# LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGIES TO ENHANCE DIGITAL COMPETENCY IN OFFICE TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME IN FEDERAL POLYTECHNICS IN SOUTH-EAST NIGERIA: A CURRICULUM ISSUE

**[1]Kate Nkemjurum C. Nwaiwu & [2]Nwokorie, Harrieth Nwamarabia**

[1,] Department of Office Technology and Management Federal Polytechnic Ngodo-Isuochi, Abia State

[2]Department of Office Technology and Management, Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic Unwana, Afikpo, Ebonyi State

[1]peculiarkaty@gmail.com; [1]knc.nwaiwu@fpi.edu.ng [2]harriethnwokorie@gmail.com

**Abstract**

*This study tried to ascertain the emerging technologies required in Office Technology and Management (OTM) programme in Federal Polytechnics in South-East Nigeria for enhanced digital competency amongst its graduate. It also sought to find the place of curriculum in effective integration of these technologies into the programme. Three research questions guided the study and two null hypotheses were tested. Survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study was 32 OTM lecturers drawn from three Federal polytechnics in South-East offering OTM. There was no sampling because the size was manageable. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire on a four-point rating scale. Data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and ascertain the homogeneity of the responses' mean. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using t-Test. The findings of the study showed that modern technologies such as e-learning tools, digital marketing tools, and online communication technologies are some of the emerging technologies required to enhance digital skills competency in OTM and equip the graduates for the modern offices. The study also found that measures like industry collaboration as one of most effectives in ensuring regular review of OTM curriculum with a view to making it reflective of technological trends, adequately prepare its products for the modern office and reduce skills mismatch. There was no significant difference in the mean ratings of lecturers with over fifteen years of experience and those below on the emerging technologies required for enhanced digital skills acquisition in OTM programme. The study concluded that modern technologies for enhanced digital skills acquisition are essential in OTM, if the graduates will remain employable in a digital age. It then recommended that federal polytechnics in South-East should effectively collaborate with feeder industries in the Region for curriculum enrichment and adequate students' exposure to modern office realities.*

**Keywords:** Digital Skills, Emerging Technologies, Curriculum and OTM Students

## Introduction

Technological revolution of this era has transformed the 21st Century office and also revamped business operational processes globally. Digital skills are, today, part of the existential skills required for relevance in today's business world. They are in high demands across all fields and not just limited to the tech sector. Employers no longer expect potential employees today to possess just their core professional competencies but in addition to that, certain digital skills and familiarity with emerging technologies are expected and even demanded. Eliku (2022) agreed with this assertion in his submission that digital skills cut across various disciplines. Taking on entrepreneurship, for example, Eliku stressed that, unlike what previously obtained where entrepreneurship skills were all about soap/detergent making, digital skills which will help in marketing businesses, irrespective of discipline, sector, or chosen field are now part of basic requirements for entrepreneurship. European Commission report (2023) showed that 90% of professionals, including agricultural workers, were expected to possess basic digital skills, hence its conclusion that nearly all jobs require basic digital skills. That goes to buttress that in addition to the specific basic professional skills demanded in different fields, relevant digital skills are still required for enhanced efficiency and productivity.

Another research report from World Economic Forum (WEF) (2023) found that more and more employers were expecting potential candidates or job seekers to have basic digital skills such as data

analytics, app and web-enabled markets, internet skills machine learning, cloud computing, digital trade (e-commerce), augmented reality, encryption, new materials, wearable electronics, 3D printing, blockchain, and robotics at varying percentages. As digital transformation continues to shape how businesses operate, the list of digital skills on demand continues to grow. Another factor is that skills-demands for certain jobs appear not to be so sharply divided along "professional" lines any longer as the demarcating lines are gradually eroding. For example, it is no longer the exclusive preserve of Office Technology and Management (OTM) graduates, generally referred to as secretaries or office managers, to typeset and edit documents, and process office correspondences today. Almost everybody can do that now and so being a secretary or an office manager requires more than the ability to type and proofread or simply put, ability to use the computer to process documents. The mere ability to use a computer no longer sets one potential secretarial employee apart from the others. Berger and Frey in Utebor et al. (2024) affirmed that with the emergence of new technologies, narrow technical skills were no longer sufficient for the emerging jobs, yet on the other hand, the demand for higher level digital skills will keep increasing. This meant that there would be a widened gap between declining jobs/skills and the increase in emerging ones as a result of changes in technology (WEF, 2025). It has, therefore, become imperative for potential employees to learn and keep learning new and relevant digital skills since it is no longer enough to have just the excellent knowledge of one's area of "specialisation"; there will always be that more that will distinguish one applicant from the others.

