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Impact of Performance Management Systems on Service Delivery in the Rivers State Civil Service Commission

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ABSTRACT

Public personnel management remains a critical determinant of effective service delivery in public institutions. In the Rivers State Civil Service Commission (RSCSC), performance management systems play a central role in shaping staff output and organizational effectiveness between 2015 and 2025. This study examined the impact of performance management systems on service delivery in the RSCSC. The study adopted a mixed-methods research design, combining survey questionnaire and interviews. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Chi-square tests, while Institutional Theory provided the analytical framework for the study. Findings from 86 valid respondents revealed that effective performance management systems significantly influence service delivery. The grand mean score (2.92) indicated general agreement that performance appraisal, feedback mechanisms, and frequent evaluations enhance staff productivity and service quality. Chi-square results ($\chi^2 = 59.54 > 3.841$) confirmed a statistically significant relationship between performance management systems and service delivery. However, qualitative findings revealed challenges such as subjectivity in appraisal, weak linkage between performance outcomes and rewards, inadequate feedback, and limited use of performance data for training and development. These weaknesses reduce the effectiveness of the system despite its formal existence. The study concludes that while performance management systems have a positive impact on service delivery, their effectiveness is constrained by poor implementation practices and institutional inefficiencies. The study recommends that government should strengthen transparency mechanisms in performance appraisal processes, and also link appraisal outcomes to rewards and promotions. This will help to enhance feedback mechanisms, and integrates performance data into training and capacity development programmes.

Keywords: Performance, Management, Service, Public, Programme.

INTRODUCTION

Public personnel management remains central to effective public service delivery. In Nigeria, however, persistent weaknesses in personnel administration continue to undermine governance despite several reform efforts. Within the Rivers State Civil Service Commission (RSCSC), concerns regarding efficiency, professionalism, and responsiveness between 2015 and 2025 raise important questions about the relationship between personnel management and service delivery. One major challenge is inadequate capacity development. Although civil service reforms emphasize continuous professional development, training programmes are often irregular, poorly funded, and poorly aligned with modern governance needs such as digital administration and results-based management (World Bank, 2020; UNDESA, 2022). This limits the technical and managerial competence of civil servants and weakens service delivery. Recruitment and selection processes have also been criticised for political interference, patronage, and lack of transparency. Scholars argue that merit-based recruitment is essential for administrative professionalism and effective service delivery (OECD, 2021). However, bureaucratic bottlenecks and weak workforce planning frameworks in many Nigerian public institutions often result in skill mismatches and reduced institutional performance (Olaopa, 2021).

In addition, performance management systems in many public organisations remain largely routine and compliance-oriented rather than results-driven. Modern public administration emphasizes performance measurement, accountability, and outcome-based evaluation as key drivers of service delivery (Bouckaert & Halligan, 2020). However, weak appraisal systems, unclear performance indicators, and poor feedback mechanisms often reduce employee productivity and organisational effectiveness.

Employee motivation is another important challenge. Public Service Motivation theory highlights the importance of recognition, commitment, and supportive work environments in enhancing performance (Perry, Hondeghem, & Wise, 2021). Nevertheless, delayed promotions, inadequate incentives, and limited career advancement opportunities within the civil service frequently lower staff morale and commitment to service delivery. Furthermore, weak accountability and oversight mechanisms continue to affect administrative effectiveness. Transparency, ethical compliance, and accountability are widely recognised as essential for effective governance (Transparency International, 2023; World Bank, 2021). However, weak internal controls and limited sanctions for misconduct may encourage inefficiency and reduce institutional credibility. Bureaucratic rigidity and slow adoption of digital technologies also constrain effective service delivery. Excessive procedures and administrative delays may weaken responsiveness and efficiency (Farazmand, 2022). Similarly, limited ICT infrastructure, inadequate digital skills, and resistance to technological change continue to hinder modernization efforts within many state civil services (United Nations E-Government Survey, 2022).

