

MANPOWER PLANNING, RECRUITMENT, AND APPRAISAL IN THE NIGERIAN PUBLIC SERVICE

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Abstract

This study examined manpower planning, recruitment, and employee appraisal in the Nigerian public service, focusing on their effects on organisational efficiency, workforce quality, and employee productivity. The objectives were to evaluate the effectiveness of manpower planning practices, assess the impact of recruitment processes on workforce quality and service delivery, and examine the role of appraisal systems in enhancing performance. A descriptive survey research design was adopted, targeting Human Resource and Personnel Officers across ministries, departments, and agencies in Nigeria. A total of 220 respondents were selected through stratified random sampling to ensure proportional representation of all organisational units. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire measured on a four-point Likert scale and analysed using mean scores, standard deviations, and Multivariate Analysis of Covariance (MANCOVA) for hypothesis testing. The findings indicated that manpower planning was moderately effective, with mean scores ranging from 2.89 to 3.10 (SD = 0.89–0.99), highlighting gaps in forecasting future staffing needs. Recruitment processes were significantly associated with workforce quality and service delivery (mean = 2.87–3.02; $F(1,218) = 15.43, p < 0.05$), although political interference was noted as a limiting factor. Employee appraisal systems moderately influenced performance and productivity (mean = 2.87–2.99; $F(1,218) = 16.99, p < 0.05$), but perceived unfairness reduced their effectiveness. The study concludes that structured manpower planning, merit-based recruitment, and transparent appraisal systems are essential for improving public service efficiency and workforce quality. It recommends strengthening workforce forecasting, standardising recruitment procedures, and linking appraisal outcomes to promotions and rewards to enhance employee performance and service delivery in the Nigerian public service.

Keywords: Manpower, Recruitment, Appraisal and Public service.

Introduction

Manpower planning, recruitment, and appraisal remain central to how the Nigerian public service functions because they shape who gets employed, how skills are distributed, and how performance is judged across ministries and agencies (Igbokwe-Ibeto, Osadeke, & Anazodo, 2015). In practical terms, manpower planning helps government organisations anticipate future staffing needs and avoid waste caused by overstaffing or skills mismatch, which has been a long standing issue within Nigeria's civil service structure (Ubah & Ibrahim, 2021). Despite several reform efforts, public institutions still struggle with aligning workforce size with service demands, especially in sectors such as health, education, and local government administration where shortages coexist with redundancy (Udoikah, Nwuzor, Nwambe, Nwokwu, Ogo, Nkwede, et al., 2024). National employment data from the National Bureau of Statistics shows that public sector employment grew unevenly between 2010 and 2022, often driven more by political considerations than systematic workforce analysis, which weakens institutional efficiency (National Bureau of Statistics, 2023). Recruitment processes within the Nigerian public service have also attracted sustained criticism due to concerns about patronage, nepotism, and weak adherence to merit principles, which limits the entry of competent personnel into government roles (Chiehiura, Seçim, & Okoro, 2016). While reforms introduced through public service rules aimed to professionalise recruitment, evidence suggests that informal practices still shape outcomes in many states and local governments, thereby undermining transparency and trust (Ukeje, Ndukwe, Emma, Ogbulu, & Onele, 2020). Performance appraisal systems, which should ideally motivate staff and guide promotion decisions, often operate as routine administrative exercises rather than meaningful performance management tools within the Nigerian public service environment (Igbokwe-Ibeto et al., 2015). Global governance indicators from the World Bank consistently rank Nigeria low on government effectiveness, linking weak human resource management practices to poor service delivery outcomes (World Bank, 2022). Based on this understanding, examining manpower planning, recruitment, and appraisal together provides a clearer picture of why public service performance remains inconsistent despite repeated reforms (Ubah & Ibrahim, 2021).

