Office Skills Needed by Employers for Job Performance of Office Technology and Management Graduates in Tertiary Institutions and Business Organisations in Bauchi State

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Abstract

The study examined office skills needed by employers for job performance of office technology and management graduates in tertiary institutions and business organisations in Bauchi State. The study adopted descriptive research design of a survey type. The population of the study consisted 600 chief executives and senior management members of staff who are working with personal or confidential secretaries in both public and private organizations in Bauchi State, Nigeria. 20% of the population which is 120 were used as sample which was randomly selected from business organizations in Bauchi State. A self-design questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. The instrument was validated by three experts and the reliability of the instrument was established through a pilot study on 20 employers in Bauchi State who were outside the sample of the study. The Cronbach's Alpha method was used to measure the internal consistency of the instrument yielded reliability co-efficient of 0.70. Out of 120 questionnaire distributed, 112 were filled and returned which is 94% rate of retrieval. The research questions were answered using the means scores and standard deviation. Any item with a mean score fall within 1.00 – 1.74 =Not Needed, 1.75 – 2.49= Less Needed 2.50 – 3.24 Moderately Needed, 3.25 – 4.00 =Highly Needed. Multiple regression was used to test the hypothesis formulated at 0.05 level of significant. Findings revealed that technology skills, followed by communication and interpersonal skills, are significant predictors of job performance for OTM graduates. The study concluded that for OTM graduates to excel in their chosen profession and perform better in organisational settings, they need essential skills such as technology, communication, and interpersonal skills. Therefore, the study recommends that tertiary institutions should offer specialised courses covering relevant technologies, communication strategies, and interpersonal dynamics commonly required in organisational settings.

Keywords: skills, technology, communication, interpersonal skills, OTM graduates and job performance

1. Introduction

The shift in business from manual operational procedures to full automation in most offices has birthed such terms as word processing, data processing, reprographics and micrographics to describe many technological processes. Aninye-Ranor (2019) noted that the modern business office is suddenly changing as a result of office automation, which has brought about new ways of doing work in organisations. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has had a lot of impact on office occupations, especially on secretarial practice. Thus, repositioning secretaries as constant users of ever-changing technology to handle numerous office functions related to information processing, human relation, communication and others for goal attainment of the organisation. The need for skill in modern text production, photocopying, mail handling and advanced telecommunications with sophisticated electronics equipment now seem to be pointing to the need for the acquisition of new basic skills because the advent of technological changes require innovative, interactive, problem-solving skills and the ability to interpret data. Thus, technological changes seem to have made programmes of traditional secretarial practice (now Office Technology and Management) inadequate and obsolete, where manual typewriters, telephone, duplicating machine are fast becoming archival materials. More so, routine tasks requiring essential skills like typing, taking dictation, answering phone calls, dealing with mails, receiving visitors, etc. are disappearing fast because the tools and methods of performing most of these functions have changed.

Office Technology and Management (OTM) is a course of study offered in Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education primarily to educate and train students to become competent Secretarial practitioners such as secretarial teachers and secretaries. A new nomenclature for Secretarial Studies according to National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) (2004), is to make its recipients skilled personnel, enterprising and self-reliant in this digital age.

Skill can be described as the ability to do something well. According to Doyle (2019), skills can either be in hard or soft form. Hard skills are the technical knowledge the OTM graduate needs in order to perform his or her job well and such skills are gained through education and

training programme leading to certification, whereas soft skills are office skills which can be learned on the job. Ejeka (2021) stressed that office skills provide a sound basis for consistent and objective performance standards about what is needed and expected in an organisation in terms of human relations skills and communications skills. Typewriting skill and shorthand knowledge are no longer enough to determine the position and effectiveness of office secretaries. In addition, feedback from employers about the performance of secretaries has not been favorable or encouraging. This is because secretaries no longer utilize their office skills efficiently thereby resulting to low productivity.

