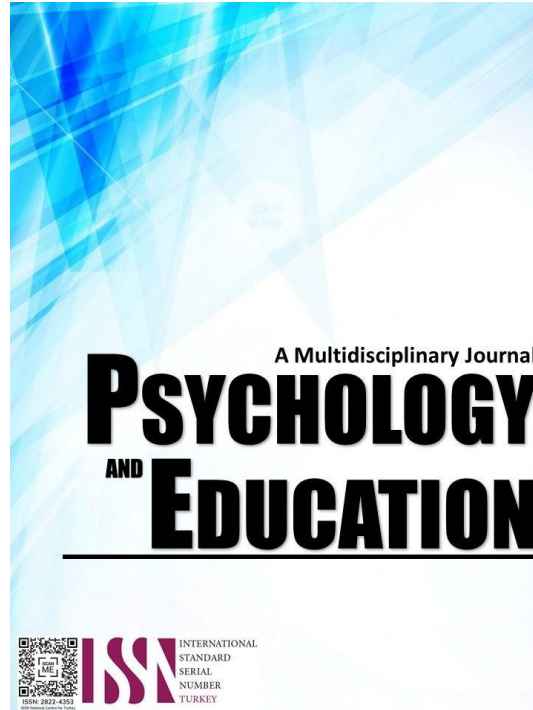


CLICK, RANK, HIRE: GAUGING THE SUCCESS OF DEPED BOHOL'S RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION SYSTEM



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Click, Rank, Hire: Gauging the Success of DepEd Bohol's Recruitment and Selection System

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Abstract

As the largest employer in the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) plays a critical role in shaping equitable and efficient public service systems, especially in teacher recruitment. In response to longstanding concerns regarding transparency and efficiency in hiring, the DepEd Bohol Division implemented a reformed recruitment and selection system for the 2024–2025 and 2025–2026 hiring cycles. This study evaluated the system's effectiveness as experienced by teacher applicants, focusing on four dimensions: process efficiency, fairness, usability of the applicant portal, and overall satisfaction. Grounded in Strategic Human Resource Management, Organizational Justice Theory, and the Technology Acceptance Model, the study used a descriptive-evaluative design to analyze data from 902 valid survey responses. The instrument, which yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.88, underwent pilot testing to ensure internal reliability. Descriptive statistics revealed high ratings across all indicators: efficiency ($M = 4.32$, $SD = 8.00$), fairness ($M = 4.23$, $SD = 8.49$), portal usability ($M = 4.24$, $SD = 8.77$), and satisfaction ($M = 4.30$, $SD = 8.47$), with an overall mean of 4.27. A z-test showed no significant difference in ratings between the 2024 and 2025 cycles ($p = 0.14$), indicating consistent implementation. However, ANOVA results revealed statistically significant differences in perceptions based on the number of application attempts ($p = 0.001$) and current employment status ($p = 0.012$), suggesting disparities in experience among repeat applicants and those outside the DepEd system. Other demographic variables showed no significant variation in ratings. While the system was perceived as highly effective overall, the voluntary and non-randomized nature of the sample presents a limitation in generalizability. Nonetheless, the findings underscore the system's strengths in efficiency and fairness, while calling attention to the need for greater inclusivity and responsiveness to underrepresented voices in the applicant pool. The study provides empirical evidence that may guide other divisions and national policymakers in refining recruitment systems toward more meritocratic, transparent, and applicant-centered practices.

Keywords: *teacher recruitment, applicant satisfaction, DepEd Bohol, fairness, HRM, usability, public school hiring*

Introduction

Across the world, education systems are recognizing that the strength of any school begins with the people it hires. More than ever, the process of recruiting and selecting teachers has come under scrutiny, not just for its outcomes, but also for the experience it creates for both applicants and hiring bodies. Countries are adopting data-driven tools, digitized platforms, and structured evaluation frameworks to improve how educators are selected, moving away from bureaucratic delays and opaque scoring systems toward speed, transparency, and meritocracy (Ghodosara, 2023; Harver, 2020). These changes signal a deeper shift in public sector governance: one that values not just getting people into classrooms quickly, but doing so in a way that builds trust in the system and confidence in its fairness.

Yet despite these progressive reforms, the path toward truly effective recruitment remains uneven. In many contexts, especially where digital infrastructure and capacity-building lag, reforms either stall in implementation or fail to deliver their intended impact. Research indicates frequent problems, including users struggling with poorly designed portals, evaluation criteria that lack clarity, and systems that exacerbate disparities rather than resolve them (Sharna, 2023; Anderson, 2021). Even in technologically advanced settings, hiring processes often remain susceptible to hidden biases and inconsistent execution. As governments automate and standardize more of their operations, they face a critical challenge: ensuring that technology enhances, rather than undermines, the principles of equity, efficiency, and user-centered governance.