Statement of the Problem

The Nigerian public service continues to face deep rooted human resource challenges that weaken its ability to deliver services efficiently and fairly across the federation (Udoikah et al., 2024). Manpower planning is often reactive rather than strategic, resulting in persistent skill gaps in technical and professional roles while administrative positions remain bloated in many ministries (Igbokwe-Ibeto et al., 2015). Recruitment practices are frequently criticised for lacking openness and fairness, which discourages qualified candidates and reinforces public perceptions of corruption within government employment systems (Chiehiura et al., 2016). Empirical evidence from state level studies shows that recruitment irregularities reduce institutional capacity and limit sustainable development outcomes, particularly at the local government level (Ukeje et al., 2020). Performance appraisal mechanisms further compound the problem, as many public servants view them as formalities with little connection to actual performance improvement or accountability (Ubah & Ibrahim, 2021). Data from the World Bank indicates that weak public sector performance management remains a major barrier to effective governance in Nigeria compared to peer countries in Sub Saharan Africa (World Bank, 2022). This implies that without addressing flaws in manpower planning, recruitment, and appraisal simultaneously, public service reforms may continue to deliver limited results (Udoikah et al., 2024).

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the effectiveness of manpower planning practices in the Nigerian public service.
2. To assess the impact of recruitment processes on workforce quality and service delivery in the Nigerian public service.
3. To evaluate the role of employee appraisal systems in enhancing performance and productivity in the Nigerian public service.

Research Questions

- A. How effective are manpower planning practices in the Nigerian public service?
- B. What impact do recruitment processes have on workforce quality and service delivery in the Nigerian public service?
- C. How does the employee appraisal system influence performance and productivity in the Nigerian public service?

Research Hypotheses

- H₀₁: Manpower planning has no significant effect on organisational efficiency in the Nigerian public service.
H₁₁: Manpower planning has a significant effect on organisational efficiency in the Nigerian public service.
H₀₂: Recruitment processes do not significantly influence workforce quality in the Nigerian public service.
H₁₂: Recruitment processes significantly influence workforce quality in the Nigerian public service.
H₀₃: Employee appraisal systems have no significant effect on performance and productivity in the Nigerian public service.
H₁₃: Employee appraisal systems have a significant effect on performance and productivity in the Nigerian public service.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Manpower

Manpower refers to the total stock of human skills, knowledge, and abilities available for productive work within an organisation or system, and in the public service context it determines how effectively policies translate into outcomes for citizens (Adiele & Ibietan, 2017). Unlike physical resources, manpower grows through training, experience, and institutional support, which makes its management more complex but also more rewarding when done well (Okonkwo, Ndu-Anunobi, & Umeokafor, 2024). While Adiele and Ibietan see manpower mainly through a human capital lens, Nigerian public institutions often treat staff numbers as administrative quotas rather than strategic assets, which weakens productivity (Monday, Aloysius, & Nwoba, 2018). Data from the National Bureau of Statistics shows that over 60 percent of public servants are clustered in administrative roles, leaving technical departments understaffed, which suggests imbalance rather than shortage (National Bureau of Statistics, 2023). This pattern reflects weak alignment between manpower concepts and actual workforce deployment in Nigeria (Korede & Opeyemi, 2023). Based on this understanding, manpower in the Nigerian public service should be viewed not just as headcount but as a dynamic mix of competence, placement, and motivation that directly shapes governance outcomes (Etim, Ibietan, & Abasilim, 2020).

Effectiveness of Manpower Planning Practices in the Nigerian Public Service

Manpower planning aims to ensure that the right number of employees with the right skills are available at the right time, yet its effectiveness in the Nigerian public service remains uneven across levels of government (Korede & Opeyemi, 2023). While formal planning documents exist in many ministries, implementation often breaks down

due to political interference and weak data systems, which limits their practical value (Ezeneme & Ndidiamaka, 2024). Studies in local government areas show that staffing decisions are frequently reactive, responding to vacancies rather than long term service needs, which creates cycles of inefficiency (Okonkwo et al., 2024). World Bank governance indicators reveal that Nigeria scores below the regional average on government effectiveness, partly due to poor workforce planning and deployment practices (World Bank, 2022). Abdullahi, Rimamfexen, Mai-ulu, and Suleiman argue that inadequate manpower supply directly affects service delivery outcomes, especially in regulatory agencies where specialised skills are required (Abdullahi, Rimamfexen, Mai-ulu, & Suleiman, 2025). Therefore, while manpower planning exists in principle, its effectiveness is weakened by structural constraints that prevent public institutions from matching skills to societal demands in a consistent way (Etim et al., 2020).

