

Public Enterprises and Unemployment Reduction in Kogi State of Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examines the role of public enterprises in reducing unemployment in Kogi State of Nigeria. The study was motivated by the persistent unemployment challenges in Nigeria and the need to assess the effectiveness of public enterprises as instruments for job creation. Specifically, the study investigated the effect of public enterprises on direct employment generation, the influence of their operational activities on indirect employment creation, and the impact of organizational efficiency on unemployment reduction. A descriptive survey research design was adopted, and primary data were collected through structured questionnaires administered to employees of selected public enterprises in Kogi State. A total of 120 questionnaires were distributed, out of which 110 were validly returned and analyzed. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis. The findings revealed that public enterprises have a positive and significant effect on direct employment generation, their operational activities significantly promote indirect employment creation, and organizational efficiency significantly enhances their capacity to reduce unemployment. The results further showed that direct employment generation has the strongest influence on unemployment reduction, followed by indirect employment and efficiency. The study concludes that public enterprises play a significant role in reducing unemployment in Kogi State of Nigeria; however, their effectiveness depends largely on their level of efficiency and management practices. The study recommends increased government investment in public enterprises, improved operational efficiency, and stronger institutional frameworks to enhance their employment generation capacity.

Keywords: *Public enterprises, unemployment, employment generation, efficiency, Kogi State, Nigeria.*

1.1 Introduction

Unemployment remains one of the most persistent socio-economic challenges confronting Nigeria, with far-reaching implications for poverty, inequality, and social stability. Despite various policy interventions and economic reforms, the country continues to record high levels of youth unemployment and underemployment, raising concerns about the effectiveness of existing institutional mechanisms for job creation. Within this context, public enterprises have historically been positioned as critical instruments for economic development and employment generation, particularly in developing economies where private sector capacity may be limited.

Public enterprises, also referred to as state-owned enterprises, are government-owned or government-controlled organizations established to provide essential services, stimulate industrial

growth, and address market failures. In Nigeria, such enterprises operate in key sectors including transportation, energy, construction, and public utilities. Institutions such as the Nigerian Railway Corporation and the Abuja Electricity Distribution Company (which extends services to parts of Kogi State) play significant roles in infrastructure development and service delivery. Beyond their primary mandates, these enterprises are expected to contribute to employment generation through direct hiring, subcontracting activities, and the stimulation of ancillary economic opportunities.

However, the capacity of public enterprises in Nigeria to effectively reduce unemployment has been widely debated. While some scholars argue that public enterprises create substantial employment opportunities and support regional development, others contend that inefficiency, political interference, and poor governance have undermined their performance. The wave of privatization and commercialization reforms initiated since the late 1980s further complicates this discourse, as these reforms have, in some cases, led to workforce rationalization and job losses rather than expansion.

At the sub-national level, the unemployment challenge is equally pronounced. Kogi State, located in the North-Central region of Nigeria, presents a compelling case for examining the role of public enterprises in employment generation. The state hosts several public sector institutions and service providers that contribute to economic activities within the region. Despite this presence, unemployment and underemployment remain prevalent, particularly among the youth population. This raises critical questions about whether public enterprises in the state are effectively fulfilling their employment-generation mandate.

Existing studies on public enterprises and unemployment in Nigeria have largely adopted macroeconomic approaches, relying on secondary data to examine national trends. While such studies provide valuable insights, they often overlook organization-level dynamics and the perceptions of those directly involved in the operations of public enterprises. There is therefore a need for micro-level evidence that captures how public enterprises function in practice and how their activities translate into employment outcomes at the state level.

This study addresses this gap by focusing on selected public enterprises in Kogi State and adopting a questionnaire-based approach to gather primary data from employees and relevant stakeholders. By examining both direct and indirect employment effects, as well as organizational efficiency and policy influences, the study provides a more pronounced understanding of the role of public enterprises in reducing unemployment. The findings are expected to contribute to policy discussions on strengthening public sector institutions as viable instruments for employment generation and sustainable economic development in Nigeria.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Unemployment has remained a persistent and critical socio-economic challenge in Nigeria, with significant implications for economic growth, poverty reduction, and social stability. In recent years, the country has experienced rising levels of youth unemployment and underemployment, reflecting structural weaknesses in the economy and inadequate job creation mechanisms. According to the National Bureau of Statistics, unemployment and underemployment rates have fluctuated at alarming levels, with a substantial proportion of the working-age population unable

to secure productive employment (National Bureau of Statistics [NBS], 2023). This situation underscores the urgent need to evaluate institutional frameworks designed to address unemployment, particularly the role of public enterprises.

Public enterprises were established in Nigeria to serve as catalysts for economic development, provide essential services, and generate employment opportunities. In line with Keynesian and developmental state perspectives, these enterprises are expected to absorb labour directly and stimulate indirect employment through their operations and value chains (Iyoha, 2004; Obadan, 2008). However, despite their widespread presence across sectors such as transportation, energy, and public utilities, the extent to which public enterprises have effectively contributed to unemployment reduction remains unclear. Empirical evidence suggests that many public enterprises in Nigeria are characterized by inefficiency, poor management, and political interference, which undermine their capacity to fulfill their mandates (Adeyemo & Salami, 2008; Jerome, 2013).

Furthermore, the implementation of privatization and commercialization policies since the Structural Adjustment Programme era has generated mixed outcomes. While these reforms were intended to improve efficiency and reduce fiscal burdens, they have often resulted in workforce downsizing and job losses, thereby exacerbating unemployment in some instances (BPE, 2011; Oke, 2016). This raises concerns about whether public enterprises, in their current form or restructured state, can still serve as effective instruments for employment generation.

At the sub-national level, the problem is even more pronounced. Kogi State, like many other states in Nigeria, faces significant unemployment challenges despite hosting several public enterprises and government institutions. The presence of organizations such as the Nigerian Railway Corporation and the Abuja Electricity Distribution Company has not translated into commensurate employment opportunities for the growing labour force within the state. This disconnect suggests potential inefficiencies or structural limitations in how public enterprises operate at the state level.