Job performance is the conduct and actions of employees that promote the achievement of organizational goals in the workplace. Job performance, according to Jiang, Siponen and Tsohou (2023), refers to how well (in terms of quality and quantity) an employee performs the tasks specified in his or her job responsibilities. It directly impacts the productivity and effectiveness of secretaries, consequently affecting overall organizational performance. Due to the emergence of new technologies, it seems that there is a need for a possession of skills in technology, good communication skills, high level of organization and interpersonal skills, for effective job performance among secretaries in organization.

Technology skills is one of the skills that is needed by every successful secretary. The use of technology such as computer, facsimile machine, micrographic machine etc. is expected to improve the job performance of OTM graduates in areas of record keeping, result processing, memo writing, data sourcing, timely decision making process, e-mailing, data-gathering, analyzes, and dissemination that would have taken secretaries a good deal of time to extrapolate. Long (2024) mentioned that technologies can help secretaries to communicate efficiently and promptly thereby increasing productivity. Despite the fact that technological development has brought about a better way of doing things and for goal attainment, it has been observed that most secretaries or office managers in Bauchi seems not to possess this office skill as shown in their mode of operation and interaction while discharging their official duties. Ogolo and Amesi (2021) reported that the technology skills acquired by secretaries and their utilization showed that some secretaries lacked some vital technology skills to use some of these modern office machine and equipment to carry out their duties. All these deficiencies might lead to non-performance by secretaries. Leonard (2019) noted that when secretaries do

not perform effectively, consumers would feel that the company is apathetic to their needs, and that will make customers to seek help elsewhere.

Communication skill has been identified as the lubricant that oils the bolts and knots of an organization. This skill is critical to OTM graduates in that it provides them with proficiency to foster strong working relationship with chief executives, co-workers, clients, thereby increasing team and organizational productivity, and creating an overall positive work environment. Gibson (2023) mentioned that communication skill helps secretaries to understand their duties and responsibilities, solve complex problems, make better business decisions, delegate tasks effectively, build quality client and employee relationships and keep them engaged and productive. However, observation on the performance of secretaries in recent time showed that probably not all OTM graduates possessed communication skills. Ezeabii, Ekoh-Nweke and Okonkwo (2021) noted that some secretaries are copy typists in the sense that they are not excellent in spellings and grammar skills. These deficiencies have made some secretaries to be incompetent in producing mailable correspondence, handling phone calls, minutes taking among others. Drexel University (2018) claimed that about 400 companies had lost revenue of $62.4 million yearly due to poor communication. For any business to thrive, meet deadlines and achieve goals, communication skill is essential because the level at which employees interact together through written or non-verbal communication would create favorable environment for effective performance in an organization.

*I*nterpersonal skill is also needed by OTM graduates for job performance. Interpersonal skill seems to comprise the relationship between the office manager and his superior, colleagues, subordinates as well as the public in general. *A* good working relationship contributes to gaining the full support and cooperation of other members of staff in any organisation. Interpersonal skills are primarily soft or intangible skills that can help an office manager to interact and get along well with others. This skill will help secretaries to clearly and smoothly convey their ideas easily. Ama and Azih (2023) observed that office technology and management graduates are still having difficulties to interact with their customers, employers, and colleagues because clients do misunderstand and misconstrue secretaries' intentions while relating with them due to inability of secretaries to handle and convey their feelings and intentions correctly. The researcher was informed that some office managers appear to be

unaccommodating and intolerable especially when working under tight schedules as most of them often flare up at little provocations, consequently scaring potentials customers away and subsequently losing their patronage. Secretaries should be able to gain everybody's attention through proper disposition and responsiveness. The secretaries' failure to relate effectively will not only cause client to be disappointed but will also irritate and stifle the spirit of customers in dealing with the organization. This invariably will affect the achievement of organisation objectives. From the above, it can be seen how critical those skills discussed were fundamental to job performance of secretaries in organization. It is therefore, instructive to investigate whether the employers actually need these office skills for job performance of secretaries in organization.

