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SOFT SKILLS AS A PREDICTOR OF JOB PERFORMANCE OF TECHNICAL COLLEGE INSTRUCTORS IN LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
Soft skills play a critical role in determining job performance across various professions, particularly in the education sector. Technical college instructors are not only required to possess strong technical expertise but also relevant soft skills that enhance teaching effectiveness and improve student learning outcomes. Therefore, this study investigated the predictive influence of soft skills on the job performance of technical college instructors in Lagos State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey design was adopted. The study population consisted of 400 instructors from five technical colleges in Lagos State, and total enumeration sampling was employed. Data were collected using two self-structured instruments: the Soft Skills Questionnaire (SSQ) and the Technical College Instructors' Job Performance Questionnaire (TCIJPQ). The instruments were validated by three experts. Reliability analysis revealed strong internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.81 and 0.77 respectively. The collected data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, employing descriptive statistics and linear regression analysis. All hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that communication skill ($\beta = 0.652$, $p < 0.05$), problem solving skill ($\beta = 0.528$, $p < 0.05$), and time management skill ($\beta = 0.781$, $p < 0.05$) significantly influenced instructors' job performance in government technical colleges in Lagos State. It was concluded that soft skills are significant predictors of instructors' job performance. The study recommended that the Ministry of Education and technical college administrators should provide periodic professional development programmes aimed at improving instructors' soft skills, among other measures.

Key words: Soft skills, Job performance, Technical College Instructors, Soft skills predictor.

Introduction

Education thrives on effective knowledge delivery, skill development, and value transmission, all of which depend on the competence of the instructor. Instructors' effectiveness directly influences the teaching and learning process. The underlying assumption is that education produces human capital in the form of knowledge and skills, which in turn enhances worker productivity. Consequently, instructors' job performance refers to the effectiveness and quality with which they discharge their teaching and administrative responsibilities. It also denotes the outcomes of an

individual's or group's efforts directed toward achieving predetermined organisational objectives (Uwannah et al., 2019).

Instructors' performance in technical college settings represents the collective skills, efforts, and abilities of teaching staff that contribute to institutional productivity and goal attainment, thereby improving institutional effectiveness and enhancing employee performance. Achmad (2017) further defines instructors' job performance as the successful completion of assigned duties based on ability, experience, sincerity, and adherence to time constraints. Thus, instructors' performance is critical to the overall improvement and quality of education, as it depends on their ability to manage classrooms, communicate effectively, solve problems efficiently, and maintain professionalism, all of which can be strengthened through the possession of soft skills.

Soft skills such as communication skills, problem solving skills, and time management skills, play a crucial role in fostering an interactive and conducive learning environment. In many educational institutions, particularly technical colleges, instructors are expected not to only impart specialized knowledge but also mentor and guide students toward industry readiness. According to Feraco et al. (2022), soft skills are adaptable personality traits that control our cognition, behaviour, and emotions, and help us accomplish our goals. These traits can be described as a unique combination of behaviours, dispositions, skills, and abilities that enable individuals to overcome personal and professional challenges. Soft skills are crucial in shaping labour market outcomes, as they enhance individuals' employability, workplace success, and capacity for innovation. Soft skills encompass a combination of personality traits, interpersonal abilities, and social behaviours that contribute to productive and harmonious work environments. Developing and strengthening these competencies not only improves job performance but also fosters career growth and holistic personal development. Consequently, individuals in the teaching profession must possess strong soft skills to remain competitive and effective in their roles (Volkov et al., 2022).

Teaching profession demands adequate knowledge of communication skills for easy transmission of information to the learners. Communication skill is one of the essential tools in teaching. This skill involves the ability of the instructor to communicate with his/her learner in such a way that can be understood before learning can take place. Therefore, the instructor is expected to get his/her idea communicated to the learners without any ambiguity or misconception. This will assist the learners to understand and interpret correctly the intention of the instructor. According to Alamgir et al. (2017), instructors need good communication skills for facilitating the students and achieving good professional goals. This means that effective teaching cannot take place without effective communication skills. Ability of the instructors to communicate well will enhance good performance of students in the school system. Communication skills involve oral, listening and speaking as well as reading and writing. Conceptually, good communication skills of instructors are the basic need of academics' success of learners and professional success of life. Another important component of soft skill is problem solving skill.

