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Influence of Stress Management Practices on Job Performance of Office Technology and Management Lecturers in Polytechnics in South-South, Nigeria

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Abstract

The issue of academic staff job performance in Nigerian Polytechnics has been attracting the attention of public educators and stakeholders in education. High workload of academic staff is one of the factors impeding their desire to put up excellent performance. This study, therefore, deemed it fit to investigate the Influence of Stress Management (SM) on Job Performance (JP) of Office Technology and Management (OTM) lecturers in South-South Polytechnics, Nigeria. Descriptive research design was adopted. Population consisted 134 OTM Lecturers from seven South-South Polytechnics, Nigeria. Total enumeration sampling technique was used, therefore all the 134 OTM Lecturers served as the sample size for this study. Data collected was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings

revealed that SM had positive and significant influence on JP (Adj. $R^2 = .418$; $F_{(4, 122)} = 23.587$, $p < 0.05$). The results of relative influence analysis of the sub-variables reveal that control over job, support from colleagues and support from supervisor all had significant influence on job performance ($\beta = 0.431$, $p < 0.05$, $\beta = -0.316$, $p < 0.05$, $\beta = -0.207$, $p < 0.05$) respectively. Psychological well-being had insignificant influence ($\beta = 0.004$, $p > 0.05$). The study concluded that stress and stress management practices influence JP. The study recommended that there should be an advocacy for teamwork that would foster effective communication among OTM lecturers as this could also heighten their level of job performance. This would make them to perform better in their jobs.

Keywords: Stress Management, Job Performance, Academic Staff, Polytechnics

Introduction

Performance in an organization refers to the formation of value, efficiency, and quality of overall output which determines how important an employee is to the organization. Performance is defined as behaviour that leads to the attainment of the desired results or whether an employee is doing well at his job or not. Employees are an asset to the organization, and the performance each employee provides must be significant. Performance are the outcome of the energy put in place by each employee of the organization which can be tangible, or intangible which is influenced by a variety of individual traits. In a competitive environment, every organization irrespective of its type, sizes and level of development needs highly performing employee that fulfills the goals and aspiration in order to enhance productivity. Job performance refers to the quality and quality output expected from each employee (Okeleke & Oladejo, 2021) ^[10].

Performance of academic staff is one of the most important components of any educational system that has attracted a lot of interest in academics and the social world. Tertiary institutions no doubt play vital role in providing support in terms of scientific and academic development. This support is dependent on the performance of its employees. The performance of Office Technology and Management Lecturers in tertiary institutions is a vital factor for the progress and productivity of tertiary education and the prosperity of the society at large. This is because a better performance of the Office Technology and Management Lecturers would lead to a better organizational performance (Oladejo, Kareem & Ghanni, 2019) ^[13].

Improved job performance is a precursor for different organizations to achieve their objectives for the organization to survive and thrive. It has become necessary, therefore, for organizations wishing to improve their performance to focus on their human component in order to ensure excellence and prosperity. OTM Lecturers' job performance enables management of the institution to assess the performance of the organization and to develop programs and frameworks that can help in improving

the overall performance of the institution. The job performance of OTM Lecturers is important in all organizations, but its importance is imperative in all educational organizations and tertiary institutions in particular, this is because Lecturers of tertiary institutions play a pivotal role in nurturing future generations that will be capable of advancing the country and the society. Lecturers, therefore, contribute to the educational institution in terms of administrative management, teaching and conducting scientific research that increases the efficiency of the tertiary institutions and society (Oladejo, Kareem & Ghanni, 2019) ^[13]. Authors revealed that some of the problems of job performance in tertiary institutions in Nigeria may manifest in the form of decreased productivity, difficulty prioritizing tasks, committing errors in given tasks, or missing deadlines, turnover intentions among staff, among others (Oladimeji & Sowemimo, 2020) ^[14].

In addition, some other perceived problems faced by OTM Lecturers in their job performance in the institution include; lack of job satisfaction, too long working hours, poor remuneration and incentive scheme, delayed promotion, issue of relegation just to mention a few (Oladimeji & Sowemimo, 2020) ^[14]. All these problems could also make the OTM Lecturers in polytechnics not to achieve the stated goals and objectives of the polytechnics. This study, therefore, is focused to investigate job performance of Office Technology and Management Lecturers in polytechnics and work environment together with stress management practices as factors that could affect it.

