

Public Personnel Management and Service Delivery in Rivers State Civil Service Commission, 2015-2025

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ABSTRACT

The management of human resources in the public service directly affects government service delivery. This study examined public personnel management and service delivery in the Rivers State Civil Service Commission from 2015 to 2025. The study investigated the effects of staff development, recruitment processes, performance management systems, employee motivation, accountability and oversight mechanisms, and the interaction between bureaucracy and technology adoption on service delivery. Human Capital Theory provided the theoretical foundation for explaining issues affecting human capital performance in service delivery. The study adopted a mixed-methods design, combining qualitative interviews and quantitative analysis. Mean scores from a 4-point Likert scale were used to determine respondents' agreement, while chi-square tested the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was rejected when the calculated chi-square value exceeded the table value. Findings showed that staff development programmes improved employee performance but were limited by poor coverage, uneven distribution, inconsistent quality, and implementation gaps. Recruitment processes were weakened by political interference, skill deficiencies, prolonged vacancies, declining service standards, and perceived inequity, thereby reducing the effectiveness of merit-based recruitment on service delivery. Performance management systems showed some relevance but lacked practical impact due to inflated appraisal ratings, weak feedback mechanisms, and poor linkage between evaluation and incentives. Employee motivation positively influenced service delivery but was constrained by inadequate remuneration, poor working conditions, and weak recognition systems. The study concluded that limited training coverage, political interference, weak feedback mechanisms, and inadequate remuneration hinder productivity. The study recommended that the Commission institutionalise a structured annual training framework, adopt transparent and merit-based recruitment processes, and redesign appraisal systems to include measurable performance indicators, periodic feedback, supervisor accountability, and direct links between performance outcomes and incentives to improve service delivery.

Keywords: Public, Public Personnel, Service Commission, Management, Service Delivery.

INTRODUCTION

The effective management of human resources within public sector organizations represents one of the most critical determinants of governmental capacity to deliver services to citizens. Across the globe, governments have increasingly recognized that the competence, motivation, and performance of civil servants directly shape the efficiency, and responsiveness of public service delivery (Berman et al., 2019). Recent scholarship reinforces this position, demonstrating that human resource management (HRM) practices significantly influence public sector performance outcomes, particularly when aligned with institutional reform and governance objectives (Knies, Boselie, Gould-Williams, & Vandenabeele, 2022). In developing countries especially, where institutional capacity is often constrained by limited resources and systemic governance challenges, strategic public personnel management becomes indispensable for achieving developmental targets and enhancing citizen trust. Public Personnel Management (PPM) refers to the processes, strategies, and practices involved in managing human resources in public sector. It encompasses recruitment, selection, training, development, performance appraisal, compensation, and general management of employee in public institutions (Berman et al., 2019). Contemporary research emphasizes that modern PPM must integrate performance-oriented management, digital innovation, and employee engagement strategies to remain

effective in dynamic governance environments (Bouwman, Grimmelikhuijsen, & Meijer, 2021). The significance of PPM lies in its capacity to ensure that public institutions possess the requisite human capital to achieve policy goals and deliver services.

First, PPM plays a foundational role in the recruitment and selection of competent personnel. Through transparent, merit-based recruitment systems, governments can attract skilled individuals whose competencies align with organizational objectives (Ingraham, 1995). Empirical studies further show that meritocratic recruitment enhances administrative professionalism and reduces corruption risks in public service systems (Meyer-Sahling, Schuster, & Mikkelsen, 2021). Such alignment ensures that employees possess not only technical expertise but also a commitment to public service values, which is critical for effective governance. Transparent hiring procedures also enhance public trust by demonstrating institutional fairness and accountability (Perry & Wise, 1990). Second, PPM is integral to employee training and development. Continuous professional development enables public servants to adapt to emerging technological changes and evolving service demands (Llorens & Kellough, 2007). Recent research highlights that investment in employee development significantly improves organizational resilience and service quality, particularly in reform-oriented public institutions (OECD, 2020). When public organizations systematically build human capital capacity, they strengthen their ability to deliver efficient and citizen-responsive services. Third, performance management constitutes a core dimension of PPM. Effective appraisal systems facilitate monitoring, feedback, and alignment between individual performance and institutional goals (Kellough & Lu, 1993). Contemporary evidence suggests that performance management systems produce positive results when linked to accountability structures and supported by organizational culture (Knies et al., 2022). Without credible implementation, however, such systems risk becoming symbolic rather than substantive. Finally, compensation management significantly influences employee motivation and retention. Competitive remuneration and equitable reward structures are essential in retaining skilled personnel in environments where private-sector alternatives may be more attractive (Nigro, Nigro, & Kellough, 2014). Recent studies confirm that fair compensation combined with intrinsic motivation enhances public employee engagement and service commitment (Vandenabeele & Perry, 2021). Adequate welfare systems not only ensure financial stability but also strengthen morale, productivity, and organizational loyalty.

