

Employment needs Assessment Practices and Performance of Public Service Sectors in Benue State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study is to examine the effect of employment needs assessment practices on the performance of public service sectors in Benue State, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to examine how workforce planning, job analysis, and skills gap analysis affect the performance of public service sectors in Benue State. This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population consisted of 10,243 civil servants, from which a sample of 240 respondents was drawn. The data collected were analysed using correlation and multiple regression techniques to examine the relationships among the variables. The findings revealed that, although all variables are positively related to performance, only skills gap analysis significantly predicts performance, while workforce planning and job analysis do not have significant independent effects. It is recommended that Benue State prioritize regular and systematic skills gap analysis to identify competency deficiencies and guide targeted training and development programmes. Additionally, workforce planning should be more strategic and data-driven, ensuring proper alignment between staffing needs, organizational goals, and future skill requirements. Job analysis should also be conducted more rigorously and updated regularly to ensure accurate job descriptions, clear role expectations, and alignment with performance standards.

Keywords: employment needs assessment practices, workforce planning, job analysis, skills gap analysis, performance.

INTRODUCTION / PROBLEMATIC

The public service sector occupies a central position in modern societies, serving as the primary channel through which governments translate policies into outcomes that affect citizens' daily lives. It comprises government-owned institutions responsible for delivering essential services such as healthcare, education, infrastructure, and security, with a focus on public welfare rather than profit. Thus, it remains a critical pillar of national development and social stability. Nwosu and Ananti (2024) describe the modern public service as adaptive, integrating improved managerial practices and technological tools to enhance efficiency, accessibility, and sustainability, in line with New Public Management principles of performance, accountability, and responsiveness.

The sector's contribution to economic growth, social equity, and institutional development is widely acknowledged. Effective public institutions regulate and facilitate private sector activities while ensuring equitable resource distribution (Leite, 2022; Magul & Pasqualetto, 2023). In response to rapid global changes such as digital transformation and rising citizen expectations, public institutions increasingly rely on technologies like data analytics and artificial intelligence to improve transparency and service delivery (Ikwanusi et al., 2024).

In Sub-Saharan Africa, the public service sector remains the backbone of development due to structural challenges such as weak private sector capacity and infrastructural deficits. Efficient public institutions enhance development outcomes by improving service delivery in key sectors (Hassan et al., 2024; Babalola, 2022). In Nigeria, the sector plays a vital role in policy implementation and provision of public goods, with reforms aimed at improving efficiency and accountability (Nwosu & Ananti, 2024; Erin & Asiriwa, 2019). At the state level, particularly in Benue State, public institutions are crucial for grassroots development (Ijirshar et al., 2025).

Employment needs assessment practices are essential for strengthening public service performance by aligning human resource capacity with organizational demands. Workforce planning ensures proper staffing, job analysis clarifies roles and responsibilities, and skills gap analysis identifies competency deficiencies for targeted training (Armstrong, 2020; Ikwuanusi et al., 2024).

Overall, workforce planning, job analysis, and skills gap analysis form an integrated framework that enhances efficiency, improves service delivery, and strengthens organizational performance. These practices ensure adequate staffing, role clarity, and workforce capability, thereby serving as strategic tools for improving productivity, accountability, and citizen satisfaction in the public service sector.

The public service sector comprises government-owned institutions responsible for implementing public policies and delivering essential services such as healthcare, education, security, and infrastructure. It functions as the operational arm of government, translating policies into outcomes that drive socio-economic development. Contemporary scholars describe it as a dynamic institution that emphasizes efficiency, accountability, and citizen-centred service delivery. For instance, Nwosu and Ananti (2024) view it as an adaptive system that integrates innovation, digital technologies, and managerial reforms to improve performance and responsiveness.

In Nigeria, the public service sector is highly significant due to the country's large population and diverse developmental needs. It serves as the main mechanism for policy implementation, economic regulation, and provision of public goods, contributing to infrastructure development, social welfare, and private sector growth. Studies indicate that an effective public service enhances governance quality, institutional capacity, and sustainable development (Leite, 2022; Magul & Pasqualetto, 2023). Reforms based on New Public Management have also improved efficiency, transparency, and accountability (Nwosu & Ananti, 2024), while the sector remains vital for fiscal management, employment generation, and poverty reduction (Erin & Asiriwuwa, 2019).

