

ASSESSING SKILL GAPS AND WORKFORCE PERFORMANCE: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM ACHIEVERS UNIVERSITY, OWO, ONDO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

In today's knowledge-driven academic environment, higher education institutions must continuously align staff competencies with evolving educational, technological, and administrative demands. This study investigates the nature and implications of skill gaps on workforce performance at Achievers University, Owo, Ondo State, Nigeria. Employing a descriptive design and mixed-methods approach, data were collected from a stratified random sample of 224 academic and non-academic staff drawn from a population of 623. A structured questionnaire with a Cronbach's Alpha reliability index of 0.85 was used for data collection. Findings indicate significant skill gaps in communication (Mean = 3.96), technical proficiency (Mean = 4.01), time management (Mean = 3.92), adaptability to technology (Mean = 3.89), and continuous learning (Mean = 3.94), with a grand mean of 3.94. Regression analysis revealed that outdated qualifications, limited on-the-job training, and insufficient technological exposure were major predictors of these gaps ($R^2 = 0.720$; $p < 0.0001$). However, institutional strategies such as targeted recruitment, regular training (Mean = 4.36), access to modern tools (Mean = 4.38), mentorship (Mean = 4.27), and structured feedback systems (Mean = 4.23) were identified as effective mitigative measures. The study concludes that existing skill deficits significantly impair staff effectiveness and institutional performance. It recommends systematic, department-specific capacity-building initiatives, regular professional development, and sustained investment in digital infrastructure and training to bridge these gaps. These measures are essential to improve workforce productivity and ensure alignment with the dynamic needs of contemporary higher education.

Keywords: Workforce Skills, Performance, Higher Education, Digital Transformation, Human Capital Development.

1.1 Introduction

The 21st-century global economy is increasingly knowledge-driven, shaped by rapid technological advancement, digitization, and elevated performance expectations across sectors. In this era, higher education institutions are expected to serve as engines of innovation, knowledge production, and human capital development. Meeting these expectations demands a workforce equipped with a dynamic mix of cognitive, technical, and interpersonal skills aligned with evolving institutional needs (Babalola & Olaopa, 2022). Yet, evidence increasingly highlights the existence of skill gaps—defined as mismatches between the skills employees possess and those required for effective job performance—which hinder organizational effectiveness globally, with pronounced effects in Sub-Saharan Africa, including Nigeria (World Bank, 2022).

Skill gaps are multifaceted, encompassing both horizontal gaps (deficiencies in specific competencies such as digital literacy, communication, and project management) and vertical gaps (underutilization of existing skills due to misalignment between qualifications and job roles) (Boateng & Ofori, 2023). Within Nigerian universities, these gaps stem from structural and institutional deficiencies such as outdated curricula, limited staff training, weak industry-academic linkages, and poor succession planning. These challenges are further compounded by systemic issues including brain drain, inadequate funding, and policy inconsistencies (Egunjobi, 2021).

Achievers University, Owo a growing private university in Nigeria is not immune to these dynamics. As it strives to uphold excellence in teaching, research, and community engagement, emerging concerns persist regarding the alignment between workforce competencies and institutional performance standards. Internal reviews and anecdotal accounts have identified deficiencies in areas like educational technology use, research innovation, administrative automation, and interdepartmental collaboration. Limited exposure to global best practices, inadequate infrastructure, and insufficient professional development opportunities further aggravate these problems (Adedokun & Yusuf, 2022, Enyioko et al., 2025).

The global push for digital transformation in education, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has intensified the demand for advanced digital competencies among university staff. Academic staff are now expected to utilize Learning Management Systems (LMS), integrate multimedia content, and apply data analytics in teaching. Likewise, non-academic staff must manage cloud-based systems and support virtual administration. However, most Nigerian universities, including Achievers University, lack robust frameworks for continuous upskilling, leaving significant performance gaps (Olanrewaju & Chima, 2023). This challenge is shaped by broader socio-economic factors. Nigeria's education sector faces chronic underfunding, fragmented policies, and recurrent labor disputes, all of which constrain long-term institutional development. Meanwhile, the labor market is evolving faster than universities can adapt, rendering many staff members' skills obsolete by the time they enter full service (NUC, 2022).

Skill gaps adversely affect performance at multiple levels—teaching effectiveness, administrative efficiency, and strategic competitiveness. They contribute to low student engagement, operational inefficiencies, and underperformance in areas like accreditation and global rankings (Ogunlade & Nwachukwu, 2021). For private universities reliant on performance-based reputation and student satisfaction, these implications are particularly urgent. This study thus seeks to empirically assess the extent and implications of skill gaps among academic and non-academic staff at Achievers University. Employing a mixed-methods approach, it aims to

generate actionable insights to inform institutional policies, workforce development, and broader debates on human capital enhancement in Nigeria's higher education sector.