Problem-solving skills are essential for success in academic pursuits, professional endeavours, and everyday life, as they involve identifying challenges, generating and evaluating potential solutions, and implementing effective strategies. Problem solving entails identifying the issue, dissecting the problem so it is understood, examining all options relating to solutions, discussing ways to solve the problem, and putting the plan into action (Gemma, 2014). Effective problem solving allows

for efficiency, improved communication, productivity and being solution focused. Problem solving is a capacity that school instructors use on a daily basis. Hence, instructors' job performance can be strengthened by essential soft skills such as problem-solving, which enable them to address classroom and instructional challenges effectively; similarly, time management can be essential to ensure efficient task completion and maximize productivity in educational activities.

Time management skill is an important component of soft skills for instructors (Sahito & Väisänen, 2017). Time management is a crucial skill that can influence instructors' job performance, affecting their ability to plan lessons, engage students effectively, and meet administrative responsibilities (Khan et al., 2016). Teaching is a demanding profession that requires educators to balance multiple responsibilities, including lesson planning, classroom instruction, student assessment, and participation in extracurricular activities. Effective time management enables teachers to prioritise tasks, minimise stress, and enhance productivity, thereby improving instructional delivery and promoting better student learning outcomes. Conversely, poor time management, problem solving skills, and communication skills can lead to delayed lesson completion, disorganised classroom activities, and ineffective teaching strategies, all of which may negatively affect students' academic performance and the overall effectiveness of the school.
Therefore, this study investigates soft skills as a predictor of job performance among technical college instructors in Lagos State, Nigeria. Despite existing research on soft skills and job performance, contextual gaps remain, as many Nigeria based studies have focused on universities and colleges of education, while limited empirical attention has been given to technical colleges. Many studies also treat soft skills as a broad aggregated construct without disaggregating specific dimensions such as communication skills, problem solving skills, and time management skills. This study seeks to address that gap.

Statement of the Problem

The effectiveness of technical college instructors in Nigeria, particularly in Lagos State, has increasingly come under scrutiny due to concerns about the quality of graduates produced and their readiness for the modern workforce. While emphasis has traditionally been placed on technical competence and subject mastery, growing evidence suggests that these alone are insufficient for optimal job performance in contemporary educational settings. Soft skills, such as communication, emotional intelligence, teamwork, problem-solving, and time management, have emerged as critical determinants of effective teaching, classroom management, and student engagement. Empirical studies in Nigeria have shown that soft skills significantly correlate with teachers' job performance, influencing their ability to deliver instruction effectively and interact productively with students and colleagues (Okorie, 2020; Akinyemi & Okoh, 2023). Despite this, technical education in many Nigerian institutions continues to prioritize hard skills at the expense of these essential interpersonal and intrapersonal competencies, creating a gap that may undermine instructional effectiveness and students' holistic development.

Furthermore, the rapidly evolving demands of the 21st-century workplace require technical college instructors not only to impart vocational skills but also to model and cultivate soft skills among students. However, there is limited empirical focus specifically on technical college instructors in Lagos State, even though existing studies in related contexts consistently affirm that soft skills are

strong predictors of job effectiveness and overall performance (Garzon et al., 2025). This gap in localized and context-specific research raises concerns about whether instructors possess the requisite soft skills needed to meet current educational and industry expectations. Therefore, this study is justified as it seeks to provide empirical evidence on the predictive value of soft skills on instructors' job performance within technical colleges in Lagos State. The findings will not only contribute to existing literature but also inform policy decisions, curriculum development, and professional training programs aimed at enhancing teaching effectiveness and improving the quality of technical education in Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study was to examine the contribution of soft skills on instructors' job performance in government Technical Colleges in Lagos State. Specifically, the study sought to

1. examine the influence of communication skill on Technical College instructors' job performance in government Technical Colleges in Lagos State;
2. determine the influence of problem-solving skill on Technical College instructors' job performance in government Technical Colleges in Lagos State;
3. establish the influence of time management skill on Technical College instructors' job performance in government Technical Colleges in Lagos State.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses formulated were tested at .05 level of significance