Moreover, PPM's impact extends to fostering a positive organizational culture that supports ethical behaviour, diversity, and inclusion. In the public sector, where services are provided to a diverse population, it is imperative that the workforce reflects this diversity to ensure equitable service delivery (Pynes, 2008). A diverse and inclusive work environment not only enhances creativity and innovation but also improves the ability of public institutions to understand and meet the needs of different community groups. In the context of public administration, PPM also addresses the challenge of bureaucratic inefficiencies that can hinder service delivery. By streamlining human resource processes and adopting modern technologies, PPM can reduce administrative burdens and enhance the responsiveness of public institutions (Kim & Holzer, 2016). This efficiency is critical in ensuring that public services are delivered in a timely and cost-effective manner, thereby improving overall public satisfaction. Furthermore, the adoption of technology in PPM, such as Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS), has revolutionized the way public institutions manage their personnel. These systems facilitate better data management, improve decision-making, and enhance the overall efficiency of human resource functions (Bondarouk & Ruël, 2013). The integration of technology in PPM is particularly significant in the digital age, where the demand for efficient and accessible public services is ever-increasing. Public Personnel Management (PPM) occupies a central place in public administration because of its direct influence on policy implementation and service outcomes. Effective PPM ensures that public institutions recruit, develop, motivate, and retain the right personnel capable of implementing government policies and programmes that meet citizens' needs (Ohemeng & Ayee, 2016). Without a well-managed and competent workforce, policy execution becomes compromised, resulting in suboptimal outcomes and declining public trust. Thus, PPM is not merely an administrative function; it is a strategic instrument for enhancing organisational efficiency, institutional legitimacy, and citizen satisfaction.

Service delivery, on the other hand, is a multidimensional concept that entails providing services that meet or exceed citizens' expectations in an efficient, effective, and equitable manner. It is closely tied to public trust, institutional legitimacy, and societal development (Osborne, Radnor, & Nasi, 2013). This study therefore seeks to examine how training and development, recruitment, performance management, employee motivation,

accountability, bureaucratic structure, and technological integration affect the quality of public service delivery in the Commission.

The specific objective of the study is to; assess the influence of recruitment and selection processes on service delivery in the Rivers State Civil Service Commission. The study raised the question; what influence do recruitment and selection processes have on service delivery in the Rivers State Civil Service Commission? The study stated the null hypothesis (Ho) that; recruitment and selection processes have no significant influence on service delivery in the Rivers State Civil Service Commission.

Human Capital Theory

This study is anchored on Human Capital Theory (HCT) as its primary theoretical framework. Human Capital Theory, pioneered by economists Gary Becker (1964) and Theodore Schultz (1961), provides an appropriate analytical lens for examining the relationship between personnel management practices and service delivery outcomes in the Rivers State Civil Service Commission. The theory's central proposition that investments in education, training, and skills development enhance productivity aligns directly with this study's concern with how investments in civil servants' capabilities translate into improved public service delivery. Contemporary scholarship continues to affirm the relevance of Human Capital Theory in explaining organizational performance outcomes, particularly in public institutions where human resource capacity remains central to state effectiveness (Crook, Todd, Combs, Woehr, & Ketchen, 2021; OECD, 2020). Human Capital Theory fundamentally transformed how organizations conceptualize their workforce by arguing that investments in human beings generate measurable economic returns. Schultz (1961) emphasized that expenditures on education and training should be treated as productive investments rather than consumption. Becker (1964) further developed a systematic framework for evaluating the costs and benefits of investing in human capital. Modern empirical research continues to validate this foundational insight, demonstrating that human capital investments significantly improve organizational productivity, innovation capacity, and adaptability (Nyberg, Moliterno, Hale, & Lepak, 2021). In public sector contexts, such investments are increasingly recognized as drivers of governance quality and service responsiveness. At its core, Human Capital Theory posits that individuals possess skills, knowledge, competencies, and attributes that generate economic value. Unlike physical capital, human capital can appreciate through learning and experience. Recent studies reaffirm that structured training and professional development enhance employee capability and public sector performance, particularly when aligned with strategic objectives (Knies, Boselie, Gould-Williams, & Vandenabeele, 2022). Within the Rivers State Civil Service, this implies that systematic investment in employee development should produce measurable improvements in service quality, responsiveness, and administrative efficiency. Evidence from comparative public administration research suggests that countries and institutions investing consistently in workforce capacity building tend to demonstrate higher levels of institutional effectiveness (OECD, 2020). A key proposition of Human Capital Theory is that returns on human capital investments can be quantified and measured. This is particularly relevant in public organizations facing fiscal constraints and accountability pressures. Contemporary human resource scholarship confirms that training expenditures, when strategically managed, correlate positively with performance metrics and organizational resilience (Crook et al., 2021). In this sense, training budgets within the civil service should be regarded as strategic investments yielding performance dividends rather than routine operational costs. The distinction between general human capital (transferable skills) and specific human capital (organization-specific competencies) remains highly relevant. Recent research emphasizes that organization-specific human capital fosters institutional memory, reduces turnover, and strengthens policy implementation capacity (Nyberg et al., 2021). For the Rivers State Civil Service Commission, investments in role-specific administrative competencies may yield higher returns in service efficiency, while general skill investments enhance workforce flexibility and adaptability to reform initiatives. The application of Human Capital Theory also illuminates recruitment and performance management systems. Effective recruitment ensures the acquisition of baseline human capital, reducing remedial training costs and accelerating productivity. Empirical studies demonstrate that merit-based recruitment enhances public sector performance and professionalization (Meyer-Sahling, Schuster, & Mikkelsen, 2021). Performance appraisal systems, from a Human Capital perspective, serve as mechanisms for diagnosing skill gaps and guiding targeted development interventions. Strategic human resource management literature increasingly emphasizes the integration of appraisal systems with training and career development to maximize performance outcomes (Knies et al., 2022). Finally, Human Capital Theory provides insights into