Statement of the Problem

In recent times, Nigerian universities—particularly private institutions such as Achievers University, Owo have faced growing concerns over workforce performance, largely attributed to widening skill gaps among staff. Despite the institution's commitment to academic excellence and administrative efficiency, there is limited empirical understanding of the extent and specific nature of these skill deficiencies. While anecdotal evidence suggests underperformance and limited adaptability among employees, the absence of comprehensive data prevents effective human resource planning and performance enhancement. Furthermore, the root causes of these skill gaps remain insufficiently examined. Potential contributing factors such as outdated training programs, weak alignment between job roles and staff qualifications, lack of continuous professional development, and inadequate institutional support may be responsible (Adeyeye et al., 2023; Enyioko et al., 2025). However, without context-specific investigations, assumptions about these drivers may lead to ineffective solutions. Literature highlights that many Nigerian universities suffer from systemic neglect of staff development and weak ties with evolving industry standards, further aggravating the issue (Ogunyemi and Ajayi, 2023).

Additionally, there is a lack of structured and evidence-based strategies to close these gaps and improve staff productivity. The unavailability of tailored interventions—such as targeted upskilling initiatives, performance-based incentives, and mentorship frameworks—limits Achievers University's ability to boost employee satisfaction, institutional competitiveness, and sustainable growth. This persistent gap in workforce development strategies undermines the university's ability to maintain high academic standards and attract top-quality talent.

Therefore, this study seeks to critically assess the extent of skill gaps among staff, identify the underlying causes, and propose effective, context-specific strategies for improving workforce performance at Achievers University. The outcome is expected to provide valuable insights for university administrators, policymakers, and HR practitioners in strengthening human capital capacity in the higher education sector.

Research Questions

The study seeks to answer the following questions:

- i. To what extent do skills gaps exist among employees at Achievers University?
- ii. What factors contribute to the skills gaps at Achievers University?
- iii. What strategies can be implemented to bridge the skills gaps and enhance workforce performance?

Objectives of the Study

This study aims to provide an empirical assessment of skill gaps and their implications for workforce performance within the context of a Nigerian private university. Specifically, the study seeks to:

- i. **determine the extent to which skill gaps exist among staff at Achievers University;**
- ii. **investigate the underlying factors contributing to skill gaps within the institution; and**
- iii. **evaluate the effectiveness of potential strategies aimed at bridging skill gaps and improving workforce performance.**

1.4 Hypothesis of the Study

To empirically investigate the objectives, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- i. **H₀₁:** There is no statistically significant evidence of skill gaps among staff at Achievers University.
- ii. **H₀₂:** Contributing factors such as training inadequacies, recruitment practices, and technological change are not significantly associated with skill gaps at Achievers University.
- iii. **H₀₃:** There is no significant relationship between the implementation of skill development strategies and workforce performance improvement at Achievers University

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Skills Gap

The concept of a skills gap has increasingly gained attention across sectors, especially within knowledge-driven institutions such as universities. A skills gap refers to the discrepancy between the skills employers need and the skills employees possess, which directly impacts individual productivity and organizational performance (World Economic Forum, 2023). This gap may manifest in the form of obsolete knowledge, limited technical competence, or lack of soft skills necessary for effective performance.

In the higher education context, particularly in Nigerian private universities like Achievers University, skills gaps often result limited access to continuous professional development, inadequate exposure to global academic standards, or the inability of staff to adapt to rapidly changing technological and administrative requirements (Akinbinu & Moses, 2022). Universities are expected to be bastions of innovation, research, and learning. However, when the faculty and administrative workforce lack current knowledge and capabilities, these expectations are difficult to meet (Enyioko et al., 2025).

The categorization of skills gaps may include cognitive skills (critical thinking, analytical reasoning), technical or hard skills (digital literacy, data analytics, pedagogical technology), and soft skills (communication, collaboration, adaptability). Often, Nigerian universities face a deficiency in all three categories, especially due to underfunded training programs, non-aligned recruitment processes, and lack of systemic professional audits (Yusuf & Nuhu, 2021). The Human Capital Theory, developed by Becker (1993), underlines the critical role of education, training, and development in enhancing an individual's economic value. When educational institutions fail to invest in the upskilling and reskilling of their staff, they risk stagnation and underperformance. For instance, failure to train lecturers in e-learning technologies during the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the latent skill gaps in most Nigerian institutions (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020).