The measures for job performance have been studied and stated in John Campbell theory of 1993. This study adapted the measures from the Campbell theory to use for the OTM Lecturers' job performance: declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge, demonstrating effort and facilitating peer and team performance. These four (4) adapted measures are more relevant to duties and responsibilities of academic members of staff of learning institutions. Declarative knowledge refers to facts or information stored in the memory that is considered static in nature. Declarative knowledge, also referred to as conceptual, propositional or descriptive knowledge, describes things, events, or processes; their attributes; and their relation to each other. Declarative knowledge refers to facts and information about a topic. OTM Lecturers need this knowledge for teaching because they need first-hand information about the course they are teaching as this would reveal their mastery in their field (Wuryaningrum, Bektiarso & Suyitno, 2020) ^[25].

Another factor that could influence job performance of OTM Lecturers is managing the stress that result from performing their duties. Stress is defined as a psychological and physical reaction to prolonged internal and/or environmental conditions in which individual's adaptive capabilities are over extended. It is an adaptive response to conscious or unconscious threat and can affect an individual emotional, physical and social wellbeing as well as pose a threat to one's health if not dealt with or managed well. It is affirmed that stress shows itself in a number of ways. For instance, a lecturer who is experiencing a high level of stress may develop high blood pressure, ulcers and other associated problems which could inhibit the job performance of such employee (Shuwa, 2021) ^[18].

Anger, anxiety, depression, nervousness, irritability, aggressiveness, and boredom which could arise from high level of stress could lead to low employee performance as

this could also lead to a decline in self-esteem, resentment of supervision, inability to concentrate, trouble in making the decision and work dissatisfaction. The experience of work stress is a challenge to the health and safety of workers and to the healthiness of their organizations. Management of institutions should have a policy for the management of workers' health, also employees should device strategies on how to manage stress. Stress management is the ability of employees to deal with the pressure of work as well as that of work without any effect on their psychological, physical and emotional well-being. It has been revealed that when employees are able to manage stress that emanates from work they tend to be more productive at work (Sokpuwu & Ibara, 2022) ^[19].

Stress management should not emanate from the employee alone, employers of labour have a lot to do to ensure that their employees are not over stressed at work as this could inhibit their level of productivity. It is expedient that employers of labour should apportion to their employees' job that they could finish before the close of every work day. Giving employee time to explore and go for vacation is a way where they could manage stress that could emanate from work as this could reduce the pressure and tension that have been accumulated from works and make them to be fresh to duty when they resume work which could in turn boost their job performance. Some of the measures of stress management include emotional labour and job hassles. These measures were adapted from job demand theory by Demerouti (2014) ^[3].

Despite the fact that several studies have been done on job performance of employees, the problem of low job performance still persist because there are several factors influencing job performance of workers. Many researches have been done in Europe, America and Africa on stress management having relationship with job performance. Many of these studies were also conducted in business organizations and very few in educational institutions. The study would also provide empirical evidence on stress management taken as factor that could have significant influence on job performance of OTM Lecturers in Polytechnics in South-south, Nigeria.

Theory and Hypotheses Development

Job Performance Theory

The job performance theory was propounded by Campbell in 1990. The eight factors are: job specific task proficiency, non-job-specific task proficiency, written and oral communication, demonstrating effort, maintaining personal discipline, facilitating peer and team performance, supervision, and management or administration. Campbell presented a theory of performance that formalized relations and found a relationship between ability, job knowledge, skill, and job performance. He argued that there are three direct determinants of job performance: declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge and skill, and motivation. Explanation of this construct is important for many functions that one engages in one's profession.

The measures for this study are declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge, demonstrating effort and facilitating peer/team work. Explaining the content domain of the construct of job performance is a critical component of our job performance as industrial and organizational psychologists. Also, it emphasizes those components in an organization that could enhance the productivity of

employees as it goes a long way in making organizations to meet its goals and objectives (Campbell, 1993) [4]. Job-specific task proficiency is defined as the degree to which the individual can perform the core substantive or technical tasks that are central to a job and distinguish one job from another. Non-job-specific task proficiency, on the other hand, is used to refer to tasks not specific to a particular job, but is expected of all members of the organization. Demonstrating effort captures the consistency or perseverance and intensity of the individuals to complete the task, whereas maintenance of personal discipline refers to the eschewment of negative behaviours (such as rule infractions) at work.