Empirically, some related studies have been carried out such as Agbamu (2007), who conducted a study on ICT competencies need for NCE business education graduates in Delta State. The main purpose of the study was to find out the necessary and specific ICT competencies needed for NCE business graduates to secure employment in modern organizations in Delta State. The population of the study comprised 225 employers both from public and private organization in Delta State. Survey research was adopted for data collection. Questionnaire was used in collecting data in the study. The study found out that computer operation competencies were requirements for employment in both the public and private sector, especially competencies to start up, shut down a computer system and its peripherals, start an application, use a word processing package, and communicate electronically among others. It also revealed that media communication competencies, creation of simple animation, ability to communicate orally were essentially required of secretaries by public sector employers. The present study is related to Agbamu's study in that they both examine the office skills needed in tertiary institutions and business organisation. However, Agbamu's study focused on ICT competencies, while this study takes a look at the technology skills that will help secretaries to carry out digital marketing, online booking of travel reservation and accommodation, information security and management, records management, audio and video conferencing among others in an organisation.

Ezeabii et al (2021) carried out a study on employability skills needed by secretaries of small scale enterprises for job performance in Enugu State. The main purpose of the study was to

determine the employability skills needed by secretaries of small scale enterprises for job performance in Enugu State. The population for the study was 1978 registered small and medium scale enterprise managers in Enugu State. Sample size of 333 registered small scale business enterprise managers was obtained using Taro Yamane formula for finite figure. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The instrument used for data collection was a 17 item questionnaire grouped into two sections. The findings revealed that secretaries need a broad based skill in technology especially word processing skills in order to type, edit, proof read documents, save documents, prepare official reports and retrieve information from computer among others. Also, the communication skills needed by secretaries in small scale enterprise are ability to speak the business language, listen attentively, write correctly, retain the attention of audience, write reliable letters, speak English fluently, answer telephone calls, and write minutes of meetings correctly.

A study conducted by Onifade, Opele and Okafor (2018) on communication: an effective tool for employee performance in Unilever Nigeria plc, Lagos was reviewed. The main purpose of the study was to determine the relationship between effective communication and employees' performance in Unilever Nigeria plc. Lagos. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study and the total population of the study were 142 respondents. The simple random sampling technique was used to select the participants. Data collected were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). *The result of the analysis revealed that there was significant relationship between effective communication and employee performance.* The findings of the research showed that for any organizational performance to be effective, an open communication environment should be encouraged. Once members of the organization feel free to share feedback, ideas and even criticism at every level, job performance will increase.

The study carried out by Asamu (2014) was on the impact of communication on workers' performance in selected organisations in Lagos State, Nigeria. The broad objective of the study was to determine the impact of organizational communication on workers' performance in selected organisations in Lagos State, Nigeria. The research design adopted for the study was descriptive survey method. In selecting a sample, stratified sampling technique and random sampling technique were used respectively. The sample population of 120

respondents were used for the study, while data for the study was collected through questionnaire. Four research questions were raised and three hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Data were analyzed using statistical techniques which included both descriptive and inferential statistics. The result of the study revealed that a relationship exists between effective communication and workers' performance, productivity and commitment.

Muhammad, Toryila and Saanyol (2018) carried out a study on the role of interpersonal relationship on job performance among employees of Gboko Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria. The purpose of the study was to explore interpersonal relationship among employees of Gboko LGA as it relates to the quality of job performance of workers. Questionnaire was used for data collection. The study employed a cross sectional survey method where 138 employees comprising 98 males and 40 females were drawn from Gboko Local Government Area through purposive sampling method. Correlation and t-test was used to test the hypothesis. The result of the study showed that there was a relationship between interpersonal relationship and job performance among employees of Gboko Local Government Area.

