

## Supervisors' Rating of Personality Skills Possessed by OTM Graduate Workers for Effective Work Performance in Anambra State, Nigeria

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### Abstract

This study was necessitated by numerous reports from employers of labour regarding the ineffective work performance of Office Technology and Management (OTM) graduate workers in different organizations in Anambra State, Nigeria. One research question guided the study and three null hypotheses were tested. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Population of the study was 304 supervisors from public and private organizations in Anambra State were studied. There was no sampling because the population was manageable. A 5-point rating scale questionnaire containing 13 items with options of very much possessed (VMP), much possessed (MP), fairly possessed (FP), little possessed (LP) and very little possessed (VLP), which was validated by three experts was used for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was determined using measure of internal consistency method with Cronbach Alpha and reliability index of 0.76 was obtained. The arithmetic mean was used to answer the research question while t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that the OTM graduate workers fairly possessed personality skills needed for effective work performance. Type of organization significantly influenced the supervisors' rating of personality skills possessed by their OTM graduate workers but gender and work experience did not. Based on the findings, it was concluded that the ineffective performance of OTM graduate workers is the result of their level of acquisition of requisite skills in the course of their training. It was, therefore, recommended among others that OTM lecturers should use suitable instructional pedagogies to ensure that students acquire relevant skills for effective work performance in employment upon graduation and that the curriculum developers should emphasize skills for effective work performance and methods for adequately developing them in students.

**Keywords:** *Supervisor, personality skills, OTM graduates, work performance*

### Introduction

Personal skills are generic skills which are related to a person's attributes or traits that affect social interaction in a variety of ways. Doyle (2022) explained that personal skills are generic or soft skills including intangible qualities or traits that enhance people's interactions. People with such skills, communicate effectively with others, self-express, and self-manage. Doyle further

averred that personal skills shape not only the professional trajectory of individuals but their private life as well. Personality skills are highly transferable since an individual's attitude, personality and work style automatically follow the individual to every company they work for (Zane, 2022). Generally, employers of labour prefer candidates with strong personal skills because they are reliable and positively contribute to the office culture in a variety of ways. OTM graduates with good personality skills are in high demand because they have the ability to take courageous decisions and respond adequately to business pressure and challenges in the organizations

People's personality reveals their enduring traits and characteristics in relation to emotions, motivations, interpersonal interactions and attitudes which differ from their abilities (Emecheta, Awa & Ukoha, 2016). It endures and predicts people's attitudes towards situations and other people but is transient. Daft in Ghani, Yunus and Bahry (2016) defined personality traits to be set of invisible characteristics and practices that lie behind a relatively stable pattern of behavior in response to ideas, objects, or people in the environment. Personality traits encompass a person's relative stable feelings, thoughts, behavioural patterns and form unique personality that differentiates people from others. Proper understanding of such personality traits provides clues about how an individual is likely to feel and act in various situations. Studies show that personality traits influence the environments where people work, reside and play vital roles (Ezenwafor & Okoli, 2014, & Emecheta, Awa & Ukoha, 2016).

Personality skills include ability to be hardworking, use initiative, learning skills, memorizing skills, multitasking, positive mindset, patience, perseverance, rigor, self-confidence, strategic thinking, time management, ability to work under pressure, adaptability, ambition and analytical skills. Others are attention to detail, autonomy, creativity and innovation, critical mindset, decision-making and judgement, dedication, drive for results and ethical behaviours. According to Goldberg in Emecheta, Awa and Ukoha (2016) personality traits demonstrate such personality structures as extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and intellect/imagination which are briefly explained as follows:

- **Extraversion:** This trait shows people to be energetic, sociable, assertive and positively emotional. People high in extroversion are often talkative, arguing for their opinions, interacting with every one so frankly and seeking excitement in every bit of life. This

quality of personality makes people more social with an out-going personality, always ready to interact with people in the society.