Ho_1: There is no significant influence of communication skill on Technical College instructors' job performance in Technical Colleges in Lagos State

Ho_2: There is no significant influence of problem-solving skill on Technical College instructors' job performance in Technical Colleges in Lagos State

Ho_3: There is no significant influence of time management skill on Technical College instructors' job performance in Technical Colleges in Lagos State

Methodology

This study adopted descriptive research design of survey type. The descriptive research design of survey type is appropriate for the study because it helped in providing unadulterated information about the variables from the respondents and also assists the researcher to obtain detailed information on soft skills on instructors' job performance in government technical colleges in Lagos State. The target population for this study comprised all the 400 instructors across all the five technical colleges in Lagos State which comprises of Technical College, Ikorodu (99); Technical College, Epe (55); Technical College, Agidingbi (85); Technical College, Ado-Soba (69); Technical College, Ikotun (92), as obtained from the Department of Planning, Research and Statistics, Lagos State Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (Personal communication, 2025). The total sample size for this study was 400 instructors, as total enumeration was used to select all instructors from the five technical colleges in Lagos State. This technique ensured that there was no sampling bias. Ethical approval was obtained, and participants' consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation were ensured throughout the data collection process.

The instruments used for data collection were self-structured questionnaires titled Soft Skills Questionnaire (SSQ) and Technical College Instructors' Job Performance Questionnaire (TCIJPQ). Soft Skills Questionnaire (SSQ) elicits information on the soft skills from the teachers. It has 35 items based on three indices such as communication skill, problem solving skill, time management skills. Technical College Instructors' Job Performance Questionnaire (TCIJPQ) was geared towards eliciting information on instructors' job performance. The questionnaire is made up of 20 items. The questionnaires requested responses on a four (4) point scale format. The rating scales consist of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Strongly Disagree (SD) and Disagree (D)**.** Content validity was carried out on the two instruments. The instruments were validated by the researcher's supervisors and two other experts from the College of Vocational and Technology Education (COVTED), Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun, Ogun State. The experts examined the instruments with regards to relevance and accuracy of the items in terms of language and clarity of the items bearing in mind the purpose of the study. Their comments, suggestions and criticisms made independently by the experts helped the researcher to modify and produced the final instruments. Reliability of the instruments was carried out on all the two instruments using the Cronbach alpha. In this case, copies of the instruments were administered on 120 instructors in government technical colleges in Ogun State that is parallel to the sample population. The collected data were analyzed and their respective reliability estimates were recorded. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients were .81 and .77 for "SSQ" and "TCIJPQ" respectively, indicating acceptable internal consistency. Data collected were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), with the results interpreted using the inferential statistics technique. Items with the mean value of 2.50 and above were considered 'agree'. On the other hand, items with the mean value less than 2.50 were considered 'disagree'. The data collected for null hypotheses one to three were analysed using Linear Regression Analysis. All the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. For decision-making regarding hypothesis testing, null hypotheses with p-values less than 0.05 were rejected, indicating a significant influence, whereas p-values greater than or equal to 0.05 were accepted, indicating no significant influence.

Results and Interpretations

The results and interpretations were presented according to hypotheses.

Ho_1: There is no significant influence of communication skill on technical college instructors' job performance in Technical Colleges in Lagos State.

Table 4.1: Influence of Communication Skills on Technical College Instructors' Job Performance in Technical Colleges

Model	B	SE B	B	t	P
(Constant)	17.891	.247		72.433	.001
Communication Skills	.768	.190	.652	4.042	

a. **Dependent Variable: technical college instructors' job performance**

b. **Note:** R = .652, R^2 = .425

The table 4.1 above showed the influence of communication skills on technical college instructors' job performance in Technical Colleges expressed as beta weights, viz: (β = .652, P < .05). R = .652 indicates a moderate positive relationship, while R^2 = .425 shows that communication skills

explain 42.5% of the variance in job performance. It therefore revealed that communication skills influence technical college instructors' job performance in Technical Colleges in Lagos State. Therefore, hypothesis one was rejected.