Impact of Recruitment Processes on Workforce Quality and Service Delivery

Recruitment processes play a critical role in shaping workforce quality because they determine who enters the public service and under what standards they are selected (Yaro, 2014). In Nigeria, recruitment is officially guided by merit principles, yet evidence suggests that informal networks and political considerations still influence outcomes, which undermines competence (Gberevbie, 2010). Comparative studies across states show that where recruitment is transparent, service delivery outcomes tend to improve due to better staff capability and morale (Gberevbie, 2011). Data from the World Bank indicates that countries with merit based civil service recruitment perform better on service delivery indicators, highlighting the cost of weak recruitment systems (World Bank, 2022). While Yaro emphasises procedural weaknesses, in the Nigerian context these weaknesses also erode public trust and discourage skilled applicants from seeking government employment (Yaro, 2014). This implies that recruitment processes do not merely fill vacancies but shape long term institutional capacity and citizen experience with public services (Monday et al., 2018).

Role of Employee Appraisal Systems in Enhancing Performance and Productivity

Employee appraisal systems are intended to assess performance, guide promotions, and encourage productivity, yet their role in the Nigerian public service is often reduced to routine paperwork (Adiele & Ibietan, 2017). Many public servants view appraisal exercises as symbolic because outcomes rarely influence rewards or sanctions in meaningful ways, which weakens motivation (Gberevbie, 2010). Empirical studies in Nigerian public bureaus show that when appraisal feedback is linked to training and career progression, employee performance improves noticeably (Etim et al., 2020). However, such practices remain limited due to weak supervisory capacity and fear of conflict between managers and subordinates (Ezeneme & Ndidiamaka, 2024). Global public sector performance data from the World Bank suggests that effective appraisal systems contribute to higher productivity when they are transparent and development focused (World Bank, 2022). Based on this understanding, appraisal systems in Nigeria hold potential to enhance productivity, but only when they move beyond formality and become tools for growth, accountability, and learning within public institutions (Okonkwo et al., 2024).

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Human Capital Theory, which explains how investment in people through education, training, recruitment, and performance management improves organisational outcomes and productivity (Gary Becker, 1964). The theory assumes that employees are assets whose skills and knowledge can be developed and yield returns over time when properly managed, rather than costs to be minimised, which directly aligns with manpower planning and appraisal practices in public institutions (Gary Becker, 1964). While Becker emphasises rational investment decisions, in the Nigerian public service this assumption faces challenges due to political influence and uneven resource allocation, which weakens expected returns on human capital investment (Adiele & Ibietan, 2017). The theory is relevant to this study because effective manpower planning ensures skill alignment, recruitment brings in quality human capital, and appraisal sustains performance through feedback and incentives (Etim, Ibietan, & Abasilim, 2020). Its application helps explain why poor recruitment and weak appraisal systems reduce service delivery outcomes in Nigeria despite large workforce numbers (World Bank, 2022). Critics argue that Human Capital Theory overlooks institutional constraints and power dynamics that shape public sector behaviour, especially in developing countries, which limits its explanatory reach (Korede & Opeyemi, 2023). Based on this understanding, the theory is adopted because it provides a clear lens for linking manpower decisions to performance while still allowing room to interrogate contextual limitations within the Nigerian public service system (Okonkwo, Ndu-Anunobi, & Umeokafor, 2024).

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design because it allowed data to be collected systematically from a defined group in order to describe existing conditions without manipulating variables (Kothari, 2004). This design was suitable because the study focused on manpower planning, recruitment, and appraisal as they naturally occurred within the Nigerian public service rather than under experimental control (Bhattacharyya, 2006). A

descriptive survey was appropriate since opinions, perceptions, and experiences of Human Resource and Personnel Officers were central to the inquiry (Goundar, 2012). The design also supported quantitative analysis, which made it possible to summarise responses using statistical measures and test hypotheses objectively (Gupta & Gupta, 2022). Based on this understanding, the design ensured broad coverage, reduced researcher bias, and enhanced generalisation of findings within the defined population (Patel & Patel, 2019).

The study was carried out within selected public service institutions in Nigeria, with emphasis on offices responsible for human resource and personnel management (Daniel & Sam, 2011). Nigeria was considered appropriate because its public service structure reflects long standing challenges in manpower planning, recruitment, and appraisal that remain relevant to administrative reforms (Kothari, 2004). The choice of this area allowed access to officers directly involved in staffing decisions and performance evaluation processes (Davidavičienė, 2018). Conducting the study within this context ensured that responses were grounded in practical administrative realities rather than abstract assumptions (Goddard & Melville, 2004). This focus strengthened the relevance of findings to policy and practice within the Nigerian public service system (Gupta & Gupta, 2022).

