

Nepotism Practices in Recruitment Lead to Declining Performance of Educational Personnel: A Case Study at Bosowa University

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Abstract

This study seeks to examine the impact of kinship-based recruiting practices (nepotism) on the reduction in educational staff performance at Bosowa University, with an emphasis on mass recruitment in 2025, which is expected to include features of nepotism. An explanatory survey design is combined with a quantitative approach in the study methodology. The 107 educational staff members of Bosowa University in 2026 make up the study population, and a complete sampling technique is used. Questionnaires, interviews, observations, and personnel data recording were used to gather data. Descriptive statistics, basic linear regression, and various tests were employed in data analysis. Kinship-based recruitment procedures fall into the top category, according to the study's results (score 4.17). An estimated 52% of the 42 educational employees hired between 2023 and 2025 did so through non-competitive means that included nepotism. The performance of education staff hired prior to 2023 (score 3.70) and those hired between 2023 and 2025 (score 2.31) differs significantly, by 37.6%. 48.3% of the reduction in performance is positively and significantly impacted by family-based recruitment techniques. For education staff hired through non-merit methods, this report suggests implementing a meritocracy system, thorough HR audits, and competency improvement initiatives.

Abstrak

Studi ini bertujuan untuk meneliti dampak praktik perekrutan berbasis kekerabatan (nepotisme) terhadap penurunan kinerja staf pengajar di Universitas Bosowa, dengan penekanan pada perekrutan massal pada tahun 2025, yang diperkirakan akan mencakup ciri-ciri nepotisme. Desain survei eksploratif dikombinasikan dengan pendekatan kuantitatif dalam metodologi studi. 107 anggota staf pengajar Universitas Bosowa pada tahun 2026 merupakan populasi studi, dan teknik pengambilan sampel lengkap digunakan. Kuesioner, wawancara, observasi, dan pencatatan data personel digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data. Statistik deskriptif, regresi linier dasar, dan berbagai uji digunakan dalam analisis data. Prosedur perekrutan berbasis kekerabatan termasuk dalam kategori teratas, menurut hasil studi (skor 4,17). Diperkirakan 52% dari 42 karyawan pengajar yang dipekerjakan antara tahun 2023 dan 2025 melakukannya melalui cara non-kompetitif yang mencakup nepotisme. Kinerja staf pendidikan yang dipekerjakan sebelum tahun 2023 (skor 3,70) dan mereka yang dipekerjakan antara tahun 2023 dan 2025 (skor 2,31) berbeda secara signifikan, sebesar 37,6%. 48,3% dari penurunan kinerja tersebut dipengaruhi secara positif dan signifikan oleh teknik perekrutan berbasis keluarga. Untuk staf pendidikan yang dipekerjakan melalui metode non-merit, laporan ini menyarankan penerapan sistem meritokrasi, audit SDM yang menyeluruh, dan inisiatif peningkatan kompetensi.



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Introduction

The most valuable resource in higher education institutions is human resources (HR). The efficient operation of academic procedures and administrative services at universities is strategically supported by educational staff. The success of education, research, and community service will be greatly influenced by the caliber of these personnel (Abdullahi et al., 2023). However, the reality on the ground demonstrates that not all colleges are successful in hiring qualified faculty members through an effective hiring procedure.

One of the top private universities in Makassar, Bosowa University, has significant issues with the caliber of its faculty. As of March 2026, there were 107 active teachers, according to personnel records. Over the previous two years, there have been indications of deteriorating performance, including sluggish administrative services, an increase in student complaints, and decreased productivity at work. Studying this phenomena is intriguing since it happened in 2024–2025, when there was a huge surge in the hiring of new teachers. According to data, 42 (39.3%) of the 107 teaching staff members were hired between 2023 and 2025, with 2025 having the highest concentration (18 individuals). According to preliminary findings, most of the educational personnel hired during this time were either "insiders" or connected to family members and lacked sufficient competency. Up to 50% of all new recruits are thought to be involved in this activity.

Nepotism, or the practice of hiring people based on kinship, has long been a concern in Indonesian organizations. According to (Kartono, 2020), the embedded system, which depends on intimate, familial, and social ties, has long existed in Indonesia and is challenging to eliminate. According to (Ardiansyah et al. 2023), this practice intensifies when there is a disproportionate ratio of job searchers to positions, which motivates attempts to circumvent the merit system.

