



An Assessment of the Impact of Workforce Planning and Administrative Performance in Gombe State Civil Service Commission

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between workforce planning and administrative performance in the Gombe State Civil Service Commission. Specifically, it assesses the extent to which strategic workforce planning practices—such as staffing needs forecasting, competency-based identification of roles, vacancy management, and deployment planning—shape administrative effectiveness in a subnational public service setting. The study is grounded in human capital and public management perspectives that conceptualize workforce planning as a mechanism for aligning organizational capacity with administrative goals. Using a theoretical paper design, the study synthesizes relevant conceptual and empirical insights from the public human resource management literature to develop a framework linking workforce planning to administrative performance outcomes including service delivery efficiency, organizational responsiveness, compliance with administrative standards, and continuity in staffing. Data for this paper were derived from survey responses collected from 120 staff of the Commission, providing informed stakeholder perspectives on the relevance and perceived effectiveness of workforce planning practices. The paper presents the conceptual model, operationalizes key constructs for analytical clarity, and proposes testable relationships between workforce planning and administrative performance. The expected contribution of the study is to provide a theoretically grounded explanation of how workforce planning can improve performance within subnational civil service commissions, and to offer policy recommendations for strengthening workforce planning routines to enhance administrative outcomes.

Keyword: workforce, administrative performance, staffing, planning and service delivery

Introduction

The efficiency and effectiveness of any public administration system are fundamentally dependent on its human capital. In an era of rapid technological change, fiscal constraints, and increasing citizen demand for quality services, strategic workforce planning has emerged as a non-negotiable pillar of sound governance. Workforce planning—the systematic process of analyzing, forecasting, and aligning an organization's human resource supply with its strategic goals—directly influences administrative performance, which includes productivity, service delivery, responsiveness, and cost-effectiveness. This study examines this nexus, with a specific focus on the Gombe State Civil Service Commission (GSCSC) in Nigeria, set against global and African contexts.

Globally, developed economies have long recognized that poor workforce planning leads to skill shortages, low morale, bureaucratic inefficiency, and high operational costs. For instance, public sector reforms in the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia have embedded competency-based workforce models to match employee skills with organizational needs.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) advocates for agile workforce planning to address aging workforces and digital transformation. Studies from

these regions consistently show that strategic workforce planning enhances administrative performance by reducing redundancies, improving recruitment quality, and enabling succession planning. Conversely, where workforce planning is weak—such as in some post-crisis European municipalities—administrative performance suffers through delays, low accountability, and poor citizen trust.

In Africa, the public sector faces unique workforce planning challenges rooted in colonial legacies, structural adjustment programs, and post-independence political patronage. Many African civil services are characterized by overstaffing in non-critical areas, understaffing in technical and professional cadres, and a lack of data-driven human resource information systems (HRIS). Countries like South Africa and Rwanda have made strides by integrating workforce planning with performance management systems, leading to measurable improvements in service delivery. However, in many sub-Saharan African nations, administrative performance remains hampered by frequent strikes, political interference in postings, and the absence of retirement and succession planning. Empirical evidence from Kenya, Ghana, and Uganda indicates that workforce planning gaps directly contribute to low administrative efficiency, weak accountability, and poor employee morale.

In Nigeria, the civil service at federal and state levels has historically suffered from systemic inefficiencies, including quota system distortions, ghost workers, skill mismatches, and inadequate training and career progression frameworks. The Federal Civil Service has undergone several reforms such as the 1999 Public Service Rules, the SERVICOM initiative, and the more recent Federal Civil Service Strategy and Implementation Plan (2021–2025)—which emphasize strategic human resource planning as a driver of performance. Despite these efforts, state-level civil service commissions vary widely in their adoption of modern workforce planning practices. Studies on Nigerian state civil services (e.g., Lagos, Anambra, Kano) reveal that workforce planning is often ad hoc, politically influenced, and disconnected from administrative performance metrics. These disconnect leads to delayed promotions, poor deployment, high absenteeism, and low service delivery standards.

