example, Personality assessments accurately measuring traits associated with self-control, and the mechanism to predict an applicant's likelihood of exhibiting insubordination or abuse of power during service, both received an Mdn of 2. This finding indicates that while the system is excellent at screening historical administrative or physical disqualifiers, it remains vulnerable in the

crucial area of proactively measuring and predicting the non-cognitive traits essential for ethical, long-term conduct. This vulnerability is a potential leakage point for future misconduct and undermines the organization's commitment to securing VRIN resources.

Level of Effectiveness of the HRM Practices and Recruitment/Selection Practices

The high fidelity of implementation translates into a consistently Highly Effective (HE) system across almost all measured competency outcomes. This level of effectiveness confirms the successful attainment of the Person-Job Fit goal (P-J Fit), indicating the system successfully secures human capital meeting organizational competency requirements.

The following table highlights the sustained high effectiveness in securing key attributes critical for policing in BARMM.

Table 1
Level of Effectiveness of the Recruitment and Selection Practices (Competency Focus)

Competency Dimension	Key Component	Median Score (Mdn)	Descriptive Equivalent
Job Knowledge	Academic qualifications are relevant	4	Highly Effective (HE)
Cognitive Ability	Neuro-Psychiatric tests are effective	3	Effective (E)
Personality/Discipline	Applicants' behavior is monitored/factored	4	Highly Effective (HE)
Integrity	Prioritizes character and honesty	3	Effective (E)
Physical Fitness	BMI measurements accurately applied	4	Highly Effective (HE)

Note: Highly Effective (HE)-4, Effective (E)-3, Moderately Effective (HE)-2, Ineffective (E)-1

The consistent High Effectiveness rating validates that the implementation of merit-based and reform-oriented HRM policies, such as the "Faceless and Nameless" system, directly results in a higher quality of human capital entering the organization. The successful screening for ethical and behavioral attributes implies that rigorous background investigation procedures are yielding superior results.

A critical functional dissonance, however, was noted in the physical assessment domain. While the PAT standards were Fully Implemented (Mdn=4), their effectiveness in accurately reflecting the functional strength and endurance needed for active duty in BARMM was rated only Moderately Effective (ME) (Mdn=2). This observation suggests that although the procedure is rigorously applied, the standard itself may lack operational relevance or criterion validity for the rugged, context-specific demands of the BARMM environment.

Degree of Seriousness of the Challenges Encountered (Q3)

The assessment of challenges reveals that the primary threats to the selection system's integrity are structural, financial, and logistical, rather than policy-related or due to a lack of talent. The challenges are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2
Degree of Seriousness of the Challenges Encountered in the Current Recruitment and Selection Practices

Challenge Indicator	Median Score (Mdn)	Descriptive Equivalent
Budgetary constraints (BI/Medical)	4	Very Serious (VS)
Geographical/security issues (Vetting)	4	Very Serious (VS)
IT infrastructure deficiencies (CORES Glitches)	4	Very Serious (VS)
Corruption among selection personnel	3	Serious (S)
Political/external intervention attempts	2	Moderately Serious (MS)
Lack of qualified applicants in the region	1	Not Serious (NS)

Note: Very Serious (VS)-4, Serious (S)-3, Moderately Serious (MS)-2, Not Serious (NS)-1

The three highest-rated challenges, scoring Very Serious (VS) (Mdn=4), are structural failures that directly compromise the selection process's integrity.

1. Budgetary Constraints: Fiscal limitations severely restrict the quality and depth of essential background and medical investigations. The inability to fund a truly thorough investigation due to resource scarcity poses an existential risk to the integrity of the selection outcome, threatening the acquisition of high-integrity VRIN resources.
2. Geographical/Security Issues: The unique security environment of BARMM makes on-the-ground vetting difficult, directly impeding core HRM functions in high-risk or remote areas. This operational feasibility threat risks incomplete vetting, allowing individuals with problematic backgrounds to potentially enter the service.
3. IT Infrastructure Deficiencies: Despite the successful policy implementation of CORES, pervasive system glitches and slow data processing cause major procedural delays. This gap between policy and infrastructural readiness undermines transparency, causes applicant frustration, and contributes to attrition among qualified candidates.

The challenge related to Corruption among some selection personnel remains Serious (S) (Mdn=3). This highlights persistent organizational resistance, suggesting that anti-corruption policies must be reinforced with rigorous internal monitoring. Significantly, the challenge related to Political or external intervention attempts was rated only Moderately Serious (MS) (Mdn=2). This finding indicates that the institutional buffers, notably the "Faceless and Nameless" system, have successfully mitigated the influence of the historical padrino system, marking a measurable success in public sector reform. Most profoundly, the perception of a Lack of qualified applicants in the region was definitively refuted, receiving a Not Serious (NS) rating (Mdn=1). This disproves a common institutional myth used to justify low-quality intake, confirming that PRO BAR possesses a sufficient local talent pool. The strategic focus, therefore, must shift entirely from policy refinement to overcoming the structural and logistical barriers that prevent the effective processing of this existing talent.