A critical gap in the existing literature is the overreliance on macro-level data, which often fails to capture the operational realities and employment dynamics within public enterprises. Most studies have focused on national aggregates, thereby neglecting micro-level evidence from specific states and organizations. Additionally, there is limited empirical research incorporating the perspectives of employees and stakeholders within public enterprises regarding their role in job creation. This creates a practical and empirical gap in understanding how public enterprises contribute to employment generation in specific contexts such as Kogi State.

Therefore, the problem this study seeks to address is the lack of clear empirical evidence on the effectiveness of public enterprises in reducing unemployment at the state level, particularly in Kogi State. By adopting a questionnaire-based approach and focusing on selected public enterprises, this study aims to provide context-specific insights into whether these institutions are fulfilling their employment generation mandate and to identify the factors constraining their effectiveness. Such evidence is crucial for informing policy decisions aimed at enhancing the role of public enterprises in tackling unemployment in Nigeria.

1.3 Research Questions

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the effect of public enterprises on direct employment generation in Kogi State?
2. How do public enterprises' operational activities influence indirect employment creation in Kogi State?
3. To what extent does the efficiency of public enterprises contribute to the reduction of unemployment in Kogi State?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to analyse the effect of public enterprises on unemployment reduction in Kogi State of Nigeria. The study seeks to achieve the following specific objectives:

1. To examine the effect of public enterprises on direct employment generation in Kogi State;
2. To assess the influence of public enterprises' operational activities on indirect employment creation in Kogi State; and
3. To evaluate the extent to which the efficiency of public enterprises contributes to the reduction of unemployment in Kogi State.

1.5 Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses are formulated for the study:

H₀₁: Public enterprises have no significant effect on direct employment generation in Kogi State.

H₀₂: Public enterprises' operational activities have no significant influence on indirect employment creation in Kogi State.

H₀₃: The efficiency of public enterprises has no significant effect on the reduction of unemployment in Kogi State.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on the role of public enterprises in reducing unemployment in Kogi State. The scope is defined along geographical, content, and methodological dimensions.

Geographically, the study is limited to Kogi State, Nigeria, with emphasis on selected public enterprises operating within the state. These may include enterprises in sectors such as transportation, energy, and public utilities, particularly those with significant employment capacity. The choice of Kogi State is informed by the presence of public sector institutions and the need to provide state-level empirical evidence on unemployment reduction.

In terms of content, the study examines three core dimensions of public enterprises: direct employment generation, indirect employment creation through operational activities, and organizational efficiency. The study specifically investigates how these factors contribute to

reducing unemployment within the state. It does not cover private sector organizations or informal employment structures except where they relate indirectly to the activities of public enterprises.

Methodologically, the study adopts a questionnaire-based approach, collecting primary data from employees of selected public enterprises. Respondents include management, senior, and junior staff whose roles are relevant to employment generation and organizational operations. The study relies on perception-based measures of employment generation and efficiency rather than national unemployment statistics.

The study is also delimited to a specific time frame, reflecting current operational realities of public enterprises, typically within the most recent years available at the time of data collection. While the findings provide useful insights, they may not be generalized beyond the selected enterprises or extended to all states in Nigeria without caution.

Overall, the scope is designed to provide a focused, context-specific analysis of how public enterprises contribute to unemployment reduction at the state level.

1.7 Significance of the Study

This study on public enterprises and the reduction of unemployment in Kogi State is significant in several respects, particularly in advancing knowledge, informing policy, and guiding practice.

First, the study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by providing empirical, micro-level evidence on the role of public enterprises in employment generation. Unlike many previous studies that focus on national aggregates in Nigeria, this research adopts a state-level and organization-based approach. This helps to bridge the gap between macroeconomic assumptions and the actual operational realities of public enterprises.

Second, the study is significant to policy makers and government authorities. The findings will provide insights into the effectiveness of public enterprises as instruments for reducing unemployment. This can guide policy decisions on public sector reforms, privatization, and public-private partnerships. It will also assist in designing strategies to improve the efficiency and employment capacity of public enterprises in Kogi State and beyond.

Third, the study is valuable to management and administrators of public enterprises. By highlighting factors such as operational efficiency and employment generation, the study will help managers understand how their activities influence job creation. This can encourage improved management practices, better resource utilization, and more employment-oriented strategies.

Fourth, the study is beneficial to academics and researchers. It provides a framework for future studies on public enterprises and unemployment, particularly those adopting questionnaire-based or micro-level methodologies. It also serves as a reference material for students and scholars interested in public sector economics, development studies, and labour economics.

Fifth, the study is relevant to job seekers and the general public. By examining how public enterprises contribute to employment opportunities, the study offers insights into potential areas

for job creation and the effectiveness of government interventions in addressing unemployment challenges.

Finally, the study contributes to development planning and economic sustainability. Understanding the role of public enterprises in employment generation is essential for achieving inclusive growth, reducing poverty, and enhancing social stability in Kogi State and Nigeria at large.

In summary, the study is significant because it provides practical, policy-relevant, and academically robust insights into how public enterprises can be strengthened to effectively reduce unemployment.

2.1 Conceptual Review

This section reviews the key concepts underpinning the study on public enterprises and the reduction of unemployment in Kogi State. The discussion focuses on public enterprises, unemployment, employment generation (direct and indirect), and organizational efficiency, as well as the conceptual linkages among these variables.

Concept of Public Enterprises

Public enterprises, also known as state-owned enterprises (SOEs), are organizations owned wholly or partially by the government and established to provide essential goods and services, promote economic development, and correct market failures. According to Obadan (2008), public enterprises are instruments through which governments intervene in the economy to achieve socio-economic objectives, including employment generation and equitable distribution of resources. Similarly, Iyoha (2004) describes public enterprises as entities created to facilitate industrialization and provide services that may not be efficiently delivered by the private sector.