The detrimental effects of nepotism in organizations are confirmed by recent international studies. In their investigation of the banking industry in Cyprus, Arasli and Turner (2022) discovered that nepotism had a negative correlation with organizational commitment and job satisfaction and a positive correlation with turnover intention. According to research by (Akhtar et al. 2023), nepotism in Pakistani public sector hiring resulted in a 34% drop in production and an increase in unproductive employee conduct. According to Boadi et al. (2024), nepotism in the hiring of academic personnel led to subpar administrative services and lower student satisfaction at Ghanaian universities.

Based on earlier studies conducted at Bosowa University, educational staff members' performance is positively impacted by their knowledge, abilities, and conduct (Randan et al., 2023). Accordingly, these three aspects of competency are crucial in determining the best possible

performance. But a basic dilemma emerges: what if a poor hiring process results in educational staff members without sufficient competencies?

This context led to the formulation of the following issues in this study: (1) Based on personnel data from 2026, how accurate is the description of Bosowa University's family-based hiring policies for educational staff? (2) How do the performance levels of educational professionals hired prior to 2023 and those hired between 2023 and 2025 differ? (3) Does Bosowa University's declining performance of its teaching staff have anything to do with family-based hiring practices?

The objectives of this study are to characterize kinship-based recruitment methods, examine performance variations according to recruitment period, and examine how kinship-based recruitment practices impact performance decrease. The study is useful both practically as a resource for assessing more open and competency-based hiring practices and theoretically for the advancement of human resource management science, especially with regard to the detrimental effects of nepotism in hiring in the higher education sector.

Method

This study employed a quantitative strategy with an explanatory survey method, which uses hypothesis testing to explain causal links between variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). This method was selected because it can be used to measure the impact of the independent variable (family-based recruitment) on the dependent variable (performance drop), which is backed by real personnel data.

From March to May 2026, the study was carried out at Bosowa University in Makassar. The location was chosen in response to the problem of educational staff performance diminishing, with the most recent personnel data for 2026 demonstrating a spike in recruitment in 2023–2025.

The study population consisted of all 107 Bosowa University educational staff members listed in the 2026 personnel data. Because the sample size was small and reasonably priced, the entire population was used as responders in this study, which employed total sampling (Fowler, 2024). The composition is displayed in the personnel data: recruitment in 2025 (18 individuals, 16.8%), 2024 (13 individuals, 12.1%), 2023 (11 individuals, 10.3%), before to 2023 (65 individuals, 60.7%), permanent status (81 individuals, 75.7%), and contract (26 individuals, 24.3%).

Kinship-based hiring practices that prioritize family ties, disregard formal qualifications, lack transparency in the hiring process, interference from specific parties, and the percentage of non-competitive hiring are examples of independent variables (Arasli & Turner, 2022; Akhtar et al., 2023; Boadi et al., 2024; Hamid et al., 2024). Declining job quality, productivity, initiative, promptness, and service response are examples of dependent variables (Koopsman, 2022; Ozler & Buyukarslan, 2024; Breevaart & Bakker, 2023; Sultana & Johari, 2023; Hassan & Al-Harthy, 2023).

A Likert scale questionnaire with 35 statement items that had been tested for validity (r count 0.412-0.789) and reliability (Cronbach's Alpha 0.891), semi-structured interviews with 10 educational

staff members and three unit leaders, and two weeks of participant observation in three work units were the methods used to gather the data.

Descriptive statistics, simple linear regression analysis ($Y = a + bX$), the Independent Sample T-test, classical assumption tests (normality, heteroscedasticity, linearity), and descriptive qualitative analysis of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña's interactive model were all employed in the data analysis (2024).

Discussion

a. Personel Data Analysis and Recruitment Practices

Bosowa University's instructional staff distribution, which includes 42 individuals (39.3%), demonstrates a notable increase in recruitment between 2023 and 2025, according to personnel data from 2026. There were 18 recruits (16.8%) in 2025, 13 in 2024 (12.1%), and 11 in 2023 (10.3%). This illustrates how the makeup of human resources has drastically changed over the previous three years.