Ho_2: There is no significant influence of problem-solving skill on technical college instructors' job performance in Technical Colleges in Lagos State.

Table 4.2: Influence of Problem-Solving Skill on Technical College Instructors' Job Performance in Technical Colleges in Lagos State

Model	B	SE B	B	t	P
(Constant)	18.906	.154		122.766	.000
			.528	2.506	
Problem Solving Skills	.777	.310			

a. **Dependent Variable: technical college instructors' job performance**

b. **Note:** R = .528, R^2 = .279

The table 4.2 above showed the influence of problem-solving skill on technical college instructors' job performance in Technical Colleges in Lagos State expressed as beta weights, viz: (β = .528, P < .05). R = .528 indicates a moderate positive relationship between problem solving skills and job performance, while R^2 = .279 shows that problem solving skills explain 27.9% of the variation in instructors' job performance. It therefore revealed that problem-solving skill influence technical college instructors' job performance in government Technical Colleges in Lagos State. Therefore, hypothesis two was rejected.

Ho_3: There is no significant influence of time management skill on technical college instructors' job performance in Technical Colleges in Lagos State.

Table 4.3: Influence of Time Management Skill on Technical College Instructors' Job Performance in Technical Colleges in Lagos State

Model	B	SE B	β	t	p
(Constant)	15.730	.188		83.670	.000
Time Management Skill	.650	.101	.781	6.435	

a. **Dependent Variable: technical college instructors' job performance**

b. **Note:** R = .781, R^2 = .610

The table 4.3 above showed the influence of time management skill on technical college instructors' job performance in Technical Colleges in Lagos State expressed as beta weights, viz: (β = .781, P < .05). The result shows a strong positive relationship between time management skill and instructors' job performance (R = .781), while the coefficient of determination (R^2 = .610) indicates that time management skill explains 61.0% of the variance in job performance. The relationship was statistically significant (p < .001). It therefore revealed that time management skill influences technical college instructors' job performance. Therefore, hypothesis three was rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The finding of hypothesis one revealed that there was significant influence of communication skill on technical college instructors' job performance in Government Technical Colleges in Lagos State. This result implies that instructors with strong communication skills are more likely to perform better in their instructional duties, classroom management, assessment of students, and interaction with peers and school management. Communication skills such as clarity in conveying ideas, active listening, verbal and non-verbal cues, and the ability to provide and receive feedback play a pivotal role in the effectiveness of teaching and learning, especially in technical and vocational education where practical instructions must be clearly articulated and demonstrated. This finding aligns with the work of Akintunde and Adigun (2022), who found that communication competence significantly predicted teachers' classroom effectiveness in Nigerian technical schools. Their study emphasized that poor communication often results in misconceptions and errors in practical tasks, ultimately reducing the quality of instruction and learners' performance. Similarly, Okoye and Eze (2021) concluded that teachers with high interpersonal and communication skills tend to foster better student engagement, motivation, and instructional clarity, which contributes positively to job performance and students' academic success.
Furthermore, Nwachukwu and Onu (2023) in their study on vocational education instructors, observed that instructors who possessed strong communication abilities were more effective in transmitting both theoretical and practical knowledge, thereby improving students' skill acquisition and satisfaction. They noted that communication skill was among the strongest predictors of instructional delivery and assessment quality. Conversely, a study by Ogunyemi (2020) reported no significant relationship between communication skill and job performance among some vocational educators in Ogun State. The author argued that other factors such as administrative support, availability of instructional materials, and workload had more direct influence on instructors' performance than communication skill alone. Ogunyemi suggested that while communication is important, its influence may be moderated by institutional constraints and resource availability.