Management or administration differs from supervision in that the former includes performance behaviours directed at managing the organization that are distinct from supervisory or leadership roles. Written and oral communications reflects that component of the job performance that refers to the proficiency of an incumbent to communicate (written or oral) independent of the correctness of the subject matter. These eight dimensions are sufficient to describe the latent structure of performance at a general level which could be high or low. It could be pointed out that the salience or importance of these eight dimensions differs across occupational groups. Further, each of the eight factors are proposed to have sub-factors that will also vary in their degree of salience across occupations. The true score correlations between these eight dimensions can be assumed to be small enough to consider them distinct. Each dimension is likely to produce rank ordering of employees that is different (Campbell, 1993) [4].

The author anticipated this possibility, predicting that future empirical tests would reveal the need for modification of their theory. Campbell did not specifically mention examples of behavioural episodes with varying levels of expected organizational value. It is not difficult, however, to imagine what they might be from the definitions he provided for the behavioural categories. For example, in the first dimension (job-specific proficiency), behaviours that represent quick, error-free task execution would carry positive expected value, and at the other end behaviours that represent very slow or incomplete task execution would carry negative expected value. Similarly, in the sixth dimension (facilitating peer and team performance), behaviours that represent generous help and support for coworkers in need would carry positive expected value and behaviours that represent indifference toward coworkers in need, or hostile and hurtful acts toward coworkers would carry negative expected value. Thus, performance in each of the behavioural areas described in Campbell's model can be defined according to the expected values of all the behaviours that fall under the same behavioural category. For example, performance on the factor job-specific task proficiency can be defined as the sum of the expected values of all behaviours related to job-specific task proficiency that an individual carries out over some standard period of time (Campbell, 1993) [4]. In view of the above discussion, the hypothesis below was formulated for testing at 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis: There is no significant influence of stress management practices (control over job, support from colleagues, psychological well-being) on job performance of OTM lecturers in polytechnic in South-south, Nigeria

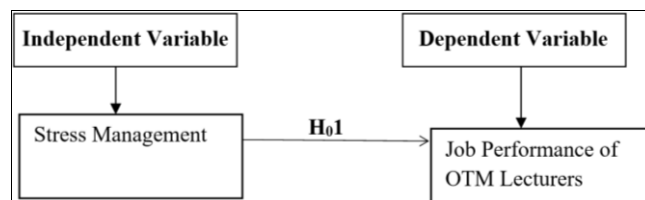


Fig 1: Source: Researchers, 2023

Stress Management and Job Performance of OTM Lecturers

The psychological structure of employees is directly reflected in the work they do and their work lives. Therefore, stressful employees mean that the organization is stressful. All kinds of problems caused by stress reflect in business relations and business success by affecting the performance of the individual directly. The studies, examining the relationship between stress and performance in organizations, have accepted the existence of four approaches. There is an inverse relationship between stress and performance, and it is assumed that performance will decrease as the stress level increases (Nina Munira & Mohammad, 2018) [7].

Employees who want to reduce their stress can waste their time and do unwanted behaviors. It is affirmed that job performance will increase as job stress increases. The challenges, concerns, and competitive environment in the workplace are opportunities for the employee to put forward constructive actions and improve his/her performance. High-level stress means high competitiveness, thus, high performance. The relationship between stress and performance is inverse u-shaped and consists of a combination of positive and negative relationship models in general. While stress that increases until a certain level improves performance, the ability to work efficiently decreases rapidly if stress exceeds the critical level. Although there is a psychological agreement between the employee and the organization, there is no relationship between stress and performance. According to this model, employees know that they will receive a certain wage for their performance. The presence or absence of stress does not affect performance (Nina Munira & Mohammad, 2018) [7].