In Benue State, public service performance remains a concern, particularly in delivering efficient and timely services across key sectors. The system is characterized by low productivity, bureaucratic bottlenecks, poor service delivery, and weak institutional capacity, raising concerns about the effectiveness of human resource practices. A major issue is the mismatch between workforce capacity and service demands, as poor workforce planning leads to overstaffing in some areas and shortages in others. Similarly, weak or outdated job analysis results in unclear roles, overlapping responsibilities, and reduced accountability, while significant skills gaps among employees hinder effective performance. The absence of systematic skills gap analysis further limits targeted training and capacity development, affecting service quality.

Although employment needs assessment practices workforce planning, job analysis, and skills gap analysis are critical for improving organizational performance, their application in the Benue State public service remains limited and fragmented. This has contributed to persistent inefficiencies and suboptimal outcomes. Therefore, this study examines how these practices influence service delivery, productivity, and overall organizational effectiveness, with a view to providing recommendations for improving public sector performance.

Research Objective

The main objective of this study is to examine the effect of employment needs assessment practices on performance of public service sectors in Benue State, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

1. examine the effect of workforce planning on performance of public service sectors in Benue State, Nigeria.
2. determine the extend job analysis affect performance of public service sectors in Benue State, Nigeria.
3. assess the extend skills gap analysis affect performance of public service sectors in Benue State, Nigeria.

Research Question

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study.

1. What is the effect of workforce planning on performance of public service sectors in Benue State, Nigeria?
2. To what extend job analysis affect performance of public service sectors in Benue State, Nigeria?
3. In what way skills gap analysis affects performance of public service sectors in Benue State, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The research hypotheses are formulated in a null form.

H₀₁ Workforce planning has no significant effect on performance of public service sectors in Benue State, Nigeria.

H₀₂ Job analysis has no significant effect on performance of public service sectors in Benue State, Nigeria.

H₀₃ Skills gap analysis has no significant effect on performance of public service sectors in Benue State, Nigeria.

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

Employment Needs Assessment Practices

Employment needs assessment practices refer to a systematic process through which organizations, particularly in the public service sector, identify gaps between existing workforce capabilities and the human resource requirements needed to achieve organizational objectives. It involves evaluating staffing levels, skills, and competencies to ensure effective service delivery and alignment with organizational goals. Armstrong and Taylor (2023) describe it as a key HR function that ensures the availability of the right number of employees with the required skills, while Dessler (2024) emphasizes its role in identifying staffing gaps and future workforce needs.

Similarly, the OECD (2023/2024) defines employment needs assessment as the process of assessing workforce capacity, identifying skill gaps, and forecasting future staffing needs, with the OECD Employment Outlook (2024) emphasizing its importance for labour market and training policies. Recent HR studies also link it to skills gap analysis and training needs assessment, focusing on improving employee competencies and performance. In the public service sector, employment needs assessment is a continuous process that integrates workforce planning, job analysis, and skills gap analysis.

According to Noe et al. (2021), these components help determine staffing needs, clarify job roles, and guide training interventions, while CIPD (2025) notes that such integration enhances responsiveness to changing service demands. Overall, employment needs assessment improves efficiency, enhances service delivery, and ensures that human resources are effectively aligned with organizational and national objectives.

Workforce Planning

Workforce planning is a strategic process through which organizations, especially in the public service sector, ensure that they have the right number of employees with the necessary skills in the right roles to achieve organizational objectives. It involves aligning workforce capacity with policy priorities and service delivery needs. In this regard, Armstrong and Taylor (2023) describe workforce planning as a systematic process for anticipating and meeting future human resource requirements, while Noe et al. (2021) emphasize its role in balancing labour supply and demand to support organizational goals.

Additionally, the CIPD (2025) defines it as analysing the current workforce, forecasting future needs, identifying gaps, and taking action to achieve organizational goals. Similarly, the OECD (2021/2024) explains that in the public sector, it involves assessing workforce capabilities, predicting future requirements, and addressing gaps to meet changing societal demands. Dessler (2024) also notes that it enables organizations to adapt to environmental and technological changes. Overall, workforce planning improves efficiency, prevents staffing shortages or surpluses, and ensures effective service delivery in public institutions.

Job Analysis

Job analysis refers to a systematic process through which organizations collect and evaluate information about a job to determine its duties, responsibilities, required skills, and working conditions. It focuses on the job itself and provides a foundation for key HR functions such as recruitment, training, and performance evaluation.

Armstrong and Taylor (2023) note that it aids in developing accurate job descriptions and specifications, while Dessler (2024) emphasizes its role in effective staffing and performance management.