- **Agreeableness:** This trait describes people as being very accommodating, trustful, generous, tolerant and compassionate. People high in this trait are always helping, ready to resolve issues by creating a win-win situation due to their flexible attitude and are usually highly sociable, friendly and generous in negotiations in a friendly environment to keep balance with opponent's concerns. They have the propensity to attain cooperation and social harmony because helping others is their inbuilt feature which makes them believe that others are also honest and trustworthy (Hussain in Emecheta et. al., 2016).
- **Conscientiousness:** This trait measures how organized, thoughtful and forward-thinking an individual is or can be. Conscientious employees are cautious, orderly, dependable, graceful, show self-discipline acting dutifully and responsibly. Such individuals are highly influenced by their career success in the organization and tend to be very careful about their future planning, cautious about their surroundings, compact and fully scheduled, tend to be self-managed, prefer to be predictable and try to be risk free (Burch & Anderson in Emecheta et. al. ,2016). They have the propensity to work without flaws, everything gets done rightly because chaos are stressors for them; they are neat, clean and would like everything to be at the right place always.
- **Neuroticism:** This refers to people's dispositions to experience negative emotional states, feel distressed and view the world around them negatively (Sev, 2019). Such people experience negative moods, feel stressed and have negative orientation at work. They are more critical of their work performance, a tendency that drives them to make improvements and excel in critical thinking and evaluations. Neuroticism personalities do not tend to experience many negative emotions and moods and are less pessimistic and critical of themselves and others (Jones & George in Sev 2019). They are anxious, depressed, and self-conscious and as well calm, contented and self-assured.
- **Openness:** This explains how open minded a person is and people possessing this trait are highly imaginative, having creative intellect, sensitive to inner thoughts and having the

capability to analyze matters differently. They exhibit intellectual curiosity, art and knowledge, are independent-minded, have a preference for novelty and variety, are curious to know hidden things and deductive from different angles (Cattell & Mead in Emecheta et. al. 2016). Furthermore, open minded individuals are curious about both the inner and outer world and their lives are experientially richer. They are willing to accept novel ideas and experience both positive and negative emotions more keenly than do closed individuals.

In view of the different personality traits in the work place, reasonable effort is needed by Office Technology and Management (OTM) graduate workers to understand the individual characteristics of their supervisors, colleagues and clients and the factors influencing them to enable them perform their tasks effectively. OTM is one of the practical ICT related programmes offered in polytechnics, universities and colleges of education in Nigeria. The programme has been evolving with advancement in office work and technology. Ifejika (2015) averred that OTM evolved out of a need to meet the technological and managerial demands of today's workplace. Ezenwafor and Gude (2020) observed that OTM came into being in 2004 replacing secretarial education, secretarial studies and secretarial technology as a result of inadequacies in the curriculum for the demands of employers of labour in the information and communication era. According to Esene (2014), OTM curriculum is an improvement of an old curriculum with emphasis on exposure to modern trends of acquiring knowledge and skills through the use of technological equipment and resources.

The objectives of OTM programme, as stipulated by the National Board for Technical Education (NABTE, 2004) include to equip students with office/secretarial skills and competencies essential for employment in any computerized office; to expose students to industrial work experience scheme that will give them opportunity to demonstrate and practicalize their skills; to pave way for the students to further their academic pursuit and to develop in the students an occupational intelligence that will make them versatile and adaptable to the changing situations in the world of work. . Nwaiwu, Dikeocha, Onwuagboke and Ikwugbado (2016) opined that OTM as a branch of business education is not only meant to produce business teachers who will be able to inculcate the vocational aspects of business education to the society but also equip them with

the right skills that will enable them function well as office workers and manage their own offices in self-employment. The success of OTM programme is to be measured and determined by the effectiveness, competence and job performance of the graduates (Omoniyi & Elemure, 2014).

Graduates of OTM occupy positions as secretaries, administrative professionals, office technologist, information managers and office administrators. The use of secretarial services permeates all facets of a country's socio-economic and political life ranging from schools, hospitals, corporate settings, legal and medical offices as well as large and small-scale businesses. Amoor in Amoor and Magaji (2015) asserted that the functions of professional secretaries both in private and public sectors of the economy have gone far beyond their traditional orthodox duties as professional secretaries as they are currently charged with the responsibilities of manipulating and managing database, creating presentations and reports using suitable computer software and digital graphics. OTM graduate workers are employees who have acquired professional knowledge as well as technical and different generic skills for effective work performance in their organizations. Personal attributes of an OTM graduate worker should include good personality, integrity, pleasing temperament, imitiveness, suitable manners, understanding, self-control and good humour in order to absorb the heat of the day's work (Osahon, 2018). Roles of OTM graduate workers are varied as they worked in different industries, however, their basic as highlighted by Ngotngamwong (2018) include administrative tasks, filing, screening calls, emails, organizing and scheduling meetings and appointments, making travel arrangements, accompanying superiors to meetings and following-up on discussions They are involved in continuously solving unexpected problem, coordinating work, managing schedules, and meeting deadlines, cooperating with colleagues and others outside the organization to get the work done, managing expenditures, correspondence, preparing the agenda developing minutes of the meetings.