The Philippine Department of Education, the country's largest employer, is no stranger to these challenges. While national policies such as DepEd Order No. 66, s. 2007 set clear expectations for recruitment and selection, but implementation at the division level often reflects a different reality. In DepEd Bohol, past recruitment cycles were marked by procedural inconsistencies, delayed appointments, and a lack of transparency that left many teacher-applicants uncertain and dissatisfied. In response to these longstanding concerns, Enad and Pabalan (2023) conducted a study that culminated in an action plan designed to overhaul the division's recruitment and selection process. The plan outlined a series of improvements: streamlining documentation flows, enhancing transparency in scoring, integrating an applicant portal, and standardizing communication with stakeholders. These interventions were rolled out in the 2024 and 2025 recruitment periods to transform how the division attracts, evaluates, and appoints its teaching workforce.

While the reforms introduced by Enad and Pabalan were grounded in empirical findings and practical realities, their impact remains largely undocumented. No systematic study has yet examined how these changes have affected the experience of applicants, nor whether the new process is seen as more efficient, fair, or satisfying than the one it replaced. Most literature on public school recruitment in the Philippines stops at problem identification or solution design, leaving a critical gap in post-implementation evaluation. Without feedback from those who interact with the system directly, such as the teacher-applicants, it becomes impossible to say whether the

reforms are achieving their intended goals or simply adding a new layer of complexity.

This study takes up that challenge. It seeks to assess the effectiveness of the recruitment and selection process in DepEd Bohol as implemented under the action plan of Enad and Pabalan (2023). By examining four key dimensions: efficiency of the process, fairness of implementation, functionality of the applicant portal, and user satisfaction, this study generates insight into what works, what still needs adjustment, and what lessons can be drawn for future policy directions. Beyond documenting experiences, the study aims to contribute to the ongoing professionalization of public school hiring in the Philippines. Its findings may guide other DepEd divisions seeking to reform their systems and offer valuable evidence for national policymakers aiming to strengthen merit-based, transparent, and responsive recruitment practices in education.

Research Questions

The primary objective of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the recruitment and selection system implemented in the public schools of the DepEd Bohol Division, as utilized during the School Years 2024–2025 and 2025–2026. Specifically, the study was aimed at answering the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the teacher-applicants in terms of:
 - 1.1. gender;
 - 1.2. age;
 - 1.3. highest educational attainment;
 - 1.4. number of application attempts; and
 - 1.5. current employment status?
2. What is the teacher-applicants' assessment of the recruitment and selection process in terms of:
 - 2.1. efficiency;
 - 2.2. fairness;
 - 2.3. applicant portal usability; and
 - 2.4. satisfaction?
3. Is there a significant difference in the teacher-applicants' assessment when responses are grouped into:
 - 3.1. cycle and
 - 3.2. demographic profile?

Literature Review

Understanding the effectiveness of a recruitment and selection system in a public education context requires a grounding in relevant theoretical lenses that explain not just institutional behavior, but also user perceptions and technological engagement. This study is anchored on three key theories: Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) Theory, Organizational Justice Theory, and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). These frameworks collectively illuminate how recruitment processes function, how fairness is perceived, and how digital systems are accepted or rejected by users.

Strategic Human Resource Management Theory, as articulated by Wright and McMahan (1992), emphasizes that human capital must be aligned with the strategic objectives of an institution for it to thrive. In the case of DepEd Bohol, the recruitment and selection system is not only a procedural mechanism but a strategic intervention aimed at ensuring that the most competent teachers are deployed efficiently and promptly. This theory speaks directly to how teacher-applicants and HR personnel assess the system's efficiency, whether the process is organized, timely, and responsive to staffing needs. It also provides a lens for understanding implementation challenges. From the SHRM perspective, delays, administrative redundancies, or coordination gaps are not merely logistical issues but reflections of how well or poorly aligned the recruitment strategy is with institutional goals.

Closely related to effectiveness is the question of fairness. Organizational Justice Theory, proposed by Greenberg (1987), explains how perceptions of fairness in organizational processes affect attitudes and behaviors. This theory is particularly relevant in a public sector context where transparency and impartiality are critical. It covers three key areas: distributive justice (fairness in outcomes), procedural justice (fairness in the process), and interactional justice (fairness in treatment and communication). These components provide a framework for evaluating how teacher-applicants perceive the fairness of the implemented recruitment process, whether criteria are applied consistently, whether the scoring system is understandable, and whether applicants feel respected and informed throughout the process. Furthermore, Organizational Justice Theory ties directly to user satisfaction. Applicants who perceive a process as fair, even if they are not selected, are more likely to express satisfaction and trust in the system. Thus, fairness and satisfaction are not isolated elements but interdependent outcomes shaped by institutional design and stakeholder engagement.

In today's digital age, recruitment systems are increasingly mediated by technology, making user experience with digital platforms a crucial component of effectiveness. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), developed by Davis (1989), helps explain how users come to accept and use new technologies. According to TAM, perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are the two primary factors that determine whether users will embrace a technology. In the case of DepEd Bohol, the applicant portal serves as the central access point for submitting applications, receiving updates, and viewing results. The theory becomes especially relevant in assessing

whether the portal facilitates or hinders participation. If teacher-applicants find the system intuitive and helpful in navigating the process, TAM would predict higher engagement and positive perceptions. Conversely, if the portal is confusing or unreliable, it may negatively impact users' overall evaluation of the system, regardless of how well the offline procedures are designed.