employee motivation. Research suggests that when employees perceive sustained investment in their development, they reciprocate through greater engagement, loyalty, and discretionary effort (Vandenabeele & Perry, 2021). In public sector contexts, development opportunities reinforce both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, strengthening the link between human capital investment and service delivery performance. Thus, within the Rivers State Civil Service Commission, investments in training, career progression, and skill enhancement are expected to generate a virtuous cycle of improved competence, higher morale, and enhanced public service outcomes.

For operationalization within this study, Human Capital Theory provides clear guidance on measurable variables linking investment inputs to performance outputs. Training investment may be operationalized through indicators such as the number of training programmes attended, cumulative training hours, training expenditure as a percentage of personnel budgets, and the presence of structured training needs assessments. Contemporary human resource scholarship confirms that systematic investment indicators such as training intensity and strategic alignment are strongly associated with organizational performance outcomes (Crook et al., 2021; Knies et al., 2022). The quality dimension of human capital may be captured through educational qualifications, competency-based recruitment standards, performance evaluation scores, and supervisor assessments of employee capability. Recent empirical research demonstrates that merit-based recruitment and competency-aligned selection significantly enhance public sector performance and administrative professionalism (Meyer-Sahling et al., 2021). Service delivery outcomes, conceptualized as returns on human capital investment, can be measured using service processing time, citizen satisfaction ratings, complaint resolution rates, compliance benchmarks, and comparative departmental performance indicators. Evidence from public administration research suggests that performance improvements are more likely when training investments are integrated with accountability systems and institutional support mechanisms (OECD, 2020). Human Capital Theory predicts positive correlations between these input measures (training intensity, recruitment quality) and output measures (performance, service responsiveness), with variations in relationship strength reflecting differences in strategic alignment, implementation quality, and contextual constraints. Despite its considerable strengths, Human Capital Theory exhibits important limitations when applied to public sector contexts, especially in developing countries. First, the theory adopts a predominantly economic orientation that may inadequately capture the intrinsic motivations associated with public service. While the theory emphasizes rational investment-return calculations, contemporary research on Public Service Motivation (PSM) demonstrates that civil servants are often driven by normative commitment, civic duty, and prosocial values beyond economic utility (Vandenabeele & Perry, 2021). Consequently, performance outcomes in public institutions cannot be fully explained by financial or training investments alone. Second, Human Capital Theory underemphasizes organizational and institutional contexts that mediate the translation of skills into performance outcomes. Strategic human resource management research emphasizes that training yields performance gains only when supported by conducive organizational systems, leadership practices, and institutional alignment (Knies et al., 2022). In bureaucratic settings characterized by rigid procedures, political interference, or resource shortages, even highly trained employees may be constrained from applying acquired competencies effectively. This highlights the importance of institutional frameworks in complementing human capital investments.

Public Personnel Management

Public Personnel Management (PPM) refers to the systematic approach to recruiting, developing, motivating, and maintaining a workforce in public sector organizations to achieve efficient and effective service delivery (Perry, Hondgehem, & Wise, 2021). It is a key component of public administration that directly influences institutional performance and governance outcomes (Bouckaert & Halligan, 2020). PPM encompasses several functions, including recruitment and selection, training and development, performance appraisal, compensation, employee motivation, accountability, and technological integration. Recruitment and selection aim to ensure that the public sector employs competent personnel based on merit and fairness, minimizing political interference and nepotism (Olaopa, 2021; OECD, 2021). Training and development are central to maintaining an adaptable and skilled workforce. Continuous professional development equips civil servants with technical, managerial, and digital competencies necessary for modern governance (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs [UNDESA], 2022; World Bank, 2020). Without systematic capacity-building programs, civil servants may lack the skills to deliver timely and quality services.

Performance management is another critical element of PPM. Modern public administration emphasizes outcome-oriented appraisal systems that link employee performance to organizational goals (Bouckaert & Halligan, 2020). When performance evaluations are merely compliance-oriented and lack measurable indicators, institutional efficiency suffers, and service delivery quality declines. Employee motivation, closely related to performance, affects commitment, morale, and service orientation (Perry et al., 2021). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, including recognition, career advancement opportunities, and rewards, play a crucial role in fostering high productivity in the public sector. Accountability mechanisms, including ethical standards, internal controls, and transparent procedures, are essential for promoting integrity and efficiency in public organizations (Transparency International, 2023; World Bank, 2021). Weak accountability structures may encourage inefficiency and reduce public trust in government institutions.