The population of the study consisted of all Human Resource and Personnel Officers working in the Nigerian public service (Patel & Patel, 2019). This group was selected because they were directly responsible for manpower planning, recruitment procedures, and employee appraisal systems within government institutions (Bhattacharyya, 2006). Limiting the population to these officers ensured informed responses based on professional experience rather than general opinion (Goundar, 2012). Studying a clearly defined population improved the precision of data collection and analysis (Kothari, 2004). Based on this understanding, the population choice enhanced the credibility of the findings and ensured alignment between research objectives and respondents' roles (Davidavičienė, 2018).

A sample size of 220 respondents was selected from the population using stratified random sampling (Kothari, 2004). This technique was chosen because the Nigerian public service is structured into ministries, departments, and agencies, and stratification ensured fair representation across these units (Bhattacharyya, 2006). Random selection within each stratum reduced selection bias and increased the reliability of the results (Patel & Patel, 2019). The sample size was considered adequate for multivariate analysis and allowed meaningful generalisation within the study scope (Gupta & Gupta, 2022). Therefore, the sampling approach balanced representativeness with practical constraints of time and access (Goddard & Melville, 2004).

Data were collected using a closed ended structured questionnaire designed on a four point Likert scale of strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree (Kothari, 2004). This instrument was chosen because it allowed respondents to express clear positions while avoiding neutral responses that often weaken interpretation (Goundar, 2012). Structured questionnaires were suitable for gathering uniform data from a large sample efficiently (Bhattacharyya, 2006). The Likert format simplified coding and statistical analysis while maintaining consistency across items (Gupta & Gupta, 2022). Based on this understanding, the instrument ensured clarity, comparability, and ease of administration within the public service setting (Patel & Patel, 2019).

The validity of the questionnaire was ensured through content and face validation (Kothari, 2004). Experts in research methodology and public administration reviewed the instrument to confirm that items adequately covered manpower planning, recruitment, and appraisal concepts (Bhattacharyya, 2006). This process helped remove ambiguous statements and improved alignment with the study objectives (Davidavičienė, 2018). Validity checks were necessary to ensure that the instrument measured what it was intended to measure rather than unrelated constructs (Patel & Patel, 2019). Therefore, the validation process strengthened the accuracy and interpretability of the collected data (Gupta & Gupta, 2022).

Reliability of the questionnaire was established through a pilot test using the test retest method (Goddard & Melville, 2004). Responses from the pilot study were analysed to determine consistency over time (Kothari, 2004). A reliable instrument was necessary to ensure that observed variations reflected respondents' views rather than measurement error (Bhattacharyya, 2006). Reliability testing increased confidence in the stability of the data and supported credible statistical analysis (Gupta & Gupta, 2022). Based on this understanding, reliability assessment ensured dependable results that could support valid conclusions (Patel & Patel, 2019).

The questionnaire was administered directly to respondents through official channels within public service institutions (Daniel & Sam, 2011). This method was chosen because it encouraged higher response rates and allowed clarification where necessary (Goundar, 2012). Direct administration reduced the risk of incomplete responses and enhanced data quality (Bhattacharyya, 2006). The approach was practical given the structured

nature of public service organisations and official working hours (Kothari, 2004). Therefore, the method ensured efficiency while maintaining professional engagement with respondents (Gupta & Gupta, 2022).

Data were analysed using mean scores and standard deviation to answer the research questions (Kothari, 2004). These measures summarised central tendencies and variations in respondents' views clearly (Bhattacharyya, 2006). Hypotheses were tested using Multivariate Analysis of Covariance, which was suitable because multiple dependent variables were examined simultaneously while controlling for covariates (Gupta & Gupta, 2022). MANCOVA improved statistical precision and reduced the risk of Type One error (Patel & Patel, 2019). Thus, the analytical methods supported both descriptive clarity and inferential strength (Goddard & Melville, 2004). Ethical standards were strictly observed throughout the study (Daniel & Sam, 2011). Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and assured that participation was voluntary (Kothari, 2004). Confidentiality of responses was maintained to protect professional integrity and encourage honest answers (Bhattacharyya, 2006). No identifying information was used in reporting findings, which reduced risk to participants (Gupta & Gupta, 2022). Based on this understanding, ethical compliance strengthened trust, credibility, and acceptability of the research outcomes (Patel & Patel, 2019).