Taken together, these three theories provide a comprehensive and interconnected framework for examining the recruitment and selection process implemented in DepEd Bohol. SHRM highlights the need for internal alignment and process efficiency, while Organizational Justice draws attention to transparency, consistency, and respectful communication. Meanwhile, TAM underscores the critical role of digital usability and user experience. These theoretical perspectives guide the interpretation of each research question, ensuring that the evaluation is not only data-driven but also conceptually grounded in established scholarly thought.

The theoretical grounding of this study is complemented by a strong legal framework that governs recruitment and selection in the Philippine public education system. These legal provisions do not merely serve as procedural guidelines; they carry with them implications for fairness, accountability, and institutional compliance. At the core of these policies is the mandate to uphold meritocracy, transparency, and equal opportunity, principles that directly align with the criteria being evaluated in this study.

One of the most significant legal instruments shaping recruitment in public schools is DepEd Order No. 007, s. 2023, which revises earlier guidelines and establishes a competency-based, merit-oriented system for hiring teaching personnel. It mandates that selection be based on clearly defined criteria, structured ranking procedures, and transparent scoring mechanisms. This order is not just administrative; it has legal implications that protect applicants' rights to equal treatment and fair opportunity. The order explicitly discourages favoritism, political interference, and vague evaluation methods. It also emphasizes the need for timeliness in filling vacancies, which connects directly to the study's focus on assessing the efficiency of the implemented process.

Similarly, DepEd Order No. 020, s. 2024 provides updated guidelines on the recruitment and selection of higher-level teaching and non-teaching positions. It reinforces procedural safeguards, particularly those that ensure transparency and accountability. The order requires school division offices to publish clear timetables, post results promptly, and maintain documentation for audit and grievance purposes. These requirements elevate transparency from a best practice to a legal expectation, making it essential for any recruitment system, especially one facilitated by digital tools, to comply with these standards.

Furthermore, the 1987 Philippine Constitution, specifically Article IX-B, Section 3, mandates that public sector appointments and promotions be made "according to merit and fitness." This constitutional clause serves as the highest legal backing for recruitment policies within DepEd and ensures that any deviation from merit-based practices may be subject to legal challenge. In connection with this, the Civil Service Commission (CSC), through its PRIME-HRM (Program to Institutionalize Meritocracy and Excellence in Human Resource Management), sets performance benchmarks for government agencies in recruitment, placement, and HR development. PRIME-HRM certification requires that agencies not only establish processes but also assess and refine them, a requirement that echoes the purpose of this present study.

The legal implications of these policies are profound. Failure to adhere to recruitment standards may result not only in administrative inefficiencies but also in complaints, audit findings, and potential legal sanctions. Conversely, a system that demonstrates compliance by being efficient, fair, transparent, and accessible can enhance the institution's credibility and build public trust. Therefore, this study is not only evaluative; it also plays a part in ensuring that DepEd Bohol's recruitment and selection practices are aligned with both legal mandates and the ethical imperatives of public service.

Building on the theoretical and legal foundations of recruitment and selection in public education, a growing body of research provides empirical insights into the effectiveness of such systems. The following thematized review draws from local and international studies to examine key dimensions aligned with the specific research questions of this study: namely, the profile of applicants, the perceived efficiency and fairness of the process, the functionality of the applicant portal, overall user satisfaction, implementation challenges, and stakeholder recommendations for improvement.

Recent studies affirm the importance of understanding the demographic profiles of teacher-applicants as a foundation for effective and inclusive recruitment systems. Profiling variables such as age, gender, educational attainment, and application frequency offers insight into patterns of access, persistence, and potential barriers within the hiring pipeline. In a 2024 study conducted in Albay, Libradilla examined public school teacher demographics to support strategic staffing decisions and promote work-life balance through more responsive HR policies. Similarly, Toropova et al. (2021) noted the continued feminization of the Philippine teaching force, where over 80% of teachers are female, raising essential considerations about gendered experiences in public hiring. Limbona's (2025) study in the Jolo District further highlighted how repeated application attempts were often the result of procedural inefficiencies rather than applicant inadequacy. These findings collectively emphasize that demographic profiling is not merely descriptive; it is diagnostic and instrumental in ensuring recruitment equity.

Efficiency remains a core dimension in evaluating recruitment systems, particularly in public education, where delays can disrupt school operations and learning continuity. A scoping review by Alvarez-Sández et al. (2023) concluded that clearly defined workflows and metrics significantly enhance administrative performance in educational institutions. Supporting this, Kola and Oyadiran (2023) found that applicants equate efficiency with simplified steps, faster decision timelines, and timely feedback, all of which influence perceptions of legitimacy and professionalism in the hiring process. In the Philippine setting, Gepte and Dulay (2024) reported that

unresolved recruitment bottlenecks in teacher deployment led to understaffed classrooms at the start of the school year, negatively affecting instruction delivery. These studies reinforce the urgency of assessing whether DepEd Bohol's implemented system has succeeded in minimizing procedural delays and aligning with institutional service standards.