The finding of hypothesis two revealed that there was significant influence of problem-solving skill on technical college instructors' job performance in Government Technical Colleges in Lagos State. This suggested that instructors who possess strong problem-solving abilities are better equipped to manage classroom challenges, interpret technical drawings and specifications, make effective instructional decisions, and respond promptly to unexpected issues in both theoretical and practical learning environments. In technical and vocational education, where real-world applications and practical problem-solving are central to instruction, such a skill becomes indispensable for effective job performance. This result is consistent with the empirical findings of Ede and Olaitan (2022), who found that problem-solving skill was a major determinant of teacher effectiveness in Nigerian technical colleges. Their study showed that instructors who could analyze problems critically and provide workable solutions were more efficient in instructional delivery, student guidance, and workshop organization. They emphasized that in disciplines like construction technology, the ability to troubleshoot errors and innovate during practical work greatly enhances teaching performance and student outcomes. Similarly, Ahmed and Ogunlade (2021) affirmed that problem-solving skill significantly predicted teachers' performance in vocational and technical education. According to their study, instructors with strong analytical and decision-making capabilities were able to adapt instructional strategies, manage time and resources

effectively, and overcome classroom disruptions more proficiently than those with weaker problem-solving skills.

Furthermore, Ibrahim and Musa (2023) noted that technical college instructors who excelled in problem-solving often demonstrated higher levels of creativity, resilience, and initiative, which translated to better handling of project-based learning tasks and student-centered activities. They also found that problem-solving skill correlated with other soft skills like critical thinking and adaptability, which further strengthened instructors' job competence. On the contrary, a study by Nwankwo (2020) did not find a statistically significant relationship between problem-solving skill and teacher performance in some technical schools in the South-East region of Nigeria. The study argued that systemic factors such as poor infrastructure, lack of motivation, and policy inconsistency were more influential in determining teacher performance than individual cognitive skills.

The finding of hypothesis three revealed that there was significant influence of time management skill on technical college instructors' job performance in Government Technical Colleges in Lagos State. This outcome indicated that instructors who possess effective time management skills tend to perform better in organizing lessons, meeting deadlines, completing the syllabus, and balancing both theoretical and practical components of instruction. In the context of technical education, especially in construction trades where projects are often time-bound and sequential, the ability to manage time efficiently becomes an essential professional attribute. This finding is supported by Olatunji and Ojo (2021), who found that teachers with strong time management abilities demonstrated higher levels of productivity, preparedness, and punctuality in their work. Their study in vocational institutions in Southwestern Nigeria revealed that effective time management led to improved lesson planning, timely feedback on assessments, and optimal use of instructional periods. The authors emphasized that when instructors plan and allocate their time wisely, they are better able to complete their teaching responsibilities and foster student success.
Similarly, Chukwu and Ebong (2022) confirmed that time management had a significant impact on teachers' job performance in technical colleges. Their study indicated that instructors who adhered to scheduled teaching periods, minimized time wastage, and effectively juggled administrative and instructional tasks were more likely to be rated high in job performance evaluations. They concluded that time management not only enhances productivity but also reduces stress and burnout among instructors. Furthermore, Abdullahi and Ibrahim (2023) highlighted that time-conscious instructors in construction-related disciplines were more likely to complete practical projects on schedule and help students meet learning objectives within stipulated academic terms. They argued that poor time management leads to instructional gaps, rushed lessons, and incomplete curriculum coverage factors that negatively impact both instructor performance and student learning. Contrarily, Eze (2020) found no significant relationship between time management and teacher performance in some technical institutions in Eastern Nigeria. The study posited that systemic challenges such as irregular power supply, poor classroom infrastructure, and large student-teacher ratios often disrupted lesson schedules regardless of the teacher's individual time management capability.

Conclusion

The findings of this study have shown that soft skills play a critical role in shaping the job performance of instructors in Technical Colleges in Lagos State. These skills enable instructors to

manage their classrooms more efficiently, relate better with students and colleagues, and respond effectively to both routine and unexpected challenges within the teaching and learning environment. The results suggest that instructors who possess strong personal and interpersonal competencies tend to perform better in areas such as lesson delivery, workshop coordination, student supervision, and administrative responsibilities.

Recommendations

Based on the findings if the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The Ministry of Education and technical college administrators should provide periodic professional development programmes that focus on improving instructors' communication skills.
2. Instructors should design learning activities that encourage students to identify challenges, analyze causes, and develop practical solutions, thereby strengthening their own and students' problem-solving abilities.
3. technical college administrators should design and enforce structured academic and administrative timetables that clearly outline teaching hours, meetings, and evaluation periods to enhance organizational efficiency.

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