Office Technology and Management (OTM) is a professional skilled programme designed to produce astute information managers for offices and businesses, and so its products must possess relevant digital skills without which they cannot thrive in the 21st Century business world. OTM is a replacement course for Secretarial Studies, according to National Board for Technical Education in Nigeria (NBTE) (2006), and was meant to equip students with competences required to work in the modern offices. Utebor et al. (2024) averred that OTM graduates are generally responsible for information processing and management in various organisations, hence the need for them to have digital skills. Nwokocha in Utebor et al. (2024) stressed that the goal of OTM programme is to produce manpower with the requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes for harnessing other resources and bringing them together into a cooperative relationship yielding the goods and services demanded by the society for the satisfaction of its wants and need. Thus, the students must acquire digital skills needed to integrate management, marketing, accounting, finance and education concepts to be able to compete globally in the work place.

The question of whether or not OTM needs digital skills sets does not arise anymore, rather focus has shifted to how best to enhance digital skills acquisition amongst students of the programme with view to keeping them relevant, employable and competitive in the ever-changing modern world of work. Agboola and Adesina (2020) and Odukoya and Adekitan (2020) agreed with this as they asserted that OTM should go beyond basic word processing and peripheral computer operating skills to equipping its graduates with relevant digital skills for sustainable empowerment in a technology enmeshed era. To actualise this, the programme must be kept abreast with the currency of societal technological changes and this can best be done through its curriculum.

The importance of curriculum, particularly a responsive one, in education cannot be overemphasised; teachings and learning outcomes at any level of educations are directed by curriculum. Curriculum, according to Oluwadare et al. in Okoli, et al. (2024), is the totality of all that is required to be learnt by a learner in a school setting; it is an embodiment of all knowledge, skills and attitudes which a nation, through her schools, imparts to her citizens. Ikpeama et al. (2025) defined curriculum as a prescribed and well-defined programme of studies which the learners must complete successfully in order to pass a certain academic level of education. Ali and Ajibola in Ikpeama (2025) viewed curriculum as an education plan that spells out which goals and objectives to be achieved, topics to be covered and methods are to be used for teaching and learning evaluation. Education

cannot be done arbitrarily, there must be a plan, roadmap or blueprint that directs it and thus give rooms for measurable outcomes, feedback and review mechanism curriculum.

Ude in Amesi and Obi (2023) highlighted four basic components of a curriculum thus goals (expectations/benchmark), methods (ways of knowledge impartation), materials (media and tools) and assessment (reasons and patterns of progress measurement). The goals of business education, in this case OTM, may have remained the same but the methods and materials and even assessment criteria need not be rigid rather they ought to be flexible enough to change with technological trends. Shua and Dahiru (2024) posited that continuous technological innovations have brought about complexities and rapid changes in the business environment, and so it has become essential to critically rebase the theme of business education (to which OTM is an aspect) on themes, issues and skills which are useful, practical, functional and related to one's personal life at home and at work place rather than loading it with not-so-relevant chunks of contents. OTM could be viewed as a well-planned programme and yet a flexible programme to the point that it reflects the ever-evolving technological societal changes from time to time (Nwaiwu & Nwokorie, 2023). This is true to the transformation from Secretarial Studies to Office Technology and Management Technology (OTM) in 2004 by NBTE. It appeared, however, that since then, the regulatory body and other stakeholders had gone to sleep as the operational HND curriculum in most polytechnics in Nigeria as of today is that of 2004 while that of ND is 2009. This meant that for over twenty years the curriculum of the graduating class of OTM had remained the same despite steady speedy technological changes in the business environment and world of work. One of the effects of this was that students were not correctly exposed to the right skills thereby leading to no or low relevant skills (example, digital skills) acquisition among them (Ile & Abi, 2021; Onwubuya, et al., 2024). This is tragic to say the least and it also questions the quality and competitiveness of graduates produced through this programme over the years.