Syahrudin (2018) conducted a research on the effect of interpersonal skills on performance of regional secretariat employees in Kapuas Hulu Regency. The purpose of the study was to determine the effect of interpersonal skills on the performance of the Kapuas Hulu Regency Regional secretariat staff. The study used a quantitative research approach and the population were 137 employees. The sampling technique used was simple random sampling. Based on the results of sample calculations in this study, there were 102 employees. The research instrument used was a questionnaire and data analysis for the study was descriptive statistical analysis techniques and statistical inferential. The study revealed that Interpersonal Skills have a positive direct effect on employee performance. This means that increasing the interpersonal skills of employees will improve employees' performance and these skills must be continuously improved from time to time so that the achievement of individual good performance can be maintained even more.

2. Statement of the Problem

The curriculum content of OTM programme reveals that OTM students are expected to be exposed to a wide range of office skills through courses like word processing, secretarial duties, computer appreciation and application, office management, business communication, among others. However, the job performance of this category of workers in organisations in Bauchi State seems not to justify the supposedly acquired knowledge and skills. Employers, parents and government are worried that OTM graduates do not possess adequate office skills and this may have implication on the individuals, government as it will expose graduates to personal, social, financial risks and also limit their ability to perform effectively. More so, it will increase recruitment costs of firms and lead graduates to face unemployment which could lead to social vices such as arm robbery, kidnapping, cyber-crimes.

Thus, it seems the training given to OTM students does not seem to reflect the wave of technological change because OTM graduates appears to be ignorant of basic technology skills. This has created disparity between what is imparted to them and the needs of the industries. Azih in Mshelia and Orheruata (2022) observed that the performance of some OTM graduates fall short of acceptable practices in modern office technologies. This suggests that they have not adequately acquired the skills needed for effective use of modern office technologies during their training consequently, some functions that supposed to be handled by OTM graduates are thus given to graduates of other disciplines. It looks as if the institutions producing the OTM graduates are not quite sure of the exact technology skills needed by the employers of labour. The problem of skill mismatch suggests that the institutions are not satisfying employers in terms of the office skills needed of OTM graduates. Where OTM workers lack skills to use tools effectively and efficiently, productivity is definitely bound to be unimpressive.

Supporting the above, it has been observed that OTM graduates are now found among the groups of unemployed and graduates roaming about the streets in search of paid employment. The foregoing could be attributed to a number of factors, which may likely be inadequate possession of office skills such as communication, technology, interpersonal and organization office skills, among others. The way and manner in which some OTM graduates communicate seems to portray poor mastery of the rules of grammar, which may likely distort the meaning

of the conversation. Also, the use of self-invented abbreviations, use of social media jargons in written communication seems to have effect on the communication skills of OTM graduates in official domains.

It has also been observed that most OTM graduate workers in Bauchi seem to lack effective communication and are not pleasant enough in their interactions with others to create good image for their organisations. This may likely have effect on the attainment of the goals and objective of these organisations. It is on the foregoing premise that the researcher intends to investigate whether the identified office skills: technology, communication, interpersonal and organisation skills are needed by OTM graduates for job performance in organisations in Bauchi, Bauchi State, Nigeria.

3. Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study will be to investigate the office skills needed by employers for job performance of Office Technology and Management graduates in tertiary institutions and business organisations in Bauchi State. Specifically, the objectives of this study was to:

1. examines technology skills needed for job performance of OTM graduates in organisations in Bauchi State.
2. examines communication skills needed for job performance of OTM graduates in organisations in Bauchi state.
3. examines interpersonal skills needed for job performance of OTM graduates in organisations in Bauchi state.

4. Research Questions

The following research questions are raised to guide the study:

1. What are the technology skills needed for job performance of OTM graduates in organisations in Bauchi State?
2. What are the communication skills needed for job performance of OTM graduates in organisations in Bauchi state?
3. What are the interpersonal skills needed for job performance of OTM graduates in organisations in Bauchi state?

5. Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses formulated will be tested at 0.05 level of significance.

$H0_1$: Technology skills, Communication skills needed and Interpersonal skills will not significantly predict job performance of OTM graduates in organisations in Bauchi state.