Eleven (61.1%) of the eighteen educational staff members hired in 2025 were assigned to roles that did not correspond with their educational background, according to a review of educational fit with positions. For instance, English literature grads were assigned to engineering labs, psychology graduates to finance, and law graduates to information technology. This discrepancy is a precursor to a poor competency-based hiring procedure.

With an average score of 4.17 on a scale of 5, the questionnaire findings indicated that family-based recruitment techniques fell into the high category. "Prioritization of family relationships" (4.28) and "intervention of certain parties in the final decision" (4.31) were the highest indicators. This supports the argument that nepotism has become ingrained. Based on statistics and interviews, it is projected that 22 individuals, or almost 52% of the 42 educational staff members hired between 2023 and 2025, were hired through non-competitive procedures that included nepotism.

An interview with a senior education worker (AR, 15 years of service) revealed: "Many new staff members I know for certain are the children of friends of officials or close relatives of leaders. The selection process? I never saw an official announcement. Suddenly they were in. What's worse, they were placed in positions that didn't match their educational background." A unit leader (KP) added: "I was often not involved in the staff recruitment process in my unit. Suddenly new staff members arrived with assignment letters. When I complained because their qualifications didn't match, the answer was always 'that was a request from the superiors.'"

b. Analysis of Performance Differences

Although there are notable differences between groups, the study reveals that the performance of education workers is generally in the moderate category (score 3.12). The average performance score for education staff hired between 2023 and 2025 was 2.31 (poor category), compared to 3.70 (high

category) for those hired prior to 2023. The new recruitment group's performance has significantly declined, as evidenced by the difference of 1.39 points, or 37.6%.

The most striking differences were in the indicators of timeliness (-1.50 difference), service response (-1.43), and initiative (-1.33). The Head of the Finance Subdivision (NH) commented: "New staff, especially those who joined in 2024-2025, often made fatal errors in calculations, submitted reports late, and even transferred funds incorrectly. When reprimanded, they became defensive."

Three work units' observations supported the conclusions: (1) Rectorate Unit: a straightforward letter that should have taken ten minutes took more than thirty minutes for three of the five new hires; (2) Faculty of Economics: due to new employees' sluggish processing, student lines grew to 15–20 individuals. KRS; (3) Faculty of Engineering: Practicals were postponed because new lab assistants were unable to operate lab equipment.

There is a substantial difference in performance between educational personnel hired before 2023 and those hired between 2023 and 2025, according to the Independent Sample T-test, which displays a calculated t-value (9.876) > t-table (1.983) with a significance of $0.000 < 0.05$. The group prior to 2023 performed better (3.70) than the group from 2023 to 2025 (2.31).

c. The Influence of Neepotism on Declining Performance

A basic linear regression study revealed a high correlation between lower performance and family-based hiring procedures, with a R value of 0.695. Family-based hiring practices were responsible for 48.3% of the drop in educational staff performance, according to the coefficient of determination (R²) of 0.483. Other elements including motivation, leadership, pay, and the workplace had an impact on the remaining 51.7%.

Equation for regression: $Y = 1.187 + 0.658X$. According to the positive regression coefficient (0.658), the performance decline will grow by 0.658 points for every unit increase in family-based recruitment procedures. The hypothesis is accepted since a significance value of $0.000 < 0.05$ indicates that the effect is statistically significant.

These results align with global research. Nepotism was found to be responsible for 44% of falling performance in Cyprus by (Arasli and Turner, 2022) and 51% in Pakistan by (Akhtar et al. 2023). The empirical evidence that nepotism is a significant predictor of deteriorating organizational performance is strengthened by this study.

d. The Mechanism of Nepotism Influence

Based on field observations, three processes account for the connection between nepotism and deteriorating performance:

Competency mismatch comes first. Employees hired through family connections typically don't have the necessary training and skills. According to data, 61.1% of employees hired in 2025 were assigned to jobs that did not fit their educational background. Performance deterioration is directly

impacted by a mismatch between human competencies and job expectations (person-job fit), according to (Spencer and Spence, 2023).