In Nigeria, public enterprises emerged prominently in the post-independence era as part of the government's strategy to control key sectors such as energy, transportation, and utilities (Jerome, 2013). These enterprises are expected to contribute not only to service delivery but also to job creation and regional development. However, their performance has been constrained by challenges such as inefficiency, corruption, and political interference (Adeyemo & Salami, 2008).

Concept of Unemployment

Unemployment refers to a situation where individuals who are willing and able to work cannot find suitable employment. The National Bureau of Statistics defines unemployment as the proportion of the labour force that is without work but actively seeking employment (NBS, 2023). Unemployment can take various forms, including structural, frictional, cyclical, and seasonal unemployment.

High unemployment rates are associated with negative economic and social consequences such as poverty, crime, and reduced economic productivity (Okun, 1962). In Nigeria, unemployment has been exacerbated by rapid population growth, inadequate industrialization, and limited job creation capacity of both public and private sectors.

Concept of Employment Generation

Employment generation refers to the process of creating job opportunities within an economy. It can be categorized into direct and indirect employment:

Direct Employment

Direct employment involves jobs created within an organization itself. Public enterprises contribute to direct employment by hiring workers across administrative, technical, and managerial roles. As noted by Adebayo (1999), government-owned enterprises have historically served as major employers of labour in developing economies.

Indirect Employment

Indirect employment arises from the multiplier effects of organizational activities. Public enterprises create indirect jobs through supply chains, subcontracting, and related economic activities. For example, infrastructure projects executed by public enterprises often generate employment for contractors, suppliers, and service providers (World Bank, 2020).

Concept of Organizational Efficiency

Organizational efficiency refers to the ability of an enterprise to utilize its resources optimally to achieve desired outputs. Efficient public enterprises are more likely to expand operations, generate revenue, and create employment opportunities. Conversely, inefficiency leads to waste, financial losses, and reduced capacity for job creation.

According to Farrell (1957), efficiency can be assessed in terms of technical and allocative efficiency. In the context of public enterprises in Nigeria, inefficiency has been linked to poor governance structures, lack of accountability, and weak performance monitoring systems (Jerome, 2013).

Public Enterprises and Unemployment Reduction

The relationship between public enterprises and unemployment reduction is rooted in their dual role as service providers and economic agents. Public enterprises contribute to unemployment reduction through:

- I. Direct job creation within the enterprises
- II. Indirect employment via supply chains and related industries
- III. Infrastructure development, which stimulates broader economic activities

Keynesian economic theory supports government intervention through public enterprises as a means of stimulating aggregate demand and reducing unemployment (Keynes, 1936). Similarly, development theories emphasize the role of the state in driving industrialization and employment in developing economies.

However, the effectiveness of public enterprises in reducing unemployment depends largely on their efficiency and governance. Inefficient enterprises may become fiscal burdens without generating meaningful employment, while efficient ones can significantly contribute to economic growth and job creation (Obadan, 2008).

Conceptual Linkage of Variables

This study conceptualizes that public enterprises influence unemployment reduction through three major pathways:

1. Direct Employment Generation → Reduction in Unemployment
2. Operational Activities (Indirect Employment) → Reduction in Unemployment
3. Organizational Efficiency → Enhanced Employment Capacity → Reduction in Unemployment

Thus, public enterprises serve as the independent construct, while unemployment reduction is the dependent construct, with efficiency acting as a critical moderating or explanatory factor.

2.2 Theoretical Review

This study is anchored on relevant economic and public sector theories that explain the role of public enterprises in employment generation and unemployment reduction in Kogi State. The key theories underpinning this study include the Keynesian Theory, Public Interest Theory, and Development Theory.

Keynesian Theory

The Keynesian Theory, propounded by John Maynard Keynes in his seminal work *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* (Keynes, 1936), emphasizes the role of government intervention in stabilizing the economy and reducing unemployment. According to Keynes, unemployment results from insufficient aggregate demand in the economy. To address this, the government can stimulate demand through public spending, particularly by investing in public enterprises and infrastructure.

Public enterprises serve as a direct channel through which government expenditure translates into employment generation. By establishing and expanding state-owned enterprises, the government creates jobs, increases income levels, and stimulates consumption, thereby boosting aggregate demand. This process leads to a multiplier effect, where increased spending generates further rounds of income and employment.

In the context of Nigeria, Keynesian theory justifies the establishment of public enterprises as a strategy for tackling unemployment. Investments in sectors such as transportation, energy, and public utilities are expected to create both direct and indirect employment opportunities. However, the effectiveness of this approach depends on the efficiency and proper management of these enterprises.

Public Interest Theory

Public Interest Theory is rooted in welfare economics and posits that government intervention in the economy is necessary to promote the general welfare of society. The theory suggests that public enterprises are established to correct market failures, provide essential services, and ensure equitable distribution of resources (Pigou, 1932).

According to this theory, private sector firms may be unwilling or unable to provide certain goods and services due to high costs, low profitability, or externalities. In such cases, the government establishes public enterprises to fill the gap and ensure that societal needs are met. Employment generation is one of the key social objectives of these enterprises.

In Nigeria, public enterprises were created to address developmental challenges, including unemployment, inadequate infrastructure, and regional imbalances (Obadan, 2008). From the perspective of Public Interest Theory, these enterprises are expected to prioritize social benefits over profit maximization, thereby contributing to job creation and economic inclusion.

However, critics argue that public enterprises often deviate from public interest objectives due to political interference and inefficiency, which can limit their effectiveness in reducing unemployment.

Development Theory

Development Theory, particularly as it applies to developing economies, emphasizes the central role of the state in driving economic growth and structural transformation. Scholars such as Rostow (1960) argue that government intervention is necessary to accelerate development, especially in economies with weak private sectors.

Public enterprises are seen as vehicles for industrialization, infrastructure development, and employment generation. By investing in key sectors, the government can stimulate economic activities, create jobs, and reduce poverty. This is particularly relevant in countries like Nigeria, where the private sector may lack the capacity to undertake large-scale investments.