Despite existing studies on civil service reforms in Nigeria, limited empirical attention has been given to how personnel management practices collectively influence service delivery in the Rivers State Civil Service Commission between 2015 and 2025. The key objective of the study is to; evaluate the effect of performance management systems on service delivery in the Rivers State Civil Service Commission. How do performance management systems affect service delivery in the Rivers State Civil Service Commission?

H_{01}: Performance management systems have no significant effect on service delivery in the Rivers State Civil Service Commission.

Institutional Theory

Institutional Theory provides a powerful sociological explanation for organizational behaviour, particularly within public sector institutions operating in politically embedded environments. Unlike efficiency-driven models that assume organizations adopt structures solely to maximize performance, institutional theory posits that organizations conform to socially constructed rules, norms, and belief systems in order to secure legitimacy, stability, and access to resources (Scott, 2014). Organizations are therefore embedded within institutional environments comprising regulative frameworks, normative expectations, and cultural-cognitive belief systems that shape their formal structures and operational practices. The modern articulation of Institutional Theory began with Meyer and Rowan (1977), who argued that organizations frequently adopt formal structures as “myths and ceremonies” to conform to societal expectations. These structures may enhance external legitimacy even when they are weakly connected to technical efficiency. They introduced the concept of decoupling, which refers to the separation between formal policy adoption and actual implementation. Building on this foundation, DiMaggio and Powell (1983), introduced the concept of institutional isomorphism, explaining why organizations within a field tend to become similar over time. They identified three mechanisms of institutional change: coercive isomorphism (stemming from political and regulatory pressures), mimetic isomorphism (imitation in conditions of uncertainty), and normative isomorphism (professionalization and shared standards).

These theoretical constructs are highly relevant to public administration contexts. In the Rivers State Civil Service Commission, coercive pressures are evident where political actors influence recruitment processes despite formal merit-based regulations. Mimetic pressures may explain the adoption of globalized performance management systems perceived as “best practice,” even when implementation is inconsistent. Normative pressures are reflected in professional civil service standards that shape personnel management frameworks. However, as Meyer and Rowan (1977) predicted, such formal adoption does not automatically translate into effective practice. The existence of performance management systems without statistically significant impact reflects institutional decoupling. Scott (2014), further refined Institutional Theory by articulating three institutional pillars: regulative (rules and sanctions), normative (values and expectations), and cultural-cognitive (shared beliefs). Weak enforcement of accountability mechanisms within the Commission illustrates fragility in the regulative pillar, while bureaucratic rigidity reflects deeply embedded cultural-cognitive norms prioritizing procedural compliance over efficiency. These institutional pillars interact to shape administrative behaviour and reform outcomes. A central dialectic within Institutional Theory is the tension between legitimacy and efficiency. Organizations frequently prioritize legitimacy—conformity to political and social expectations—over performance optimization (Suchman, 1995). In public bureaucracies, legitimacy may derive from adherence to political authority or maintenance of internal harmony rather than strict enforcement of merit and accountability standards. This dialectic explains inflated appraisal ratings, politically influenced recruitment, and symbolic compliance with reform initiatives observed in this study. Recent scholarship further strengthens the relevance of Institutional Theory for contemporary public administration. Greenwood et al. (2011) introduced the concept of institutional complexity, emphasizing that organizations often operate under multiple, competing institutional logics. In the context of this study, political patronage logic may coexist and conflict with meritocratic administrative logic, generating contradictions in recruitment and performance systems. Similarly, Battilana et al. (2009) highlighted the role of institutional entrepreneurship, demonstrating that actors within institutions can both reproduce and transform institutional structures. More recent empirical research continues to validate the explanatory strength of Institutional Theory. Su, Mou, and Zhou (2023) demonstrated that institutional environments significantly moderate the relationship between organizational capabilities and performance outcomes, confirming that institutional pressures condition the effectiveness of internal reforms. This finding directly supports the present study’s conclusion that training, performance systems, and digital reforms are mediated by broader political and institutional constraints. Silva, Macedo, and Thompson (2024) reaffirmed the continuing relevance of Institutional Theory in public administration research, arguing that legitimacy concerns remain central to understanding institutional adaptation and reform outcomes. Furthermore, Pirrolas and Correia (2025) advanced the discussion of institutional isomorphism in public administration, showing how formal adoption of administrative reforms may reflect conformity to international norms rather than substantive transformation.