Second, a lack of drive and dedication. Employees who believe they were employed as "insiders" rather than for their skills are typically unmotivated. They don't have to work as hard since they have "backing," which gives them a sense of security. "Honestly, I know I was accepted here because of my uncle's help," a 2025 (MF) recruitment staff member said in an interview. My background is in psychology, but I have no administrative experience. But well, I just accept it. Why put in so much effort? Being safe is the most crucial thing. This result is consistent with Adams' equity theory (in Breevaart & Bakker, 2023), which holds that people cut back on their contributions when they believe they have been treated unfairly.

Third, the effect on colleagues (also known as the spillover effect). Nepotism breeds injustice and lowers the spirits of capable workers. When they witness inept but well-connected coworkers getting preferential treatment, they feel undervalued and demotivated. "I've worked hard for decades, attended training everywhere, but promotions are slow," disclosed a senior employee (RS, 12 years of service). In the meantime, inept new hires receive promotions within a year due to their "backing." Why should I put in so much effort? According to (Boadi et al. 2024), this phenomenon is known as the "toxicity of privilege."

e. Theoretical and Practical Implications

The study's conclusions support HR management theory regarding the significance of merit-based hiring practices. It has been demonstrated that obtaining quality human resources is based on the meritocratic principles of ability, qualifications, objectivity, and equality (Young, 2022). On the other hand, performance has been demonstrated to be adversely affected by the "tethering" system (Kartono, 2020).

Additionally, the study advances the theory of organizational justice (Cropanzano et al., 2023). All three aspects of organizational justice—distributive justice (assigning labor to incompetents), procedural justice (opaque procedures), and interactional justice (unfair treatment)—are violated by nepotism. Reduced performance is one of the unfavorable reactions to these infractions.

These results provide Bosowa University with an early warning that nepotism has lowered organizational performance and harmed the caliber of human resources. Nepotism is a significant issue that has to be addressed right away, with a 48.3% contribution. The following are some of the recommendations: (1) a meritocracy system and a moratorium on family-based hiring; (2) a thorough HR audit, particularly for the 2023–2025 hiring period; (3) an intensive competency improvement program for non-merit track employees; (4) competency-based reassignments; (5) an output-based performance evaluation system with firm consequences; and (6) a whistleblower system for reporting nepotism.

The identification of employees through nepotism remains a perception-based estimate, performance evaluation lacks objective data, and generalization is restricted to a specific institution, all of which are drawbacks of this study. It is advised that future studies employ a variety of approaches, include several colleges, and provide a uniform tool for measuring nepotism.

A. Conclusion

The following findings can be made after investigation and debate using personnel data from 107 Bosowa University education professionals in 2026:

First, Bosowa University's education staff has a high rate of kinship-based hiring methods (score 4.17). The most prevalent practices are indicators of particular parties intervening in final choices and giving familial bonds priority. Of the 42 education employees hired between 2023 and 2025, an estimated 52% (22 individuals) were hired through non-competitive methods that included aspects of nepotism; in the 2025 recruitment, educational background mismatches reached 61.1%.

Second, the performance of educational personnel hired prior to 2023 and those hired between 2023 and 2025 differs significantly. There was a 37.6% difference in performance between the group recruited before 2023 (3.70) and the group recruited between 2023 and 2025 (2.31). The main cause of poor performance is a mismatch between the position and educational background.

Third, the performance drop of Bosowa University's educational personnel is positively and significantly impacted by kinship-based recruitment procedures, which contribute 48.3% ($R^2 = 0.483$; $p < 0.05$). The degree of performance decline increases with the frequency of nepotism in hiring. This decline is caused by three mechanisms: competency mismatch, low motivation and commitment, and detrimental effects on coworkers.

To enhance HR quality and organizational performance at Bosowa University, this report suggests putting in place a meritocratic structure, thorough HR audits, intense competency improvement programs, and regular performance reviews. According to personnel data from 2026, Bosowa University's instructional staff distribution reveals a notable increase in hiring between 2023 and 2025, totaling 42 individuals (39.3%). 18 individuals (16.8%) were recruited in 2025, 13 in 2024 (12.1%), and 11 in 2023 (10.3%). This suggests that throughout the last three years, the makeup of human resources has changed somewhat drastically.

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