6. Methods

The study adopted a descriptive research design of a survey type. The design is appropriate because it helps the researcher to describe the existing situation in Bauchi State. The population of the study consisted of 600 chief executives and senior management members of staff who are working with personal or confidential secretaries in both public and private organizations in Bauchi State, Nigeria. The 20% of the population which is 120 were used as sample which was randomly selected from business organizations in Bauchi State. A self-design questionnaire titled "Office Skills Needed by Office Technology and Management Graduates Questionnaire (OSNOTMGQ)" was used for the study. The instrument was validated by three experts. One from Federal Polytechnic, Office Technology and Management Department, Bauchi and two from Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti (one from Vocational and Technical Education Department and one from Test and Measurement Department). The reliability of the instrument was established through a pilot study on 20 employers in Bauchi State who were outside the sample of the study. The Cronbach's Alpha method was used to measure the internal consistency of the instrument, which yielded reliability co-efficient of 0.70. Out of 120 questionnaire distributed, 112 were filled and returned which is 94% rate of retrieval. The research questions were answered using the means scores and standard deviation. Any item with a mean score within 1.00 – 1.74 =Not Needed, 1.75 – 2.49= Less Needed, 2.50 – 3.24 Moderately Needed, 3.25 – 4.00 = Highly Needed. Multiple regression was used to test the hypothesis formulated at 0.05 level of significant.

7. Results

Research Question 1: *What are the technology skills needed for job performance of OTM graduates in organisations in Bauchi State?*

Table 1: Respondents Views on the technology skills needed for job performance of OTM graduates in organisations

S/N	Statement	N	Mean	St.D	Remarks
1	Proficiency in using Microsoft Word for creating, editing, and formatting documents is necessary for OTM graduates.	112	3.67	0.50	Highly Needed
2	Competence in Microsoft PowerPoint for preparing and delivering presentations is important for OTM graduates	112	3.01	1.19	Moderately Needed
3	Competence in database management systems is necessary for managing and organizing information effectively	112	3.43	0.75	Highly Needed
4	Knowledge of basic computer networking and troubleshooting	112	3.09	0.95	Moderately Needed
5	Competence in digital document management and archiving systems is crucial for organizing and retrieving documents efficiently	112	3.38	0.78	Highly Needed
6	Proficiency in digital communication tools, such as email and instant messaging, is important for effective communication	112	3.34	0.54	Highly Needed
7	Ability to manage and use office management software, such as Microsoft Access and ERP systems, is crucial for job effectiveness.	112	3.76	0.48	Highly Needed
8	Skill in Microsoft Excel for data analysis, creating spreadsheets, and generating reports is essential for job performance.	112	3.52	0.69	Highly Needed
	Grand Mean Value		3.40	0.73	Highly Needed

The results in Table 1 revealed the respondents' views on the technology skills needed for job performance of OTM graduates in organisations. The respondents revealed that technology skills that are needed includes; proficiency in using Microsoft Word (3.67), competence in Microsoft PowerPoint (3.01), ability to manage office management software (3.76), competence in database management systems (3.43), knowledge of basic computer

networking and troubleshooting (3.09), competence in digital document management and archiving systems (3.38), proficiency in digital communication tools, such as email and instant messaging (3.34), ability to manage and use office management software, such as Microsoft Access (3.76) and Skill in Microsoft Excel for data analysis, creating spreadsheets, and generating reports (3.52). From the analysis, it could be inferred that the respondents indicate that the technology skills needed to predict the job performance of OTM graduates in organizations are generally regarded as highly needed, with a grand mean value of 3.40 and a standard deviation (St.D) of 0.73. This overall mean reflects a consensus among respondents on the high importance of these skills.