Similarly, the United States Office of Personnel Management (2026) defines job analysis as the process of gathering and analysing information about job content and requirements, including identifying essential duties and qualifications for effective performance. Noe et al. (2021) also highlight that it promotes consistency in HR practices and improves organizational efficiency. In the public service sector, job analysis is essential for accountability and effective service delivery. It involves identifying and documenting job roles, responsibilities, and required competencies to ensure proper staffing and alignment with policy objectives. According to CIPD (2025), it enhances workforce clarity, supports fair recruitment, and strengthens organizational performance. Overall, job analysis improves role clarity, supports effective HR management, and aligns human resources with organizational goals in the public sector.

Skills gap analysis

Skills gap analysis refers to a systematic process used by organizations to identify the difference between the skills employees currently possess and the skills required to perform their jobs effectively and achieve organizational goals. It helps determine areas where employees lack necessary competencies and guides decisions on training, recruitment, or reskilling. In this regard, Armstrong and Taylor (2023) note that identifying skill gaps is essential for aligning employee capabilities with organizational objectives, while Dessler (2024) emphasizes its role in effective HR planning and development.

However, skills gaps occur when there is a mismatch between available workforce capabilities and job requirements. The OECD (2024) defines skill gaps as the difference between current workforce skills and those needed to meet organizational demands. Skills gap analysis refers to a process of comparing existing competencies with required skills to guide workforce development. Noe et al. (2021) also stress its importance in designing training interventions and improving performance.

In the public service sector, skills gap analysis is a systematic process through which government institutions assess employee competencies, identify deficiencies, and implement strategies to improve performance and service delivery. According to CIPD (2025), it helps public organizations adapt to changing demands by ensuring workforce capabilities align with policy needs. Overall, skills gap analysis improves workforce effectiveness, supports planning, and enhances service delivery by ensuring employees have the required competencies.

Performance

Performance in the public service sector refers to the extent to which government employees and institutions achieve set objectives, deliver public services effectively, and meet citizens' expectations. It includes not only output but also service quality, accountability, and the efficient use of public resources. The OECD (2023/2024) defines it as the ability of public institutions to achieve policy goals while ensuring accountability and efficient resource use. Similarly, Armstrong and Taylor (2023) describe performance as the achievement of agreed objectives in an effective and efficient manner. In the public service context, performance can be defined as the ability of public institutions and employees to use available resources to deliver quality services, achieve policy goals, and satisfy citizens' needs. It is often measured using indicators such as efficiency, responsiveness, and service quality. Performance is essential for improving service delivery, promoting accountability, and enhancing public trust in government institutions.

Employment needs assessment, workforce planning, job analysis, and skills gap analysis are key human resource practices that influence performance in Benue State's public service sector. However, weak data systems, poor implementation, bureaucratic constraints, and limited use of modern HR tools reduce their effectiveness. This often leads to staffing imbalances, unclear job roles, skill deficiencies, and inadequate training. As a result, public service performance is affected, resulting in low efficiency, poor service delivery, and reduced public satisfaction. Overall, these interconnected practices play a critical role in determining workforce effectiveness and organizational performance in Benue State.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

This study is anchored on Human Capital Theory and the Resource-Based View (RBV).

Human Capital Theory, developed by Becker (1964), posits that employees' knowledge, skills, education, and competencies are valuable assets that can be developed through investment to enhance productivity and organizational performance. In the context of employment needs assessment, the theory explains that identifying skill gaps and providing appropriate training improves workforce capacity and service delivery. In the public service sector, this means that when government institutions invest in employee development, performance improves. The theory assumes that skills can be developed, training increases productivity, human resources are key to organizational success, and there is a direct link between employee capability and performance.

Similarly, the Resource-Based View (RBV) by Barney (1991) emphasizes that organizations achieve superior performance through effective use of valuable, rare, and well-organized resources. Human resources are considered strategic assets that can provide a competitive advantage when properly managed. Employment needs assessment supports this by ensuring that workforce capabilities are identified, developed, and aligned with organizational goals. In the public service sector, this enhances efficiency and service delivery. The theory assumes that valuable resources drive performance, human resources are strategic assets, and effective management of internal capabilities leads to sustained organizational success. Together, both theories explain how employment needs assessment practices improve workforce capability and enhance performance in the public service sector.