Equally important is the issue of fairness, which continues to receive attention in education recruitment research. Ho et al. (2024) found that procedural, distributive, and interpersonal justice strongly predict teacher engagement and institutional trust. In a related context, He et al. (2025) observed that digital recruitment systems lacking transparent scoring mechanisms tend to discourage applicants, particularly when feedback is limited or inaccessible. While efforts to digitize recruitment are often framed as fairness-enhancing, these studies caution that without clarity, consistency, and accountability, systems may reproduce the same biases they aim to eliminate. In settings like DepEd Bohol, where paper-based processes have been replaced with digital ones, evaluating fairness must go beyond policy; it must reflect the lived experiences of applicants navigating the new system.

Satisfaction, on the other hand, with the recruitment process has emerged as a key metric of institutional effectiveness and stakeholder confidence. Gallup's (2024) global workplace study reported that positive applicant experiences during recruitment lead to stronger perceptions of fairness and increased likelihood of future engagement, regardless of hiring outcomes. In education-focused settings, satisfaction is closely tied to the clarity of procedures, respectfulness of communication, and availability of timely updates. This is echoed in the work of Cohen-Charash and Spector (2021), who showed that satisfaction acts as both an indicator of recruitment success and a predictor of institutional loyalty. By capturing the satisfaction levels of teacher-applicants and HR personnel, this study provides a more holistic view of whether the implemented system in DepEd Bohol meets the expectations of those it was designed to serve.

As digital portals increasingly mediate recruitment, their usability becomes central to user experience and overall process credibility. A 2023 usability assessment of Zayed University's academic portal revealed that intuitive design, seamless navigation, and reliable load times significantly enhance user satisfaction and task success rates. In the higher education context, such enhancements directly correlate with increased engagement and reduced application abandonment. These findings underscore a universal principle: whether for student admission or teacher selection, an applicant portal must be user-centric and accessible. As such, this study will critically assess DepEd Bohol's recruitment portal to determine if it supports clear navigation, real-time updates, and reliable communication, or if it introduces barriers that compromise user trust and system transparency.

In light of the theoretical underpinnings, legal mandates, and empirical evidence presented, it becomes clear that evaluating the recruitment and selection system in DepEd Bohol requires a multifaceted approach, one that accounts for both structural soundness and human experience. The convergence of Strategic Human Resource Management Theory, Organizational Justice Theory, and the Technology Acceptance Model allows this study to explore how institutional alignment, perceptions of fairness, and digital accessibility collectively shape the effectiveness of the hiring process. Reinforced by national policies and constitutional imperatives on merit-based and transparent recruitment, the legal framework gives further weight to the system's obligation to function efficiently, fairly, and accountably. Moreover, recent studies provide relevant insights into the lived experiences of applicants and HR personnel, illuminating critical patterns in profile equity, procedural efficiency, fairness, satisfaction, and portal usability. Together, these layers form the foundation for a well-informed evaluation of whether the implemented system in DepEd Bohol has achieved its intended goals. As public education continues to evolve, so too must the mechanisms by which it selects its people, those at the frontlines of delivering quality education. This study positions itself as both a reflection on progress and a guide for continued refinement.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-evaluative research design to assess the effectiveness of the implemented recruitment and selection system in the public schools of the Department of Education (DepEd) Bohol Division during the 2024–2025 and 2025–2026 hiring cycles. This design, as described by Calderón and Gonzales (2018), is suited for studies that systematically gather and analyze stakeholder perceptions to evaluate program efficiency, fairness, functionality, and satisfaction. The design was chosen to systematically gather and analyze the perceptions of teacher-applicants regarding the system's efficiency, fairness, applicant portal functionality, and overall satisfaction.

Respondents

The primary respondents of the study were teacher-applicants who participated in the recruitment and selection process for School Years 2024–2025 and 2025–2026. A total of 902 valid responses were analyzed, with 509 responses out of the 3,234 applicants from the 2024 cycle and 393 responses out of the 5,467 applicants from the 2025 cycle. An invitation to participate in the study was sent to all applicants through official communication channels used during the hiring process. The survey was administered online using a structured questionnaire developed specifically for the study.

To ensure the validity of the responses, a screening protocol was applied during data cleaning. Survey entries that showed "Strongly Disagree" responses across all evaluated dimensions, without any supporting comments, suggestions, or engagement in the open-ended sections, were excluded from the final pool. This exclusion criterion was implemented to remove clearly insincere or non-informative responses that could skew the analysis and affect the reliability of the findings.

Instrument

The primary data collection tool used in this study was a self-constructed online survey questionnaire designed to assess the effectiveness of the recruitment and selection system implemented by the Department of Education (DepEd) in Bohol. Developed based on the study's conceptual framework and informed by related literature in human resource management, organizational justice, and technology acceptance, the instrument aimed to capture teacher-applicants' perceptions across key dimensions of the recruitment experience.

The survey consisted of five main sections: demographic profile, process efficiency, process fairness, applicant portal usability, and overall satisfaction and suggestions. It included a total of 28 Likert-scale items, each rated on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The instrument was designed to measure constructs aligned with the study's research questions, including the clarity and timeliness of procedures, perceived equity and transparency, user experience with the online portal, and overall satisfaction with the process.