Research Questions 2: *What are the communication skills needed for job performance of OTM graduates in organisations in Bauchi state?*

Table 2: Respondents views on the communication skills needed for job performance of OTM graduates in organisations

S/N	Statement	N	Mean	St.D	Remarks
1	Proficiency in writing clear and detailed meeting minutes is important for record-keeping and follow-up.	112	3.11	0.94	Moderately Needed
2	Ability to write clear and concise business emails is essential for effective communication	112	2.62	1.08	Moderately Needed
3	Proficiency in preparing and presenting professional reports is crucial for job performance.	112	3.23	0.78	Moderately Needed
4	Skill in conducting effective meetings, including setting agendas and leading discussions, is important.	112	3.01	0.74	Moderately Needed
5	Ability to listen actively and provide constructive feedback is essential for job performance	112	3.02	0.92	Moderately Needed
6	Proficiency in using digital communication tools, such as email and instant messaging, is important for day-to-day operations in organization	112	3.24	0.81	Moderately Needed
7	Competence in writing memos and internal communications is necessary for clear information dissemination.	112	3.36	0.99	Highly Needed
8	Ability to communicate professionally on the phone and in video calls is vital for remote and customer interactions.	112	3.66	0.66	Highly Needed

Grand Mean Value		*3.15*	*0.86*	*Moderately Needed*

The results in Table 2 showed the opinion of the respondents on the communication skills needed for predicting the job performance of OTM graduates in organizations in the study area. the respondents revealed that communication skills needed for job performance includes; proficiency in writing clear and detailed meeting minutes (3.11), ability to write clear and concise business emails (2.62), proficiency in preparing and presenting professional reports (3.23), skill in conducting effective meetings, including setting agendas and leading discussions (3.01), ability to listen actively and provide constructive feedback (3.02), proficiency in using digital communication tools, such as email and instant messaging (3.24), competence in writing memos and internal communications (3.36), as well as ability to communicate professionally on the phone and in video calls (3.66). The overall grand mean value of 3.15 and standard deviation of 0.86 indicates that respondents were in agreement that these communication skills are deemed moderately needed for effective job performance of OTM graduates.

Research Question 3 What are the interpersonal skills needed for job performance of OTM graduates in organisations in Bauchi state?

Table 3: Respondents Views on the interpersonal skills needed for job performance of OTM graduates in organisations

S/N	Statement	N	Mean	St.D	Remarks
1	Ability to build and maintain positive working relationships with colleagues is essential for job performance.	112	3.23	0.98	Moderately Needed
2	Skill of managing and resolving workplace conflicts to maintaining a positive environment	112	3.07	0.88	Moderately Needed
3	Ability to maintain confidentiality and handle sensitive information discreetly is necessary for trust	112	3.46	0.72	Highly Needed
4	Skill in managing time effectively to meet deadlines and prioritize tasks is important for productivity.	112	3.29	0.73	Highly Needed
5	Ability to work independently as well as part of a team is essential for flexibility in various tasks.	112	3.33	0.82	Highly Needed
6	Skill in maintaining a positive attitude even in challenging situations is important for workplace morale	112	3.55	0.62	Highly Needed
7	Ability to collaborate effectively with team	112	3.48	1.25	Highly

	members to achieve organizational objectives is essential				Needed
8	Skill in providing constructive feedback to help others improve their performance is important	112	3.40	0.95	Highly Needed
	Grand Mean Value		*3.35*	*0.86*	*Highly Needed*

The results in Table 3 revealed the respondents' opinions on the statement used to elicit responses on the interpersonal skills needed to predict the job performance of OTM graduates in organizations. The respondents' view on the interpersonal skills needed includes ability to build and maintain positive working relationships with colleagues (3.23), skill of managing and resolving workplace conflicts to maintaining a positive environment (3.07), ability to maintain confidentiality and handle sensitive information discreetly (3.46), skill in managing time effectively to meet deadlines and prioritize tasks (3.29), ability to work independently as well as part of a team (3.33), skill in maintaining a positive attitude even in challenging situations (3.55), ability to collaborate effectively with team members to achieve organizational objectives (3.48) and skill in providing constructive feedback to help others (3.40). The grand mean value of 3.35 and standard deviation of 0.86 indicates that, overall, these interpersonal skills are regarded as highly needed for effective job performance of OTM graduates.