One of the challenges of graduate unemployment in Nigeria is skills mismatch, which meant that the skills taught by tertiary institutions do not always match the skills in demand in the industries, thus rendering most graduates "unemployable". As a way out of this malady, Amesi and Obi (2023) called for a conscious interrogation of the relevance of current curriculum of business education towards meeting the skills needed for survival in a digital age. In the same vein, Anyigor-Ogah (2023) averred that in this era of globalisation, a worthwhile and functional curriculum always changes to meet present need of individuals, workplace and the society at large. Admittedly, the UNESCO/NBTE (2004) OTM curriculum contained some salient ICT skills but those have long been overtaken hence the need for regular update as technologies emerge. The need for the curriculum to be responsive to the digital trends of the age hence the need for its regular update cannot be overflogged (John & Lawrence, 2023) because, not only are digitals skills in hot demand in today, the kind of digital skills in demand in the industry change over time as technologies emerge (Berger & Frey in Utebor et al. 2024). Unarguably, one of the inhibitions to relevant digital skills acquisition in OTM is the contents/state of the curriculum (OECD, 2025; OECD, 2023). The need for the integration of relevant technologies (such as digital communication, digital marketing tools and the likes) into OTM curriculum so as to adequately equip its products for the competitive global world of work has been established, even as Utebor et al. (2024) opined that inculcating relevant digital skills in the curriculum of OTM will greatly help the recipients with the competency to attain global relevance in a world of work. It is, therefore, worrisome that in spite of this volume of knowledge, the challenge of non-functional and current technology-bereft curriculum still persisted in OTM without any visible effort to change the narrative soonest. If OTM must leverage technologies to enhance relevant digital skills, as is globally demanded today, then the journey must start with its curriculum – goals, methods, materials and assessment, all of its contents and what it represents. Overtime, gender and experience have been suspected to influence technology choice. That was also a concern for this study. It is in the light of these, that this study was designed to identify emerging technologies that can be leveraged to enhance digital competency amongst OTM students, and also ascertain effective measures of ensuring constant integrating of relevant digital skills into OTM curriculum so as to make ready its graduates for the 21st Century world of work and beyond.

**Purpose of the study**

The main purpose of the study was to ascertain how emerging technologies could be leveraged to enhance digital competency in OTM programme in South-East Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to find out the:

1. Extent to which digital skills are incorporated into the current OTM curriculum.
2. Extent to which emerging technologies were being leveraged in teaching and learning of OTM students in federal polytechnics in South-East Nigeria.
3. Measures to be adopted for effective integration of relevant digital skills into OTM curriculum to enhance digital competency and relevance of its graduates.

**Research questions**

1. To what extent are digital skills incorporated into the current OTM curriculum?
2. To what extent are emerging technologies being leveraged in teaching and learning of OTM students in federal polytechnics in South-East Nigeria?
3. What measures to be adopted to properly integrate relevant digital skills into OTM curriculum to enhance digital competency and relevance of its graduates?

## Method

The descriptive survey research design, using quantitative approach was adopted for the study. The design was considered appropriate for the study because it enabled the researchers to elicit responses from the respondents in their natural environment without manipulation. The area of the study consisted of three federal polytechnics in the South-East Zone of Nigeria with undergraduate programme in Office Technology and Management and they are Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic Unwana, Afikpo, Ebonyi State, Federal Polytechnic Nekede, Imo State and Federal Polytechnic Oko, Anambra State. The population of the study was 32 lecturers/instructors/technologists from the institutions of study in the order of 11, 10, and 11 respectively. The entire population was used for the study because it was of a manageable size. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire entitled: "Leveraging technology to enhance digital competency in Office Technology and Management (LTEDCOTMQ) developed by the researchers. The instrument was divided into two sections – A & B. Section A was the demographics of the respondents with only three items. Section B had 34 items organised in three uneven clusters hinged on the three research questions that guided the study. The first two clusters were based on a four-point rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE) – 4points, High Extent (HE) - 3points, Low Extent (LE) – 2points and Very Low Extent (VLE) – 1point, while the last cluster, also on a four-point rating scale, had Strongly Agree (SA) – 4points, Agree (A) – 3points, Disagree (D) – 2points, and Strongly Disagree (SD) – 1point, as response options. The respondents were asked to choose one option per item, as it best reflects their opinions or experiences. Googleform was used to design and administer the instruments, and a total of four weeks was allowed for the completion and harvesting of the data. The data collected were analysed using statistic mean to answer the research questions and standard deviation to determine the homogeneity of the response mean ratings. For decisions, items with mean ratings of 3.50 and above were considered as very high extent/strongly agree, as the case may be. Those between 2.50 and 3.49 were taken to be High extent/Agree, 1.50 – 2.49 were for low extent/disagree, while 1.49 and below were rated as very low extent/strongly disagree. Two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance using t-test and any item whose p-value (sig) was less than the alpha value was not accepted and those with p-value greater than the alpha value were accepted. SPSS was used in running the analysis.