To ensure validity and reliability, the instrument underwent pilot testing with 30 teacher-applicants from a nearby Department of Education (DepEd) division that was not involved in the main study. Feedback from the pilot phase was used to refine the clarity and structure of the items. Internal consistency of the Likert-scale items was confirmed through reliability analysis, yielding a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.88, indicating a high level of reliability (Pallant, 2020).

The survey was administered online using Google Forms, allowing efficient and wide-reaching data collection among applicants across the Bohol Division. Respondents accessed the survey through an official announcement issued via DepEd's communication platforms. The average completion time was estimated at 10 to 15 minutes. As no standardized instruments were used, the development, testing, and deployment of the tool adhered to guidelines for self-constructed instruments in educational and organizational research, as outlined by Creswell and Creswell (2018) and Babbie (2020).

Procedure

The research process began with securing formal approval from the Office of the Schools Division Superintendent of DepEd Bohol. A letter of request outlining the study's objectives, scope, and intended respondents was submitted and approved, authorizing the researcher to investigate teacher-applicants involved in the recruitment and selection processes for School Years 2024–2025 and 2025–2026.

Upon receiving institutional clearance, the researcher coordinated with the Human Resources (HR) office to disseminate an invitation to participate in the study. This invitation was sent to the participants via email. The invitation contained essential information, including the purpose of the study, a link to the online survey, and assurances regarding confidentiality and voluntary participation. Respondents were informed that no identifying information would be collected and that all data would be used exclusively for research purposes.

The online survey was administered using Google Forms and remained accessible throughout the two full recruitment cycles. This extended availability allowed ample time for applicants to respond based on their lived experiences with the system. During this period, regular reminders were shared to encourage participation and ensure broad representation.

All responses were automatically collected and stored securely in a password-protected spreadsheet file accessible only to the researcher. Upon the closing of the survey window, the dataset underwent a cleaning process to ensure data integrity. Incomplete entries and those lacking meaningful engagement, such as responses marked "Strongly Disagree" across all items without accompanying comments, were excluded to preserve the validity of the findings.

The procedures followed a structured sequence from authorization, instrument administration, and data screening to ethical compliance, aligning with established standards of transparency, replicability, and research integrity. This methodical approach ensured that the study's findings were both reliable and grounded in rigorous data collection practices.

Data Analysis

This study employed a combination of quantitative analytical methods to assess the effectiveness of the recruitment and selection system implemented in DepEd Bohol during the 2024 and 2025 hiring cycles. Quantitative data were collected through Likert-scale items that measured four key areas: process efficiency, perceived fairness, applicant portal usability, and overall satisfaction. These items were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations, to provide a general summary of responses and highlight trends in how teacher-applicants perceived the system.

To compare perceptions between the two recruitment cycles, a z-test for the difference between two means was applied to the responses from the 2024 and 2025 groups. This test determined whether significant differences existed in the applicants' assessments across time, thereby providing insight into whether improvements or regressions occurred after the system's initial implementation.

To analyze demographic-related differences in perceptions, such as those related to age, gender, educational attainment, or the number of application attempts, the researcher employed one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to determine if statistically significant

differences existed among the groups' mean ratings across the identified dimensions.

Together, these analytic approaches ensured that the study's findings were both statistically sound and grounded in the actual experiences and insights of the teacher-applicants who participated in DepEd Bohol's reformed recruitment and selection system.

Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to established ethical standards in the conduct of educational research, with particular attention to informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and data integrity. Before any data were collected, the researcher sought and secured formal approval from the Office of the Schools Division Superintendent of DepEd Bohol. This approval signified institutional consent and granted permission to conduct the study among teacher-applicants who participated in the 2024 and 2025 recruitment and selection cycles.

Participation in the study was entirely voluntary. An official announcement, which included the survey link, clearly outlined the purpose of the study and emphasized that no identifying information would be collected or disclosed. Respondents were assured that their participation would not affect their standing or application results in any way. By choosing to proceed with the survey, respondents indicated their informed consent.

Confidentiality was maintained throughout the study. The survey was conducted using a secure online platform, with all responses anonymized at the point of collection. Only the researcher had access to the raw data, which were stored in password-protected files and used solely for academic analysis. No individual-level data were shared with DepEd or any third party, and findings were reported in aggregate form.

The researcher followed all guidelines in conducting a responsible study and ensured that the dignity, rights, and welfare of all participants were respected at every stage. Should future inquiries arise from the study, respondents' privacy will continue to be upheld in accordance with ethical and institutional standards.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the study's findings, based on data gathered from teacher-applicants who participated in the recruitment and selection process of DepEd Bohol during the school years 2024–2025 and 2025–2026. A total of 902 valid responses were analyzed after applying data screening procedures. The results are organized according to the specific research questions, beginning with the demographic profile of respondents and followed by their assessments of the system's efficiency, fairness, applicant portal functionality, and overall satisfaction.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the 902 teacher-applicants who participated in the study. The majority of respondents were female (84.92%), and most belonged to the 25–34 age group (68.63%), indicating a predominantly young and female applicant population. In terms of educational attainment, 89.47% held a bachelor's degree, while a smaller portion had completed a master's (10.42%) or doctoral degree (0.11%). Nearly half of the respondents (43.79%) were first-time applicants, while others had applied multiple times, with 27.38% applying 2–3 times and 16.19% more than five times. Regarding current employment status, a significant portion were either unemployed (37.03%) or employed in institutions other than DepEd Bohol (46.67%), while a smaller group were employed in DepEd Bohol itself (11.09%) or self-employed (5.21%).