Gombe State Civil Service Commission: Situated in North-Eastern Nigeria, Gombe State was created in 1996 and has since worked to build a functional public service. The Gombe State Civil Service Commission is constitutionally mandated with recruitment, promotion, discipline, and career management of state civil servants. However, preliminary observations suggest that workforce planning in the Commission is largely reactive rather than proactive. There are indications of critical skill gaps in key ministries (e.g., health, education, technical services), imbalanced staff distribution between headquarters and local government areas, and a lack of integrated human resource information systems. Administrative performance—measured by speed of recruitment, fairness of promotions, staff productivity, and responsiveness to government priorities—appears inconsistent. For example, recruitment cycles are often delayed, promotion exercises are irregular, and there is limited evidence of succession planning for retiring senior officers. These challenges likely impair the Commission's ability to serve as an effective engine of state governance.

While workforce planning is theoretically linked to administrative performance, little empirical research has been conducted within the Gombe State Civil Service Commission to

establish this relationship. Without such evidence, policy interventions may remain guesswork, and inefficiencies may persist. Hence, this study seeks to assess the impact of workforce planning (recruitment alignment, skill forecasting, and succession planning) on administrative performance (efficiency, effectiveness, and responsiveness) in the Gombe State Civil Service Commission.

Statement of the Problem

Effective workforce planning is the cornerstone of a productive and responsive civil service. In an ideal public administration framework, a State Civil Service Commission should function as a strategic partner to the government, utilizing data-driven manpower planning to ensure that the right number of people, with the right skills, are in the right places at the right time. The ideal scenario involves a transparent recruitment process based on merit, a reliable digital database for personnel records, objective performance appraisal systems linked to promotion, and proactive succession planning to avoid critical skill gaps. This ideal administrative performance results in high employee morale, efficient service delivery, and prudent financial management.

However, the present situation within the Gombe State Civil Service Commission (GSCSC) deviates significantly from this ideal. The Commission is grappling with a legacy of inadequate workforce planning, characterized by the absence of an up-to-date and verified personnel database. This foundational flaw has led to severe administrative inefficiencies, including the prevalence of "ghost workers" and officers who have overstayed their statutory retirement age, resulting in a significant waste of public funds. Furthermore, there is evidence of rampant victimization and subjectivity within the performance appraisal system, largely due to a lack of training for appraising officers, which has demotivated competent staff and frustrated highly skilled workers. Recruitment and promotion processes are often irregular and perceived as unfair, disconnecting staff progression from actual performance. The lack of strategic forecasting means the Commission reacts to crises (like sudden vacancies) rather than planning for future workforce needs, hampering its administrative effectiveness.

Consequently, a gap exists between the desired strategic workforce planning model and the current reactive, data-deficient practices in Gombe. Without addressing these planning deficits, administrative performance—measured by efficiency, responsiveness, and accountability—will remain suboptimal, hindering the state's overall development goals. Therefore, this study seeks to assess the specific impact of these workforce planning deficiencies on the administrative performance of the Gombe State Civil Service Commission.

Research Questions

- i. What is the current state of workforce planning practices (recruitment alignment and succession planning) and the level of administrative performance in the Gombe State Civil Service Commission?
- ii. To what extent does recruitment alignment significantly impact the administrative performance of the Gombe State Civil Service Commission?
- iii. How does succession planning influence the administrative performance of the Gombe State Civil Service Commission?

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to assess the impact of workforce planning on administrative performance in the Gombe State Civil Service Commission. The specific objectives are to:

- i. To examine the current state of workforce planning practices (recruitment alignment and succession planning) and the level of administrative performance in the Gombe State Civil Service Commission.
- ii. To determine the extent to which recruitment alignment impacts the administrative performance of the Gombe State Civil Service Commission.
- iii. To evaluate the influence of succession planning on the administrative performance of the Gombe State Civil Service Commission

Research Method

The method adopted in this study is content analysis using mainly secondary data. The secondary data consist of existing literature on topic such as books, journals, conference papers, and other related documents. Hence, qualitative method allows for proper appraisal of process that enables critical evaluations of information gathered from secondary sources (Matthew Funsor and Mela K. 2023). This methodological approach is appropriate given the historical nature of the case study, the availability of substantial documentary evidence, and the objective of extracting transferable lessons rather than generating primary data. This among others informed the adoption of secondary source and use of content analysis (Ahmed Musa Tella and Mela K. 2025)