Technological integration in personnel management through digital records, e-governance platforms, and automated performance tracking enhances efficiency, transparency, and service responsiveness (United Nations E-Government Survey, 2022). Despite these benefits, many public institutions in Nigeria face slow adoption of technology due to limited infrastructure, inadequate training, and resistance to change. Public Personnel Management is a multifaceted approach to optimizing human resources in the public sector. Effective PPM aligns recruitment, training, performance management, motivation, accountability, and technology to improve service delivery outcomes. Personnel in organisations has been defined in various ways, but all definitions converge on the centrality of people as the most critical resource in any institution. According to Armstrong (2014), personnel or human resources refer to the individuals who make up the workforce of an organisation, contributing their skills, knowledge, and abilities to achieve organisational goals. Dessler (2020) defines personnel management as the policies and practices involved in carrying out the “people” aspect of management, including recruiting, training, evaluating, rewarding, and maintaining a productive workforce. Similarly, Flippo (1984) describes personnel as the total of all employees in an organisation whose contributions are necessary for its survival, growth, and effectiveness. These definitions underscore the fact that personnel are not merely supplementary resources but are central actors who drive productivity, innovation, and sustainability in organisations. The role of personnel in organisations is fundamental to the survival, growth, and success of any enterprise. At the heart of every organisation lies its people, who, through their skills, knowledge, attitudes, and dedication, drive the processes that deliver value to stakeholders. Unlike machines, capital, or technology, personnel bring creativity, adaptability, and innovation, making them the most dynamic resource within any system. It is therefore widely acknowledged in management studies that while organisations may acquire the latest technologies and vast financial resources, their ability to harness and optimise the human element ultimately determines the level of effectiveness and competitiveness they achieve (Yukl, 2013). Personnel not only contribute to operational efficiency but also play an essential role in shaping organisational culture, driving innovation, and ensuring long-term sustainability. This recognition has led to an increased emphasis on human resource management as a strategic function in contemporary organisations. Historically, the study of personnel in organisations was narrowly focused on administrative and welfare functions, with early approaches often treating workers as tools to achieve production goals. During the industrial revolution, for instance, the primary concern of management was efficiency and output, with little regard for workers’ psychological and social needs. However, as organisations evolved and studies in psychology, sociology, and management expanded, there was growing recognition of the human element in production and service delivery. The work of Elton Mayo and the Hawthorne studies revealed the significance of social factors and employee morale in productivity, marking a turning point in understanding personnel as more than just cogs in the industrial machine (Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1939). Over time, this perspective matured into what we now regard as modern human resource management, which views personnel as valuable assets requiring investment, development, and continuous engagement. This paradigm shift aligns with the principles of Human Capital Theory, which posits that investments in employee education, training, and health directly enhance productivity and organisational outcomes (Becker, 1964; Schultz, 1961).

Service Delivery

Service delivery has emerged as one of the most critical concepts in both public administration and management discourse, as it refers to the processes, mechanisms, and practices through which services are provided to citizens, clients, or consumers by institutions, organizations, or governments. It captures not only

the quantity of services rendered but also the quality, accessibility, and responsiveness of those services to the needs of the intended beneficiaries. The term is particularly significant in the context of public administration, where governments are entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring that citizens have access to essential services such as education, health care, water supply, security, and infrastructure. Osborne (2010), argue that service delivery is at the heart of governance because it represents the tangible outcomes of policies, resource allocation, and institutional performance. In the private sector, service delivery is equally critical as it shapes customer satisfaction, loyalty, and competitive advantage. Regardless of the context, service delivery provides the visible and practical manifestation of organizational objectives and is therefore central to the evaluation of institutional effectiveness. The concept of service delivery is rooted in the idea that organizations exist to provide value to their stakeholders. For public organizations, this value is reflected in social equity, inclusiveness, accountability, and responsiveness, while private organizations emphasize efficiency, innovation, and customer satisfaction. According to Grönroos (1990), service delivery is not only the provision of tangible products or outcomes but also the management of relationships, interactions, and experiences that define how services are perceived by recipients. This relational dimension is crucial in public service, where trust in institutions often depends on the consistency, fairness, and quality of service delivery. Pollitt and Bouckaert (2011) reinforce this view by noting that service delivery constitutes the “front line” of government, where policies are translated into real outcomes for citizens. In this sense, service delivery acts as the bridge between policy formulation and citizen experience, making it a critical area for both research and reform.