Despite its strengths, Institutional Theory has faced criticism. Hirsch (1997) argued that early institutionalism overemphasized conformity and homogeneity while underestimating agency and innovation. Critics also contend that the theory initially paid insufficient attention to power dynamics, although later developments incorporating institutional entrepreneurship and complexity have addressed these concerns (Battilana et al., 2009). Nonetheless, Institutional Theory remains particularly useful for analyzing public organizations in politically complex environments where legitimacy pressures are strong. The usefulness of Institutional Theory to this study is therefore substantial. While Human Capital Theory explains how investment in skills enhances productivity, Institutional Theory explains why such investments may not yield proportional improvements in service delivery when institutional pressures distort implementation. It clarifies the persistence of political interference in recruitment, the symbolic operation of performance management systems, and the moderate impact of accountability mechanisms. By situating personnel management practices within broader socio-institutional structures, the theory provides a comprehensive explanation for the gap between formal policy design and actual administrative outcomes observed in the Rivers State Civil Service Commission. Institutional Theory deepens the analytical framework of this study by illuminating the interplay between legitimacy, coercive pressures, normative expectations, bureaucratic culture, and reform outcomes. It offers a critical complement to Human Capital Theory in explaining public personnel management performance within politically embedded civil service institutions.

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, Hondeghem, & 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.

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.

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). Evaluating training effectiveness ensures accountability and improvement. Kirkpatrick's Four-Level Model measuring reaction, learning, behavior, and results remains a widely adopted framework (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006). Evaluation not only identifies successes but also provides data for refining future programmes. Educational training represents another dimension, preparing individuals for professional and academic goals. This encompasses vocational and academic training, both of which bridge theory and practice. Vocational training emphasizes hands-on skills in trades such as carpentry, plumbing, or IT, often through apprenticeships or industry-specific courses (Greer, 2013). Academic training, meanwhile, fosters intellectual growth, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills essential across disciplines (Boud & Falchikov, 2006). Both forms emphasize transferable skills like communication, teamwork, and time management, crucial for success in modern contexts (Coles, 2011). Increasingly, interactive and student-centered approaches such as problem-based learning and flipped classrooms have replaced passive instruction, encouraging lifelong learning and adaptability (Boud & Soler, 2014).

Recruitment

Recruitment is a process of searching for prospective employees and stimulating them to apply for jobs in the organization" (Flippo, 1984, p. 134). This definition emphasizes two key functions of recruitment: searching and stimulating. It highlights the proactive role organizations must play not only in identifying talent but also in attracting them. Dessler (2020), a leading authority in human resource management, defines recruitment as: "the process of finding and attracting capable applicants for employment. The process begins when new recruits are sought and ends when their applications are submitted." This definition emphasizes the starting and ending points of recruitment. According to Dessler, recruitment is distinct from selection and primarily concerned with building a pool of candidates. Armstrong and Taylor (2020) define recruitment as the process of identifying the need for a job, defining the requirements of the position and the job holder, attracting suitable candidates, and selecting those best suited. This definition is broader and more strategic, showing recruitment as a multi-step process involving job analysis, attraction, and selection. It reflects the modern HRM view that recruitment is aligned with organizational goals and workforce planning.

Eshleman (as cited in Rao, 2005) defined recruitment as the development and maintenance of adequate manpower resources. It involves the creation of a pool of available labor from which the organization can draw when it needs additional employees. His ideology focuses on manpower planning and the availability of human resources, viewing recruitment as part of a long-term staffing strategy. Ivancevich and Glueck (1989) describe recruitment as the process of attracting individuals on a timely basis, in sufficient numbers, and with appropriate qualifications to apply for jobs with an organization. Here incorporate the elements of timing, quantity, and quality of candidates, emphasizing the operational side of recruitment that ensures organizational efficiency. Robins and Coulter (2018) view recruitment as the process of locating, identifying, and attracting capable applicants. Though concise, this definition reflects the core purpose of recruitment finding and attracting qualified individuals. It aligns with the general view of recruitment as a talent acquisition mechanism. According to Yoder (1970) the process to discover the sources of manpower to meet the requirements of the staffing schedule and to employ effective measures for attracting that manpower in adequate numbers to facilitate effective selection of efficient personnel.