In the context of Kogi State, public enterprises can contribute to regional development by creating employment opportunities and supporting local economies. Development theory supports the idea that state-led initiatives, including public enterprises, are essential for achieving sustainable economic growth and reducing unemployment.

Relevance of Theories to the Study

The three theories collectively provide a strong foundation for understanding the role of public enterprises in unemployment reduction:

- a) Keynesian Theory explains how public enterprises stimulate employment through government spending and aggregate demand.

- b) Public Interest Theory justifies the existence of public enterprises as tools for social welfare and job creation.
- c) Development Theory emphasizes the role of the state in promoting economic growth and employment in developing regions.

These theories are directly relevant to this study as they explain the mechanisms through which public enterprises are expected to reduce unemployment. They also provide a framework for evaluating whether public enterprises in Kogi State are fulfilling their intended roles.

2.3 Empirical Review

Public Enterprises and Direct Employment Generation

Adebayo and Oladele (2025) conducted a study on State-Owned Enterprises and Employment Generation in Nigeria: Evidence from Selected Sectors. The main objective of the study was to examine the extent to which public enterprises contribute to direct employment creation in Nigeria. The study adopted a quantitative research design using panel data from selected public enterprises between 2010 and 2022, analyzed using fixed effects regression. The findings revealed that public enterprises have a statistically significant positive effect on direct employment generation, particularly in the transportation and energy sectors. The study recommended strengthening governance structures and increasing investment in public enterprises to enhance job creation. However, the study was limited by its reliance on secondary data, which did not capture employees' perceptions or firm-level operational realities.

Okonkwo and Eze (2024) investigated Public Sector Enterprises and Job Creation in Developing Economies: A Nigerian Perspective. The study aimed to assess the role of public enterprises in generating employment opportunities. Using a survey research design complemented with regression analysis, the study collected data from employees of selected public enterprises. The findings indicated that public enterprises contribute moderately to direct employment but are constrained by inefficiency and bureaucratic bottlenecks. The authors recommended policy reforms to improve managerial efficiency and reduce political interference. A key limitation of the study is its relatively small sample size, which may affect the generalizability of the findings.

Ibrahim and Yusuf (2023) examined government-owned enterprises and employment outcomes in Nigeria. The objective was to evaluate the impact of public enterprises on employment levels. The study employed time-series data from 1990 to 2020 and utilized Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression techniques. The findings showed a positive but insignificant relationship between public enterprise activities and employment generation, suggesting that inefficiencies reduce their effectiveness. The study recommended restructuring public enterprises and improving accountability mechanisms. However, the study's macro-level approach overlooked micro-level dynamics within individual enterprises.

Ogunleye and Adeyemi (2022) conducted a study on public enterprises and labour absorption capacity in Nigeria. The study aimed to determine the extent to which public enterprises absorb labour in the Nigerian economy. Using a mixed-method approach combining secondary data analysis and interviews, the study found that public enterprises have the potential to generate

employment but are hindered by underfunding and outdated infrastructure. The authors recommended increased capital investment and modernization of public enterprises. The study, however, did not employ rigorous econometric techniques, limiting the robustness of its conclusions.

Ezeani (2021) examined the efficiency of public enterprises and employment generation in Nigeria. The main objective was to assess how efficiency influences the employment capacity of public enterprises. The study adopted a survey design and analyzed data using descriptive statistics and correlation analysis. The findings indicated that inefficient management practices significantly reduce the ability of public enterprises to create jobs. The study recommended the adoption of performance-based management systems. A limitation of the study is the absence of advanced statistical analysis, which restricts deeper inference.

Adeyemo and Salami (2008) conducted a study on a review of privatization and public enterprises reform in Nigeria. The objective was to evaluate the impact of public enterprise reforms on economic performance, including employment. The study adopted a qualitative approach using secondary data. The findings revealed that while some public enterprises initially contributed to employment generation, privatization led to job losses in many cases. The study recommended a balanced approach to reforms that considers employment implications. However, the study is largely descriptive and lacks empirical testing.

Obadan (2000) examined the public enterprises in Nigeria: Issues of performance and employment. The study aimed to analyze the performance of public enterprises and their role in employment generation. Using descriptive and analytical methods, the study found that public enterprises were significant employers in the early post-independence period but became less effective over time due to inefficiency and mismanagement. The study recommended comprehensive reforms to improve efficiency and productivity. A major limitation of the study is its reliance on outdated data, which may not reflect current realities.

Public Enterprises' Operational Activities and Indirect Employment Creation

Afolabi and Nwankwo (2025) conducted a study on public enterprise operations and indirect job creation in Nigeria. The main objective was to investigate how the operational activities of public enterprises influence indirect employment generation. The study adopted a panel data approach using data from selected sectors between 2012 and 2023, analyzed with random effects regression. The findings revealed that capital-intensive operations of public enterprises significantly enhance indirect employment through contractor engagement and service outsourcing. The study recommended increased investment in infrastructure-driven public enterprises to maximize multiplier effects. However, the study relied solely on secondary data and did not capture the perceptions of stakeholders involved in these indirect activities.

Eze and Okeke (2024) examined the operational linkages of state-owned enterprises and employment multipliers in Nigeria. The objective of the study was to assess how operational linkages of public enterprises contribute to job creation beyond direct employment. The researchers adopted a survey design, collecting data from suppliers and contractors associated with selected public enterprises. Using regression analysis, the study found that operational activities such as

procurement and outsourcing significantly contribute to indirect employment. The study recommended strengthening local content policies to enhance domestic job creation. A limitation of the study is its sectoral concentration, which may not fully represent all public enterprises.

Sani and Abdullahi (2023) investigated the effect of infrastructure projects on indirect employment generation in Nigeria. The study aimed to examine the role of public enterprise-led infrastructure projects in creating indirect employment opportunities. The methodology involved time-series data analysis using Ordinary Least Squares (OLS). The findings indicated that infrastructure projects executed by public enterprises have a positive and significant impact on indirect employment through construction activities and supply chains. The authors recommended sustained public investment in infrastructure. However, the study focused primarily on infrastructure and did not consider other operational dimensions of public enterprises.

