

The Impact of Personnel Development on Employees' Performance in Liberia's Public Sector: A Systematic Review

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ABSTRACT

Personnel development has become an important human resource management strategy for improving employee competence, institutional effectiveness, and public service delivery. Through capacity building, organizations seek to enhance employee competence, which in turn improves productivity and service delivery. Despite the importance of workforce development in strengthening public institutions and service delivery, there is evidence of weak implementation systems and limited accountability, which reduce the effectiveness of training. Thus, the study explored the impact of personnel development on employees' performance in Liberia's public sector. Using the PRISMA 2020 framework, 46 relevant studies were identified from databases such as Google Scholar, ScienceOpen, ScienceDirect, and ResearchGate. Empirical studies focusing on personnel development and employee performance in public sector institutions were systematically screened and analyzed thematically. The findings revealed that personnel development practices generally improve employee competence, productivity, organizational effectiveness, accountability, and service delivery. Evidence from Liberia also showed that workforce development and continuous professional development strengthened institutional performance, particularly within the health sector. However, the effectiveness of the reforms is often constrained by inadequate funding, weak institutional support, favoritism, weak supervision, poor training design, political interference, and ineffective implementation systems. The review also identified significant methodological and contextual gaps, particularly the limited empirical research on personnel development within Liberia's broader public sector beyond the health sector. The review concludes that personnel development positively influences employee performance when supported by transparent systems, managerial commitment, transparent human resource practices, adequate funding, and effective implementation strategies. It recommends strengthening personnel development policies and expanding empirical research to inform evidence-based human resource reforms across Liberia's public sector.

Keywords: Personnel development, Employee Performance, Public Sector, Capacity building, Liberia.

INTRODUCTION

Personnel development refers to planned activities such as training mentoring, coaching, career development, workshops, and continuous professional development designed to improve employee's knowledge, skills, abilities, and competencies, thereby enabling them to perform their duties more effectively (Armstrong & Taylor, 2023; Noe, 2020). On the other hand, employee performance refers to the extent to which employees, through behavior and results, effectively accomplish organizational goals through improved productivity, efficiency, quality of service delivery, commitment, and accountability (Aguinis, 2019; Campbell & Wiernik, 2015). In the public sector, personnel development is recognized as an important human resource management practice that improves employee capability, strengthens institutional performance and improves the quality of public service delivery (OECD, 2023; World Bank, 2020). Through training, mentoring, career development, emotional intelligence, and continuous professional development, organizations can enhance employee competence, productivity, motivation, and service delivery.

Several studies have reported positive relationships between personnel development and employee performance. Nor (2023), Kareem and Hussein (2019), Singh and Vinci (2023), Ituma et al. (2023), and Babatunde (2024) found that training and career development improve employee productivity, competence, and organizational effectiveness. In Liberia, Friedman (2012), Rowe et al. (2010), Michel-Schuldt et al. (2018), and Karngbea (2023) emphasized the importance of workforce development in strengthening public institutions and service delivery. However, some studies reported divergent findings. Anlesinya et al. (2015) found a negative relationship between employee development and organizational performance, while Ternni et al. (2014) and Spreen et al. (2020) argued that weak implementation systems and limited accountability reduce the effectiveness of training.

Despite growing global evidence, limited research has examined personnel development and employee performance across Liberia's broader public sector. Therefore, this study examines the impact of personnel development on employee performance in Liberia's public sector using the PICO framework: public sector employees in Liberia (Population), personnel development practices (Intervention), limited development practices (Comparison), and employee performance outcomes such as productivity and service delivery (Outcome). The study addresses the question: *How does personnel development influence employee performance in Liberia's public sector?* Thus, the study covers the following areas; overview of Liberia's public sector governance, administrative framework and reform initiatives, personnel development, employees' performance, public sector human resource development in Liberia, employee performance and personnel development in Liberia's public sector, results, and recommendations.

Overview of Liberia's Public Sector Governance, Administrative Framework and Reform Initiatives

Liberia's public sector exists within a unitary system of government that is established by the 1986 Constitution, which also established the framework for democratic governance, separation of powers, and public accountability. The governance architecture is made up of the Executive, Legislature, and Judiciary, which are all supported by various ministries, agencies, autonomous commissions, and oversight public institutions (World Bank, 2024). Since the end of the civil war, the government has introduced several governance reforms to rebuild the trust of the people in public institutions and enhance effective service delivery across Liberia.