All kinds of discomfort, psychological and mental problems experienced due to stress are directly reflected in employee performance, business relations, and business success. The mental and physical condition affecting the productivity, activity, health, and work quality of employees is occupational stress, and this stress, which exceeds the optimum limit, may decrease the performance of the organization since it creates discomfort in employees (Weerathna & Geeganage, 2016) [24]. The exposure of individuals to excessive stress in the work environment leads to both an increase in costs (an increase in business absences, health expenditures, and insurance expenditures) and a decrease in organizational performance, as well as in job satisfaction, by decreasing the amount of goods and services produced per unit time. The stress experienced also has consequences that are closely related to the organization, such as the individual's late arrival to work, increase in his/her absenteeism, increase in the labor turnover rate, alienation of the employee to work and workplace, and decrease in his/her performance.

Numerous studies have been carried out on occupational stress and job performance. For instance, a study found that stress-causing factors such as workload, career progress, facilities and the work setting were significant predictors of academic staff job effectiveness (Hansen & Thordis, 2017)^[6]. Likewise, illustrated the effect of stress on employees' performance using an inverted U-type curve. The study revealed that employees' performance increases as stress increases. However, when the stress becomes excessive, the performance of employees will reach a peak and then begin to decline. Nevertheless, a significant positive relationship between work stress and job performance was found by scholars (Hansen & Thordis, 2017)^[6]. These studies argue that stress and job performance of academic staff increase or decrease in the same direction but to varying degrees.

Other studies have shown that occupational stress contributes to low performance of duties, poor productivity, increased absenteeism, poor health and aggression, creativity and innovation (Turgut, 2016)^[22]. Nevertheless, a growing body of literature shows that stress and workload are significant predictors of teachers' effectiveness. On the contrary, a study has revealed that stress due to workload has no significant influence on the professional effectiveness of teachers. The difference in the results of various studies is attributable to the type of occupation understudied or the type of stress considered. However, in the current study, we investigated the extent to which occupational stress (such as remuneration, workload and the provision of institutional amenities) influences the job performance of the academic staff of two Nigerian public polytechnics.

Workload is a factor that has been found to affect the performance of university academic staff (Ayaz, 2019)^[2]. Under a manageable workload, employees are likely to be motivated to perform, overcome or accomplish tasks. However, a high amount of workload in terms of the quantity (amount of work) and quality (difficulty or complexity of the task) tend to affect performance. Moreover, expressed that employees have different capacities to perceive and respond to their workload. While some employees can perform well under a particular workload level, others may be negatively affected. Author stated that internal and external factors could impact the reaction to workload (Usoro, 2018)^[23].

According to them, external factors include burdens from outside employees' bodies, such as the quantity, difficulty and intensity of job tasks, hours spent on task, and the work situation. Internal factors refer to conditions within employees due to reaction to external factors. Internal factors include somatic factors in age, gender, body type or health status and psychic factors such as motivation, experience, desire, satisfaction and interest in others. It was discovered in their study that academic employees were highly stressed by a variety of factors, including their workload, research, and professional growth, as well as administrative concerns (Agu, 2021)^[1].

A scholar conducted an exploratory study to identify the drivers of employee engagement within the Egyptian context and the impact of employee engagement on job performance and organizational commitment based on Social Exchange Theory (SET). The study employed a regression analysis to predict and explain the relationships and the result indicated that leadership and organizational justice were the most significant drivers of employee engagement (Sudarijati & Kartini, 2018)^[20]. Another study

was on the impact of employee engagement on organizational commitment among workers at national higher education institutes (HEI) in Zimbabwe. The research methodology employed was an explanatory descriptive survey design. The respondents were drawn from a stratified random sample of 142 employees from three Universities. The study revealed that there is a positive correlation between employee engagement and organizational commitment (Osaat & Ekechukwu, 2017)^[15].

A study was carried out on 2015 Trends in Global Employee Engagement. The study employed a qualitative approach and it was revealed how companies can create a culture of engagement by investing and helping leaders whose interest is on building skills, empowering others and challenging individual's accountability to take possession of solutions and their own engagement (Pourteimour, Yaghmaei & Babamohamadi, 2021)^[17]. The study shows that the role of human resource professional is to support the leaders of organization in achieving engagement agenda. Here, they identified the senior leaders and the individuals themselves as critical stakeholders required for creating a culture of engagement. Aon Hewitt company's leaders attributed their success to talent management and engagement of two key variables – culture and leadership (Pourteimour, Yaghmaei & Babamohamadi, 2021)^[17].