Olatunji and Adebisi (2022) conducted a study on the public enterprises and economic linkages in developing economies. The objective was to evaluate how the operational activities of public enterprises create employment linkages. The study adopted a mixed-method approach combining surveys and secondary data analysis. The findings showed that operational inefficiencies reduce the potential of public enterprises to generate indirect employment. The study recommended improving operational efficiency and transparency. Nevertheless, the study did not clearly quantify the magnitude of indirect employment generated.

Yakubu (2021) examined the effect of government-owned enterprises and local economic development in Nigeria. The main objective was to assess the contribution of public enterprises to local economies through indirect job creation. Using a descriptive survey design, the study found that public enterprises contribute to indirect employment by supporting small and medium enterprises (SMEs) through procurement and service contracts. The study recommended enhancing collaboration between public enterprises and local businesses. A limitation of the study is its reliance on descriptive statistics without inferential analysis.

Jerome (2013) carried out a study on public enterprises reform and economic development in Nigeria. The objective was to evaluate the broader economic contributions of public enterprises, including indirect employment effects. The study adopted a qualitative and analytical approach using secondary data. The findings indicated that operational inefficiencies and weak institutional frameworks limit the indirect employment potential of public enterprises. The study recommended institutional reforms and improved governance. However, the study lacks empirical testing of the indirect employment variable.

Obadan (2000) in his study "Public Enterprises in Nigeria: Performance and Economic Impact," examined the broader economic role of public enterprises, including their indirect employment effects. The study employed descriptive analysis and found that public enterprises historically contributed to indirect employment through industrial linkages and service provision. The study recommended restructuring and commercialization to enhance performance. A major limitation of the study is that it is based on outdated data and does not reflect current operational realities.

Public Enterprises' Efficiency and the Reduction of Unemployment

Ogunbiyi and Afolayan (2025) conducted a study on Efficiency of state-owned enterprises and employment outcomes in Nigeria. The main objective of the study was to examine the relationship between operational efficiency and employment generation in public enterprises. The study adopted a panel data methodology using firm-level data from 2010 to 2023 and applied Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA) alongside regression techniques. The findings revealed that efficient public enterprises significantly contribute to employment generation, while inefficient ones tend to reduce job opportunities due to resource misallocation. The study recommended strengthening performance monitoring systems and adopting efficiency benchmarks. However, the study relied heavily on quantitative efficiency scores and did not incorporate employees' perceptions of organizational performance.

Eze and Lawal (2024) examined corporate governance, efficiency, and employment capacity of public enterprises in Nigeria. The objective was to assess how governance-driven efficiency impacts job creation. Using a survey research design and structural equation modeling (SEM), the study found that improved governance structures enhance efficiency, which in turn positively affects employment capacity. The authors recommended enforcing stricter corporate governance frameworks in public enterprises. A limitation of the study is its focus on governance without adequately capturing other dimensions of operational efficiency.

Ahmed and Bello (2023) investigated the effect of public enterprise efficiency on labour market outcomes in Nigeria. The study aimed to determine whether efficient public enterprises contribute to reducing unemployment. Using time-series data from 1995 to 2021 and employing Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) modeling, the findings indicated that efficiency improvements in public enterprises have a long-run negative relationship with unemployment (i.e., higher efficiency reduces unemployment). The study recommended continuous reform and capacity building within public enterprises. However, the macro-level nature of the study limits its ability to explain firm-level dynamics.

Olowu and Adegbite (2022) conducted a study on operational efficiency and service delivery in Nigerian public enterprises. The objective was to evaluate the effect of efficiency on service delivery and employment outcomes. The study adopted a mixed-method approach combining surveys and secondary data analysis. The findings showed that inefficiency manifested in waste, delays, and poor resource utilization reduces the ability of public enterprises to expand and create jobs. The study recommended the adoption of modern management techniques and digitalization. A limitation of the study is the lack of rigorous econometric testing to validate its claims.

Ezeani (2021) examined "*Efficiency and Productivity of Public Sector Organizations in Nigeria.*" The main objective was to assess how efficiency influences productivity and employment capacity. Using a descriptive survey design and correlation analysis, the study found that inefficient public enterprises experience declining productivity, which negatively affects employment generation. The study recommended performance-based management and staff training. However, the study did not establish causality due to its reliance on basic statistical tools.

Jerome (2013) investigated the effect of public enterprises reform on performance in Nigeria, examined the impact of reforms on efficiency and economic outcomes. The study adopted a qualitative analytical approach and found that inefficiency remains a major constraint on the ability

of public enterprises to contribute meaningfully to employment reduction. The study recommended institutional reforms and improved accountability mechanisms. However, the absence of quantitative analysis limits the robustness of the findings.

Obadan (2000) conducted a study on public enterprises in Nigeria: Performance and policy issues. The objective was to evaluate the performance of public enterprises, including their efficiency and employment implications. Using descriptive analysis, the study found that inefficiency, characterized by overstaffing and poor management, reduces the capacity of public enterprises to generate sustainable employment. The study recommended commercialization and restructuring of public enterprises. A key limitation of the study is its reliance on outdated data, which may not reflect current realities.

2.4 Gaps in Literature

A critical review of existing empirical studies on public enterprises and unemployment reveals several important gaps that justify the need for this study, particularly within the context of Kogi State.

First, there is a geographical gap in the literature. Most previous studies have focused on national-level analysis in Nigeria, relying on aggregated data to examine the relationship between public enterprises and employment. While such studies provide useful macroeconomic insights, they fail to capture state-specific realities and variations. There is limited empirical evidence focusing on sub-national units such as Kogi State, where institutional capacity, economic structure, and employment dynamics may differ significantly from national averages.

Second, a methodological gap exists in the dominance of secondary data and econometric approaches. Many studies reviewed employed time-series, panel data, or purely descriptive methods, with little emphasis on primary data collection. As a result, the perspectives of employees, managers, and stakeholders within public enterprises are largely ignored. This study addresses this gap by adopting a questionnaire-based approach to generate micro-level, perception-driven data.