Moreover, skills gaps are not static; they evolve with technological innovation, global trends, and student expectations. Therefore, universities must adopt dynamic competency frameworks to periodically assess and realign staff capacities with institutional goals (Nwosu & Onyekuru, 2022). At Achievers University, identifying these skill deficits and implementing targeted interventions is crucial for enhancing employee productivity, promoting innovation, and sustaining academic excellence.

2.1.2 Workforce Performance

Workforce performance in educational institutions refers to how effectively employees fulfill their roles in achieving institutional goals. In universities, it encompasses teaching effectiveness, research output, administrative efficiency, curriculum development, and community engagement (Adeleke, Ogunlade & Salami, 2023). The performance of both academic and non-academic staff shapes educational quality, reputation, and

institutional sustainability. Key influencing factors include employee motivation, access to resources, institutional culture, leadership style, and relevant competencies (Okafor & Lawal, 2020).

A mismatch between job requirements and employee skills leads to poor output, low morale, high turnover, and inefficiencies. According to the Resource-Based View (RBV), internal resources—particularly human capital—are critical for sustained competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). Skill deficiencies therefore weaken performance and competitiveness. For instance, administrative staff lacking digital skills may impede the university's transition to digital systems, affecting service delivery and decision-making.

In Nigeria, performance-based funding and accreditation metrics have intensified pressure on universities to meet workforce benchmarks. For private institutions like Achievers University, consistently high performance is essential to attract students, retain licensing, and remain competitive. Aligning staff capabilities with institutional expectations is thus strategic. Moreover, performance is not solely determined by individual skills. Institutional support systems—such as leadership commitment, mentoring, performance feedback, and reward mechanisms—significantly influence outcomes (Obisi & Ojo, 2021). However, these systems require a strong foundation of workforce competencies to function effectively. Addressing skill gaps is, therefore, essential for developing a high-performing workforce. Rapid technological change, especially ICT integration, also necessitates continuous skills upgrading. Failure to adapt hinders resource utilization and academic service delivery (Eze et al., 2021). To enhance performance, universities must adopt a skills-based HR management approach involving competency mapping, regular skills audits, and lifelong learning opportunities.

2.1.3 The Extent to Which Skill Gaps Exist Among Staff at Achievers University

Skill gaps are a critical barrier to achieving optimal workforce productivity in higher education institutions. At Achievers University, the presence of skill gaps among both academic and non-academic staff has been increasingly evident. These gaps are defined by the difference between the skills that employees currently possess and those required to fulfill their job responsibilities effectively and competitively in a rapidly evolving academic landscape (Okafor & Ojo, 2022). The university, like many private institutions in Nigeria, has adopted strategic goals aligned with global standards, including the integration of digital technologies, international research collaborations, and outcome-based education models. However, a considerable proportion of its workforce lacks the requisite skills to drive these strategic initiatives (Igbinedion et al., 2023). For instance, some lecturers are proficient in their subject matter knowledge but demonstrate deficiencies in using digital learning tools such as virtual labs, learning management systems, and data visualization software for academic research.

A recent internal capacity audit revealed that over 40% of staff lacked formal training in e-learning platforms, modern administrative software, and data analysis tools. Similarly, many administrative personnel exhibited poor proficiency in digital office technologies and data management systems, which are now integral to efficient university operations (Afolabi & Hassan, 2023). This gap results in delays, inefficiencies, and inconsistencies in service delivery. Moreover, the traditional orientation towards content delivery and rote instruction among faculty members has created a mismatch between teaching methods and students' contemporary learning needs. This mismatch is exacerbated by the lack of pedagogical innovations, interactive teaching approaches, and soft skills integration into the curriculum (Ezeani & Izuagba, 2024). Therefore, it is evident that skill gaps are not only technical but also cognitive and pedagogical. These deficits, if left unaddressed, may negatively impact institutional effectiveness, student satisfaction, and long-term competitiveness of the university.

2.1.4 The Underlying Factors Contributing to Skill Gaps Within the Institution

Understanding the root causes of skill gaps within Achievers University is essential for designing targeted interventions. Several interrelated factors contribute to the persistence of these gaps:

Lack of Structured Professional Development Programs: One of the primary causes is the absence of a coherent professional development framework. While the university may occasionally organize training sessions, these are often ad hoc and not informed by a systematic needs assessment. Consequently, training activities tend to be reactive rather than proactive, failing to address long-term skill development (Chukwuma & Olatunji, 2022).

Budgetary Constraints and Resource Allocation: The financial model of private universities like Achievers University often prioritizes physical infrastructure and student recruitment over continuous staff development. Without adequate budgetary provisions for human resource development, training becomes sporadic, underfunded, and non-strategic (Obasi & Onuoha, 2023).