The framework of the public sector is structured through key public institutions, such as the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP), the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), the Civil Service Agency (CSA), and the Liberia Institute of Public Administration (LIPA). Among all of them, the CSA is the central human resource management agency that is responsible for workforce planning, recruitment, training, performance management, career development, and the formulation of civil service policies. Under the Civil Service Act of 1973, the CSA promotes merit-based employment and professional standards for a productive and competent workforce. As governance becomes more complex, employee development becomes more central for public sector management. Likewise, skilled and motivated personnel are vital for improving institutional performance and service delivery (Civil Service Agency, 1973; 2025).

Liberia has implemented successive civil service reform programmes that focuses on professionalization, organizational restructuring, payroll integrity, and human resource modernization. The earliest reform emphasized rightsizing the civil service, introducing biometric employee registration, strengthening the Human Resource Management Information System (HRMIS), pay structures, and institutionalizing performance management systems to improve accountability and productivity (IMF, 2012). In recent time, the CSA has advanced its reforms through initiatives such as the Employees Status Regularization Project (ESRP), the Civil Service Training Center (CSTC), automated civil service testing, digital human resource management systems, and competency-based recruitment (IMF, 2012). All of these initiatives are intended to strengthen workforce capacity and improve employee performance across government institutions. Despite all of that, institutional capacity constraints, inadequate human resource management, limited training opportunities, resource constraints and limited organizational performance continue to affect employee performance and service delivery across the public sector, thereby emphasizing the need for sustained personnel development initiatives (World Bank, 2024; IMF, 2021).

Under the leadership of President Joseph Nyumah Boakai, these reform efforts are guided by the CSA's Strategic Plans (2025-2029), which align with the Government of Liberia's ARREST Agenda for Inclusive Development. In so doing, it prioritizes capacity building, institutional effectiveness, research and innovation, digital transformation, and performance-based management to create a professional, merit-driven, and citizen-centered civil service (Civil Service Agency, 2025). These highlight the importance of continuous personnel development as the only strategic way of improving employee competence, organizational efficiency, and the overall performance of Liberia's public sector. Therefore, this unveils the importance of understanding the relationship between personnel development and employee performance.

Personnel development is significant to achieving sustainable national development and effective public service delivery. It remains the key towards enhancing workers' skills, knowledge, and competencies through formal education, training, and regular professional development programs (OECD, 2021). Investing in human capital improves workforce productivity, strengthens the institution's capacity, and as well, sustains the quality of public services. Liberia's public service cannot be effective and productive when it operates with incompetent and unmotivated personnel. This means that inadequate personnel development leads to poor service delivery and institutional performance (World Bank, 2020). To this end, Liberia's Civil Service Agency (CSA) and development partners have emphasized employee training, performance management, leadership development, and capacity building as personnel development strategies to improve public sector efficiency (Civil Service Agency, 2025; World Bank, 2024).

Personnel Development

As the independent variable in this study, personnel development was examined through the lens of continuous learning, emotional intelligence, and professional development. According to Obazuaye (2024), personnel development is a systematic process through which employees' knowledge, skills, competencies, and capabilities are developed to enhance their effectiveness and adaptability within the organization. It involves continuous learning and skills development that enable employees and organizations to respond to changing workplace demands, emerging skill requirements, and future organizational needs (Harney & Gubbins, 2024; Oglobin, 2025). It aims to improve both employees and the organization.

An employee will not entirely rely on their organization's growth before they can improve their own job performance. Hence, there is a need for continuous learning, which enhances adaptability, problem-solving abilities, and organizational competitiveness while promoting a culture of innovation and lifelong learning (Ahmed et al., 2023; Billett, 2022). Similar to continuous learning, professional growth refers to the continuous advancement of an individual's career through learning, experience, networking, leadership development, and increased responsibilities. This growth encourages innovation, adaptability, and leadership readiness while improving job satisfaction and employee retention (Aguinis & Burgi-Tian, 2023; Caniëls & Hatak, 2022).

Another aspect is emotional intelligence, which is the ability to recognize, understand, regulate, and effectively manage one's own emotions while understanding and influencing the emotions of others. Emotional intelligence enhances leadership effectiveness, teamwork, decision-making, and organizational citizenship behaviors. (Miao et al., 2023; Extremera et al., 2022). Personnel development enhances productivity by improving employees' technical competencies, innovation capacity, problem-solving skills, adaptability, and technological proficiency. This equips employees to utilize modern administrative systems, streamline work processes, reduce errors, and increase overall organizational efficiency (Salas et al., 2012). With the premise above, it is safe to say that personnel development is an important mechanism because it generally influences both employees' performance and organizational objectives.