## Results

The results of the study as obtained from the respondents were shown below:

**Research question 1**: To what extent are digital skills incorporated into the current OTM curriculum?

**Table 1:** *Mean ratings and standard deviation of respondents' views on the extent digital skills were incorporated into the current OTM curriculum*

| SN. | Digital technologies incorporated into the current OTM curriculum | $\bar{x}$ | SD | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Basic understanding of computer hardware & software | 3.20 | 0.68 | High Extent |
| 2. | Word processing (MS Word, Google Docs, Libre Office) | 2.93 | 0.96 | High Extent |
| 3. | Spreadsheet software (MS Excel, Google Sheets) | 2.87 | 1.06 | High Extent |
| 4. | Presentation software (MS PowerPoint, Google Slides) | 2.80 | 0.86 | High Extent |
| 5. | Desktop Publishing Software (CorelDraw, MS Publisher, Adobe InDesign, Canva) | 3.07 | 0.80 | High Extent |
| 6. | Email communication (MS Outlook, Gmail, etc) | 2.53 | 1.06 | High Extent |
| 7. | Internet communication tools | 2.53 | 0.92 | High Extent |
| 8. | E-learning/online tools (Learning Management Systems – Moodle, Google classroom, Udemy) | 2.33 | 0.98 | Low Extent |
| 9. | Digital marketing awareness tools | 2.13 | 0.92 | Low Extent |
| 10. | File management and storage (Google Drive, OneDrive, Dropbox, Windows File Explorers) | 2.53 | 0.92 | High Extent |
| 11. | Web/Digital literacy (basic internet research skills, website navigation, evaluation of credible sources, etc.) | 2.47 | 0.99 | Low Extent |
| 12. | Database management (basic understanding of records, fields, queries, cloud databases) | 3.07 | 0.70 | High Extent |
| 13. | Digital communication (Zoom, Google Meet, MS Teams, Skype, Slack) | 2.60 | 0.99 | High Extent |
| 14. | Digital design and publishing (for creating digital flyers, reports, newsletters, etc.) | 2.60 | 0.99 | High Extent |
| 15. | Cyber-security awareness (password management, email phishing and cyber threat identification, safe browsing and data privacy principles, etc.) | 2.07 | 0.70 | Low Extent |

Table 1 showed that items 8, 9, 11 and 15 had mean scores ranging from 0.70 to 2.47 indicating that respondents viewed them as items integrated into the current OTM curriculum at a low extent. The mean for the rest eleven items ranged within 2.53 and 3.20, which meant that respondents agreed that, to a high extent, these items were integrated into the current OTM curriculum.

**Research question 2:** To what extent are emerging technologies being leveraged in teaching and learning of OTM students in federal polytechnics in South-East Nigeria?

**Table 2:** *Mean ratings and standard deviation of respondents' views on the extent modern technologies were being leveraged in teaching and learning of OTM in SE Nigeria*

| SN. | Emerging technologies currently leveraged in teaching and learning experience in OTM in SE | $\bar{x}$ | SD | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16. | Microsoft office suite (Word, Excel, PowerPoint) | 3.00 | 0.66 | High Extent |
| 17. | Google workspace (Docs, Drive) | 2.33 | 0.90 | Low Extent |
| 18. | Learning management systems (e.g. Moodle, Google Classroom) | 2.27 | 0.80 | Low Extent |
| 19. | Internet facilities | 2.33 | 0.98 | Low Extent |
| 20. | Digital communication technologies | 2.60 | 0.99 | High Extent |
| 21. | Database management | 2.93 | 0.70 | High Extent |
| 22. | Email/online communication tools | 2.47 | 0.83 | Low Extent |
| 23. | Multimedia (video editing software, projectors) | 2.40 | 0.74 | Low Extent |
| 24. | Web/Digital literacy | 2.27 | 0.88 | Low Extent |
| 25. | Cloud computing tools | 2.27 | 0.80 | Low Extent |

Table 2 showed that items 16, 20 and 21 had mean scores ranged from 2.60 to 3.00 indicating that respondents viewed them as the only items on emerging technologies that were being leveraged to a high extent in teaching and learning of OTM students in SE. The remaining seven items with mean ratings ranged from 2.27 to 2.47 showed that those emerging technologies were leveraged at a low extent. From the standard deviations, the respondents in the two response options that featured were homogenous in the responses on the emerging technologies that were being leveraged in the teaching and learning of OTM students in SE.