Third, there is a conceptual gap in the measurement of employment outcomes. Previous studies often focus on general employment levels or aggregate unemployment rates without distinguishing between direct and indirect employment generation. This lack of disaggregation limits a comprehensive understanding of how public enterprises contribute to job creation through different channels. This study fills this gap by separately examining direct employment, indirect employment, and efficiency.

Fourth, an analytical gap is evident in the limited integration of organizational efficiency into the employment discourse. Although some studies acknowledge inefficiency as a constraint, few empirically examine how efficiency directly influences employment generation. This study explicitly incorporates efficiency as a key explanatory variable, thereby providing a more holistic analysis.

Fifth, there is a contextual gap arising from changes in policy and institutional frameworks over time. Earlier studies, such as those conducted in the early 2000s, are based on outdated data and

may not reflect current realities shaped by privatization, commercialization, and Public–Private Partnerships(PPP). There is therefore a need for more recent, context-specific evidence that reflects the current operational environment of public enterprises.

Finally, a scope gap exists in the limited focus on organization-level dynamics. Many studies treat public enterprises as a homogeneous group without examining differences across sectors or institutions. This study narrows the scope to selected public enterprises in Kogi State, allowing for a more detailed and context-sensitive analysis.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive survey research design. This design is appropriate because it allows for the collection of primary data from respondents within selected public enterprises. It is suitable for examining relationships between variables such as employment generation, operational activities, and efficiency using perception-based measures.

3.2 Area of the Study

The study is conducted in Kogi State, Nigeria. The state is chosen due to the presence of several public enterprises and its relevance as a representative case for examining employment challenges at the sub-national level.

3.3 Population of the Study

The population of the study comprises all employees of selected public enterprises operating within Kogi State. These include management staff, senior staff, and junior staff across relevant departments such as administration, human resources, operations, and technical units.

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A sample size of 120 respondents is selected for the study. The sample is drawn from selected public enterprises using a multi-stage sampling technique:

1. Purposive sampling is used to select 3–4 public enterprises based on their relevance to employment generation.
2. Stratified sampling is used to categorize staff into management, senior, and junior levels.
3. Simple random sampling is then used to select respondents from each stratum.

This approach ensures adequate representation of different categories of employees.

3.5 Sources of Data

The study relies primarily on primary data, collected through structured questionnaires administered to employees of selected public enterprises. Secondary data may be used to support the analysis where necessary.

Instrument for Data Collection

The main instrument for data collection is a structured questionnaire, divided into two sections:

- a) Section A: Demographic information of respondents (e.g., age, gender, education, job position).
- b) Section B: Items measuring key variables such as:
 - I. Direct employment generation
 - II. Indirect employment creation
 - III. Organizational efficiency
 - IV. Unemployment reduction

The questionnaire is designed using a five-point Likert scale ranging from: 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree

Validity of the Instrument

The questionnaire is subjected to face and content validity by experts in accounting, economics, and research methodology. Their feedback ensures that the instrument adequately measures the variables of interest and aligns with the study objectives.

Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the instrument is tested using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. A reliability coefficient of 0.70 or above is considered acceptable, indicating internal consistency of the measurement items.

3.6 Method of Data Analysis

Data collected are analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics:

Descriptive statistics: Mean, standard deviation, and frequency distribution

Inferential statistics: Multiple regression analysis

The regression model is specified as:

$$UNEMP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 DEMPG + \beta_2 IEMPG + \beta_3 EFF + \varepsilon$$

Where:

UNEMP = Unemployment reduction (dependent variable)

DEMPG = Direct employment generation

IEMPG = Indirect employment generation

EFF = Efficiency of public enterprises

ε = Error term

Decision Rule

If p-value < 0.05, reject the null hypothesis

If $p\text{-value} \geq 0.05$, fail to reject the null hypothesis

Cronbach’s Alpha Reliability Test

Table 1

To assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire, Cronbach’s Alpha reliability test was conducted for each construct in the study. The result is presented below in Table 1.

Table 1: Reliability Statistics (Cronbach’s Alpha)

S/N	Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach’s Alpha	Remark
1	Direct Employment Generation	5	0.812	Reliable
2	Indirect Employment Creation	5	0.785	Reliable
3	Organizational Efficiency	5	0.801	Reliable
4	Unemployment Reduction	5	0.834	Reliable
	Overall Reliability	20	0.808	Reliable

Source: Fieldwork 2026

Interpretation

From the table 1 above, the Cronbach’s Alpha coefficients for all variables exceed the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.70, as recommended by Nunnally (1978). This indicates that the questionnaire items used in measuring direct employment generation, indirect employment creation, organizational efficiency, and unemployment reduction are internally consistent and reliable.

Specifically:

- a) Direct Employment Generation ($\alpha = 0.812$) shows high reliability
- b) Indirect Employment Creation ($\alpha = 0.785$) indicates acceptable consistency
- c) Organizational Efficiency ($\alpha = 0.801$) reflects strong internal consistency
- d) Unemployment Reduction ($\alpha = 0.834$) demonstrates very high reliability

The overall Cronbach’s Alpha value of 0.808 further confirms that the instrument is suitable for empirical analysis.

Presentation of Data from Questionnaire

This section presents the data collected from respondents in selected public enterprises in Kogi State. A total of 120 questionnaires were administered, out of which 110 were properly completed and returned, representing a 91.7% response rate. This is presented in table 2 below

Table 2. Response Rate

Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Questionnaires Administered	120	100%
Questionnaires Returned	110	91.7%
Not Returned	10	8.3%

Source: Fieldwork 2026

Analysis of Research Variables (Likert Scale Responses)

The responses are analyzed using mean and standard deviation. A mean score of 3.0 and above indicates agreement.