Employee Performance

Employee performance is discussed from the tenets of task performance, organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), responsiveness, accountability, and productivity. Employee performance is a fundamental determinant of organizational effectiveness, particularly within the public sector where employees are responsible for delivering essential services to citizens. According to Campbell (1990), employee performance refers to

behaviors and actions that are directly related to organizational goals rather than merely the outcomes achieved. Similarly, Aguinis (2019) defines employee performance as the collection of behaviors and results that employees exhibit in fulfilling organizational objectives. Performance extends beyond completing assigned tasks to include responsiveness to citizens, ethical conduct, collaboration, innovation, and commitment to public service values (Van Dooren et al., 2021). It is also closely associated with improvements in governance, transparency, accountability, and service delivery, making it an important indicator of institutional success (Armstrong & Taylor, 2023; Dessler, 2020). Well-designed development initiatives are required, and as a result, employees' knowledge, skills, competencies, attitudes, and motivation are enhanced. Training, career development, mentoring, coaching, and continuous professional development positively influence employee performance across both developed and developing countries (Noe, 2020; Salas et al., 2012).

In measuring employee performance, Campbell (1990) identifies task performance as the core technical component of job performance. It includes the quality, accuracy, efficiency, and timeliness with which employees complete work-related activities that directly contribute to organizational objectives (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997). Campbell and Wiernik (2015) recognized task performance as the employee behaviors that are directly associated with carrying out their job responsibilities, that is penned down as job description and directly affect the objectives of the organization. The evaluation here is based on their behavior towards their assigned duty rather than their work output. Employees with high task performance consistently demonstrate technical competence, effective problem-solving skills, and adherence to organizational standards (Aguinis, 2019).

Another important factor is Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), which refers to discretionary employee behaviors that are not formally required by job descriptions but contribute positively to organizational effectiveness (Organ, 1988). These voluntary behaviors include helping colleagues, demonstrating civic responsibility, supporting organizational initiatives, maintaining positive interpersonal relationships, and promoting organizational objectives beyond minimum job expectations. Podsakoff et al. (2000) define OCB as employee behaviors that contribute to organizational effectiveness by facilitating teamwork, reducing workplace conflicts, increasing employee cooperation, and strengthening organizational adaptability. Harari et al. (2022) define it as those behaviors that go beyond formal role requirements to achieve organizational effectiveness. Employees who receive development opportunities become more willing to assist coworkers, participate in organizational improvement initiatives, and support institutional reforms (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Responsiveness ensures that employees provide timely, efficient, and citizen-centered services while adapting to changing public needs and organizational priorities. It reflects the speed, quality, and appropriateness of government responses to citizens' requests, complaints, and service demands (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2015). It refers to an employee's ability and willingness to recognize work-related demands and respond to them promptly, appropriately, and effectively while adapting to changing public needs (Bernardes & Hanna, 2009). High responsiveness strengthens public trust, increases citizen satisfaction, and enhances government legitimacy (OECD, 2020).

Importantly, employees should be able to justify their decisions, actions, and performance to oversight bodies and stakeholders that have the right to question, evaluate, and impose consequences where appropriate (Boven, Goodin, and Schillesmans, 2014; Boven, 2017). Accountability involves performance reporting, ethical decision-making, proper documentation, and effective utilization of public resources (World Bank, 2021). In the public sector, accountability is essential for ensuring transparency, preventing corruption, promoting responsible resource utilization, and maintaining public confidence (Bovens, 2007). Ethics training, leadership development, and continuous professional education reinforce responsible behavior and improve compliance with institutional standards (Armstrong & Taylor, 2023).

Improved performance leads to productivity, as seen when employees utilize available resources to produce desired outputs and achieve organizational objectives. Therefore, it encompasses the quality, quantity, timeliness, and cost-effectiveness of services delivered to citizens (Van Dooren et al., 2021). Unlike private organizations that primarily measure productivity through profit generation, public sector productivity

emphasizes efficient service delivery, policy implementation, citizen satisfaction, and effective utilization of public resources.

Public Sector Human Resource Development in Liberia

Human resource development (HRD) in Liberia's public sector has become increasingly important as the government pursues sustainable public sector reforms. As stated earlier, recent reforms by the CSA have emphasized employee capacity development, leadership training, digital transformation, and performance improvement to strengthen public institutions and achieve sustainable development goals (World Bank, 2024; United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2025). Despite these reforms, inadequate funding for training and development, limited access to continuous professional learning opportunities, weak performance management systems, shortages of skilled personnel, and the migration of experienced professionals to the private sector and international organizations continue to cripple public agencies. These constraints limit employees' ability to acquire new competencies, adapt to changing organizational demands, and improve institutional performance (World Bank, 2024; African Development Bank, 2024).