Table 1. *Profile of the Respondents*

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Gender	Female	766	84.92%
	Male	126	13.97%
	Prefer not to say	10	1.11%
	Total	902	100.00%
Age	25-34	619	68.63%
	35-44	125	13.86%
	45-54	12	1.33%
	55 and above	1	0.11%
	Total	902	100.00%
Highest Educational Attainment	Bachelor's Degree	807	89.47%
	Doctorate Degree	1	0.11%
	Master's Degree	94	10.42%
	Total	902	100.00%
Number of Application Attempts	2-3 times	247	27.38%
	4-5 times	114	12.64%
	First time	395	43.79%
	More than 5 times	146	16.19%
	Total	902	100.00%

Current Employment Status	Employed in DepEd Bohol	100	11.09%
	Employed in Others	421	46.67%
	Self-Employed	47	5.21%
	Unemployed	334	37.03%
	Total	902	100.00%

The demographic distribution suggests that the applicant pool is composed primarily of early-career professionals seeking entry into the public education system. The high number of first-time applicants reflects the continuing interest in joining the teaching workforce, while the notable proportion of repeat applicants implies that many face ongoing barriers to successful placement. Additionally, the dominance of bachelor's degree holders aligns with qualification requirements for entry-level teaching positions, while the relatively low percentage of advanced degree holders may reflect limited access to graduate education or a lack of requirement for higher academic credentials at the time of application.

These findings are consistent with recent studies reviewed in the literature. Libradilla (2024) emphasized the importance of understanding teacher demographics in shaping responsive HR strategies, particularly concerning age and educational attainment. Similarly, Toropova et al. (2021) noted the gender imbalance in the Philippine teaching force, which this study confirms, as over 84% of respondents identified as female. The pattern of repeated applications observed in this study also echoes the findings of Limbona (2025), who associated such trends with procedural inefficiencies and structural barriers within the recruitment system. Overall, the demographic profile not only provides context for interpreting the applicants' perceptions of the system but also highlights potential equity considerations and institutional areas that may require policy adjustments or targeted support.

Effectiveness of the Recruitment and Selection System

Table 2 summarizes the respondents' assessment of the effectiveness of the recruitment and selection system implemented in DepEd Bohol, evaluated across four key indicators: efficiency, fairness, applicant portal usability, and overall satisfaction. All four indicators were rated as "Highly effective," with mean scores ranging from 4.23 to 4.32. The overall mean was 4.27, also corresponding to a "Highly effective" descriptor, indicating a consistently positive perception of the system among teacher-applicants.

Table 2. *Effectiveness of the Recruitment and Selection System*

#	Indicators	SD	Mean	Descriptor
1	Efficiency	8.00	4.32	Highly effective
2	Fairness	8.49	4.23	Highly effective
3	Applicant Portal Usability	8.77	4.24	Highly effective
4	Satisfaction	8.47	4.30	Highly effective
Overall Mean		8.43	4.27	Highly effective

Note: 4.20–5.00, Highly effective; 3.40–4.19, Effective; 2.60–3.39, Moderately effective; 1.80–2.59, Less effective; 1.00–1.79, Not effective.

The first indicator, efficiency, received the highest mean score of 4.32, suggesting that respondents found the recruitment process to be well-organized, timely, and manageable. This finding implies that the improvements introduced through the action plan addressed prior concerns related to long waiting periods and unclear procedural steps. It supports the idea that DepEd Bohol was able to enhance its administrative handling of applications, consistent with the findings of Alvarez-Sández et al. (2023), who emphasized the importance of streamlined workflows in improving recruitment outcomes. Similarly, Kola and Oyadiran (2023) found that applicants perceive processes as efficient when redundancies are minimized and communication is clear, conditions that likely contributed to the high ratings in this study.

The second indicator, fairness, had a mean score of 4.23, reflecting positive perceptions of transparency, consistency, and impartiality in the evaluation process. This score suggests that the system's scoring rubrics, ranking procedures, and communication protocols may have succeeded in reinforcing a sense of equity among applicants. This aligns with Ho et al. (2024), who noted that procedural and distributive justice are strong predictors of applicant trust and engagement. Additionally, He et al. (2025) emphasized that digital systems can enhance fairness when designed with clear criteria and accessible feedback, elements likely present in DepEd Bohol's improved process.

The third indicator, applicant portal usability, was also rated highly with a mean score of 4.24. This suggests that respondents found the online platform user-friendly and functional, likely aiding in application submission, status tracking, and communication. These findings mirror those of the 2023 study on digital portals in higher education, which found that features such as intuitive layout, real-time updates, and access to instructions significantly improve user satisfaction. In the context of DepEd Bohol, the positive rating indicates that the applicant portal did not create additional barriers and likely contributed to a smoother application experience.