Furthermore, Ajayi (2015) stressed that the duties of OTM graduate workers include efficient administration of a company, particularly with regards to ensuring compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements and ensuring that decisions of the board of directors are implemented. OTM graduate workers are secretaries and administrative office managers regarded as image makers of the organization and since no business can afford to lose its image, their effective performance cannot be overemphasized as they interface with executives, colleagues and

the outside world. This is why Uygur and Koç in Ali, Burcu and Murat (2011) affirmed that secretaries are the first people visitors to organization come across and are regarded as the organization's vision. It becomes an obligation, therefore, that they should be very well equipped and knowledgeable than other office employees. For this reason, organizations with today's contemporary management approach increase their expectations of OTM graduates providing structures for them in both public and private sectors.

The subjects of this study are male and female supervisors of office workers from public and private organizations in Anambra State. According to the Institute of Internal Auditors in Smith (2015), public organizations consist of governments and all publicly controlled or publicly funded agencies, enterprises and other entities that deliver public programs, goods, or services. They are pure governmental bureaucratic agencies, governmental profit-oriented corporations and governmental service agencies (Khan & Khandaker, 2016). Public organizations encompass the civil service (ministerial departments), statutory corporations or parastatals, judiciary, legislature, educational institutions, financially wholly or principally owned by government at the local, state and federal levels (Marshall & Murtala, 2015). On the other hand, private organizations, according to Bella, Grant, Kindornay and Tissot (2013) are those with a core strategy and mission to engage in profit-seeking activities whether in production of goods, provision of services, and/or commercialization. This includes financial institutions and intermediaries, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), individual entrepreneurs, farmers, co-operatives, and large corporations, which operate in the formal and informal sectors.

Khan and Khandaker (2016) asserted that public organizations are controlled predominantly by political forces while private organizations are controlled by market forces. The Nigerian Civil Service (the mainstay of the public sector in Nigeria) is characterized by unclear mandates and guaranteed jobs, which most times can be traced to political connections instead of competency, adequateness and performance (Osemeke, 2011). These result in unskilled and unmotivated civil servants which cause inefficient and ineffective work performance. The two sectors have similarities in the area of profit-making pursuance and making contributions to economic development of the country, however, they are controlled by different ideologies. Therefore, Pacha in Osahon (2018) noted that there is need to ascertain whether dissimilarities in

business ideologies are likely to significantly influence employers' assessment of skills of employees.

Similarly, gender could also affect the perception of supervisors. Gender stereotype is a generalized view or preconception about attributes and roles that are performed by women and men (UN Human Right, 2021). It is believed that males and females perceive things differently. Olayinka and Warren (2019) reported that a significant difference exists between male and female school leadership. Garba (2019) asserted that gender bias may influence supervisors' assessment of workers skills and performance. In addition, years of experience is another factor that could affect the perception of the supervisors of OTM graduate workers' possession of personality skills for effective work performance. Adebayo in Osahon (2018) noted that experience of an assessor is a significant factor that can influence the assessment. However, Osahon (2018) reported that level of experience of employers did not significantly influence their assessment of the application of interpersonal skills by OTM graduates. Based on the need to ascertain the influence of these respondent variables on the supervisors' rating of personality skills possessed by OTM graduate workers for effective performance in public and private organizations in Anambra State, they were covered in the study.

### **Problem of the Study**

Employees' job performance is known to have a significant relationship in the attainment of goals of the organization which is of utmost interest to organizational managers. Personality traits of individuals influence the environments where they work, reside and play vital roles. Researchers have reported that employees in different organizations today are deficient in requisite skills for effective performance such as ability to multi-task, positive mindset, perseverance, patience, ability to work under pressure, taking initiatives and self-development among others. Neyland in Ezenwafor and Okoli (2014) asserted that people with high level of personality skills are hard to find among today's workforce.

OTM graduate workers are employees found in different organizations as executive assistants, executive secretaries or office managers and are regarded as image makers of their organizations. It is widely reported that these image makers in public and private organizations in Anambra State often display poor attitude to work and do not perform their functions as effectively

as expected of them which may not be unrelated with the level of generic skills they possess. The problem of this study, therefore, is that the level of personality skills (an aspect of generic skills) possessed by OTM graduate workers in public and private organizations in Anambra State is not clearly known and such knowledge is required to address the cause of their poor performance. The study was considered imperative as it will provide empirical on the personality skills possessed by OTM graduate workers to enable relevant stakeholders take objective actions to solve the problem so that organizations will benefit maximally from this very important set of office workers.