The Triumph of Policy: Achieving Integrity and Meritocracy

The consistent high effectiveness (HE) ratings across all core competencies validate the strategic approach adopted by PRO BAR, confirming that when meritocratic policies are substantially implemented, superior human capital is acquired. The establishment of the "Faceless and Nameless" system is a landmark success. Its Fully Implemented status directly contributed to the Moderately Serious rating of political intervention attempts, demonstrating that institutional buffers can successfully insulate the selection process from external patronage, a rare achievement in Philippine bureaucracy.

The commitment to Strategic Human Resource Management is further evidenced by the Largely Implemented status of recruiting former MILF/MNLF members. This practice extends the role of HRM beyond standard personnel management, strategically aligning the organization with the regional peace mandate (R.A. 11054) to promote institutional legitimacy and socio-political integration in the BARMM.

The Constraint Paradox: When Resources Undermine Integrity

Despite the robust policy framework, the analysis reveals a critical constraint paradox: the successful acquisition of high-quality human capital (the VRIN resource) is fundamentally threatened by systemic operational failures.

Fiscal Threat to Vetting Integrity

The Very Serious rating for budgetary constraints prevents the necessary depth in vetting, directly impacting the quality of the selected personnel. The integrity component of selection, while rated Highly Effective in theory, is fiscally unsustainable, as inadequate funding compels a less-than-thorough execution of background and medical checks. This resource limitation prevents the organization from maximizing the predictive validity of its screening tools, despite their high implementation fidelity.

Operational and Infrastructural Friction

The Very Serious geographic and security constraints expose a fundamental conflict between the standard procedural requirement for thorough, physical vetting and the realities of operating in high-risk BARMM areas. Generic BI procedures are operationally infeasible, necessitating the immediate development of specialized, context-specific protocols to ensure vetting integrity across the entire region. Furthermore, the juxtaposition of the Largely Implemented CORES policy with the Very Serious IT infrastructure deficiencies creates a systemic bottleneck. The slow processing and glitches undermine the transparency and efficiency CORES was designed to achieve, causing delays that increase applicant frustration and damage the organization's reputation among high-caliber local applicants.

Addressing Residual Competency and Ethical Gaps

The Partially Implemented (PI) status for predictive personality assessment must be addressed to protect the system from the Serious threat of corruption. The reliance on historical records (which are Fully Implemented in screening) is insufficient. The discussion argues that current psychological tools require an upgrade to a

sophisticated, predictive model designed to measure non-cognitive attributes like ethical resilience and self-control, necessary to prevent the entry of individuals prone to abuse of power. Additionally, the Moderately Effective (ME) rating for the Physical Agility Test (PAT) standard highlights a critical disconnect between the standard applied and the job's functional requirements. To achieve optimal P-J Fit physiologically, a validation study is required to recalibrate PAT standards based on the genuine operational demands and ecological environment of PRO BAR.

CONCLUSION

The assessment confirms that the Police Regional Office Bangsamoro Autonomous Region (PRO BAR) has successfully operationalized a strategically aligned, merit-based, and Highly Effective (HE) recruitment and selection framework. The consistent ratings of Full and Large Implementation across major HRM dimensions demonstrate that the unit has firmly institutionalized contemporary recruitment safeguards—most notably the "Faceless and Nameless" system—which significantly reduced political interference and patronage influence. Equally important, the finding that the perceived lack of qualified regional applicants is "Not Serious" establishes that PRO BAR possesses a viable and competent local talent pool capable of meeting the organization's strategic and operational demands.

However, a deeper analysis reveals that while the policy architecture is strong, the ability of PRO BAR to sustain these high standards is critically threatened by Very Serious structural and operational constraints. Budgetary limitations severely impede comprehensive background investigations and medical examinations, creating vulnerabilities in the vetting of integrity, ethical fitness, and long-term job suitability. Similarly, the geographical and security challenges inherent in the BARMM environment restrict ground-level verification processes, directly affecting the reliability and completeness of applicant assessments. Compounding these issues are persistent IT infrastructure deficiencies, particularly within CORES, which cause delays, frustrate applicants, and disrupt the transparency and efficiency of the overall process.

These constraints demonstrate that the core threats to recruitment integrity are not rooted in flawed policies or inadequate human capital but rather in systemic resource scarcity and operational feasibility barriers. Furthermore, the study identifies critical competency gaps—such as the partial implementation of predictive behavioral assessments and the limited criterion validity of the Physical Agility Test (PAT)—which require immediate recalibration to ensure that non-cognitive attributes and physical capabilities align with the unique demands of policing in BARMM.

Overall, the study concludes that PRO BAR's recruitment and selection system is fundamentally robust, principled, and effective in its intent and design. To fully realize its potential, however, the PNP must prioritize strategic resource mobilization, strengthen logistical and security-based BI protocols, and modernize digital infrastructure. Addressing these structural barriers is essential not only to preserve the integrity of the current system but also to ensure the long-term acquisition of ethically resilient, operationally capable, and community-responsive police officers vital to maintaining peace and stability in the Bangsamoro region.

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