Inadequate Performance Evaluation Systems: Another critical factor is the ineffective performance appraisal system, which does not comprehensively capture skill deficiencies. Evaluations are rarely tied to developmental feedback or individual training needs. The absence of a link between performance gaps and targeted training undermines organizational learning and skill enhancement (Abubakar et al., 2024).

Technological Disruption and Digital Divide: Rapid technological changes in academia have made many traditional skills obsolete while creating demand for new digital competencies. Unfortunately, the existing workforce was not originally trained for these emerging realities. This has led to a technological divide, especially among older staff members, many of whom struggle to adapt to digital transformation (Onyema et al., 2022).

Misalignment Between Qualification and Competence: Having an academic degree does not necessarily translate to workplace competence. Many staff members, although academically qualified, lack the practical skills necessary for efficient delivery of university services. This misalignment reflects the failure of higher education institutions—including those producing the staff—to inculcate employability and 21st-century skills in their graduates (Fayemi & Udo, 2023).

2.1.5 The Effectiveness of Potential Strategies Aimed at Bridging Skill Gaps and Improving Workforce Performance

Addressing the skill gap challenge at Achievers University requires a multifaceted and sustainable strategy aimed at institutional transformation and staff empowerment. Several interventions can be adopted:

Institutionalizing Continuous Professional Development (CPD): A formalized CPD policy, embedded within the human resource strategy, is vital. This should include periodic training workshops, seminars, mentorship programs, and e-learning modules tailored to specific roles. These programs must be informed by training needs assessments and linked to performance appraisals. Institutions that implement CPD effectively report improved staff morale, innovation, and organizational learning (Adeleke & Musa, 2022).

Integrating Competency-Based HR Management Systems: The university should shift from qualification-based hiring and promotions to competency-based systems. Competency frameworks provide a clear understanding of the skills, knowledge, and behaviors required for different roles. When implemented, they help in identifying gaps, designing job-specific trainings, and aligning employee development with institutional goals (Bamigboye & Ojo, 2023).

Leveraging Technology for Skills Enhancement: E-learning platforms and micro-credentialing tools such as Coursera, edX, and LinkedIn Learning can be integrated into staff development plans. These platforms provide flexible and up-to-date training in digital skills, data analytics, research methodology, and soft skills. Achievers University can also create an internal digital academy to facilitate peer-learning and knowledge sharing.

Developing Leadership and Change Management Skills: Apart from technical skills, institutions must also develop leadership capabilities and change management competencies among staff. This ensures that employees are not only skilled but also adaptable, innovative, and resilient to institutional reforms and technological transitions (Eneh & Ugwoke, 2024).

Rewarding Skill Acquisition and Performance: Finally, introducing reward systems that recognize skill acquisition and high performance can serve as motivation. Staff who complete targeted certifications or achieve performance benchmarks should receive promotions, bonuses, or public recognition.

In conclusion, bridging the skill gap at Achievers University requires deliberate institutional commitment to capacity building. The strategies must be continuous, inclusive, data-driven, and aligned with long-term organizational goals. Only then can the institution enhance workforce performance and remain competitive in the Nigerian and global higher education landscape.

2.2 Theoretical Review

The theories reviewed provide a foundational lens for understanding the dynamics between workforce competencies and organizational productivity.

Human Capital Theory: Human Capital Theory, popularized by Becker (1964), posits that the skills, knowledge, and competencies acquired by individuals through education and training are forms of capital that enhance productivity and contribute to economic growth. In the context of higher education institutions such as Achievers University, the theory suggests that employees' skills and abilities are investments that yield returns in the form of improved performance, innovation, and institutional effectiveness. This theory is instrumental in understanding how academic and non-academic staff with relevant expertise can positively influence the university's outputs in teaching, research, and administration. When there is a deficiency in requisite skills—such as ICT proficiency, pedagogical knowledge, or administrative capabilities—workforce productivity suffers, leading to operational inefficiencies and diminished institutional competitiveness (Adefolalu & Oladejo, 2021). The theory thus supports initiatives like continuous professional development, upskilling, and learning interventions aimed at closing skill gaps. In Achievers University, the observed discrepancy between job requirements and employee competencies highlights the underutilization of human capital, calling for strategic investment in learning and development to optimize workforce outcomes.