Performance

Performance, in its broadest sense, refers to the execution or accomplishment of tasks or responsibilities and is often measured against established standards or expectations. It encompasses both individual and organisational achievements, with assessments based on effectiveness, efficiency, and quality relative to time and resources expended. For instance, individual performance in the workplace may be assessed by how well employees meet deadlines, produce high-quality work, and contribute to organisational goals, while organisational performance is evaluated in terms of how effectively resources are utilised to achieve strategic objectives, including financial outcomes, competitiveness, and customer satisfaction (Armstrong, 2014). Performance measurement is critical in determining the extent to which goals are achieved, ensuring accountability, and informing decision-making. Standards differ across contexts: in workplaces, they may include output targets, deadlines, or quality benchmarks, whereas organisations often adopt broader measures, incorporating financial and non-financial indicators. Kaplan and Norton's (1992) balanced scorecard highlighted the importance of combining financial performance with other perspectives, such as customer relations and internal processes, for a holistic evaluation. Organisational performance is a multidimensional construct concerned with the extent to which institutions achieve goals and adapt to environmental changes. Today, it is often tracked through key performance indicators (KPIs), quantifiable metrics that span financial results, customer satisfaction, employee engagement, and innovation (Neely et al., 1995). Among these, productivity is a central KPI, reflecting the efficiency with which resources are converted into outputs. High productivity enhances competitiveness by enabling cost reduction, faster delivery, and improved margins (Muller, 2016). Profitability is another crucial indicator, representing the capacity to generate income in excess of costs. Financial measures such as return on investment (ROI), profit margins, and earnings before interest and taxes (EBIT) allow organisations to evaluate operational success and make informed strategic choices (Porter, 1985).

METHODOLOGY

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.

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Data Analysis

Research Question: How do performance management systems impact on service delivery in the Rivers State Civil Service Commission?

Computation of response rate on performance management systems impact on service delivery in the Rivers State Civil Service Commission

Table 2: Performance Management 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 performance review system in the Commission accurately reflects employees' work output	28 (112)	30 (90)	18 (36)	10 (10)	86	248	2.88	Accepted
2	Frequent performance assessments encourage staff to enhance their service delivery	32 (128)	28 (84)	16 (32)	10 (10)	86	254	2.95	Accepted
3	Feedback from performance reviews assists employees in addressing work shortcomings	30 (120)	29 (87)	17 (34)	10 (10)	86	251	2.92	Accepted
4	Weak performance oversight leads to reduced commitment to service delivery	26 (104)	30 (90)	20 (40)	10 (10)	86	244	2.84	Accepted
5	Effective performance management improves service delivery in the Commission	34 (136)	28 (84)	16 (32)	8 (8)	86	260	3.02	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Grand Mean Calculation

Total Weighted Score = 248 + 254 + 251 + 244 + 260 = 1,257

Grand Mean = 1257 ÷ 86 = 14.62 (÷ 5 items = 2.92)

Overall Remark: Accepted

The table presents respondents' views on performance management and service delivery in the Commission. Item 5 recorded the highest mean score of 3.02, indicating strong agreement that effective performance management improves service delivery. Item 2 followed closely with a mean score of 2.95, showing that frequent performance assessments encourage staff to improve their output. Items 3 and 1 recorded mean scores of 2.92 and 2.88 respectively, suggesting that respondents generally agree that feedback from performance reviews is useful and that the review system reflects employees' work output. Item 4, with a mean score of 2.84, indicates agreement that weak performance oversight reduces commitment to service delivery. The grand mean of 2.92 shows that respondents generally agree that performance management practices significantly influence service delivery in the Commission.