One of the fundamental aspects of service delivery is its multidimensional nature. Scholars such as Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1985), developed the SERVQUAL model, which highlights five key dimensions of service quality: reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness. These dimensions are widely used to evaluate service delivery in both public and private sectors. Reliability refers to the ability to deliver services accurately and consistently, while assurance involves the trust and confidence instilled in beneficiaries through competence and credibility. Tangibles represent the physical facilities, tools, and appearance associated with service provision, whereas empathy captures the degree of personalized care and understanding extended to service users. Responsiveness refers to the willingness and ability of providers to address the needs of clients promptly. Together, these dimensions illustrate that service delivery goes beyond the act of providing goods or services; it encompasses the perceptions, attitudes, and experiences of both providers and recipients. In public administration, service delivery is often examined through the lens of governance, accountability, and development. World Bank (2004), defines effective service delivery as the ability of government institutions to ensure that services are accessible, equitable, and of sufficient quality to meet the needs of all citizens. This perspective emphasizes inclusivity, recognizing that poor or marginalized groups must not be excluded from accessing essential services. Bovaird and Löffler (2009) argue that public service delivery requires a balance between efficiency and equity, where governments must maximize resources while ensuring fairness and inclusiveness. In many developing countries, including Nigeria, challenges such as inadequate funding, corruption, bureaucratic inefficiency, and weak institutional capacity hinder the provision of quality services. Adebayo (2014) observes that poor service delivery in Nigeria often undermines citizen trust in government and fuels disillusionment with democratic governance. This underscores the idea that effective service delivery is not merely a technical matter but also a political and ethical imperative, essential for sustaining social cohesion and political legitimacy. The concept of service delivery is also deeply intertwined with performance management. Kaplan and Norton's (1996), balanced scorecard, though primarily designed for private organizations, has been widely adapted to public administration as a framework for measuring service delivery outcomes. By incorporating perspectives such as customer satisfaction, internal processes, and organizational learning, the balanced scorecard reflects the multidimensionality of service delivery. Van Dooren, Bouckaert, and Halligan (2015), argue that performance measurement in public service delivery must consider both efficiency and outcomes, emphasizing not only how resources are used but also the extent to which services achieve desired societal goals. In this regard, service delivery is both a process and an outcome, requiring continuous monitoring, feedback, and adaptation to changing circumstances. From a theoretical perspective, several frameworks have been applied to explain and evaluate service delivery. Systems Theory, as articulated by Von Bertalanffy (1968), provides a holistic understanding of how different components of organizations interact to influence service delivery outcomes. Inefficiencies in recruitment, motivation, or accountability, for instance, can create ripple effects that undermine overall performance.

Training

Training, in its broadest sense, refers to a structured and purposeful process through which individuals acquire knowledge, skills, and competencies that enable them to perform tasks effectively. It involves instruction, practice, and experience, designed to enhance both personal and organizational effectiveness. Training occurs in multiple contexts educational, professional, and informal and plays a pivotal role in developing human capacity, improving productivity, and ensuring overall effectiveness. It not only entails knowledge acquisition but also emphasizes the development of competencies, defined as integrated sets of knowledge, skills, and behaviors essential for success in a role (Baldwin & Ford, 1988). Competencies ensure that training goes beyond theory to encompass application, enabling individuals to carry out tasks proficiently. Training programmes are typically guided by specific goals and objectives that shape content, instructional methods, and evaluation. These goals ensure that training aligns with the needs of organizations and individuals. For instance, professional training often addresses skill gaps identified through performance evaluations, enabling targeted interventions that yield measurable improvements (Salas, Tannenbaum, Kraiger, & Smith-Jentsch, 2012). In the workplace, employee training is a vital subset, ensuring that workers have the knowledge and competencies needed for efficient performance. This training takes multiple forms formal classroom instruction, on-the-job learning, mentoring, and self-directed study depending on organizational objectives. When employees first join organizations, they undergo initial training that familiarizes them with policies, procedures, and job-specific tasks. For example, new hires may receive instruction in customer service protocols, software applications, or safety regulations, equipping them with basic competencies from the outset (Noe, 2017). However, training is not a one-time event. Ongoing training is increasingly necessary in today's dynamic work environment, where technological innovations and regulatory changes demand continual skill renewal. Such continuous learning may emphasize professional growth, leadership development, or technical expertise, ensuring employees remain adaptable and competitive (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009).

The impact of training on individual and organizational performance is well documented. Research confirms that training enhances job performance, increases productivity, and improves job satisfaction (Chiaburu & Tekleab, 2005). Proper training also reduces workplace errors and accidents, as employees are better equipped to follow procedures and make sound decisions (Kraiger, 2002). Beyond technical outcomes, training boosts employee confidence and motivation, reinforcing commitment and loyalty to the organization. A workforce that perceives value in organizational investment tends to be more engaged, thereby driving overall success. Organizational benefits of training are equally significant. Training programmes contribute to improved customer service, higher product quality, and operational efficiency. For instance, training in service delivery can increase customer satisfaction, while training in process improvement reduces costs and streamlines operations (Cascio, 2006). Training also enhances retention, as employees are more likely to remain with employers who invest in their development (Maurer, 2012). The effectiveness of training depends on design, delivery, environment, and employee motivation. Tailored programmes that address organizational needs tend to yield the best outcomes. Delivery methods must be interactive and relevant to engage employees meaningfully (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006). A supportive learning environment, where feedback and collaboration are encouraged, further enhances learning outcomes (Baldwin & Ford, 1988). Motivation is equally crucial; employees who perceive training as relevant and beneficial to their career growth are more likely to participate actively and transfer learning to practice (Noe, 2017).