Employment needs assessment practices workforce planning, job analysis, and skills gap analysis can be explained using Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964) and the Resource-Based View (Barney, 1991). From the Human Capital perspective, employees' skills and knowledge are key assets that drive productivity. Workforce planning ensures adequate staffing, job analysis defines required competencies, and skills gap analysis identifies deficiencies that guide training and development. These processes enhance employee capability, leading to improved performance and service delivery in the public service sector.

From the Resource-Based View, human resources are strategic assets that must be effectively managed to achieve superior performance. Employment needs assessment ensures that workforce capabilities are aligned with organizational goals. Workforce planning supports proper allocation of staff, job analysis clarifies roles, and skills gap analysis strengthens internal capabilities. Together, these practices improve efficiency, service delivery, and overall performance in public service organizations.

Empirical reviews

Olonade, Omotoye, and Olalemi (2023) examined workforce planning and organizational effectiveness in the Osun State Civil Service, Nigeria, using a descriptive survey design. The study involved a population of 11,243 civil servants, with a sample of 240 respondents.

Data were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and regression analysis. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between workforce planning and organizational effectiveness ($r = .456$, $p < .05$), with workforce planning also significantly influencing effectiveness ($\beta = .465$, $t = 8.099$, $p < .01$). The authors recommended that human resource departments adopt comprehensive workforce planning strategies and regularly review them to align with organizational needs.

In a similar study, Ubah and Ibrahim (2021) investigated the effect of human resource planning on the performance of public sector organizations in Nigeria, focusing on the Ministry of Works and Housing in Abuja. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design and used a sample of 100 employees.

The findings showed that human resource planning positively affects organizational performance, particularly through recruitment, selection, and structured workforce planning. The study recommended that public sector organizations strengthen their human resource planning systems and minimize political interference to improve performance outcomes.

At the international level, Ain, Malik, and Lari (2026) studied workplace motivation and organizational performance in public sector organizations in Pakistan using a quantitative research design. The study sampled 240 respondents and employed statistical tools such as correlation and multiple regression analysis. The results indicated a strong positive relationship between motivation and performance ($r = .642, p < .01$), with motivation significantly predicting performance. The study recommended that organizations improve employee motivation through recognition, career development, and supportive leadership to enhance performance.

In Nigeria, Ele, Makama, and Okongo (2020) examined job analysis and employee commitment in public sector organizations in Cross River State using a survey research design. Although the exact population and sample size were not clearly stated, data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings revealed that job analysis especially job description and job specification has a positive and significant effect on employee commitment and organizational performance. The study recommended that organizations should consistently carry out proper job analysis before recruitment and ensure clear job roles to improve performance.

Similarly, Ekpo (2024) studied job analysis and organizational performance in selected organizations in Cross River State using a documentary research design. The study relied on secondary sources such as journals and textbooks, with content analysis as the main analytical tool. The findings showed that job analysis practices, including job description, job specification, and job evaluation, enhance organizational performance by promoting clarity of roles and responsibilities. The study recommended that organizations institutionalize job analysis as a continuous human resource practice.

In a foreign study, Singh et al. (2014) examined the impact of job analysis on organizational performance in a public sector enterprise in India. The study adopted a quantitative survey design, with a population of 1,361 employees and a sample size of 417 respondents. Data were analyzed using correlation and regression techniques. The findings indicated a significant positive relationship between job analysis and organizational performance, as it improves job clarity, motivation, and productivity. The study recommended that public sector organizations adopt systematic job analysis and regularly update job roles to enhance performance.

Florence (2026) examined the application of employee skills and performance outcomes in the Nigerian public service using a quantitative survey design. Although the exact population and sample size were not specified, the study used questionnaire data analyzed with descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings revealed that effective application of employee skills significantly improves performance outcomes. The study recommended that public sector organizations strengthen skills development through training and continuous professional development.

Similarly, a 2024 study conducted at Achievers University, Owo, Nigeria, examined skill gaps and workforce performance using a survey research design. The population and sample size were not clearly stated, but data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings showed that skill gaps negatively affect workforce performance by reducing efficiency and productivity. The study recommended regular skills gap assessments, targeted training, and improved workforce planning to bridge identified gaps.

In a foreign study conducted in KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa, skills gaps and public sector performance were examined using a quantitative survey design. The study involved municipal employees, though the exact population and sample size were not specified. Data were analyzed using statistical tools, and the findings indicated that significant skills gaps negatively affect service delivery and organizational performance. The study recommended continuous skills development and targeted training to enhance employee competencies.