### **Research Question**

What is supervisors' perception of the level of personality skills possessed by OTM graduate workers for effective work performance in public and private organizations in Anambra State, Nigeria?

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. Respondents from public and private organizations in Anambra State do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the level of personality skills possessed by OTM graduate workers for effective work performance.
2. Male and female respondents do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the level of personality skills possessed by OTM graduate workers in public and private organizations in Anambra State for effective work performance.
3. Work experience does not significantly influence respondents' mean ratings on the level of personality skills possessed by OTM graduate workers in public and private organizations in Anambra State for effective work performance.

### **Method**

Descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The study was carried out in Anambra State of Nigeria which is one of the five states in the South-East. The population of the study comprised 304 supervisors drawn across public and private organizations in Anambra State. There was no sampling and sampling technique because the population is manageable. The

instrument used for data collection was a 5-point rating scale questionnaire titled, “Personality Skills Assessment Questionnaire (PSAQ)”. The instrument contained 13 items with options of very much possessed (VMP), much possessed (MP), fairly possessed (FP), little possessed (LP) and very little possessed (VLP). It validated by three experts from the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe university Awka, Anambra State. The reliability of the instrument was tested using Cronbach Alpha method of internal consistency and it yielded reliability coefficient of 0.76 indicating that the instrument is reliable (Olayiwole in Oluwasina, 2019). The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer research question and determine the spread of respondents’ mean ratings while t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. A null hypothesis was rejected where the p-value is equal to or greater than the alpha level of 0.05 ( $p > 0.05$ ), otherwise the null hypotheses was not rejected. The analyses were carried out using SPSS version 25.0.

## Result

**Table 1: Respondents’ mean ratings on the level of personality skills possessed by OTM graduate workers for effective work performance in public and private organizations in Anambra State**  
N=304

S/N	Personality Skills	Mean	SD	Remarks
	<b>Ability to:</b>			
1	Manage emotions in a stressful moment	3.17	1.01	Fairly Possessed
2	Display high sense of self-esteem	3.34	1.01	Fairly Possessed
3	Deal honestly with others in the office	3.47	0.99	Fairly Possessed
4	Take risks when necessary	2.93	1.03	Fairly Possessed
5	Display self-discipline	3.50	0.97	Much Possessed
6	Respond adequately to work pressure	3.13	1.04	Fairly Possessed
7	Set goals	3.29	1.00	Fairly Possessed
8	Achieve goals	3.24	1.02	Fairly Possessed
9	Take courageous decisions	3.26	1.02	Fairly Possessed
10	Display high sense of self reliance	3.23	0.93	Fairly Possessed
11	Demonstrate sustained energy at work	3.35	0.92	Fairly Possessed
12	Recognize personal shortcomings	3.16	0.86	Fairly Possessed
13	Work on personal shortcomings	3.02	0.98	Fairly Possessed
	<b>Cluster Mean</b>	<b>3.24</b>		<b>Fairly Possessed</b>

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Table 1 reveals that 12 out of 13 personality skills listed have mean ratings ranging from 2.50 – 3.49 indicating that supervisors rated them as fairly possessed by OTM graduate workers. Only one item has a mean rating of 3.50 indicating that OTM graduate workers possessed it at much level. The cluster mean score of 3.24 indicates that OTM graduate workers in public and private organizations in Anambra State fairly possessed personality skills. The standard deviations for all the items are within the same range indicating that the respondents are not wide apart in their mean ratings.

**Table 2: Summary of t-test of significant difference in the mean ratings of supervisors from public and private organizations in Anambra State on the level of personality skills possessed by OTM graduate workers for effective work performance**

Type of Organization	N	Mean	SD	df	Sig	t-cal	P-Value	Remarks
Public	165	3.42	0.79	301.34	0.05	4.71	0.00	Significant
Private	139	2.02	0.70					

Table 2 reveals the calculated t-value of 4.71 and 301.34 degree of freedom with a p-value of 0.00 which is less than the alpha level of 0.05 ( $p\text{-value}=0.00 < \alpha\text{ level}=0.05$ ). This implies that there is a significant difference in the mean ratings of supervisors from public and private organizations in Anambra State on the level of personality skills possessed by OTM graduate workers for effective work performance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