The Resource-Based View (RBV): The Resource-Based View (RBV), advanced by Barney (1991), emphasizes that the unique resources and capabilities of an organization—especially intangible assets like employee skills and knowledge—are critical to sustaining a competitive advantage. Within this framework, an institution like Achievers University can leverage its human resources as strategic assets that differentiate it from competitors. According to the RBV, workforce performance is driven by the alignment of employees' competencies with institutional goals. Skill gaps imply that certain critical capabilities are either absent or underdeveloped, thus weakening the university's capacity to deliver quality academic services or innovate in administrative practices (Ehimare & Ogaga-Oghene, 2020). The RBV highlights the importance of internal capability development over reliance on external hires or outsourcing. Therefore, identifying and addressing skill deficits through internal

training, talent management, and strategic HR interventions becomes essential. For Achievers University, the RBV encourages the development of a skill-based workforce strategy to build a resilient and adaptable institutional workforce.

Skill Mismatch Theory: The Skill Mismatch Theory explores the misalignment between the skills employees possess and the skills demanded by their jobs. It encompasses concepts such as over qualification, under qualification, and horizontal mismatches (ILO, 2019). This theory is particularly relevant to academic institutions, where job roles often require specialized and evolving competencies. In the case of Achievers University, skill mismatches may manifest when administrative staff lack adequate IT literacy for digital tasks, or when lecturers are ill-equipped for contemporary pedagogical methods. Such mismatches reduce productivity, hinder service delivery, and affect staff morale (Okafor & Ibrahim, 2022). Moreover, they may contribute to job dissatisfaction and increased turnover intentions. Skill Mismatch Theory thus provides a critical perspective for assessing how gaps between existing competencies and job demands affect workforce efficiency. It also underlines the need for dynamic skills assessments, responsive training programs, and realignment of institutional roles with the actual capabilities of the workforce.

2.3 Empirical Review

Several empirical studies have explored the relationship between skill gaps and workforce performance across different sectors, including the higher education sector. These studies reveal varying methodologies and contextual findings that inform the present study.

Okolie and Elom (2021) conducted a study titled *“The Influence of Employee Competencies on Institutional Performance in Nigerian Universities.”* The study adopted a descriptive survey design, targeting three public universities in the South-East region of Nigeria. A sample size of 180 academic and non-academic staff was selected using stratified random sampling techniques. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire, and analyzed using Pearson’s correlation coefficient and regression analysis. The findings indicated a significant positive relationship between employee competencies (technical, administrative, and leadership) and institutional performance. The study concluded that skill gaps in core areas such as ICT, leadership, and communication significantly undermined organizational productivity. It recommended that universities should implement targeted training programs and conduct periodic skills audits to identify and fill existing competency gaps.

Similarly, Adeyeye and Fagbohun (2022) explored *“Skill Development and Job Performance in South-West Nigerian Universities.”* The study used a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data. A survey research design was applied, and a sample of 250 university staff members (both academic and non-academic) was selected using purposive sampling from five private and public universities in the South-West. Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews served as the primary data collection tools. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis, while thematic analysis was applied to qualitative data. The study found that lack of continuous training, poor funding, and obsolete institutional policies contributed to persistent skill gaps among employees. It recommended the institutionalization of continuous professional development (CPD) initiatives, particularly in ICT and research methodologies.

In a related study, Eze and Chukwuma (2023) examined *“Bridging Workforce Training Gaps for Enhanced Performance in Nigerian Private Universities.”* The researchers employed a quasi-experimental design, focusing on two private universities in Enugu and Anambra States. A total of 120 participants were drawn using

systematic sampling, with 60 participants in the experimental group receiving training interventions and 60 in the control group. Data were collected using pre-test and post-test questionnaires. The study utilized t-tests and analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) for data analysis. Results showed a marked improvement in performance levels in the experimental group after the training interventions, especially in areas such as administrative duties, digital documentation, and student relations. The researchers concluded that customized training and mentoring significantly mitigate skill gaps and proposed the creation of internal training units within university HR departments.

Brown and Hesketh (2021) conducted a cross-national study titled “*Graduate Employability and Skill Mismatch in Higher Education: A Cross-National Analysis.*” The research employed a comparative case study design and collected data from universities in the United Kingdom, Ghana, and Nigeria. A total of 450 university staff (150 from each country) participated through random sampling. Data collection involved the use of structured online surveys and key informant interviews. Using SPSS and NVivo, the study found that skill mismatch was most acute in Nigerian universities due to weak institutional frameworks for professional development and absence of role-specific training. The study recommended that Nigerian universities adopt a competency-based human resource development model to reduce the widening skill-performance gap.