A more recent study examined the effect of stress management techniques on employee Job performance in manufacturing firms in Nigeria using the descriptive survey design. The sample size comprised 378 employees of four manufacturing firms in southeast, Nigeria. Findings showed that the level of job performance of employees was moderate. It was also revealed that there was positive and significant effect of stress management techniques on performance of employees of manufacturing firms in Nigeria. It was recommended that management of manufacturing firms in Nigeria should invest in the different stress dimension management strategy such as meditation technique and relaxation technique so as to improve employee performance (Tojue, Audu & Nnamani, 2023)^[21].

A study examined stress management strategies and employee performance in manufacturing firms in Edo State. The specific objectives were to: identify the relationship among workplace social support, coping competence, time management techniques, mind-body techniques and employee's performance. Sample size of 301 respondents was drawn from 1,663 population staff of selected manufacturing firms. Finding revealed employees in manufacturing firms receive maximum workplace social support and this helps them deal with stressful work situations; and they have high coping competence in handling stress. Additionally, it was discovered that employees of manufacturing firms most typically adopt time management as a method of stress reduction. It was shown that there was significant influence of stress management on job performance. Moreso, it was demonstrated that the employees do apply the mind-body strategy of time management, albeit not to a very high amount in comparison to their adoption of other stress management measures. The study found that managers in manufacturing businesses should instruct staff members about the benefits of mind-body techniques like massage and yoga as well as how to use them successfully to reduce stress levels (Odita, 2023)^[9].

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design as it attempted to study the subset of a population at a point in time and to determine the influence of stress management on job performance of OTM lecturers in Polytechnics in South-south, Nigeria. The research instrument (questionnaire) used was administered to a total of 134 Office Technology and Management lecturers of Polytechnics in South-south, Nigeria covering all the Federal and State Polytechnics in South-south, Nigeria. The Polytechnics include; Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi (Federal), Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic, Ikot-Ekpene (State), Delta State Polytechnic, Ogwashi-Uku (State), Delta State Polytechnic, Ofebe-Oghara (State), Edo State Polytechnic, Usen (State), Ken Sarowiwa Polytechnic, Bori, Rivers State (State) and Port Harcourt Polytechnic, Rumola, Rivers State (State). Total enumeration was used for the sample size. The hypothesis formulated was tested

using inferential statistics of linear regression analysis at 0.05 level of significance. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 21 was used for the analysis.

Results and Discussion

Hypothesis: There is no significant influence of stress management practices (control over job, support from colleagues, psychological well-being) on job performance of OTM lecturers in polytechnic in South-south, Nigeria.

The data for stress management was generated by summing responses of all variable items respectively, while that of job performance of OTM Lecturers in South-South polytechnics, Nigeriawas generated by adding responses of all items used to measure the variable. The regression test results are presented below.

Results and Discussion of Findings

Table: 1: Influence of stress management practices (control over job, support from colleagues, support from supervisor, psychological well-being) on job performance

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.660 ^a	.436	.418	8.01246

Predictors: (Constant), control over job, support from colleagues, support from supervisor, psychological well-being

ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	6056.999	4	1514.250	23.587	<.001b
	Residual	7832.340	122	64.200		
	Total	13889.339	126			

a. Dependent Variable: Job Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), control over job, support from colleagues, support from supervisor, psychological well-being

Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	90.762	11.186		8.114	.001
Control over job	2.291	.368	.431	6.220	.001
Support from colleagues	-2.133	.496	-.316	-4.299	.001
Support from supervisor	-1.327	.482	-.207	-2.756	.007
Psychological well-being	.003	.597	.004	.055	.956

a. Dependent Job performance

The Model summary and ANOVA tables above show that stress management practices significantly influence job performance of OTM lecturers (Adj. R² = 0.418, F_(4,122) = 23.587, p <0.05). This implies that stress management practices account for 41.8% of variance in determining job performance of OTM lecturers. The remaining 58.2% of the variance would be due to other factors not included in this study. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

The coefficients table above show the influence of stress management practices (control over job, support from colleagues, support from supervisor, psychological well-being) on job performance of OTM lecturers in polytechnics in South-south, Nigeria. The most potent measure of stress management practices was control over job (β = 0.431, p<0.05), followed by support from colleagues (β = -0.316, p<0.05), support from supervisor (β = -0.207, p<0.05), while psychological well-being was not significant (β = .004, p>0.05). This implies that control over job, support from colleagues and support from supervisor tend to enhance the quality of job performance of OTM lecturers in South-south, Nigeria by 43.1%, 31.6% and 20.7% respectively.