The Government of Liberia, through the CSA, continues to promote merit-based recruitment, employee training, leadership development, and performance management reforms aimed at strengthening workforce capacity and improving public service delivery. These initiatives support broader national efforts to enhance accountability, transparency, institutional effectiveness, and citizen-centered governance (Civil Service Agency, 2024; UNDP, 2025). Public sector human resource development in Liberia provides an important foundation for examining the relationship between personal development and organizational performance. It highlights the need for continuous learning, leadership development, skill enhancement, and supportive organizational policies that enable employees to maximize their potential while contributing to improved public sector performance.

Employee Performance and Personnel Development in Liberia's Public Sector

Liberia's public sector has undergone substantial reforms following years of institutional rebuilding, with increasing emphasis on capacity development, human resource management, and governance improvement. Despite these reforms, challenges such as inadequate training, limited career advancement opportunities, weak performance management systems, and insufficient professional development continue to affect employee performance across many public institutions (Government of Liberia, 2022).

Personnel development serves as a strategic mechanism for addressing these challenges by strengthening employees' competencies, improving motivation, enhancing organizational commitment, and fostering continuous learning. Investments in training, mentoring, leadership development, and career progression are expected to improve task performance, encourage organizational citizenship behavior, increase responsiveness, strengthen accountability, and enhance productivity throughout Liberia's public administration.

Theoretical and empirical evidence consistently demonstrates that organizations investing in systematic personnel development achieve higher levels of employee performance than those that neglect continuous workforce development (Aguinis, 2019; Noe, 2020). Consequently, strengthening personnel development initiatives should remain a strategic priority for improving institutional performance and achieving effective public service delivery in Liberia.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study is grounded in Becker's (1964) human capital theory, which emphasizes the impact of personnel development on employee performance in Liberia's public sector. This theory holds that individuals possess a set of skills, knowledge, and talents known as "human capital" that can be enhanced through deliberate investment in education and skill training to increase worker productivity and economic value. This idea is reinforced by Vroom's expectancy theory, proposed in 1964, which contends that three variables influence an employee's incentive to exert effort: expectancy, performance, and rewards. This highlights how personal growth raises employee expectations, how effort leads to performance, and how performance leads to rewards. Singh

and Vinci (2023) both found that training, mentorship, and transparent promotion procedures increased staff productivity in the public sector. Similarly, Nor (2023) found that training improved staff competency, job performance, and public service delivery. Therefore, for Liberia's public sector to prosper, personnel development must catalyze improved employee performance. However, as Vroom warned, increased capacity alone is insufficient. Personnel development programs must be embedded in a motivational ecosystem that includes meritocratic rewards and clear progression paths to produce optimal operational returns.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a systematic review approach to examine the impact of personnel development on employee performance in the public sector. According to Mulrow (1994), as stated by Tranfield et al. (2003, p. 214), “systematic review has been argued to provide the most efficient and high-quality method for identifying and evaluating extensive literature”.

A systematic review was considered appropriate because it allows for the identification, evaluation, and synthesis of existing empirical literature related to a specific research problem in a structured and transparent manner. It is not the same as narrative reviews because it adopts a replicable, rigorous, scientific, and transparent process (Cook et al., 1997). For that reason, this approach allows minimizing bias and subjectivity. Relevant studies (46) were identified through electronic database searches using sources such as Google Scholar, ResearchGate, ScienceOpen, and ScienceDirect.

Keywords used during the search include: personnel development, employee performance, training, career development, mentoring, and capacity building. Boolean operators such as AND/ OR were used to refine the search and retrieve relevant studies.

Using the PRISMA 2020 reporting mechanism, the authors developed clear and precise objectives; set the inclusion and exclusion criteria; conducted a comprehensive search of all potentially relevant articles in predefined journals; assessed study quality; synthesized individual studies using an explicit analytical framework; and finally presented the results in a comprehensible manner.

To be included in this review, a study must: be an article published in a peer reviewed journal or credible academic source; books, be published between 2015 and 2026, studies conducted in Liberia, Africa, and other developing countries, consider personnel development and employee performance as active and consistent variables; examine personnel development variables such as training, career development, mentoring, manpower development, or professional development; focus on public sector institutions or closely related organizational contexts; be empirical studies using quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-method approaches; and were written in English.

Excluded studies or articles were conference proceedings, newspaper articles, unpublished works; opinion papers without empirical evidence; studies that lacked sufficient methodological information; duplicates of already included studies; and those not written in English.