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Test of Hypothesis

H_0: Performance management systems have no significant impact on service delivery in the Rivers State Civil Service Commission.

Table 3: Shows responses for calculating frequency expected (fe)

Aggregate Observed Frequencies (O)

Response	**Total Observed (O)**
SA	28 + 32 + 30 + 26 + 34 = 150
A	30 + 28 + 29 + 30 + 28 = 145
D	18 + 16 + 17 + 20 + 16 = 87
SD	10 + 10 + 10 + 10 + 8 = 48

Grand Total = 150 + 145 + 87 + 48 = 430
(Total respondents × 5 statements = 86 × 5 = 430)

Combine into "Agree" and "Disagree"

Agree = SA + A = 150 + 145 = 295

Disagree = D + SD = 87 + 48 = 135

Expected Frequencies (E) under H_{02}

E Agree= E Disagree $=\frac{430}{2}=21$

Table 4: 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	295	215	80	6,400	29.77
Disagree	135	215	-80	6,400	29.77
Total	430	430		12,800	59.54

Degrees of Freedom (df)

df=(r−1)(c−1)=(2−1)(2−1)=1df = (r-1)(c-1) = (2-1)(2-1) = 1df=(r−1)(c−1)=(2−1)(2−1)=1

Chi-Square Decision

Calculated $\chi^2 = 59.54$

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

Decision Rule:
Since 59.54 > 3.841, we reject H_01

There is a significant impact of performance management systems on service delivery in the Rivers State Civil Service Commission. The high level of agreement among respondents on performance reviews, feedback systems, and regular assessments indicates that performance management practices play an important role in improving service delivery effectiveness.

DISCUSSION OF FINDING

Evaluate the impact of performance management systems on service delivery in the Rivers State Civil Service Commission.

Questionnaire details revealed that the highest mean score of 3.02, indicating strong agreement that effective performance management improves service delivery. Item 2 followed closely with a mean score of 2.95, showing that frequent performance assessments encourage staff to improve their output. Items 3 and 1 recorded mean scores of 2.92 and 2.88 respectively, suggesting that respondents generally agree that feedback from performance reviews is useful and that the review system reflects employees' work output. Item 4, with a mean score of 2.84, indicates agreement that weak performance oversight reduces commitment to service delivery. The grand mean of 2.92 shows that respondents generally agree that performance management practices significantly influence service delivery in the Commission. This analysis was affirmed by an interviewee who thus revealed that:

> The growth of every staff depends on the genuine effort of performance appraisal system gear towards addressing the perceive peculiarities and issue-based platforms required for effective service delivery. Career growth is an indispensable aspect of the process. Therefore, performance appraisal system must not compromise the extant procedures required for organizational successes (L. Nwinya, personal communication, January 19, 2026).

The work of Andrius and Vladimiras (2014), supports the above data analysis when they aptly state that to achieve service delivery, employee performance becomes an integral part of career development which is a strategic mission every meaningful management board must considered. It is interesting to note that performance appraisal and employee productivity are conventional part of any personnel circle. The activation of employee development is therefore hinged on a carefully thought-out appraisal system which invariably led to the achievement of some specific goals through the utilization of materials such as financial and personnel resources. These materials are further condescended into energy, talent, creativity, and effort to which the organization maintain its existence (Armstrong, 2016). Another interviewee revealed that:

> The implementation of our performance appraisal policy is fantastic but the application and dynamic issues confronting appraisal exercise and employee development is poor management and political affiliation leading to a decline in service delivery with a triple down effect traced to poor recruitment policies, poor capacity building, political patronage, quota system and lack of democratic practices in the management of the public service (J. Bob-Manuel, personal communication, January 19, 2026).