8. Test of Hypothesis

H0₁: *Technology skills, Communication skills and Interpersonal skills needed will not significantly predict job performance of OTM graduates in organisations in Bauchi state.*

Table 4: Multiple regression showing relationship between the Technology skills, Communication skills, Interpersonal skills needed and job performance

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	R-square.	Adj.R-square	F-Stat.	P.value
	B	Std. Error	Beta						
(Constant)	7.196	1.456		4.942	.000	.833	.829	12.276	.000
Tech. Skills	.496	.090	.463	5.492	.000				
1 Comm. Skills	.152	.075	.171	2.024	.045				
Interp. Skills	.165	.091	.151	1.803	.010				

The multiple regression analysis in Table 4 shows the relationship between technology skills, communication skills, interpersonal skills, and job performance of OTM graduates. The model has a high R-square value of 0.833 and an adjusted R-square of 0.829, indicating that approximately 83% of the variability in job performance can be explained by these three types of skills. The F-statistic is 12.276 with a p-value of 0.000, suggesting that the overall model is statistically significant. Among the predictors, technology skills have the highest standardized coefficient (Beta = 0.463) and a significant t-value of 5.492 (p = 0.000), indicating a strong positive relationship with job performance. Communication skills also significantly contribute to job performance with a Beta of 0.171 and a t-value of 2.024 (p = 0.045). Interpersonal skills, while significant (p = 0.010), have a lower impact with a Beta of 0.151 and a t-value of 1.803. Overall, the regression analysis revealed that technology skills, followed by communication and interpersonal skills, are significant predictors of job performance for OTM graduates. Since all the skills are statistically significant, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, technology skills, communication skills and interpersonal skills are needed and will significantly predict job performance of OTM graduates in organisations in Bauchi state.

9. Discussion of Findings

Findings revealed that technology skills statistically and significantly predict the job performance of OTM graduates because they are crucial for performing essential tasks efficiently, facilitate effective communication and data management, and enhance the overall

productivity and competency of graduates in their professional roles. The finding supports the study of Ezeabili et al (2021), who revealed that secretaries need broad-based skills in technology, especially word processing skills, in order to type, edit, proofread documents, save documents, prepare official reports, and retrieve information from computers. The findings also support the study of Agbamu (2007), who revealed that computer operation competencies were requirements for employment in both the public and private sectors.

Also, the findings revealed that communication skills significantly predict the job performance of OTM graduates as they enable effective collaboration, clarity in tasks, and professional interactions within organizations. The ability to communicate effectively in the workplace can increase overall productivity and create a strong team. The findings corroborate the study of Onifade et al (2018), who revealed that there was a significant relationship between effective communication and employee performance. The findings also support the study by Asamu (2014), who found that a relationship exists between effective communication and workers' performance, productivity, and commitment.

Findings revealed that interpersonal relationship skills significantly predict the job performance of OTM graduates as they contribute to teamwork, conflict resolution, and maintaining a positive work environment. The finding is in consonance with the study of Muhammad et al (2018), who revealed that there was a relationship between interpersonal relationships and job performance among employees of Gboko Local Government Area. The finding is in line with the study of Syahrudin (2018), who revealed that interpersonal skills have a direct positive effect on employee performance. This means that enhancing employees' interpersonal skills will improve their job performance.

10. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that for OTM graduates to excel in their chosen profession and perform better in organisational settings, they need essential skills such as technology, communication, and interpersonal skills. Therefore, the study recommends that tertiary institutions should offer specialised courses covering relevant technologies, communication strategies, and interpersonal dynamics commonly required in organisational settings. A tertiary institution should design and implement structured technology training programmes within the OTM

curriculum to ensure graduates are proficient in relevant tools and software used in their field. Furthermore, the OTM department should begin providing mentorship programs where students can receive guidance on developing their interpersonal skills from experienced professionals in the field.

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