The study selection process involved screening titles, abstracts, and full texts of identified articles to determine relevance to the review topic. Articles that met the inclusion criteria were retained, while irrelevant studies were excluded. Figure 1 below illustrates the procedure employed to identify, select, and incorporate the articles and books for the review.

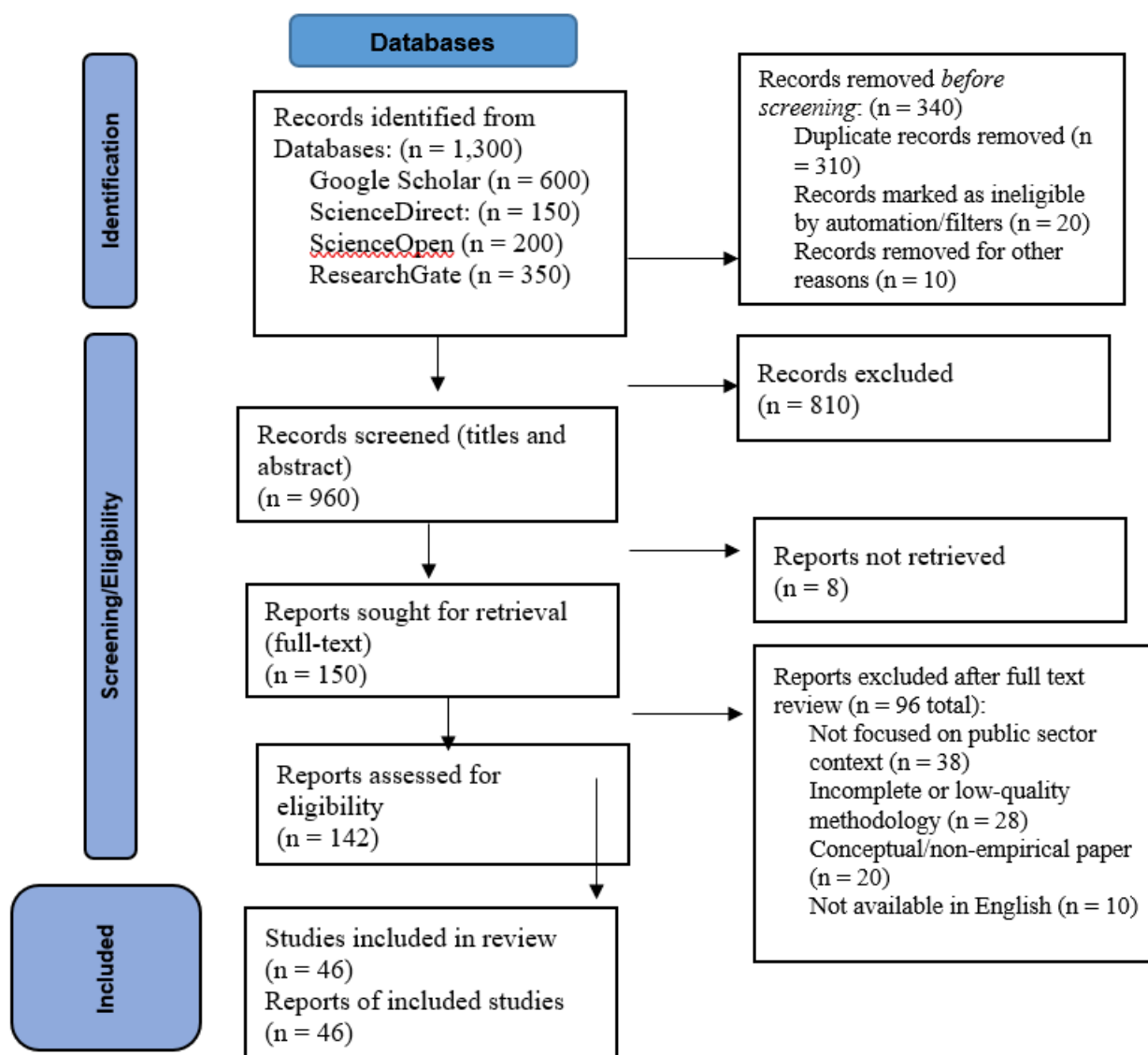


Figure 1. Literature identification, screening/Eligibility, and inclusion PRISMA flowchart.