According to Eneanya (2013), performance appraisal system has a substantial impact on every aspect of an organization. Human resource capacity building is believed to be a potent strategy that could impact positively on the performance of any management board. Moreover, Obi (2016), contends that performance appraisal is amongst the most complicated issues in managing and exerting human resource development. This is because the success of an employee in an organization relies heavily on the nature of appraisal system that is inherent in the organization. Hunnes, Kvaloy and Mohn (2012), opine that the basis of performance appraisal is to institute a compensation system that improves the contribution of managers and employees towards the attainment of organizations goal and objectives. Similarly, Laschchnau, (2015), opines that performance appraisal is one of the fundamental tools that have been adopted in measuring, evaluating, and determining the strength and performance of employee in an organization. The essence of performance appraisal according to Onah (2018) is to assess the strengths and weaknesses of staff in work situation. According to Cole (2002), employee performance appraisal is one out of the numerous personnel functions that evaluate personnel's or employees as individuals, and important because its sensitive. In his words this is a task that is delicate as well as complex. In Nigeria, this "task has been carried out at one time as a confidential annual report" i.e, done by the manager/supervisor without the knowledge or any input by the employee being appraised; and at another time as an "open performance appraisal" system. An interviewee aptly notes that:

> It is good for staff to get promoted, progress from a lower level to higher level via career development. It motivates and improves service delivery. The system provides organization with a means of identifying not only what people's performance levels are but in which areas these levels need to be improved if maximum use is to be made of human resources (L. Amachree, personal communication, January 19, 2026).

Also, Onah (2015), argues that the civil service is a legal entity established to achieve a multidimensional and far-reaching objectives. These objectives are primarily hinged on welfare maximization of the masses. The overall intention of performance management system is to bring the greatest good or happiness to the greater number of staff. The process of appraisal allows each employee understand his performance, and this suggests a possible recommendation to address identified areas of weaknesses matched by staff development programmes. It is on this note, Abaraoye (1991, p.12), defined performance appraisal as "the process of reviewing an individual's performance and progress on job with a view to identifying his strength and weakness". The importance of human resources in the growth or decline of any organization cannot be over emphasized as they are needed to perform in accordance with organization's objectives and this could be achieved through the use of a management technique called performance appraisal, performance rating or performance evaluation. According to Disu (2018), appraisal provides an opportunity for discovering barriers to effective performance and for considering how these would be removed. It helps to improve motivation in an organization. It is usually done periodically. Effective performance appraisal should also be put into consideration, the legitimate desires of employees for progress in their professions. However, performance management highlighted some flaws that hinder the effective utilization of human resources. These flaws are marked by inflated ratings, in which most employees receive favourable assessments regardless of their actual performance. This approach leads to a lack of meaningful differentiation, obscures skill deficiencies, and makes performance data ineffective for informing development choices. This therefore posed a severe challenge to transparency, accountability and the integrity of the performance progress which invariably negatively affected staff morale and efficiency in service delivery (Kellough & Lu, 1993).

In consonance with the above view, another interviewee responded that:

> Where certain departments implemented clearer objectives, constructive feedback systems, and monitoring frameworks, these departments reportedly realized improved results, reinforcing the notion that the performance of human resources relies not only on individual skills but also on the proficiency of accompanying management systems. Numerous services lack formal standards, rendering the appraisal processes fundamentally subjective. Performance evaluations are significantly overstated, as over 93% of workers are rated as "Good" or better, making the differentiation of performance meaningless (C. Ogbonna, personal communication, January 19, 2026).

A notable issue that emerged was the unclear relationship between performance results and rewards. Contributors observed that promotions and incentives are seldom influenced by review outcomes, which diminishes motivation and dissuades efforts aimed at enhancing skills. Moreover, the absence of clearly articulated performance benchmarks and measurable objectives restricts both individual and organizational ability to evaluate progress or identify key areas for investment. This trend aligns with international studies on dysfunctions in public sector evaluations (Aguinis, 2013), although the severity within Rivers State is particularly acute. The lack of substantial feedback systems and the complete disconnect between performance evaluations and career progression remove any incentives for staff to enhance their performance or pursue skill development. Decisions on promotions that rely solely on tenure further demotivate employees, solidifying the belief that performance is of little importance. The absence of well-defined performance benchmarks and organizational objectives exacerbates the issue. In the absence of clear expectations and measurable parameters, neither employees nor management can effectively evaluate performance or identify necessary areas for growth.