**Research question 3:** What measures should be adopted to properly integrate relevant digital skills into OTM curriculum to enhance digital competency and relevance of its graduates?

**Table 3:** *Mean ratings and standard deviation of respondents' views on the measures to be adopted for effective integration of relevant digital skills into OTM curriculum*

| SN. | Measures to be adopted for effective integration of relevant digital skills into OTM curriculum | $\bar{x}$ | SD | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 26. | Increased practical sessions on digital communication tools | 3.93 | 0.26 | Strongly Agree |
| 27. | Inclusion of more advanced ICT/digital literacy courses (Artificial Intelligence) | 3.93 | 0.26 | Strongly Agree |
| 28. | Inclusion of cloud computing tools | 3.80 | 0.41 | Strongly Agree |
| 29. | Greater use of e-learning platforms | 3.67 | 0.49 | Strongly Agree |
| 30. | Enhanced industry collaboration to enable regular internship in tech-enabled workplaces | 3.87 | 0.35 | Strongly Agree |
| 31. | Inclusion of data analysis and visualisation tools | 3.60 | 0.51 | Strongly Agree |
| 32. | Establishing a feedback mechanism from industries and employees to keep tab on digital trends | 3.80 | 0.41 | Strongly Agree |
| 33. | Introduction of automation basics | 3.60 | 0.51 | Strongly Agree |
| 34. | Regular review of OTM curriculum by relevant professionals | 3.87 | 0.32 | Strongly Agree |

Table 3 showed that all the nine items had mean scored ranged from 3.60 to 3.93. This meant that respondents strongly agreed on all the nine items listed as measures to be adopted for effective integration of relevant digital skills into OTM curriculum. From the standard deviation scores, the respondents were homogenous in their views that the listed items are measures to be adopted for effective integration of relevant digital skills into OTM curriculum.

**Test of Hypotheses**

Ho1: OTM lecturers with less than 15 years cognate experience do not differ significantly from those with over 15 years of experience in their mean ratings on the extent to which digital skills are incorporated into the current OTM curriculum.

**Table 4:** *t-test analysis of the mean ratings of OTM lecturers with less than 15 years cognate experience and those with over 15 years of experience on the extent to which digital skills are incorporated into current OTM curriculum*

| Years of Experience | N | Mean | St. D | Df | t-cal | Sig | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 8 | 2.71 | .53 | 13 | 0.363 | 0. 722 | Not Significant |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Less than 15 years cognate experience | | | |
| Over 15 years of experience | 7 | 2.58 | .82 |

Table 4 depict the mean responses of the significant difference between OTM lecturers with less than 15years cognate experience and those with over 15years of experience on the extent to which digital skills were incorporated into the current OTM curriculum. Lecturers with less than 15years cognate experience had a mean of 2.71 and those with more than 15years experience had a mean of 2.58 while their corresponding standard deviations were 0.53 and 0.82 respectively. The t-value of 0.362 at a degree of freedom of 13 showed that it was not significant at p-value of 0.722. Testing at an alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis was retained since the p-value is greater than the alpha value. Thus, there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of the responses of OTM lecturers with less than 15years cognate experience and those with over 15years experience on the extent to which digital skills were incorporated into the current OTM curriculum.

H02: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female OTM tutors on the measures to be adopted for effective integration of relevant digital skills into OTM curriculum.

**Table 5***: t-test analysis of the mean ratings of Male and Female OTM tutors on the measures to be adopted for effective integration of relevant digital skills into OTM curriculum.*

| **Gender** | **N** | **Mean** | **St.D** | **Df** | **t-cal** | **Sig** | **Decision** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male | 4 | 3.89 | .16 | 13 | 1.088 | 0.296 | Not Significant |
| Female | 11 | 3.75 | .24 | | | | |

The result in table 5 revealed the mean response of the significant difference between male and female OTM tutors on the measures to be adopted for effective integration of relevant digital skills into OTM curriculum. Male tutors had a mean of 3.89 and female tutors had a mean value of 3.75 while their corresponding standard deviations were 0.16 and 0.24 respectively. The t-value of 1.088 at degree of freedom of 13 showed that it was not significant at p-value of 0.296. testing at an alpha level 0.05, the null hypothesis was retained since the p-value is greater than the alpha value. Thus, there is no significance difference in the mean ratings of male and female OTM tutors on the measures to be adopted for effective integration of relevant digital skills into OTM curriculum.