The fourth indicator, satisfaction, received a mean of 4.30, indicating that applicants were generally pleased with the overall system. This dimension reflects the cumulative impact of the process on the user experience, integrating elements of efficiency, fairness, and usability. The high satisfaction score is consistent with Gallup's (2024) global findings, which indicated that positive candidate experiences, especially in transparent and well-managed systems, lead to stronger institutional trust and applicant engagement. Similarly, Cohen-Charash and Spector (2021) emphasized that satisfaction is a critical outcome of well-implemented recruitment

practices and often reflects the overall health of institutional hiring systems.

Taken together, the overall mean of 4.27 suggests that the recruitment and selection system implemented in DepEd Bohol was highly effective from the perspective of teacher-applicants. This score indicates that the reforms not only addressed previous inefficiencies and fairness concerns but also provided a user-friendly and satisfying experience for stakeholders. It reflects the successful operationalization of the action plan developed in response to earlier process weaknesses, as discussed in the original study by Enad and Pabalan.

These findings reinforce the empirical insights found in both local and international literature. The high effectiveness ratings across all dimensions align with the theoretical foundations of Strategic Human Resource Management, which emphasize the importance of aligning HR processes with institutional goals. Moreover, the consistent results across fairness and satisfaction resonate with Organizational Justice Theory, while the positive portal usability outcomes are consistent with the Technology Acceptance Model. Overall, Table 2 confirms that the implemented system is functioning as intended and provides a model for other divisions seeking to reform their recruitment processes.

Difference in the Effectiveness of the Recruitment and Selection System in Terms of Cycle

Table 3 presents the comparison of the perceived effectiveness of the recruitment and selection system between two distinct implementation cycles: 2024–2025 and 2025–2026. The results show that respondents from the 2024–2025 cycle gave a mean rating of 4.24, while those from the 2025–2026 cycle rated it slightly higher at 4.31. A z-test was conducted to determine whether the difference in means was statistically significant. The computed p-value was 0.14, which is greater than the 0.05 significance level, leading to the interpretation that the difference is not statistically significant. Hence, the null hypothesis (H_0) is not rejected.

Table 3. *Difference in the Effectiveness of the Recruitment and Selection System in Terms of Cycle*

Group	Mean	p-Value	Interpretation	Decision
2024-2025 Cycle	4.24	0.14	Not significant	Do not reject H_0
2025-2026 Cycle	4.31			

These results imply that there was no meaningful change in applicants' perceptions of the system's effectiveness across the two cycles. While the slight increase in the mean suggests a possible improvement in user experience or implementation consistency, it was not large enough to be considered statistically significant. This suggests that the system's performance has remained stable and that the reforms introduced by DepEd Bohol have been implemented consistently across multiple cycles, contributing to sustained positive evaluations by applicants.

This finding aligns with Alvarez-Sánchez et al. (2023), who emphasized that well-structured recruitment systems, especially those guided by clear procedures and accountability mechanisms, are more likely to maintain consistent performance across multiple implementation periods. Furthermore, it supports the idea from Kola and Oyadiran (2023) that perceived efficiency and fairness are stable when institutional processes are clearly defined and regularly evaluated. The consistency in ratings across cycles may also reflect the influence of DepEd Orders No. 007, s. 2023 and No. 020, s. 2024, which emphasized procedural safeguards and timeliness, promoting standardized implementation across divisions and periods.

Overall, the results suggest that DepEd Bohol's recruitment and selection system has been able to deliver a steady level of effectiveness across consecutive school years. While there may be room for continuous refinement, the absence of significant variation over time can be seen as an indicator of a system that is not only effective but also reliably implemented.

Difference in the Effectiveness of the Recruitment and Selection System in Terms of Demographic Profile

Table 4 presents the comparison of respondents' perceived effectiveness of the recruitment and selection system based on various demographic variables: gender, age, highest educational attainment, number of application attempts, and current employment status. For each variable, the differences in mean scores were analyzed using either z-tests or ANOVA, with corresponding p-values used to determine statistical significance at the 0.05 level.

In terms of gender, female respondents gave a mean rating of 4.26, while male respondents rated the system slightly higher at 4.39. Respondents who preferred not to disclose their gender had the lowest mean at 4.05. Despite these variations, the resulting p-value of 0.15 indicates that the difference is not statistically significant. This suggests that gender did not significantly influence perceptions of system effectiveness, affirming that the recruitment process was experienced similarly across gender identities. This finding supports Ho et al. (2024), who observed that when procedural justice is upheld, gender-based variations in perception tend to diminish.

For age, the 35–44 age group had the highest mean (4.35), followed by those aged 25–34 (4.25). Respondents aged 45–54 and 55 and above gave lower ratings at 3.80 and 4.00, respectively. Despite the apparent differences in means, the p-value of 0.17 indicates no significant difference. This implies that respondents from various age groups generally shared the same level of satisfaction and perception of fairness and usability. These findings resonate with the results of Libradilla (2024), who noted that age tends to influence expectations more than actual experiences when transparent processes are in place.