Conceptual Review

The Concept of Workforce Planning

Workforce planning (WFP) is a systematic process of analyzing an organization's current human resource capacity, forecasting future needs, and developing strategies to ensure that the right number of people with the right skills are in the right positions at the right time (Bechet, 2008). In the public sector context, workforce planning extends beyond mere staffing to include strategic alignment with governmental goals, budgetary realities, and service delivery mandates (OECD, 2019). Rothwell (2010) describes workforce planning as a proactive approach that enables organizations to anticipate rather than merely react to human capital challenges, including retirements, skill gaps, and changing operational demands.

In the Nigerian civil service, workforce planning has historically been characterized by ad-hoc recruitment, political patronage, and the absence of integrated human resource information systems (Adebayo & Oyewole, 2018). However, modern reforms emphasize data-driven planning, merit-based selection, and the use of technology to track personnel records and forecast staffing needs (Federal Civil Service Commission, 2021). Key components of workforce planning relevant to this study include recruitment alignment—ensuring hiring matches organizational needs—and succession planning—preparing internal staff to fill future vacancies (Cascio, 2018).

Concept of Administrative Performance

Administrative performance refers to how efficiently, effectively, and responsively public organizations execute their mandated functions (Fountain, 2015). In civil service commissions, administrative performance is typically measured through indicators such as speed of recruitment processes, fairness of promotions, staff productivity, citizen satisfaction, and adherence to service delivery timelines (Akinbode & Fagbohunbe, 2019). Rainey (2014) distinguishes administrative performance from general organizational performance by emphasizing procedural regularity, accountability to public rules, and responsiveness to political oversight.

Studies on Nigerian state civil services reveal that poor workforce planning directly undermines administrative performance, manifesting as delayed recruitments, irregular promotions, high absenteeism, and low employee morale (Okoro & Nwankwo, 2020). Conversely, where workforce planning is strategic—as observed in Lagos State Civil Service—administrative performance improves through faster processing of personnel actions, reduced ghost workers, and higher staff satisfaction (Oladele & Ogunyomi, 2021).

Empirical Review: Workforce Planning and Administrative Performance

Globally, empirical evidence supports a positive relationship between strategic workforce planning and administrative performance. For instance, a study by Pienaar and Bester (2019) in the South African public service found that structured workforce planning significantly reduced vacancy rates and improved service delivery turnaround times. Similarly, in the United Kingdom civil service, Dewhurst et al. (2017) reported that data-driven workforce forecasting led to better deployment of skilled staff and enhanced responsiveness to policy changes.

In Nigeria, empirical studies remain limited but instructive. Akinwumi and Adebayo (2022) examined recruitment alignment in Osun State civil service and found a significant positive correlation between merit-based recruitment and administrative efficiency ($r = 0.68$, $p < 0.05$). Likewise, Eze and Okafor (2021) investigated succession planning in Enugu State and discovered that organizations with formal succession plans experienced 40% fewer leadership vacancies and higher employee retention. However, no known empirical study has specifically focused on Gombe State Civil Service Commission, creating a gap that this research seeks to fill.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Human Capital Theory (Theodore Schultz, 1961; Gary Becker, 1964). Human Capital Theory posits that individuals possess a stock of knowledge, skills, and abilities (human capital) that can be developed through investment in education, training, and experience. Organizations that strategically invest in acquiring and developing human capital achieve higher productivity and performance (Becker, 1964).

This theory provides the foundational rationale for workforce planning. Recruitment alignment ensures that the Commission acquires staff with the right human capital, while succession planning invests in developing existing human capital for future roles. When Gombe State Civil Service Commission aligns recruitment with skill needs, it directly enhances its stock

of human capital, leading to improved administrative performance. The theory explains why poor recruitment (e.g., political appointments without requisite skills) reduces performance.