During the study selection process, which was between April and June 2026, a total of 1,300 relevant records were identified across four databases. Before screening, 340 records were removed for various reasons (refer to the PRISMA chart). 960 records were screened, resulting in the exclusion of 810 records. 150 reports were sought for full-text retrieval, but 8 reports could not be retrieved. 142 full-text reports were assessed for eligibility. From these, 96 reports were excluded. Finally, a total of 46 studies (46 reports) met all criteria and were included in the systematic review. To ensure the credibility and reliability of the reviewed literature, each study was assessed using the Joana Briggs Institute (JBI) critical appraisal checklist because it provides design-specific instruments for assessing methodological quality and risk of bias across quantitative and qualitative research designs. JBI identifies tools for analytical cross-sectional, cohort, quasi-experimental, randomized, qualitative, and other study designs, making the framework appropriate for a heterogeneous evidence base. Each included study was assessed against the relevant checklist criteria. Items were classified according to the response options specified by the selected JBI instrument, such as Yes, No, Unclear, or Not Applicable, where applicable. Only studies that met acceptable quality standards were included in the final review.

Relevant information extracted from each study included: author(s), year of publication, country or study context, study objectives, research design, sample size, theoretical framework, major findings, strengths and limitations, identified research gaps. Because the included studies differed, the extracted information was synthesized narratively and thematically rather than combined statistically in a meta-analysis. Similar findings

and recurring themes across studies were grouped together under major categories such as training and development, career development, mentoring, organizational support, institutional barriers, and public sector performance outcomes. The analysis focused on identifying patterns, similarities, differences, and gaps within the reviewed literature.

RESULTS

The systematic review included empirical studies conducted across several countries, including Liberia, Nigeria, Ghana, Somalia, Indonesia, Iraq, Sri Lanka, Sierra Leone, and the United States. The reviewed studies used quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method research approaches to examine the relationship between personnel development and employee performance.

The majority of the reviewed studies found a positive relationship between personnel development and employee performance. Personnel development practices such as training, mentoring, coaching, career development, professional education, workshops, job rotation, and capacity building were consistently associated with improved employee competence, motivation, productivity, commitment, job satisfaction, and organizational effectiveness. For instance, Singh and Vinci (2023) found that training, mentoring, and transparent promotion systems improved employee productivity in Indonesia's public sector. Similarly, Nor (2023) established that training enhanced employee competence, job effectiveness, and public service delivery in Somalia's civil service.

Studies by Ituma et al. (2023), Babatunde (2024), and Akinbo and Ogah (2025) also showed that career development, training opportunities, mentoring, and performance appraisal positively influenced employee performance and organizational effectiveness. Similarly, Tamsah et al. (2023) found that training effectiveness improved employee performance through enhanced soft skill competency and employee capacity. Thoronka and Combey (2024) further reported that mentoring, job delegation, and job rotation improved employee commitment and productivity.

In Liberia, Rowe et al. (2010), as well as Michel-Schuldt et al. (2018), found that management training and continuous professional development improved workforce competence and service delivery in the health sector. However, several studies identified challenges affecting personnel development effectiveness, including inadequate funding, favoritism, poor training design, weak supervision, political interference, and poor transfer of learning. Ternni et al. (2014), alongside Omodia and Abekhe (2025), emphasized that these barriers reduced the effectiveness of training and manpower development programs.

A contrasting finding was reported by Anlesinya et al. (2015), who found a negative relationship between employee development and organizational performance when development programs were poorly aligned with organizational needs. The review identified several gaps within the existing literature. Many studies relied heavily on cross-sectional quantitative designs and self-reported questionnaire data, limiting long-term understanding of personnel development outcomes. Additionally, many studies focused on specific sectors such as healthcare, education, banking, and universities rather than the broader public sector. In Liberia particularly, limited empirical studies directly examine the relationship between personnel development and employee performance across the wider civil service system. Most Liberian studies focused mainly on healthcare workforce development and post-conflict institutional reforms. This indicates the need for further empirical research examining personnel development and employee performance within Liberia's broader public sector institutions. The review shows that personnel development positively influences employee performance and organizational effectiveness when supported by adequate funding, transparent systems, managerial support, and effective implementation strategies.

DISCUSSION

The reviewed literature indicates that personnel development generally has a positive influence on employee performance across public sector institutions and related organizations. Most studies found that training, career development, mentoring, professional education, and capacity-building initiatives improve employee

competence, motivation, productivity, commitment, and service delivery. The dominant theoretical perspective across the studies was Human Capital Theory, which explains that investment in employee knowledge and skills increases individual productivity and institutional effectiveness. Other theories identified in the literature include Human Resource Development Theory, Social Learning Theory, Self-Determination Theory, Performance Management Theory, and Capacity Building Theory.