Method

The study adopted a mixed-methods research design which combined quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between personnel management practices and service delivery outcomes. The quantitative aspect utilized a descriptive survey design through the administration of structured questionnaires to staff of the Commission, while the qualitative aspect employed semi-structured interviews to obtain detailed insights into institutional processes, experiences, and administrative realities. The integration of both methods enhanced the validity, reliability, and depth of the study findings. The study area was Rivers State, Nigeria, with particular focus on the Rivers State Civil Service Commission. The chapter highlighted the historical, cultural, and economic background of Rivers State and explained the statutory responsibilities of the RSCSC in managing appointments, promotions, discipline, and personnel administration within the state civil service system. The population of the study

consisted of one hundred and twenty (120) staff of the Commission, including both permanent and casual staff. A sample size of ninety-two (92) respondents was selected using multistage sampling procedures involving purposive, stratified random, and simple random sampling techniques. Both primary and secondary sources of data were utilized. Primary data were obtained through questionnaires and interviews, while secondary data were sourced from textbooks, journals, policy documents, government publications, reports, and internet materials. The questionnaire was structured on a four-point Likert scale consisting of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. To ensure validity, the research instruments were reviewed by experts in public administration and research methodology. Reliability was established through a pilot study using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient with a reliability threshold of 0.70. Data collected were analyzed using tables, simple percentages, arithmetic mean, and Chi-Square statistical techniques to test the hypotheses and interpret respondents' opinions regarding personnel management practices and service delivery within the Rivers State Civil Service Commission.

Presentation of Data

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Analysis of Response Rate (Population = 92)

Administration of Questionnaires	Frequency	Percentage
Number of questionnaires administered	92	100%
Number of questionnaires not returned	6	7%
Number of questionnaires retrieved	86	93%
Number of questionnaires valid for study	86	93%

Source: Field Work, 2026

The table above reveals that out of the 92 questionnaires administered to respondents, 6 representing approximately 7% were not returned, while 86 questionnaires representing about 93% were retrieved, completed, and found valid for analysis. The response rate of 93% is considered very high and therefore suitable for the study.

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (n = 86)

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	49	57.1%
	Female	37	42.9%
	Total	86	100%
Age Range	30–39 years	15	17.4%
	40–49 years	37	43.0%
	50–59 years	34	39.5%
	Total	86	100%
Years of Service	5–10 years	12	14.0%
	11–20 years	40	46.5%

	21–30 years	28	32.6%
	Above 30 years	6	7.0%
	Total	86	100%
Employment Status	Permanent Staff	68	79.1%
	Casual Staff	18	20.9%
	Total	86	100%
Educational Qualification	Bachelor’s Degree	24	27.9%
	Master’s Degree	52	60.5%
	Doctoral Degree	10	11.6%
	Total	86	100%
Position Level	Senior Management	30	34.9%
	Middle Management	37	43.0%
	Specialist/Consultant	1	1.2%
	Casual Staff	18	20.9%
	Total	86	100%
Functional Area	Administration/HR	28	32.6%
	Training & Development	15	17.4%
	Performance Management	12	14.0%
	Recruitment	9	10.5%
	Service Delivery/Reform	15	17.4%
	External Consultancy	7	8.1%
	Total	86	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The demographic profile of respondents provides important insight into the composition of the study population. In terms of gender, male respondents constitute 57.1% (49 respondents), while females account for 42.9% (37 respondents). This reflects relatively balanced gender participation within the civil service workforce and related administrative functions. The age distribution shows that the majority of respondents are mature professionals. Specifically, 43.0% fall within the 40–49 years category, while 39.5% are between 50–59 years. Respondents aged 30–39 years account for only 17.4%. This suggests that the study largely captured the perspectives of experienced personnel with extensive institutional knowledge and familiarity with reforms and personnel management practices within the civil service between 2015 and 2025. Analysis of years of service indicates that respondents possess considerable work experience. While 14.0% have served between 5–10 years, the majority have longer service durations, including 46.5% with 11–20 years, 32.6% with 21–30 years, and 7.0% with over 30 years of service. This implies that respondents have substantial exposure to administrative procedures, personnel policies, and evolving service delivery mechanisms within the civil service system. With respect to employment status, 79.1% of respondents are permanent staff, whereas 20.9% are casual staff. The inclusion of casual staff broadens the scope of the study by incorporating the experiences

and perceptions of non-permanent employees who contribute significantly to routine administrative and support services. Their participation enriches the analysis of personnel management practices and workplace conditions across different categories of workers.

Educational qualification data reveals a highly educated respondent population. Respondents holding Master's degrees constitute the majority at 60.5%, followed by Bachelor's degree holders at 27.9%, while 11.6% possess Doctoral degrees. The high proportion of postgraduate degree holders indicates that respondents possess the academic and professional competence necessary for informed evaluation of public personnel management and service delivery issues. The position level distribution demonstrates broad representation across different administrative categories. Middle management staff account for the highest proportion at 43.0%, followed by senior management at 34.9%. Casual staff constitute 20.9%, while specialists/consultants represent 1.2% of respondents. This distribution ensures that the study captures perspectives from strategic leadership, operational management, technical expertise, and non-permanent support personnel within the civil service structure. Finally, the functional area distribution confirms adequate representation across key personnel management domains. Administration/HR records the highest representation at 32.6%, followed by Training & Development and Service Delivery/Reform at 17.4% each. Performance Management accounts for 14.0%, Recruitment 10.5%, and External Consultancy 8.1%. This spread strengthens the reliability of the study by ensuring coverage of the major operational and policy areas relevant to personnel management and service delivery.