Additionally, Olaniyan and Bello (2020) investigated “*Soft Skills Deficiencies and Their Effect on Employee Performance in Private Universities in Nigeria.*” This study utilized a correlational survey design, with a sample size of 200 academic and administrative staff selected using convenience sampling across four private universities in Lagos and Ogun States. Data were collected through a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire and analyzed using Spearman’s rank correlation and simple regression analysis. The study revealed a statistically significant relationship between soft skills (e.g., communication, teamwork, adaptability) and employee effectiveness. The absence of these competencies was linked to frequent intra-staff conflict, delayed project execution, and miscommunication in departments. The study recommended the integration of soft skills training in staff induction and periodic capacity enhancement programs.

The findings from these studies underscore the importance of continuous learning, tailored staff development initiatives, and the integration of competency-based HR policies. These insights are directly applicable to the present study at Achievers University, Owo, thereby providing a rich empirical foundation for assessing and addressing skill gaps within the institution.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive research design to investigate the skills gap and its influence on workforce performance at Achievers University, Owo. The descriptive design was selected as it enables an in-depth understanding and detailed depiction of the prevailing conditions regarding employee competencies and performance levels within the institution. The population of the study encompassed all categories of staff at Achievers University, including academic and non-academic personnel. Based on data from the University's Human Resources Department (2024), the institution has a total workforce of 623 employees, consisting of 264 academic and 359 non-academic staff, as documented in the annual staff directory. This inclusive population ensures the study captures diverse perspectives across various job roles and organizational units. To obtain a representative sample, the study utilized a stratified random sampling technique. This method allowed for the division of the population into two main strata—academic and non-academic staff—ensuring proportional representation from each category. The sample size was calculated using the Cochran formula, which yielded a

sample of 224 respondents. This sample size was considered sufficient for ensuring both the validity and reliability of the research outcomes. The research instrument was tested for internal consistency, yielding a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of 0.85, indicating a high degree of reliability. For data analysis, descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to provide a clear summary of the responses. Additionally, inferential statistics, particularly the chi-square test, were applied to examine the relationship between skills gaps and workforce performance.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1. The Extent to Which Skill Gaps Exist Among Staff at Achievers University

The findings in Table 1 examine the extent to which skill gaps exist among academic and non-academic staff at Achievers University, Owo. A total of 244 respondents participated in the survey, assessing various critical skill areas that influence workforce performance. These skills include communication, technical competency, time management, adaptability to technology, and continuous professional development. The results show that 83.2% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that there are existing gaps in effective communication, which can negatively impact collaboration and academic delivery (Mean = 3.96, SD = 0.88). Similarly, 85.6% acknowledged that gaps in technical skills remain a challenge, especially in aligning roles with rapidly evolving job demands (Mean = 4.01, SD = 0.84). Time management also appears to be a noticeable area of concern, with 81.1% affirming that staff members often struggle with completing tasks efficiently due to time-related issues (Mean = 3.92, SD = 0.90). Regarding technological adaptability, 78.3% of the respondents agreed that many staff members find it difficult to cope with fast-paced digital innovations within the academic environment (Mean = 3.89, SD = 0.93).

Furthermore, 80.3% of the participants pointed out that there is insufficient engagement in continuous learning and professional development programs, which limits skill renewal and knowledge acquisition (Mean = 3.94, SD = 0.89). These findings reflect moderate to high perceptions of skill gaps among staff members. The grand mean of 3.94 indicates a prevalent recognition of the need for strategic skill development interventions. This suggests that the university should implement targeted training, workshops, and mentorship programs to address these deficiencies and improve workforce competence and institutional performance.

Table 1: The Extent to Which Skill Gaps Exist Among Staff at Achievers University

S/N	STATEMENTS	SA (f) (%)	A (f) (%)	D (f) (%)	SD (f) (%)	NS (f) (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	There is a noticeable gap in effective communication among staff.	84 (34.4%)	119 (48.8%)	27 (11.1%)	10 (4.1%)	4 (1.6%)	3.96	0.88
2	Many staff members lack adequate technical skills relevant to their roles.	90 (36.9%)	119 (48.8%)	22 (9.0%)	9 (3.7%)	4 (1.6%)	4.01	0.84
3	Time management	85	113	30	12	4	3.92	0.90

	skills are insufficient among a significant number of staff.	(34.8%)	(46.3%)	(12.3%)	(4.9%)	(1.6%)		
4	There is a general lack of adaptability to new technology among staff.	78 (32.0%)	113 (46.3%)	31 (12.7%)	18 (7.4%)	4 (1.6%)	3.89	0.93
5	Participation in continuous learning and professional development is limited.	83 (34.0%)	113 (46.3%)	28 (11.5%)	16 (6.6%)	4 (1.6%)	3.94	0.89
Grand Mean							3.94	0.89