Table 4. *Difference in the Effectiveness of the Recruitment and Selection System in Terms of Demographic Profile*

Variable	Group	Mean	p-Value	Interpretation	Decision
Gender	Female	4.26	0.15	Not significant	Failed to reject H_0
	Male	4.39			
Age	Prefer not to say	4.05	0.17	Not significant	Failed to reject H_0
	25-34	4.25			
	35-44	4.35			
	45-54	3.80			
	55 and above	4.00			
Highest Educational Attainment	Bachelor's Degree	4.27	0.71	Not significant	Failed to reject H_0
	Doctorate Degree	4.25			
	Master's Degree	4.00			
Number of Application Attempts	2-3 times	4.25	0.001	Significant	Reject H_0
	4-5 times	4.20			
	First time	4.38			
	More than 5 times	4.09			
Current Employment Status	Employed in DepEd Bohol	4.44	0.012	Significant	Reject H_0
	Employed in Others	4.21			
	Self-Employed	4.50			
	Unemployed	4.27			

Regarding the highest educational attainment, respondents with bachelor's and doctoral degrees gave nearly identical ratings (4.27 and 4.25, respectively), while those with master's degrees rated the system slightly lower at 4.00. The p-value of 0.71 shows that these differences were not statistically significant. This suggests that the recruitment system was viewed similarly across all educational levels, a positive indication that the system fairly accommodates applicants regardless of academic qualifications. This observation is in line with the emphasis on meritocracy in DepEd Order No. 007, s. 2023, and is also reflected in the findings of Cohen-Charash and Spector (2021), who noted that fairness perceptions are maintained when evaluation criteria are applied consistently, regardless of academic background.

A significant result emerged when comparing respondents based on the number of application attempts. First-time applicants had the highest mean rating (4.38), followed by those with 2–3 attempts (4.25), 4–5 attempts (4.20), and more than five attempts (4.09). The p-value of 0.001 indicates a statistically significant difference, suggesting that those who had undergone the application process multiple times were slightly less satisfied with or confident in the system's effectiveness. This may reflect accumulated experiences of procedural delays, perceived inconsistencies, or frustration due to repeated non-selection. These results align with the findings of Limbona (2025), who documented that repeated applicants in the Jolo District often encountered procedural bottlenecks, contributing to declining trust in the recruitment system over time.

Another statistically significant result was found in relation to current employment status, with a p-value of 0.012. Self-employed respondents rated the system highest (4.50), followed by those employed in DepEd Bohol (4.44), unemployed applicants (4.27), and those employed in other institutions (4.21). This variation suggests that employment context may influence how applicants interpret system fairness and responsiveness. For instance, currently employed individuals, especially those already within DepEd, may find the process more familiar and manageable. In contrast, those employed elsewhere may face challenges aligning their schedules or expectations with DepEd protocols. These findings align with the observations of Toropova et al. (2021), who highlighted how contextual work factors influence the perception of public recruitment systems.

Overall, while most demographic variables showed no statistically significant influence on respondents' perceptions, application frequency and employment status emerged as meaningful differentiators. These insights highlight the importance of continuously reviewing the applicant experience, particularly for those who reapply or come from outside institutional settings. Doing so ensures that the system remains inclusive, equitable, and responsive to the diverse profiles of aspiring public school teachers.

Conclusions

The findings of this study confirm that the recruitment and selection system implemented by DepEd Bohol during the 2024–2025 and 2025–2026 cycles was perceived by teacher-applicants as highly effective across four key dimensions: efficiency, fairness, usability of the applicant portal, and overall satisfaction. These results suggest that the reforms introduced through the action plan of Enad and Pabalan (2023) were not only operationalized as intended but also succeeded in addressing longstanding issues of transparency, timeliness, and user experience. The consistent positive ratings across two consecutive cycles indicate institutional stability and process standardization, which are hallmarks of an evolving merit-based recruitment culture within the division.

Notably, the significant differences in perceptions based on the number of application attempts and current employment status reveal areas where the system may unintentionally exclude or discourage certain applicant groups. This underscores the need for deeper engagement with repeat applicants and those currently outside DepEd, ensuring that the system remains not only efficient and fair but

also inclusive and adaptive to diverse applicant experiences. These insights contribute to the broader discourse on equity in public sector hiring and reinforce the relevance of applying Strategic Human Resource Management, Organizational Justice Theory, and the Technology Acceptance Model in educational recruitment research.

In practical terms, the study offers evidence that can inform recruitment policy refinement, applicant support systems, and the continuous improvement of digital platforms. Other DepEd divisions seeking to modernize their recruitment processes may draw from this study's findings to develop systems that are both procedurally sound and applicant-centered. Moreover, this evaluation provides baseline data for further studies assessing long-term outcomes of teacher recruitment reforms on school staffing quality and retention.

While the results are encouraging, caution must be taken in generalizing the findings. The study relied on voluntary participation and self-reporting, which may not fully capture the range of applicant experiences, particularly those who were disengaged or excluded from the process. Future research may benefit from employing mixed-methods approaches, randomized sampling, or longitudinal tracking to strengthen the evidence base and address the system's evolving challenges.

In sum, the study demonstrates that when recruitment systems are designed with fairness, usability, and strategic alignment in mind, they can build institutional trust and improve the experience of aspiring educators. Sustaining such momentum requires not only technical improvements but a continued commitment to listening, inclusion, and adaptive governance in public education hiring.

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