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On the other hand, departments that established concrete performance indicators, monitoring frameworks, and feedback systems reported significant improvements in service delivery. Initiatives supported by donors that included stringent performance oversight demonstrated the tangible effects of robust performance management. These differences indicate that effective performance management can indeed enhance service provision even in difficult environments when properly structured and enforced. The disconnection between training and performance management additionally erodes effectiveness. Optimal practice involves leveraging performance evaluations to pinpoint skill deficiencies, directing training efforts accordingly, and reassessing outcomes afterward. Rivers State's inability to fuse these elements clarifies why investments in training seldom lead to organizational enhancements. The discouraging repercussions of ineffective performance management were apparent, as high-achieving employees noted a decline in their efforts when their excellence was overlooked and subpar performance went unaddressed.

Furthermore, 23 respondents disagreed that the performance review system in the Commission accurately represents employees' output of work. Meanwhile, 14 respondents disagreed that insights gained from performance reviews assist employees in addressing their work shortcomings. The respondents consistently described APER implementation as largely ceremonial. Supervisors often complete forms perfunctorily, assigning similar ratings to all staff to avoid conflict. Performance assessments are frequently subjective, influenced by personal relationships rather than documented evidence of output. It also revealed that supervisors rarely maintain systematic performance records, making it difficult to justify ratings. Additionally, 15 respondents disagreed that the selection process for the Rivers State Civil Service Commission is based on the performance of employees. They emphasized that APER outcomes carry minimal consequences. High ratings do not reliably lead to rewards, advancement, or recognition, while poor ratings rarely result in sanctions, remedial training, or performance improvement plans. This absence of consequences renders performance assessment largely meaningless. Several respondents highlighted the lack of meaningful feedback. Many employees do not receive copies of their completed APERs and are therefore unaware of how they were rated or what improvements are expected. Where feedback exists, it is often vague and non-actionable, limiting employees' ability to improve performance systematically.

Also, 3 respondent disagreed that frequent performance assessments encourage staff to enhance their service delivery. The absence of systematic goal-setting was identified as another weakness. Most employees do not establish specific, measurable performance objectives at the beginning of the year. Instead, they are evaluated against generic criteria that may not reflect their actual duties or departmental priorities. In units where clear goals were established - such as processing timelines or accuracy targets, performance management became more credible and motivating. The study further emphasized that high performers receive no differential recognition, while minimal performers face no consequences. Although appraisal forms reference quality, timeliness, and customer service, are not measured using objective indicators, the absence of service standards, processing benchmarks, error tracking, or customer satisfaction metrics result in impressionistic judgments rather than data, creating perceptions of unfairness and bias. This erodes intrinsic motivation and encourages mediocrity. Finally, performance management is poorly integrated with training and development. Appraisal data are rarely analysed to identify skill gaps or inform training priorities, resulting in ad hoc development interventions disconnected from actual performance needs in the Rivers State Civil Service Commission, 2015 - 2025.

FINDING

The study found that performance management systems have a significant positive effect on service delivery in the Rivers State Civil Service Commission. It further revealed that effective appraisal, feedback, and frequent performance assessments enhance staff output and organizational efficiency.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that performance management systems play a crucial role in improving service delivery in the Rivers State Civil Service Commission. Effective performance appraisal practices enhance employee productivity, accountability, and commitment to duty. However, weak implementation, subjectivity, and lack of linkage between appraisal outcomes and rewards reduce effectiveness. Strengthening performance management structures is therefore essential for sustainable improvement in public service delivery.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Rivers State Civil Service Commission should adopt transparent, and merit-based recruitment processes. Competitive examinations, structured interviews, digital applicant tracking systems, and independent oversight panels should be institutionalised. Clear eligibility criteria and publicly advertised vacancies will reduce patronage influence. Strict sanctions should be introduced for procedural breaches to restore public confidence and ensure that technical competence drives service delivery.

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