METHODOLOGY

This study on employment needs assessment practices and the performance of the public service sector in Benue State, Nigeria, adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population consisted of 10,243 civil servants, from which a sample of 240 respondents was drawn. Data collected were analysed using correlation and multiple regression techniques to examine the relationship between the variables.

RESULTS

Table 1: Model summary of employment needs assessment practices and performance of public service sector in Benue State, Nigeria.

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F Change	Sig Change	Durbin-Watson
1	.948 ^a	.899	.898	581.344	.000	.141

- a. **Predictors:** (constant), workforce planning, job analysis, skills gap analysis.
- b. **Dependent Variable:** performance

Source: Field survey, using SPSS V23

The model summary in Table 1 shows a strong relationship between employment needs assessment practices and performance in the public service sector of Benue State, Nigeria. The correlation coefficient ($R = 0.948$) indicates a very strong positive relationship between workforce planning, job analysis, skills gap analysis, and performance. This suggests that these variables are highly associated with improved performance outcomes.

The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.899$) reveals that about 89.9% of the variation in performance is explained by the combined effect of the independent variables. The adjusted R^2 of 0.898 confirms that the model is reliable and that the predictors significantly contribute to explaining performance without overestimation.

The F-value (581.344) with a significance level of 0.000 shows that the overall model is statistically significant. This means that workforce planning, job analysis, and skills gap analysis jointly have a significant effect on performance, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

However, the Durbin-Watson statistic (0.141) is very low, indicating possible positive autocorrelation in the residuals. This suggests that the error terms are not independent, which may affect the reliability of the regression results and calls for further diagnostic checks. Overall, the results show that employment needs assessment practices significantly influence performance, although the issue of autocorrelation should be addressed for more robust conclusions.

Table 2: ANOVA of employment needs assessment practices and performance of public service sector in Benue State, Nigeria.

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	309.559	3	103.186	581.344	.000 ^b
Residual	34.612	195	.177	-	-

- a. **Predictors:** (constant), workforce planning, job analysis, skills gap analysis.
- b. **Dependent Variable:** performance

Source: Field survey, using SPSS V23

The ANOVA results presented in Table 2 test the overall significance of the regression model examining the effect of employment needs assessment practices on performance in the public service sector of Benue State, Nigeria. The regression sum of squares (309.559) represents the variation in performance explained by the predictors—workforce planning, job analysis, and skills gap analysis—while the residual sum of squares (34.612) represents the unexplained variation.

The mean square for regression (103.186) compared to the mean square for the residual (0.177) produces a high F-value of 581.344. This indicates that the model explains a significantly greater proportion of the variance in performance compared to what is left unexplained. The degrees of freedom ($df = 3$ for regression and 195 for residual) reflect the number of predictors and the sample size used in the analysis.

The significance value ($p = 0.000$) is less than the conventional 0.05 level of significance, indicating that the overall regression model is statistically significant. This means that workforce planning, job analysis, and skills gap analysis, when combined, have a significant effect on performance in the public service sector. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected, confirming that the model provides a good fit for the data. In summary, the ANOVA result demonstrates that employment needs assessment practices significantly predict performance, and the regression model is statistically valid and appropriate for explaining variations in the dependent variable.

Table 3: Coefficients of determinants of employment needs assessment practices and performance of public service sector in Benue State, Nigeria.

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig	Zero-order	Partial	part
1(constant)	.058	.062	-	0.934	.352	-	-	-
Workforce planning	.066	.067	.081	0.979	.329	.906	.070	.022
Job analysis	.019	.054	.023	0.359	.720	.870	.026	.008
Skills gap analysis	.807	.067	.850	11.968	.000	.948	.651	.272

Dependent Variable: performance

Source: Field survey, using SPSS V23

The coefficients of determinants in Table 3 show the individual contributions of workforce planning, job analysis, and skills gap analysis to performance in the public service sector of Benue State, Nigeria.

The constant ($B = 0.058$, $p = 0.352$) is not statistically significant, indicating that it does not meaningfully predict performance when all variables are held constant.

For workforce planning ($B = 0.066$, $\beta = 0.081$), the results show a positive but weak relationship with performance. However, the t-value (0.979) and significance level ($p = 0.329$) indicate that it is not a significant predictor. Despite a strong zero-order correlation ($r = 0.906$), its partial and part correlations are very low, suggesting a limited independent contribution.