**Discussions**

Findings from the results presented in table 1 revealed that the current OTM curriculum contain some basic digital skills such as basic understanding of computer hardware and software, word processing, spreadsheet, presentation and desktop publishing software to a high extent. Others skills it contained as a high extent are email communication and internet tools, file management and storage tools, database management, digital communication tools like zoom and Skype, and digital design and publication tools for creation of newsletter and flyers. However, modern high-in-demand-digital skills such as cyber security awareness, web/digital literacy, E-learning/online tools, and digital marketing tools were at a low extent, thus, implying that students were not adequately exposed to modern digital tools. This agreed with the findings of Nwaiwu and Nwokorie (2023) that the current OTM curriculum designed in collaboration with UNESCO has an international perspective and contains courses bothering on convergence of computer, telecommunication, internet and basic ICT competencies, but is grossly short of current digital skills. Curriculum dictates the teaching/skills transmittable in any

course, and therefore, if it is not up to date, it will be practically impossible to transmit up to date skills to its recipients. The study of Amesi and Obi (2023) asserted that a large number of business education each year join the unemployment market largely because the skills taught are at variance with the skills in demand, and this was largely due to the state/contents of the curriculum. Furthermore, Utebor et al. (2024) stressed that many graduates of OTM possess skills that are at variance with what employers need, thus pointing to the challenge of the contents of the curriculum. The need for the review of OTM curriculum in response to the trending technological changes of the age bears emphasising.

Findings in table 2 revealed that currently, emerging technologies such as Google workspace, learning management systems, internet facilities, and email/online communication tools, multimedia tools, and cloud computing tools were leveraged at a low extent in the teaching and learning of OTM in South East, Nigeria. These are the technologies that drive modern business and world of work, hence their importance in OTM. On the other hand, the result also revealed that technologies such as Microsoft office suite, digital communication technology tools, and database management (DBMS) tools, were all leveraged at high extent in the teaching and learning of OTM in South East Nigeria. This showed a skill gap or skill divide, where access to high demand digital skills is inhibited. This is corroborated by the findings of Tripathy in Okoli et al that, in order to minimise the risks of digital divide, digital skills required in the modern digital economy should be taught to students. The findings align with those of Shua and Dahiru (2024) which posited that employers tend more towards graduates who can leverage technologies to advance their organisations' strategy and operation, and so called for the integration of more technological causes into the curriculum and also for openness to new technologies. Further to that, the study of Okoli et al that emphasised that digital technologies had become a pedagogical tool for lecturers of the 21st Century, hence new technologies must be integrated in instructional delivery agrees with this finding.

From table 3, the findings showed that all the listed measures, which include increased practical sessions on digital communication tools, inclusion of cloud computing tools, advanced ICT/digital literacy courses, data analysis and visualisation tools, greater use of e-learning platforms will aid the integration of relevant digital skills into OTM curriculum. Other measures include enhanced industry collaboration, establishment of feedback mechanism from industries/employees to keep tab on digital trends, and regular review of OTM curriculum. The study found that adopting these measures is an effective strategy for integrating emerging technologies into OTM curriculum. The findings align with those of Emeasoba et al. (2024) that some of the measures for ensuring the development of a viable curriculum is industry collaboration. This will not only support in feedback on technology trends but can also provide avenue for students' internship to bridge the gap between classroom theory and world of work reality. It will also provide opportunity for financial and technological support for institutions.

**Conclusion**

The study concluded that since digital skills are essential to the relevance of OTM programme in 21st Century and beyond, emerging technologies could be leveraged on to enhance the acquisitions thereof. Employers However, to actualise this, efforts must be made to ensure that the curriculum is not obsolete. As technology keeps evolving, one measure towards ensuring regular/timely review of OTM curriculum with a view to reducing skills mismatch is collaboration with employers/industries. Employers of labour will always favour potential employees who possess current digital skills in addition to excellent core professional skills. With the trend of things, it appeared OTM is due for another overhaul so as to realign it to fit into the modern world of work. The age is not called digital age for nothing.

**Recommendations**

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

1. Federal polytechnics in South-East should effectively collaborate with feeder industries in the Region for regular curriculum review/enrichment and adequate students' exposure to modern office realities and reduction of skills mismatch.
2. Government, supported by relevant stakeholders should increase funding and provision of emerging technological tools to OTM programme.
3. A systemic intensive digital skills training funded by government through the tertiary education trust fund (TETFund) for OTM lecturers should be given top priority for the next five years.

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