A major theme emerging from the review is the significant contribution of training and development to employee performance. Nor (2023) found that training and development improved employee knowledge, competence, and public service delivery within Somalia's civil service. The study further established that employee performance mediated the relationship between training and public service delivery, suggesting that training contributes indirectly to organizational outcomes through improved employee effectiveness. Similarly, Seneviratne and Kaluarachchi (2024) reported that training design, delivery style, and evaluation significantly influenced employee performance in Sri Lanka's IT sector. Likewise, Tamsah et al. (2023) found that training effectiveness significantly improved health workers' performance through enhanced soft skill competency and employee capacity. The study demonstrated that competencies such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, planning, and employee commitment positively mediated the relationship between training effectiveness and employee performance. These findings extend the existing literature by showing that training improves performance not only directly but also indirectly through the development of employee competencies and workplace capacity.

Comparable findings were reported in Nigeria. Babatunde (2024) found that workshops, seminars, webinars, and practical training methods improved employee skills, motivation, and job performance among civil servants in Lagos State. Likewise, Akinbo and Ogah (2025) revealed that training opportunities, reward systems, performance appraisal processes, and career advancement positively influenced employee effectiveness and commitment in Nigerian government agencies. Their findings suggest that personnel development programs are more effective when supported by fair appraisal systems and clear career opportunities.

The review also demonstrates that career development practices contribute significantly to employee performance. Singh and Vinci (2023) found a significant positive relationship between career development and employee performance in Indonesia's public sector. Their study showed that training, mentoring, transparent promotion systems, and professional growth opportunities improved employee motivation, job satisfaction, and productivity. Similarly, Ituma et al. (2023) found that training, education, mentoring, and promotion improved behavioral competence, service delivery, and employee productivity in Nigeria's Ebonyi State Civil Service. Unlike several other studies, their mixed-method approach provided both statistical evidence and qualitative insights into employee experiences, thereby strengthening understanding of how career development affects workplace behavior and performance.

Additional evidence from Sierra Leone by Thoronka and Combey (2024) suggests that mentoring, job delegation, and job rotation positively influence employee commitment, adaptability, innovation, and workplace satisfaction. These findings indicate that personnel development extends beyond formal training to include workplace empowerment, coaching, and experiential learning processes that encourage employee engagement and improved performance.

The reviewed studies further suggest that supportive organizational environments strengthen the effectiveness of personnel development initiatives. Alsobaey and Alkhateeb (2025) identified supportive leadership, continuous digital skills development, flexible work arrangements, collaboration, communication, and positive workplace culture as important factors influencing employee productivity, engagement, and job satisfaction in the public sector. Their findings suggest that personnel development initiatives are more effective when organizations create enabling workplace environments that support innovation, teamwork, and continuous learning.

A study by Rowe et al. (2010) found that management training and field-based mentoring improved leadership and management skills within Liberia's public health sector. Similarly, Michel-Schuldt et al. (2018) reported that continuous professional development programs improved the professional competence of midwives and

strengthened healthcare delivery, particularly in rural communities. Both studies provide contextual evidence that personnel-development initiatives have been associated with improvements in service delivery within fragile institutional environments.

Similarly, Friedman (2012) showed that structured training programs, professional development schemes, and targeted recruitment initiatives contributed to improved budgeting systems, procurement processes, and policy implementation within Liberia's post-conflict civil service. However, the study also demonstrated that salary disparities, weak institutional coordination, and dependence on donor-supported programs limited the long-term effectiveness of some personnel development initiatives. These findings suggest that personnel development programs are more sustainable when supported by stable institutional structures and fair compensation systems.

Although most reviewed studies reported positive relationships between personnel development and employee performance, evidence from other countries provides broader comparative evidence. Studies identified that institutional and operational barriers reduce the effectiveness of training and development programs. Ternni, Abdulai, and Mohammed (2014) found that poor training needs assessment, weak supervision, ineffective facilitation processes, and inadequate transfer of learning limited the effectiveness of employee training programs in Ghana's public sector. Similarly, Omodia and Abekhe (2025) identified inadequate funding, outdated infrastructure, political interference, and weak policy implementation as major barriers affecting manpower development and public sector efficiency in Nigeria. This indicates positive associations involving training, mentoring, promotion, and career advancement.

Similarly, Singh and Vinci (2023) identified favoritism, nepotism, bureaucratic delays, and inequality in promotion systems as challenges affecting employee advancement and organizational efficiency in Indonesia's public sector. Collectively, these studies suggest that personnel development programs may produce limited outcomes when organizational structures lack transparency, adequate funding, managerial support, and effective implementation mechanisms.