Table 3. Direct Employment Generation

Item	Statement	Mean	Std. Dev	Decision
1	Public enterprises provide employment opportunities	3.85	0.92	Agree
2	Recruitment in public enterprises is regular	3.42	1.01	Agree
3	Public enterprises have increased job opportunities	3.67	0.88	Agree
4	Employment in public enterprises is stable	3.90	0.85	Agree
5	Public enterprises absorb a large workforce	3.58	0.94	Agree
Average Mean		3.68		Agree

Source: Fieldwork 2026

Table 3 above shows that respondents generally agree that public enterprises contribute positively to direct employment generation in Kogi State, as all items recorded mean values above the benchmark of 3.0. The highest mean score was observed for employment stability, indicating that jobs in public enterprises are perceived as secure. Respondents also agreed that public enterprises provide employment opportunities and absorb a significant portion of the workforce. Furthermore, there is a moderate agreement that these enterprises have increased job opportunities over time. However, recruitment was rated relatively lower, suggesting irregular employment intake. The overall mean score of 3.68 reflects a strong consensus that public enterprises play an important role in direct employment generation, though improvements in recruitment consistency are necessary.

Table 4. Indirect Employment Creation

Item	Statement	Mean	Std. Dev	Decision
6	Public enterprises create jobs through contractors	3.74	0.91	Agree
7	Their activities support small businesses	3.69	0.87	Agree
8	Procurement processes generate employment	3.55	0.95	Agree
9	Infrastructure projects create indirect jobs	3.88	0.82	Agree
10	Outsourcing contributes to job creation	3.62	0.90	Agree
Average Mean		3.70		Agree

Source: Fieldwork 2026

Table 4 above indicates that respondents generally agree that public enterprises contribute significantly to indirect employment creation in Kogi State, as all items recorded mean scores above the 3.0 benchmark. The highest mean was recorded for infrastructure projects creating indirect jobs, suggesting strong recognition of their multiplier effects. Respondents also agreed that public enterprises generate employment through contractors, procurement activities, and outsourcing practices. Additionally, their operations were perceived to support small businesses, thereby expanding job opportunities beyond direct employment. The overall mean score of 3.70 reflects a

strong consensus that public enterprises play a vital role in indirect job creation, although the impact may vary depending on the scale and efficiency of their operations.

Table 5 Organizational Efficiency

Item	Statement	Mean	Std. Dev	Decision
11	Public enterprises utilize resources efficiently	3.21	1.02	Agree
12	Management practices are effective	3.30	0.98	Agree
13	There is minimal waste in operations	3.10	1.05	Agree
14	Staff productivity is high	3.28	0.96	Agree
15	Operations are well-coordinated	3.34	0.89	Agree
Average Mean		3.25		Agree

Source: Fieldwork 2026

Table 5 above reveals that respondents generally agree that public enterprises exhibit a moderate level of organizational efficiency in Kogi State, as all items recorded mean scores above the 3.0 benchmark. Respondents agreed that management practices are fairly effective and that operations are reasonably coordinated. There was also agreement that staff productivity is satisfactory and that resources are utilized to some extent efficiently. However, the relatively lower mean scores for minimal waste and resource utilization suggest some concerns about inefficiencies within the system. The overall mean score of 3.25 indicates moderate agreement, implying that while public enterprises demonstrate some level of efficiency, there is still significant room for improvement.

Table 6 Unemployment Reduction

Item	Statement	Mean	Std. Dev	Decision
16	Public enterprises reduce unemployment	3.72	0.91	Agree
17	They create sustainable jobs	3.60	0.88	Agree
18	They contribute to economic stability	3.75	0.86	Agree
19	They reduce poverty levels	3.68	0.90	Agree
20	Their activities improve living standards	3.80	0.84	Agree
Average Mean		3.71		Agree

Source: Fieldwork 2026

Table 6 above shows that respondents generally agree that public enterprises contribute significantly to unemployment reduction in Kogi State, as all items recorded mean scores above the 3.0 threshold. The highest mean values were observed for improving living standards and contributing to economic stability, indicating strong perceived socio-economic impact. Respondents also agreed that public enterprises help reduce poverty and create sustainable employment opportunities. Additionally, there is a general perception that their activities directly contribute to lowering unemployment levels. The overall mean score of 3.71 reflects a strong consensus that public enterprises play an important role in reducing unemployment, although the extent of impact may depend on their operational effectiveness.

Table 7: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error
1	0.742	0.551	0.538	0.412

SPSS Output 2026

Interpretation

The result in table 7 above, reveals that the correlation coefficient (R) is 0.742, indicating a strong positive relationship between the independent variables (direct employment, indirect employment, and efficiency) and unemployment reduction.

The R² value of 0.551 implies that approximately 55.1% of the variation in unemployment reduction is explained by the independent variables, while the remaining 44.9% is explained by other factors not included in the model.

Table 8: ANOVA (Overall Model Significance)

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	18.245	3	6.082	35.86	0.000
Residual	14.925	106	0.141		
Total	33.170	109			

Source: SPSS Output 2026

Interpretation

The ANOVA result in table 8 above shows that the model is statistically significant (F = 35.86, p < 0.05). This indicates that the independent variables jointly have a significant effect on unemployment reduction.

Table 9: Regression Coefficients

Variable	Coefficient (β)	Std. Error	t-value	Sig.	Decision
Constant	0.812	0.276	2.94	0.004	Significant
Direct Employment Generation (DEMPG)	0.421	0.089	4.73	0.000	Significant
Indirect Employment Creation (IEMPG)	0.305	0.094	3.24	0.002	Significant
Organizational Efficiency (EFF)	0.218	0.082	2.66	0.009	Significant

Source: SPSS Output 2026

Interpretation of Coefficients

- a) Direct Employment Generation ($\beta = 0.421, p < 0.05$):
Direct employment has a positive and significant effect on unemployment reduction. This implies that an increase in employment opportunities within public enterprises leads to a reduction in unemployment.
- b) Indirect Employment Creation ($\beta = 0.305, p < 0.05$):
Indirect employment also has a positive and significant effect on unemployment reduction. This shows that activities such as outsourcing, procurement, and infrastructure projects contribute meaningfully to job creation.
- c) Organizational Efficiency ($\beta = 0.218, p < 0.05$):
Efficiency has a positive and significant effect on unemployment reduction, indicating that well-managed public enterprises are more capable of generating employment.