Data Analysis

Research Question: What influence do recruitment and selection processes have on service delivery in the Rivers State Civil Service Commission?

Computation of response rate on Recruitment, Selection and Service Delivery

Table 3: Recruitment and Selection and Service Delivery

Total Respondents = 86

S/N	Statement	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Total Respondents	Weighted Score	Mean	Remarks
1	The selection process for the Rivers State Civil Service Commission relies on qualifications and merit	30 (120)	28 (84)	18 (36)	10 (10)	86	250	2.91	Accepted
2	Open recruitment practices improve the quality of service delivery provided by the Commission	35 (140)	30 (90)	12 (24)	9 (9)	86	263	3.06	Accepted
3	Recruitment delays and inconsistencies diminish the standard of public service output	25 (100)	22 (66)	25 (50)	14 (14)	86	230	2.67	Accepted
4	Employees brought on board through proper procedures perform their responsibilities more effectively	32 (128)	26 (78)	18 (36)	10 (10)	86	252	2.93	Accepted
5	The recruitment and selection process enhances overall service delivery in the Commission	28 (112)	30 (90)	20 (40)	8 (8)	86	250	2.91	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Grand Mean Calculation

Total Weighted Score = 250 + 263 + 230 + 252 + 250 = 1,245

Grand Mean = $1245 \div 86 = 14.48$ ($\div 5$ items = 2.90)

Overall Remark: Accepted

The table shows respondents' perceptions of recruitment and selection practices and their influence on service delivery in the Rivers State Civil Service Commission. Item 2 recorded the highest mean score of 3.06, indicating strong agreement that open recruitment practices improve the quality of service delivery. This was closely followed by Item 4 with a mean score of 2.93, showing that employees recruited through proper procedures tend to perform their duties more effectively. Items 1 and 5 both recorded mean scores of 2.91, suggesting that respondents generally agree that the recruitment process is merit-based and enhances overall service delivery. Item 3, with a mean score of 2.67, also indicates agreement that recruitment delays and inconsistencies negatively affect service output. The grand mean of 2.90 shows that respondents generally agree that recruitment and selection practices significantly influence service delivery in the Commission.

Test of Hypothesis

H₀: Recruitment and selection processes have no significant influence on service delivery in the Rivers State Civil Service Commission.

Table 4: Shows responses for calculating frequency expected (fe)

Aggregate Observed Frequencies (O)

Response	Total Observed (O)
SA	$30 + 35 + 25 + 32 + 28 = \mathbf{150}$
A	$28 + 30 + 22 + 26 + 30 = \mathbf{136}$
D	$18 + 12 + 25 + 18 + 20 = \mathbf{93}$
SD	$10 + 9 + 14 + 10 + 8 = \mathbf{51}$

Grand Total = $150 + 136 + 93 + 51 = 430$
(Total respondents $\times$ 5 statements = $86 \times 5 = 430$)

Combine into "Agree" and "Disagree"

Agree = SA + A = $150 + 136 = 286$

Disagree = D + SD = $93 + 51 = 144$

Expected Frequencies (E) under H₀ (no effect)

If there is no influence, the split is equal: $E \text{ Agree} = E \text{ Disagree} = \frac{430}{2} = 215$

Table 5: Computation of Chi-square Test Statistics 1

Compute O – E and (O – E)² / E

Response	O	E	O – E	(O – E) ²	(O – E) ² / E
Agree	286	215	71	5,041	23.46
Disagree	144	215	-71	5,041	23.46
Total	430	430		10,082	46.92

Degrees of Freedom (df)

$$df=(r-1)(c-1)=(2-1)(2-1)=1 \quad df=(r-1)(c-1)=(2-1)(2-1)=1$$

Chi-Square Decision

Calculated $\chi^2 = 46.92$

Critical χ^2 at 0.05 significance level, $df = 1 = 3.841$

Decision Rule:

Since $46.92 > 3.841 \rightarrow$ reject H_0

There is a significant influence of recruitment and selection processes on service delivery in the Rivers State Civil Service Commission. Respondents' agreement with merit-based selection, open recruitment, and proper procedures confirms that recruitment and selection practices positively impact service delivery.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Assess the influence of recruitment and selection processes on service delivery in the Rivers State