**Table 3: Summary of t-test of significant difference between male and female supervisors' mean ratings on level of personality skills possessed by OTM graduate workers in public and private organizations in Anambra State for effective work performance**

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	Sig	t-cal	P-Value	DECISION
Male	158	3.14	0.76	302	0.05	-2.44	0.15	Not Significant
Female	146	3.35	0.77					

Table 3 shows the calculated t-value of -2.44 and 302 degree of freedom with a p-value of 0.15 which is greater than alpha level of 0.05 ( $p\text{-value}=0.15 > \alpha\text{ level}=0.05$ ). This shows that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female supervisors on the level of personality skills possessed by OTM graduate workers in public and private organizations in Anambra State for effective work performance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

**Table 4: Summary of one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on influence of experience on supervisors’ mean ratings on level of personality skills possessed by OTM graduate workers in public and private organizations in Anambra State for effective work performance**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P-Value	DECISION
Between Groups	1.32	2	0.66	1.10	0.33	Not Significant
Within Groups	179.95	301	0.60			
Total	181.26	303				

Table 4 shows 2 and 301 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance with a p-value of 0.33 which is greater than alpha level of 0.05 ( $p\text{-value}=0.33 > \alpha\text{ level}=0.05$ ). This implies that work experience does not significantly influence supervisors’ mean ratings on the level of personality skills possessed by OTM graduate workers in public and private organizations in Anambra State for effective work performance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

### **Discussion**

The finding of the study revealed that OTM graduate workers in public and private organization in Anambra State fairly possessed personality skills for effective work performance. This corroborates the finding of Emecheta, Awa and Ukoha, (2016) that personality characteristics including extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness influence affective commitment of workers and their work performance. It also agrees with the report of Sev (2019) that personality traits are significantly influencing job performance behaviour in manufacturing organizations in Nigeria. Furthermore, the finding is in agreement with that of Ghani, Yunus and Bahry (2016) that leaders’ personality traits influenced job performance in public sector, Putrajaya, Malaysia.

Findings of the study also revealed that supervisors from public organizations in Anambra State differed significantly with their counterparts in private organizations in their mean ratings on the level of personality skills possessed by OTM graduate workers for effective work performance. Uche, Oghojafor, and Akaighe (2016) posited that unethical practices and lack of control to checkmate workers are prevalent in public organization than private organizations because in public organizations the belief is to share the national cake while government resources are regarded as nobody’s property. Therefore, the finding could be as a result of differences in value disposition of the two sectors the supervisors operate.

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Finding of the study disclosed that male and female supervisors did not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the level of personality skills possessed by OTM graduate workers in public and private organizations in Anambra State for effective work performance. The finding disagrees with the finding of Ezenwafor and Okoli (2014) that gender has significant influence on respondents' mean ratings on personal characteristics that are important for success of entrepreneurs.

Furthermore, the study found that work experience did not significantly influence supervisors' mean ratings on the level of personality skills possessed by OTM graduate workers in public and private organizations in Anambra State for effective work performance. The finding is at variance with that of Ezenwafor and Okoli (2014) that work experience significantly influenced respondents' mean ratings on personal characteristics that are important for success of entrepreneurs. The finding of the study could be evidence that supervisors, regardless of years of work of experience, have good understanding of the importance of personality skills in an organization as such boosting organizational relationships.

### **Conclusion**

Findings of the study show that OTM graduate workers in public and private organizations in Anambra State, Nigeria fairly possessed personality skills needed for effective work performance. Based on the findings, it was concluded that the observed and widely reported poor performance of these employees is caused by their lack of personality skills which could be as a result of inadequacies in the curriculum of the programme or their implementation.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. OTM graduate workers should engage in self-development in order to fill the gap in their possessed personality skills for effective work performance.
2. Management of tertiary institutions offering OTM should ensure that Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) and teaching practice are well organized with proper feedback from industry and school-based supervisors in order to adequately develop students' personality skills for effective work performance on graduation.

3. Management of tertiary institutions offering OTM should organize or sponsor lecturers to workshops, seminars and short courses on effective methods of skills training in order to effectively develop generic skills in the students for effective performance in employment.
4. Curriculum planners should emphasize generic skills in the OTM programme and ensure that its effective implementation with suitable instructional strategies and resources so that the graduates will acquire relevant skills for effective work performance.

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