An important contrasting finding emerged from the study conducted by Anlesinya, Bukari, and Eshun (2025), which reported a significant negative relationship between employee development and organizational performance within Ghana's public sector. Unlike most reviewed studies, the authors argued that employee development programs may fail to improve performance when they are poorly aligned with organizational needs or lack adequate managerial support and resources. This finding suggests that personnel development alone does not automatically guarantee improved employee or organizational performance unless programs are strategically designed and effectively implemented.

The review also reveals methodological differences across the studies. Many studies adopted quantitative and cross-sectional designs using questionnaires and statistical analysis to examine relationships between personnel development and employee performance. However, some studies employed mixed-method approaches, including interviews, mentoring assessments, and qualitative evaluations, which provided deeper understanding of employee experiences and institutional challenges. While quantitative studies provided measurable evidence of relationships among variables, mixed and qualitative approaches offered broader contextual insights into how training and career development affect employee behavior and organizational practices.

Another important observation from the review is that several studies examined outcomes beyond individual employee performance, including organizational effectiveness, fiscal management, healthcare delivery, and public service improvement. For example, Kareem and Hussein (2019) focused on organizational effectiveness within Iraqi universities, while Spreen et.al. (2020) examined how employee training influenced fiscal management outcomes in local governments in the United States. Their findings revealed that training in financial performance management contributed to modest improvements in fiscal outcomes and accountability. These studies indicate that personnel development may influence both employee-level performance and broader institutional outcomes.

Despite the growing body of literature on personnel development and employee performance, several research gaps remain evident. Many studies focused on specific sectors such as health, education, banking, universities,

and local government administration, thereby limiting broader understanding of personnel development across the wider public sector. In Liberia, most available studies concentrated on healthcare workforce development and post-conflict institutional reforms, with limited empirical attention given to personnel development and employee performance across the broader civil service system. Additionally, many studies relied heavily on self-reported questionnaire data and cross-sectional designs, limiting long-term analysis of the sustainability and impact of personnel development programs over time.

Summarily, the reviewed literature suggests that personnel development generally contributes positively to employee competence, motivation, productivity, and service delivery. However, the effectiveness of personnel development programs appears to depend largely on organizational support, transparency, adequate funding, managerial commitment, and alignment between training initiatives and institutional needs. The identified contextual and methodological gaps therefore justify further research on the impact of personnel development on employee performance within Liberia's public sector institutions.

CONCLUSION

This systematic review examined the impact of personnel development on employee performance in the public sector. The reviewed studies generally indicate that personnel development practices such as training, career development, mentoring, coaching, professional education, and capacity-building initiatives positively influence employee competence, motivation, productivity, commitment, and service delivery.

The effectiveness of personnel development also appears to depend on organizational conditions. Inadequate funding, weak supervision, poor training needs assessment, weak transfer of learning, favoritism, political interference, limited managerial support, and weak institutional coordination may reduce the benefits associated with development initiatives.

However, the review additionally identified methodological and contextual gaps within the existing literature. Many studies relied heavily on quantitative cross-sectional designs and self-reported measures; consequently, the evidence primarily demonstrates associations rather than causal effects. Personnel development should therefore not be interpreted as independently causing improved employee performance in all public-sector settings.

The review also demonstrates substantial contextual variation. Evidence from countries such as Somalia, Nigeria, Ghana, Indonesia, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Iraq, and the United States provides broader comparative evidence, whereas the Liberian evidence remains limited and is concentrated mainly in healthcare and post-conflict institutional settings. Liberian studies suggest that training, mentoring, and continuous professional development may be associated with stronger workforce competence and aspects of service delivery, but there is insufficient evidence to generalize these findings across Liberia's entire civil service.

Future research in Liberia should therefore employ longitudinal, mixed-method, or other designs capable of examining changes in employee performance over time and should extend beyond healthcare to ministries, agencies, commissions, and other public-sector institutions. Such research would provide stronger evidence concerning whether and under what institutional conditions personnel development is associated with sustained improvements in employee performance.

To improve Liberia's public sector, the government and public institutions, with the help of need assessment, should prioritize continuous personnel development through regular training, mentoring, coaching, professional development programs, workshops, seminars, and practical capacity-building initiatives aimed at improving employee competence, as well as productivity, to meet the demands of the sustainable development goals, institutional goals, and evolving workplace demands. Financial support should be provided to ensure equity and access to training across the country. Merit-based and career development systems should be promoted to enhance employee motivation, fairness, and commitment. And lastly, the presence of an effective monitoring and evaluation team should be felt to reduce favoritism, bureaucratic barriers, and political or administrative interferences that undermine employee development, and to determine whether completed training or

development actually translates to improved workplace performance; from there, the public sector can be improved.

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