Civil Service Commission 2015 – 2025

Data analyses showed that the highest mean score of 3.06, indicate strong agreement that open recruitment practices, improve service delivery. This was closely followed by Item 4 with a mean score of 2.93, showing that employees recruited through proper procedures tend to perform their duties more effectively. Items 1 and 5 both recorded mean scores of 2.91, suggesting that respondents generally agree that the recruitment process is merit-based and enhances overall service delivery. Item 3, with a mean score of 2.67, also indicates agreement that recruitment delays and inconsistencies negatively affect service output. The grand mean of 2.90 shows that respondents generally agree that recruitment and selection practices significantly influence service delivery in the Commission. From the above data analysis, Uriri and Davies (2024), argued that effective recruitment exercise is essential for any organization whether public or private, to hire potential candidates to deliver quality and prompt service to the people as well as meet the needs of the organization. Recruitment is defined as the process of identifying and attracting qualified or proper applicants to fill vacant positions both from within and without the organization (Anwar & Abdullahi, 2021). It is the systematic analysis of jobs and the discovering and sourcing of candidates that are appropriate for specific jobs (Gardi, Hamawandy, Vian, Sulaiman, Mahmood, & Al-Kake, 2020). An efficient recruitment process has the capacity to exert a positive influence on enhancing employee commitment, productivity, and the overall quality of work. Recruitment takes place in civil service to just provide a large group of candidates that is big enough to let civil service commission select the civil servant that they need. Civil service is one of the institutions that keeps the machinery of government going. The position of the respondents supports the claims of an interviewee who thus revealed that:

We follow established civil service rules to advertise vacancies publicly, require applications with credentials, conduct written examinations to test job-relevant knowledge, and hold panel interviews. We have clear criteria based on educational qualifications, relevant experience, and performance in selection processes. In recent

cycles from 2020-2024, we've made transparency improvements—publishing shortlisted candidates, involving observers from civil society in interview panels, requiring panellists to score candidates using standardized forms. These reforms have reduced some irregularities (G. George, personal communication, January 16, 2026).

The above finding was in line with the work of Olu-Adeyemi (2009), who argued that civil servants are the body of government officials that are employed in civil occupations that are neither political nor judicial to run the public service of a country. The civil service is seen as an effective instrument through which government provides essential services to her citizenry. Obichere and Onuoha (2019), that a critical look into civil service in Rivers State reveal that many functions are being carried out by few employees. Some staff are over-burdened while others are over-bloated which leads to redundancy, gossips due to idleness at the workplace and duplicity of functions. Rivers State Civil Service has evolved into a fertile ground for discord and miscommunication, consequently resulting in subpar performance among its employees. Alluding to this line of thought, Naetor, Iheriohanma and Ukachukwu (2016), observed that, Rivers State Civil Service has low productivity and high rate of personnel turnover. However, it is worrisome to note that the performance of civil servant in Rivers State civil service system is abysmally poor. The issue that agitates mind for solution is what methods of recruitment was deployed by recruitment in the employment of it staff?" how did the unproductive staff find their way into the system? This are important because the Nigerian Civil Service placed a lot of premiums on the interview method for selection, which in line with the public service rule to ensure only eligible candidates are recruited into the system. Another interviewee responded that:

Work in the administrative aspects of recruitment and can confirm what was said by the previous respondent. We regularly receive 'lists' from above—names of individuals who must be accommodated regardless of their performance in selection processes. Sometimes these people never even participated in the advertised examinations. We're instructed to create files for them retroactively, fabricating test scores and interview assessments. It's an open secret that political connections matter more than competence in many appointments. I know several people who spent months preparing for civil service exams, performed excellently, but weren't hired, while others with no preparation got positions through connections. This creates cynicism not just among candidates but among staff who witness these manipulations. How can we expect commitment to merit principles when hiring itself violates merit? (G. Anucha, personal communication, January 16, 2026).

Eneanya (2009), averred that despite the detailed civil service rules and regulations concerning the method of recruitment and selection into the service, the staff composition of most Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) reveals that incompetent and quacks' get recruited against the principles of merit and technical competence embedded in Max Weber's ideal bureaucracy. The inefficiency of the civil servant and deduction in productivity of goods and services as well as implementation of public services is caused by the method of recruitment employed by the Rivers State Civil Service Commission. It is against this background that the researcher considered the need for critical analysis of the methods of recruitment and the relationship between recruitment method and organizational productivity.

Key Findings

1. The study found that recruitment and selection processes significantly influence service delivery in the Rivers State Civil Service Commission, as open and merit-based recruitment practices improved employee performance and organizational effectiveness. However, political interference, favoritism, and recruitment irregularities were identified as major challenges undermining transparency and efficiency in service delivery.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that both recruitment and selection processes, as well as performance management systems, play critical roles in determining the quality of service delivery in the Rivers State Civil Service Commission. Merit-based recruitment and transparent appraisal practices were found to improve employee

commitment, productivity, and organizational efficiency. However, the persistence of political patronage, poor implementation of policies, and lack of accountability negatively affected staff performance and weakened public service delivery. Therefore, strengthening transparency, fairness, and professionalism in personnel management practices is essential for achieving efficient and effective service delivery in the Commission.

RECOMMENDATION

The Rivers State Civil Service Commission should institutionalise a structured annual training framework to enhance staff development programmes. Training must be need-based, competency-driven, equitably distributed across departments, and supported with post-training performance evaluation mechanisms. Dedicated budgetary allocation and monitoring systems should be introduced to ensure quality control and measurable outcomes. Well-funded programmes should be scaled up since evidence shows that properly implemented training yields tangible productivity gains. These measures without doubt would address the issues of restricted reach, inconsistent access, outdated materials, and inadequate mechanisms for post-training execution which were initially ineffective in development programmes.

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