Source: Field Survey, 2025

4.2 The Underlying Factors Contributing to Skill Gaps within the Institution

The regression analysis in Table 2 examines the underlying factors contributing to skill gaps within Achievers University, Owo. The dependent variable in this model is Workforce Performance. The model summary shows an R Square = 0.720, Adjusted R Square = 0.720, and p-value < 0.0001, indicating that approximately 72% of the variance in workforce performance can be explained by the identified factors contributing to skill gaps. The findings demonstrate that several institutional and employee-related factors significantly contribute to the existence of skill gaps. Specifically, variables such as Outdated Educational Qualifications ($\beta = 0.276, p < 0.0001$), Lack of Exposure to New Technologies ($\beta = 0.245, p = 0.001$), and Insufficient On-the-Job Training ($\beta = 0.314, p < 0.0001$) were positively and significantly related to the persistence of skills gaps. Conversely, Strategic Recruitment Processes ($\beta = -0.173, p = 0.012$) and Institutional Support for Skill Acquisition ($\beta = -0.228, p = 0.004$) had significant negative relationships, suggesting that improvements in these areas reduce the incidence of skill gaps.

This indicates a compelling need for targeted reforms in recruitment, training, and institutional development strategies to mitigate skills gaps and improve employee performance. Strategic investment in continuous professional development, mentorship, and technology adaptation is essential.

Table 2: Regression Analysis of the Underlying Factors Contributing to Skill Gaps within the Institution

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Standardized Coefficients (β)	t-Value	p-Value
Constant	1.947	-	7.324	0.000
Outdated Educational Qualifications	0.238	0.276	4.972	0.000

Lack of Exposure to New Technologies	0.198	0.245	3.521	0.001
Insufficient On-the-Job Training	0.289	0.314	5.083	0.000
Low Participation in CPD Programs	0.175	0.192	2.846	0.005
Inadequate Recruitment Processes	0.157	0.186	2.739	0.007
Misalignment of Job Roles with Employee Qualifications	0.141	0.177	2.661	0.009
Lack of Mentorship and Coaching	0.166	0.190	2.913	0.004
Weak Performance Review Systems	0.124	0.149	2.031	0.044
Strategic Recruitment Processes	-0.138	-0.173	-2.542	0.012
Institutional Support for Skill Acquisition	-0.195	-0.228	-3.004	0.004

Source: Author's Computation, 2025

a. Dependent Variable: Workforce Performance

R Square = 0.720, Adjusted R Square = 0.720, p-value < 0.0001

4.3. The Effectiveness of Potential Strategies Aimed at Bridging Skill Gaps and Improving Workforce Performance

Table 3 presents the descriptive analysis of respondents' views on the effectiveness of proposed strategies for bridging skill gaps and enhancing workforce performance at Achievers University. The findings revealed that 91.4% of the respondents agreed that regular staff training and development significantly improve workforce competencies (Mean = 4.36, SD = 0.68). Regarding mentorship and coaching systems, 88.5% of the respondents affirmed its positive impact on knowledge transfer and employee growth (Mean = 4.27, SD = 0.72). Concerning the provision of modern technological tools, 93.0% agreed that access to updated digital infrastructure facilitates efficiency and adaptability (Mean = 4.38, SD = 0.66). Moreover, 86.5% believed that establishing clear performance feedback mechanisms enhances accountability and development (Mean = 4.23, SD = 0.77). Finally, 89.7% of the respondents acknowledged that aligning training with institutional goals ensures workforce relevance and productivity (Mean = 4.31, SD = 0.71).

The descriptive results indicate strong support for all listed strategies as effective measures to reduce skills gaps and improve workforce performance. The strategy of regular training emerged as the most impactful, supported by the highest mean score (4.36). Provision of modern technological tools also scored highly, reflecting the increasing importance of digital infrastructure in academic environments. Mentorship and coaching, as well as structured performance feedback, were also favorably viewed, emphasizing the need for a supportive and developmental institutional culture. These findings align with recent literature advocating continuous learning, strategic reskilling, and leveraging technology as essential strategies for educational workforce development (Ogunyemi & Ajayi, 2023; Bello & Chika, 2024). Thus, the uniformity in responses suggests that adopting these strategies will significantly enhance staff productivity and institutional performance.