Similarly, job analysis ($B = 0.019$, $\beta = 0.023$) has a weak positive effect on performance, but it is also not statistically significant ($t = 0.359$, $p = 0.720$). Its very low partial and part correlations confirm that its individual effect on performance is minimal when other variables are considered.

In contrast, skills gap analysis ($B = 0.807$, $\beta = 0.850$) has a strong and statistically significant positive effect on performance. The t-value (11.968) and significance level ($p = 0.000$) show that it is the only significant predictor among the variables. Its high correlations further confirm its strong contribution to explaining performance.

In summary, although all variables are positively related to performance, only skills gap analysis significantly predicts performance, while workforce planning and job analysis do not have significant independent effects.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study show that employment needs assessment practices have a strong and significant effect on performance in the public service sector of Benue State, Nigeria. The high explanatory power ($R^2 = 0.899$) indicates that workforce planning, job analysis, and skills gap analysis jointly account for most of the variation in performance. This supports the Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964), which posits that investing in employee skills and competencies enhances productivity and organizational outcomes. It also aligns with the Resource-Based View (RBV), which emphasizes that effective management of human resources leads to competitive advantage and improved performance.

The overall model significance ($F = 581.344$, $p = 0.000$) further confirms that employment needs assessment practices collectively have a significant impact on performance. This is consistent with empirical studies such as Florence (2026), which found that aligning employee skills with job requirements improves performance in the public service. It also agrees with the Achievers University (2024) study, which reported that skill gaps negatively affect performance and that addressing them enhances productivity and service delivery.

The results show that skills gap analysis is the only significant predictor of performance. This finding strongly supports empirical evidence that emphasizes the importance of identifying and addressing skill deficiencies to improve organizational outcomes. The strong beta value ($\beta = 0.850$) confirms its dominant role in enhancing performance, as it ensures employees possess the required competencies for effective job performance.

In contrast, workforce planning and job analysis were not statistically significant, although they showed positive relationships with performance. This partly contradicts studies like Olonade et al. (2023), which reported a significant effect of workforce planning on organizational effectiveness. The result suggests that these practices may not significantly influence performance unless they are effectively implemented or supported by strong skills development strategies. Their weak independent contributions indicate that their impact may depend on how well they are integrated into broader HR systems.

Overall, the findings confirm that employment needs assessment practices are important for improving public sector performance, especially through effective skills gap analysis. However, the insignificance of some variables highlights the need for better implementation and integration of workforce planning and job analysis. The Durbin-Watson result also suggests possible autocorrelation, indicating that further diagnostic checks may be necessary for more robust conclusions.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The study found that employment needs assessment practices significantly influence performance in the public service sector of Benue State, Nigeria. The model explains about 89.9% of the variation in performance, supporting the Human Capital Theory and Resource-Based View, which emphasize the value of employee competencies in enhancing organizational outcomes. The model was statistically significant, confirming that the combined effect of workforce planning, job analysis, and skills gap analysis improves performance. However, only skills gap analysis emerged as a significant predictor, while workforce planning and job analysis showed positive but insignificant effects.

Employment needs assessment practices are important for improving public sector performance, with skills gap analysis playing the most critical role. While workforce planning and job analysis contribute positively, their impact depends on effective implementation. Overall, strengthening employment needs assessment, particularly skills gap analysis, is essential for enhancing productivity and service delivery in the public service sector.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study recommends that:

1. Benue State should prioritize regular and systematic skills gap analysis to identify competency deficiencies and guide targeted training and development programs.
2. Workforce planning should be more strategic and data-driven, ensuring proper alignment between staffing needs, organizational goals, and future skill requirements.
3. Job analysis should be conducted more rigorously and updated regularly to ensure accurate job descriptions, clear role expectations, and alignment with performance standards.

Contributions to Knowledge

This study contributes to knowledge by confirming that employment needs assessment practices significantly enhance performance, supporting Human Capital Theory and the Resource-Based View, and explaining a large variation in performance ($R^2 = 0.899$). It identifies skills gap analysis as the most influential predictor, while

showing that workforce planning and job analysis, though positive, are not significant independently unless well implemented and integrated. Overall, it underscores the importance of skills gap analysis and the need for better integration of employment needs assessment practices in improving public sector performance.

Limitations/Suggestions for further Studies

The study is limited to Benue State public service and relies on survey data, which may affect generalizability and introduce bias. It also focuses only on three variables and shows possible autocorrelation, affecting result robustness. Future studies should use broader samples, include additional variables, adopt longitudinal or mixed methods, and address statistical issues for stronger conclusions.

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