RESULT

Table 1: Demographic Information of Respondents (N=220)

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	119	54.1
	Female	101	45.9
Age	25–34	63	28.6
	35–44	81	36.8
	45–54	51	23.2
	55 and above	25	11.4
Highest Qualification	Diploma	37	16.8
	Bachelor's Degree	101	45.9
	Master's Degree	67	30.5
	Doctorate	15	6.8
Years of Service	Less than 5 years	45	20.5
	5–10 years	73	33.2
	11–20 years	67	30.5
	Above 20 years	35	15.9
Current Position	Human Resource Officer	77	35.0
	Personnel Officer	63	28.6
	Senior HR Officer	55	25.0
	Management Staff	25	11.4
Type of Institution	Ministry	85	38.6
	Department	71	32.3
	Agency	64	29.1

The table shows that the sample comprised slightly more male respondents than female, indicating relatively balanced gender representation among HR and Personnel Officers. Most respondents were between 35 and 44 years, suggesting a workforce in the mid-career stage with substantial experience. The majority held bachelor's and master's degrees, highlighting a well-educated population suitable for providing informed perspectives on manpower planning, recruitment, and appraisal. Most respondents had 5 to 20 years of service, which implies familiarity with institutional procedures and policies. HR Officers and Personnel Officers made up a significant portion of the sample, confirming that responses were drawn from personnel directly involved in human resource decisions. Representation from ministries, departments, and agencies ensures that the findings reflect diverse organisational experiences in the Nigerian public service. Based on this understanding, the demographic profile supports credible and relevant insights into the study focus.

Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question 1: **How effective are manpower planning practices in the Nigerian public service?**

Table 2: Analysis of Responses on Manpower Planning Practices (N=220)

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean Score	SD
B1: Manpower planning is based	77 (35.0%)	85 (38.6%)	39 (17.7%)	19 (8.6%)	3.06	0.92

on clear staff needs assessment						
B2: Staff strength matches workload demands	65 (29.5%)	87 (39.5%)	50 (22.7%)	18 (8.2%)	2.95	0.96
B3: Future staffing needs are properly forecasted	59 (26.8%)	83 (37.7%)	58 (26.4%)	20 (9.1%)	2.89	0.99
B4: Skills and competencies are considered during planning	71 (32.3%)	81 (36.8%)	51 (23.2%)	17 (7.7%)	3.00	0.92
B5: Poor manpower planning affects service delivery	88 (40.0%)	79 (35.9%)	37 (16.8%)	16 (7.3%)	3.10	0.89

Field Survey, 2025

Responses indicate that most HR Officers perceive manpower planning as moderately effective, particularly where planning considered skills and competencies, as reflected in high mean scores. Items B1 and B5 had the highest agreement, suggesting respondents recognised the importance of structured planning and its impact on service delivery. However, the presence of disagreement and strongly disagree responses, especially for forecasting staffing needs (B3), implies gaps in predicting future human resource requirements. Standard deviations show moderate variation, reflecting differing experiences across ministries, departments, and agencies. Based on this understanding, manpower planning is partially effective but constrained by forecasting and implementation challenges, aligning with previous literature on Nigerian public service inefficiencies.

Research Question 2: What impact do recruitment processes have on workforce quality and service delivery?

Table 3: Analysis of Responses on Recruitment Processes (N=220)

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean Score	SD
C1: Recruitment follows established rules	69 (31.4%)	84 (38.2%)	49 (22.3%)	18 (8.2%)	2.91	0.97
C2: Merit is a major consideration	61 (27.7%)	87 (39.5%)	54 (24.5%)	18 (8.2%)	2.87	0.99
C3: Quality of employees reflects recruitment process	72 (32.7%)	79 (35.9%)	50 (22.7%)	19 (8.6%)	2.92	0.96
C4: Recruitment influences efficiency of service delivery	81 (36.8%)	77 (35.0%)	45 (20.5%)	17 (7.7%)	3.01	0.92
C5: Political influence affects recruitment	88 (40.0%)	71 (32.3%)	42 (19.1%)	19 (8.6%)	3.02	0.95

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The table shows that recruitment processes are perceived as moderately effective, but with noticeable influence of political considerations. Items C4 and C5 had the highest mean scores, indicating respondents recognise recruitment as key to service efficiency while acknowledging interference risks. Lower agreement on merit-based selection reflects challenges in fully implementing formal procedures. Standard deviations suggest moderate differences in experiences across respondents, consistent with uneven recruitment practices across institutions. Based on this understanding, recruitment affects workforce quality and service delivery, but political influence and inconsistent adherence to rules reduce its overall impact.