Application of the theory to the study adopts this theory to hypothesize that recruitment alignment positively impacts administrative performance. Where the Commission invests in hiring competent, qualified staff, efficiency and effectiveness should increase.

Discussion

This theoretical and conceptual paper set out to assess the impact of workforce planning on administrative performance in the Gombe State Civil Service Commission (GSCSC). Drawing on Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964), Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) Theory (Wright & McMahan, 1992), and Public Service Motivation (PSM) Theory (Perry & Wise, 1990), the study developed a conceptual framework linking two dimensions of workforce planning—recruitment alignment and succession planning—to three dimensions of administrative performance—efficiency, effectiveness, and responsiveness. The discussion is organized around the three research questions and two propositions derived from the theoretical synthesis.

Current State of Workforce Planning and Administrative Performance in GSCSC

The conceptual synthesis revealed that, in theory, the Gombe State Civil Service Commission operates within a public sector environment characterized by significant workforce planning challenges common to many Nigerian state civil services. Based on the literature reviewed (Adebayo & Oyewole, 2018; Okoro & Nwankwo, 2020), the current state of workforce planning in comparable state civil services includes:

Recruitment practices, that are often irregular, politically influenced, and disconnected from actual skill needs. Succession planning that is largely absent, with no formal mechanisms to identify, develop, or prepare internal staff for future leadership and critical technical roles

Personnel data systems that are fragmented, outdated, or entirely manual, making evidence-based forecasting impossible consequently, administrative performance in such contexts suffers from Inefficiency, Delayed recruitment cycles, prolonged vacancy filling, and high transaction costs

Ineffectiveness: Poor skill-job matching, unfair promotion practices, and high employee grievances. This theoretical diagnosis is consistent with empirical findings from other Nigerian states (Akinwumi & Adebayo, 2022; Eze & Okafor, 2021; Oladele & Ogunyomi, 2021) and suggests that without deliberate intervention, the GSCSC likely mirrors these deficiencies.

Theoretical Discussion: Human Capital Theory argues that organizations achieve higher productivity when they invest in acquiring individuals with the knowledge, skills, and abilities (human capital) that match organizational needs. When recruitment is aligned—meaning hiring is merit-based, timely, and responsive to identified skill gaps—the organization gains a workforce capable of executing tasks efficiently. SHRM Theory adds that this alignment must be vertical (consistent with the Commission's strategic mandate) and horizontal (integrated with other HR practices like training and performance management).

Implications for GSCSC: In the specific context of Gombe State, recruitment alignment would manifest as: Transparent, competitive selection processes based on job-relevant criteria, Timely filling of vacancies to prevent operational disruptions, Reduced political interference in hiring decisions

The theoretical analysis suggests that when the GSCSC achieves recruitment alignment, administrative performance improves through: Enhanced efficiency: Faster processing of recruitment requests, reduced backlog of unfilled positions Improved effectiveness: Better skill-job matches lead to higher quality of personnel administration Greater responsiveness: Ability to quickly deploy qualified staff to critical areas. Conversely, misaligned recruitment characterized by political patronage, delayed hiring, or skill mismatches undermines all three dimensions of administrative performance. This finding aligns with empirical evidence from Lagos State Civil Service (Oladele & Ogunyomi, 2021) and Osun State (Akinwumi & Adebayo, 2022), where merit-based recruitment correlated significantly with administrative efficiency.

Impact of Succession Planning on Administrative Performance. The second proposition (P2) posited that succession planning positively influences the administrative performance of the Gombe State Civil Service Commission. This proposition was derived from SHRM Theory (Wright & McMahan, 1992) and Public Service Motivation Theory (Perry & Wise, 1990).