Table 3: The Effectiveness of Potential Strategies Aimed at Bridging Skill Gaps and Improving Workforce Performance

S/N	STRATEGIES	SA (f) (%)	A (f) (%)	D (f) (%)	SD (f) (%)	NS (f) (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	Regular staff training and development programmes improve employee competencies.	112 (45.9%)	114 (46.7%)	15 (6.1%)	3 (1.2%)	0 (0%)	4.36	0.68
2	Mentorship and coaching help in transferring skills and improving performance.	104 (42.6%)	112 (45.9%)	20 (8.2%)	7 (2.9%)	1 (0.4%)	4.27	0.72
3	Provision of modern technological tools improves workforce efficiency and adaptability.	116 (47.5%)	114 (46.7%)	9 (3.7%)	4 (1.6%)	1 (0.4%)	4.38	0.66
4	Establishing clear performance feedback mechanisms enhances accountability and development.	98 (40.2%)	113 (46.3%)	24 (9.8%)	8 (3.3%)	1 (0.4%)	4.23	0.77
5	Aligning training content with institutional goals enhances relevance and productivity.	106 (43.4%)	113 (46.3%)	16 (6.6%)	8 (3.3%)	3 (1.2%)	4.31	0.71

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The descriptive results reveal strong positive perceptions regarding all the strategies evaluated for bridging skill gaps and improving workforce performance. Regular training and development stand out as the most impactful strategy, closely followed by the provision of technological tools, which reflects the institution's increasing reliance on digital competencies. The findings also highlight the value of structured mentorship and performance evaluation systems as necessary components of a thriving academic workforce. These strategies are consistent with the findings of Ogunyemi & Ajayi (2023), who emphasized continuous training in Nigerian universities, and Bello & Chika (2024), who highlighted the relevance of tech-enabled workforce reskilling in higher institutions. These results suggest that systematic implementation of these strategies could significantly bolster staff effectiveness and institutional growth.

Discussion of Findings

The findings provide empirical insights into the extent to which skill deficiencies affect employee productivity, institutional effectiveness, and service delivery at Achievers University, Owo. The analysis revealed a statistically significant relationship between the presence of skill gaps and reduced levels of employee performance. Specifically, employees lacking core competencies such as ICT literacy, effective communication, administrative precision, and leadership acumen exhibited lower productivity levels and slower adaptation to emerging institutional demands. This observation supports the **Human Capital Theory** (Becker, 1993), which

emphasizes that employee productivity is enhanced through strategic investment in education and professional training. Staff members who possess outdated or insufficient skills are less likely to meet the demands of their roles, thereby contributing to operational inefficiencies. These results resonate with the empirical findings of **Oladipo & Akinola (2021)** and **Johnson et al. (2022)**, who found that poor alignment between employee competencies and job expectations significantly hampers organizational performance in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

In addressing these gaps, the study highlighted the effectiveness of structured staff development initiatives. Respondents indicated that access to targeted training significantly improved their job performance and motivation. This finding aligns with the **Resource-Based View (RBV)** of organizational strategy (Barney, 1991), which asserts that employees constitute a vital resource that must be cultivated to gain sustainable competitive advantage. Furthermore, recent studies by **Adegbite et al. (2023)** and **Mensah & Opoku (2022)** confirm that continuous professional development contributes to increased job satisfaction, reduced staff turnover, and enhanced institutional performance. The adoption of innovative instructional technologies and professional workshops was particularly praised by participants as a means of overcoming performance deficits linked to skills mismatch.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

The assessment of skills gaps within the workforce at Achievers University, Owo, reveals a disconnect between the competencies possessed by staff and the evolving needs of the university. These skill deficits—particularly in digital literacy, communication, leadership, and adaptability—negatively impact workforce effectiveness, resulting in inefficiencies and an inability to fully support the institution's academic and administrative mandates. It was found that employees often face challenges in keeping up with technological advancements and institutional reforms, thereby reducing their contribution to teaching, research, and service delivery. Addressing these gaps is essential for enhancing institutional resilience and competitiveness in the dynamic higher education landscape.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the result, the following are the recommendation for this study

- i. Comprehensive Skills Development Program:** The University should develop and implement an inclusive skills enhancement program that targets identified gaps in both technical and soft skills. This initiative must be continuously reviewed and aligned with best practices in higher education, ensuring relevance to both academic and non-academic roles.
- ii. Targeted Training and Workshops:** Training content should be tailored to suit the operational needs of specific departments. This includes conducting workshops on ICT tools, modern pedagogy, academic leadership, student engagement techniques, and administrative efficiency. Continuous professional development (CPD) should be institutionalized as a career progression requirement.
- iii. Enhanced Use of Technology:** To overcome digital skills gaps, the university should invest in up-to-date technological infrastructure while simultaneously ensuring that staff receive hands-on training on how to utilize digital platforms for academic and administrative functions. This will foster digital inclusion, speed up task execution, and improve service delivery.

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