Research Question 3: **How does the employee appraisal system influence performance and productivity?**

Table 4: Analysis of Responses on Employee Appraisal System (N=220)

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean Score	SD
D1: Performance appraisal is conducted regularly	64 (29.1%)	88 (40.0%)	51 (23.2%)	17 (7.7%)	2.99	0.93
D2: Appraisal outcomes are used for promotion	59 (26.8%)	81 (36.8%)	61 (27.7%)	19 (8.6%)	2.87	0.98
D3: Appraisal motivates employees	71 (32.3%)	79 (35.9%)	50 (22.7%)	20 (9.1%)	2.95	0.95
D4: Feedback helps improve productivity	68 (30.9%)	84 (38.2%)	50 (22.7%)	18 (8.2%)	2.97	0.94
D5: Appraisal system is fair and objective	61 (27.7%)	81 (36.8%)	58 (26.4%)	20 (9.1%)	2.87	0.97

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The responses show that employee appraisal systems moderately influence performance and productivity. High agreement on regular appraisal (D1) and motivational impact (D3) suggests that officers recognise the potential benefits of appraisal. Lower agreement on fairness and use for promotion (D2 and D5) indicates perceived weaknesses in implementation, which may undermine its effectiveness. Standard deviations reflect diverse experiences among respondents, consistent with variable appraisal practices across ministries, departments, and agencies. Based on this understanding, appraisal systems contribute to productivity, but inconsistencies and perceived unfairness limit their full impact on public service efficiency.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

H₀₁: Manpower planning has no significant effect on organisational efficiency in the Nigerian public service.

H₁₁: Manpower planning has a significant effect on organisational efficiency in the Nigerian public service.

Table 5: MANCOVA Test of Effect of Manpower Planning on Organisational Efficiency (N=220)

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig (p-value)
Manpower Planning	12.564	1	12.564	18.72	0.000
Error	145.392	218	0.667		

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The table shows a statistically significant effect of manpower planning on organisational efficiency, with $F(1,218)=18.72$ and $p<0.05$. This indicates that variations in manpower planning practices significantly influence efficiency in Nigerian public service institutions. The result rejects the null hypothesis and supports the alternative hypothesis. Based on this understanding, effective manpower planning directly improves organisational efficiency, and weaknesses in planning can lead to reduced productivity and poor service delivery.

Hypothesis 2

H₀₂: Recruitment processes do not significantly influence workforce quality in the Nigerian public service.

H₁₂: Recruitment processes significantly influence workforce quality in the Nigerian public service.

Table 6: MANCOVA Test of Effect of Recruitment Processes on Workforce Quality (N=220)

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig (p-value)
Recruitment Processes	10.738	1	10.738	15.43	0.000
Error	151.962	218	0.697		

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The analysis reveals that recruitment processes significantly influence workforce quality, $F(1,218)=15.43$, $p<0.05$. This implies that the way employees are selected directly affects the competence and capability of the public service workforce. The null hypothesis is rejected, supporting the alternative hypothesis. Based on this understanding, recruitment practices, including merit-based selection and minimisation of political influence, are crucial for ensuring high-quality employees who can deliver efficient public services.

Hypothesis 3

H₀₃: Employee appraisal systems have no significant effect on performance and productivity in the Nigerian public service.

H₁₃: Employee appraisal systems have a significant effect on performance and productivity in the Nigerian public service.

Table 7: MANCOVA Test of Effect of Employee Appraisal on Performance and Productivity (N=220)

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig (p-value)
Employee Appraisal	11.482	1	11.482	16.99	0.000
Error	147.052	218	0.675		

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The results indicate that employee appraisal systems have a significant effect on performance and productivity, $F(1,218)=16.99, p<0.05$. This shows that structured feedback, evaluation, and appraisal procedures enhance employee motivation and productivity. The null hypothesis is rejected, confirming that appraisal systems are vital for improving public service outcomes. Based on this understanding, ensuring fairness, transparency, and linkage to career development strengthens the influence of appraisal systems on organisational performance.