The hypothesis showed that there was significant influence of stress management practices (control over job, support from colleagues, support from supervisor, psychological

well-being) on job performance of OTM Lecturers in polytechnics in South-south, Nigeria. The finding supports a study that found that stress-causing factors such as workload, career progress, facilities and the work setting were significant predictors of academic staff job effectiveness (Owan, Bassey, Mbon, Okon, Egbula, Ekaette, Ojong & Ekpe, 2020)^[16]. Another study illustrated the effect of stress on employees' performance using an inverted U-type curve. The study revealed that employees' performance increases as stress decreases. However, when the stress becomes excessive, the performance of employees will reach a peak and then begin to decline. Nevertheless, a significant positive relationship between work stress and job performance was found by scholars (Odigwe, 2020)^[8]. These studies argue that stress and job performance of academic staff increase or decrease in the same direction but to varying degrees (Odigwe, Bassey & Owan, 2020)^[8].

The finding also supports a study that was conducted on the effect of work stress on the staff performance in banking industry. Survey research design was adopted. Population was 300 and sample 185. Data was analyzed using simple percentage. The findings were that the cause of stress in Nigerian banks is particularly linked to improper working condition for delivering the duties. It was revealed that there

was significant influence of stress management on job performance (Okoi, & Odigwe, 2018) ^[11]. The finding also validates a more recent study that examined the effect of stress management techniques on employee Job performance in manufacturing firms in Nigeria using the descriptive survey design. The sample size comprised 378 employees of four manufacturing firms in southeast, Nigeria. Findings showed that the level of job performance of employees was moderate. It was also revealed that there was positive and significant effect of stress management techniques on performance of employees of manufacturing firms in Nigeria. It was recommended that management of manufacturing firms in Nigeria should invest in the different stress dimension management strategy such as meditation technique and relaxation technique so as to improve employees' performance (Okolocha, Akam & Uchehara, 2021) ^[12]. The finding also goes in line with this study. A study examined stress management strategies and employee performance in manufacturing firms in Edo State. It was shown that there was significant influence of stress management on job performance. Findings revealed employees in manufacturing firms receive maximum workplace social support and this helps them deal with stressful work situations; and they have high coping competence in handling stress. Additionally, it was discovered that employees of manufacturing firms most typically adopt time management as a method of stress reduction. Moreso, it was demonstrated that the employees do apply the mind-body strategy of time management, albeit not to a very high amount in comparison to their adoption of other stress management measures. The study found that managers in manufacturing businesses should instruct staff members about the benefits of mind-body techniques like massage and yoga as well as how to use them successfully to reduce stress levels (George & Jones, 2018) ^[5].

Conclusion

This study has established that there is a significant influence of stream management practices (control over job, support from colleagues, psychological well-being) on job performance of OTM lecturers in polytechnics in South-south, Nigeria.

Based on these findings, it could be affirmed that when OTM lecturers are given adequate support from colleagues, employers of labour and having a control over one's job could make OTM lecturers to be more productive as this could make the goals and objectives of teaching and learning to be achieved. It could be concluded that stress management practices is a factor that management of polytechnics and other organizations should pay attention to in order to increase job performance levels of their employees.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

1. To enhance the level of job performance, it is expected that OTM lecturers should be able to create knowledge through observation of the working environment and make it more practical for students in class during teaching process. Also, they should describe things, events, or processes their attributes and their relation to each other to students in class for effective teaching and learning process.

2. For effective and high job performance, OTM lecturers should solve problems, share knowledge with colleagues, collect and arrange educational information that is pertaining to OTM courses.
3. Management of the polytechnics in South-south Nigeria should create an enabling working environment for OTM lecturers that have a great impact with their prestige and also be respected as this could go a long way in enhancing their job performance.

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