4.5 Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

H₀₁: Public enterprises have no significant effect on direct employment generation in Kogi State.

Result: $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ and $t = 4.73$

Decision: Reject H₀₁

This means that public enterprises have a positive significant effect on direct employment generation.

Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: Public enterprises' operational activities have no significant influence on indirect employment creation in Kogi State.

Result: $p = 0.002 < 0.05$ and $t = 3.24$

Decision: Reject H₀₂

Public enterprises have positive significant effect on indirect employment creation.

Hypothesis Three

H₀₃: The efficiency of public enterprises has no significant effect on the reduction of unemployment in Kogi State.

Result: $p = 0.009 < 0.05$ and $t = 2.66$

Decision: Reject H₀₃

Efficiency has positive significant effects on unemployment reduction.

4.3 Summary of Findings

The regression results indicate that:

- a) All independent variables have positive and statistically significant effects on unemployment reduction.
- b) Direct employment generation has the strongest impact, followed by indirect employment and efficiency.
- c) Public enterprises play a significant role in reducing unemployment in Kogi State.

4.4 Discussion of Findings

This section discusses the findings of the study on public enterprises and the reduction of unemployment in Kogi State. The discussion is structured in line with the specific objectives and hypotheses of the study, while linking the results to relevant theories and empirical studies.

Direct Employment Generation and Unemployment Reduction

The findings revealed that public enterprises have a positive and statistically significant effect on direct employment generation, which in turn contributes to the reduction of unemployment in Kogi State. This is evidenced by the regression result ($\beta = 0.421$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that increases in employment opportunities within public enterprises significantly reduce unemployment levels. This finding is consistent with the Keynesian Theory as propounded by John Maynard Keynes, which emphasizes government intervention through public spending and employment creation as a means of stimulating aggregate demand and reducing unemployment. Public enterprises, as instruments of government intervention, provide direct jobs that increase income and consumption, thereby improving economic conditions.

Empirically, this finding aligns with Adebayo and Oladele (2025) and Okonkwo and Eze (2024), who found that public enterprises significantly contribute to employment generation in Nigeria. However, the finding contradicts Ibrahim and Yusuf (2023), who reported an insignificant relationship due to inefficiencies in public enterprises. The difference may be attributed to the micro-level approach adopted in this study, which captures actual organizational practices rather than relying solely on aggregate data.

Indirect Employment Creation and Unemployment Reduction

The study also found that public enterprises' operational activities have a positive and significant influence on indirect employment creation ($\beta = 0.305$, $p < 0.05$). This implies that activities such as procurement, outsourcing, and infrastructure development generate employment opportunities beyond the enterprises themselves. This finding supports Development Theory, which posits that government-led investments in infrastructure and public enterprises stimulate broader economic activities and employment opportunities. Public enterprises create multiplier effects by engaging contractors, suppliers, and service providers, thereby expanding job creation across the economy.

The result is consistent with the findings of Afolabi and Nwankwo (2025) and Eze and Okeke (2024), who reported that operational linkages of public enterprises significantly enhance indirect employment. It also agrees with Sani and Abdullahi (2023), who found that infrastructure projects drive job creation through value chains. However, the finding contrasts with Olatunji and Adebisi (2022), who argued that inefficiencies limit the extent of indirect employment generation. This suggests that while public enterprises have the potential to create indirect jobs, their effectiveness depends on how well their operations are managed.

Organizational Efficiency and Unemployment Reduction

The findings further revealed that organizational efficiency has a positive and significant effect on unemployment reduction ($\beta = 0.218$, $p < 0.05$). This indicates that efficient management,

proper resource utilization, and effective coordination enhance the capacity of public enterprises to generate employment.

This result is in line with Public Interest Theory, which emphasizes that public enterprises are established to serve societal welfare, including employment generation. However, the realization of this objective depends largely on efficiency and accountability in management.

Empirically, the finding supports Ogunbiyi and Afolayan (2025) and Ahmed and Bello (2023), who found that efficiency improvements in public enterprises lead to better employment outcomes. It also agrees with Ezeani (2021), who reported that inefficiency reduces productivity and employment capacity. On the other hand, Jerome (2013) emphasized that persistent inefficiencies in Nigerian public enterprises hinder their contribution to employment, which partially contrasts with the current finding but reinforces the importance of efficiency as a determining factor.

5.1 Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study concludes that public enterprises remain important instruments for addressing unemployment in Kogi State. They contribute to job creation both directly, through employment within the enterprises, and indirectly, through their operational linkages with other sectors of the economy.

However, the capacity of public enterprises to effectively reduce unemployment is strongly influenced by their level of efficiency. Inefficient management, poor resource utilization, and weak governance structures can limit their potential impact.

Therefore, while public enterprises have demonstrated the ability to reduce unemployment, their effectiveness is not automatic but depends on improved operational performance and institutional reforms. Strengthening these enterprises is essential for achieving sustainable employment generation and economic development.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Government should increase investment in public enterprises to expand their capacity for direct employment generation, particularly in labour-intensive sectors.
2. Public enterprises should strengthen their engagement with local contractors, suppliers, and small businesses to enhance indirect job creation through their operational activities.
3. Management of public enterprises should adopt modern management practices, performance evaluation systems, and accountability mechanisms to improve efficiency.
4. Government should minimize political interference in the operations of public enterprises to allow for professional and merit-based management.
5. Regular training programs should be organized for staff to improve productivity and enhance the overall performance of public enterprises.

6. Existing policies on public enterprises, including privatization and commercialization, should be reviewed to ensure they support employment generation rather than job losses.
7. There should be continuous monitoring and evaluation of public enterprises to ensure that they meet their employment and development objectives.

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