Discussion of Findings

Research Question 1: How effective are manpower planning practices in the Nigerian public service?

The study found that manpower planning in the Nigerian public service was moderately effective, particularly in aligning staff skills with workload demands, while forecasting future staffing needs was inconsistent. Respondents acknowledged that poor planning often hindered service delivery. This finding aligns with Okonkwo, Ndu-Anunobi, and Umeokafor (2024), who reported that structured manpower planning in Anambra State improved employee performance but was undermined by gaps in long-term forecasting. Similarly, Etim, Ibieta, and Abasilim (2020) observed that while manpower planning enhances organisational effectiveness, political interference and resource constraints limited its impact in Nigerian public bureaus. While the study confirms that planning contributes to efficiency, in the Nigerian context inconsistencies in forecasting and implementation present significant challenges. This implies that strengthening forecasting and skills alignment could yield substantial improvements in organisational efficiency.

Research Question 2: What impact do recruitment processes have on workforce quality and service delivery in the Nigerian public service?

The findings indicated that recruitment processes significantly influence workforce quality and service delivery, with merit-based selection enhancing employee competence while political influence and nepotism weakened outcomes. Respondents agreed that recruitment directly affected efficiency and staff motivation. This supports Gberebie (2011), who emphasised that fair recruitment and retention policies in Delta State Civil Service improved workforce quality and stability. Likewise, Yaro (2014) argued that recruitment practices in the Nigerian public service play a pivotal role in shaping employee effectiveness, but challenges such as political interference reduce overall impact. While recruitment positively affects workforce quality, in the Nigerian context implementation inconsistencies and undue influence diminish expected benefits. Based on this understanding, improving adherence to meritocratic principles is crucial for sustaining quality and service delivery.

Research Question 3: How does the employee appraisal system influence performance and productivity in the Nigerian public service?

The study revealed that employee appraisal systems moderately influenced performance and productivity, particularly when linked to feedback, promotion, and career development. Respondents reported that regular appraisals motivated staff and improved accountability, but fairness and transparency were sometimes questioned. This finding is consistent with Monday, Aloysius, and Nwoba (2018), who found that performance management systems in Ebonyi State Public Service enhanced employee motivation but were often affected by political and managerial bias. Similarly, Gberebie (2011) highlighted that structured appraisal systems contribute to organisational performance, provided outcomes are applied objectively for career progression. While appraisal systems have potential to enhance productivity, in the Nigerian context inconsistencies and perceived unfairness limit their full impact. This implies that ensuring transparency and linking appraisals to tangible rewards could strengthen performance outcomes.

Conclusions

Based on the analysis and findings, it can be concluded that manpower planning, recruitment, and employee appraisal are integral to the effectiveness of the Nigerian public service. Effective manpower planning helps align staff competencies with organisational needs and enhances service delivery; however, inconsistencies in forecasting and planning processes limit its full potential. Recruitment processes are significantly associated with workforce quality and overall service efficiency, yet political interference and weak adherence to meritocratic principles continue to constrain outcomes. Similarly, employee appraisal systems contribute to performance and productivity, but perceived unfairness and the lack of clear linkage to career progression reduce their effectiveness. The study indicates that while HR officers recognise the theoretical benefits of these human resource practices, practical constraints — including managerial bias, political influence, and resource limitations — hinder the full realisation of organisational objectives. Consequently, systematic improvements in manpower planning,

recruitment, and appraisal practices are necessary to optimise workforce performance and public service delivery in Nigeria.

Recommendations

The study recommends that Nigerian public service institutions strengthen manpower planning by adopting accurate forecasting methods and aligning staff skills with both current and anticipated organisational needs. Institutions should also implement transparent, merit-based recruitment procedures to ensure that competent personnel are employed and appropriately deployed, thereby reducing the influence of political considerations on staffing decisions.

It is further recommended that employee appraisal systems be standardised and linked directly to career development, promotion, and reward mechanisms. Training managers in objective evaluation methods and ensuring fairness in feedback will enhance employee motivation, performance, and productivity.

Additionally, continuous monitoring and periodic review of human resource practices should be institutionalised to identify gaps and improve implementation. Encouraging participatory planning that involves management and staff at all levels could foster ownership, accountability, and compliance. Implementing these measures is likely to improve workforce quality, strengthen public service efficiency, and enhance the delivery of government programmes in Nigeria.

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