Theoretical Discussion: SHRM Theory emphasizes that strategic HR practices must ensure organizational continuity and resilience. Succession planning—the systematic identification, development, and preparation of internal staff to fill future leadership and critical roles—is a core SHRM practice. In public sector organizations like the GSCSC, where senior officers often retire simultaneously, the absence of succession planning creates leadership vacuums, institutional memory loss, and operational paralysis. PSM Theory adds that employees who perceive fair opportunities for career advancement are more motivated, committed, and willing to exert discretionary effort. Succession planning signals to staff that the organization values their development, thereby enhancing morale and productivity. **Implications for GSCSC:** In the Gombe State context, effective succession planning would include: Formal career development programs for mid-level officers, Mentorship and knowledge transfer mechanisms from retiring to incoming staff talent pools or pipelines for critical technical and leadership positions, retirement forecasting to anticipate vacancies

The theoretical analysis suggests that when the GSCSC implements robust succession planning, administrative performance improves through: Enhanced efficiency: Reduced disruption during leadership transitions; continuity of operations. Improved effectiveness: Better-prepared successors maintain or improve service quality, Greater responsiveness: Internal candidates already familiar with organizational systems can assume roles with minimal delay Conversely, the absence of succession planning leads to emergency external recruitment, loss of institutional knowledge, demotivation of promising staff, and administrative decay. This finding is consistent with empirical evidence from Enugu State (Eze & Okafor, 2021), where organizations with formal succession plans experienced 40% fewer leadership vacancies and higher employee retention.

Integrating these three theories provides a more robust explanatory framework than any single theory alone. For the GSCSC, this means that workforce planning interventions must simultaneously address skill acquisition (human capital), strategic alignment (SHRM), and employee motivation (PSM) to achieve sustainable improvements in administrative performance.

Contextual Challenges Specific to Gombe State. The conceptual analysis also identified contextual factors that may moderate the workforce planning–administrative performance relationship in Gombe State:

Political interference in appointments, Undermines recruitment alignment, reduces human capital quality (violates Human Capital Theory) Weak human resource information systems (HRIS) Prevents evidence-based forecasting and succession tracking (violates SHRM Theory). These challenges suggest that even theoretically sound workforce planning practices may fail if contextual barriers are not addressed simultaneously.

Conclusion

This theoretical and conceptual paper has systematically assessed the impact of workforce planning on administrative performance in the Gombe State Civil Service Commission. The study achieved its three objectives:

Examination of current state: The conceptual synthesis revealed that the GSCSC, like many Nigerian state civil services, likely suffers from irregular recruitment practices, absent succession planning, and weak personnel data systems, leading to suboptimal administrative performance characterized by inefficiency, ineffectiveness, and unresponsiveness.

Determination of recruitment alignment impact: Drawing on Human Capital Theory and SHRM Theory, the study concluded that recruitment alignment has a significant positive impact on administrative performance. When hiring is merit-based, timely, and skill-responsive, the Commission achieves faster processing, better quality outcomes, and greater responsiveness to staffing needs.

Evaluation of succession planning influence: Drawing on SHRM Theory and PSM Theory, the study concluded that succession planning has a significant positive influence on administrative performance. Formal mechanisms for identifying, developing, and preparing internal staff for future roles ensure operational continuity, preserve institutional memory, and enhance staff motivation.

Recommendations

To bridge this gap and move towards the ideal, the following solutions are recommended based on emerging practices and research:

Digitization and Verification; The ongoing staff verification exercise must be completed and sustained to create a single source of truth digital database, eliminating ghost workers and providing reliable data for planning. However, capacity Building Mandate: Mandatory and continuous training must be provided for all officers involved in staff appraisal to ensure

fairness, objectivity, and a clear link between appraisal outcomes and promotions or pay increments. Finally, The Commission should adopt a strategic workforce planning model that includes forecasting future skill needs, merit-based recruitment, and transparent succession planning, moving away from ad-hoc political considerations.

Establish a merit-based, competency-driven recruitment framework Gombe State Civil Service Commission | Reduced political interference; improved skill-job matching; enhanced efficiency

Implement a digital human resource information system (HRIS) Gombe State Government (budgetary support) Real-time vacancy tracking; data-driven recruitment forecasting; elimination of ghost workers. Set and publish service-level standards for recruitment timelines GSCSC Management Maximum 90 days from vacancy declaration to appointment improved responsiveness, Mandate independent oversight of recruitment processes, Gombe State House of Assembly (legislative oversight) | Increased transparency; reduced patronage; public trust. Given the theoretical and conceptual nature of this study, the following empirical research directions are recommended

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