



## Creativity, emotional intelligence competency-based management and academic staff job performance in public universities in Akwa Ibom and Rivers States of Nigeria

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### Abstract

This study examined the extent creativity and emotional intelligence competency-based management predicts academic staff job performance in public universities in Akwa Ibom and Rivers States of Nigeria. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted the correlational survey design, using a sample of 520 universities' administrators drawn through total sampling technique from the population of 520 university administrators of the five public universities in both Akwa Ibom and Rivers States. The instruments for data collection were: Creativity and Emotional Intelligence Competency-Based Management Scale (CECBMS) and Academic Staff Job Performance (ASJPS) which were validated by experts with reliability coefficients of 0.83 and 0.96 respectively, determined through Cronbach's Alpha Statistics. All research questions were answered with simple regression, while all the hypotheses were tested with t-test associated with simple regression at 0.05 level of significance with (SPSS version 22). The findings of the study revealed that creativity and emotional intelligence competency-based management predicted academic staff job performance in public universities in Akwa Ibom and Rivers State of Nigeria. Based on the findings, the study recommended that, the authority of the public universities should assign jobs to the academic staff that will stir up the creative competency in academic staff and organize training that will build the capacity of academic staff on emotional intelligence to enhance the job performance of the academic staff of the public universities.

**Keywords:** creativity competency, emotional intelligence, competency-based management, public universities, Akwa Ibom, and Rivers State

### Introduction

#### Background of the Study

Competency-based management in creativity and emotional intelligence are widely listed as essential mediations to foster advancement and effective job performance among academic staff of public universities. Competency-based management is inextricably linked to the everyday school operation as the key education driver of change and success or even a source of failure if not prioritized. An efficient competency-based management that is consistently aligns with school mission and a vision is the cornerstone to induce optimum academic staff job performance.

Google Dictionary (2020) as cited in Ebong (2022) <sup>[5]</sup> views competency-based management (CBM) as a tool that supports the integration of human resources planning with business planning, by allowing organisations to assess the current human resource capacity based on their competencies against the capacity needed to achieve the vision, mission and business goals of the organization. Competency-based management is the practice of identifying the key skills necessary for employees to reach target performance in their specific roles, and then developing and optimizing those skills to best align with the business strategy of the university organization. Boyatzis (2008) describes competency as a capacity that exists in a person that leads to behaviour that meets the job demands within the parameters of the organisational environment, and that, in turn brings about desired results.

The university managers have to develop the internal competencies needed to execute their strategies. University's management in the current competitive

landscape will need to attract and effectively manage a talent pool from all over the globe. Without the skills needed to implement an innovation, even promising technological advancement may prove disastrous. It is also necessary that the university organisations should build their strategies based on their core competencies (Bateman & Snell, 2009) <sup>[2]</sup>. This study focuses on the creativity and emotional intelligence competency-based management and academic staff job performance in public universities in Akwa Ibom and Rivers States of Nigeria. These variables were selected because previous researchers have neglected them.

Competency in creativity constitutes the center of this study. Creativity is production of new ideas. Siddiqi and Qureshi (2016) <sup>[19]</sup> view creativity as a design in which the employee makes such innovative construction which the work related problems are resolved in rightful manner with step by step process. It is seen as the development of useful solution to meet the challenges and overcome problem. Creativity is developing a cost-effective technique in handling complex problems. Considerable evidence suggests that employee's creativity makes an important contribution to organizational survival and development. Wang (2016) <sup>[22]</sup> defines creativity as ideas that are both novel and useful regardless of the type of idea, the reasons behind its production, or the starting point of the process. Given the important role of employees' creativity in the university organization, researchers have become increasingly interested in identifying the conditions that predict creativity of individual employees. In view of this, does it really mean that competency and creativity are predictors of academic

staff job performance? The answer to this question will be provided in the course of this study.

Furthermore, experts opine that the ability to recognize our feelings and those of others and manage emotions well in ourselves is the major contributing factor to employees' performance. Gunu and Oladepo (2014) <sup>[7]</sup> reveal that emotional intelligence (EI) has been found to be an important predictor of various enviable organizational outcomes such as job performance; job satisfaction; organizational citizenship behaviour; etc. The educational scholars further maintain that emotional intelligence involves managing feelings so that they are expressed appropriately, therefore enabling people to work together towards a common goals in a constructive and transparent environment. Emotional intelligence is a powerful psychological skill that can affect behaviour and performance in important ways. Hence the academic staff competence in emotional intelligence cannot be compromised. All the variables were studied in respect of academic staff job performance. Performance refers to the degree of achievement and completion of the task of the individual academic staff. From the literature survey conducted by the researcher, only a few studies have sparingly examined teamwork competency and job performance, but none has systematically studied competency-based management in creativity, emotional intelligence and academic staff job performance in public universities to the best of the researcher's knowledge. In view of the above, this study was conducted to determine the extent creativity and emotional intelligence competencies predict the academic staff job performance in public universities in Akwa Ibom and Rivers States.

### **Creativity Competency and Academic Staff Job Performance**

Competency on creativity also constitutes the center of this study. Creativity is production of new ideas. Siddiqi and Qureshi (2016) <sup>[19]</sup> view creativity as a design in which the employee makes such innovative construction in which the work related problems are resolved in rightful manner with step by step process. It is seen as the development of useful solution to meet the challenges and overcome problem. It is developing a cost-effective technique in handling complex problems. Considerable evidence suggests that employee's creativity makes an important contribution to organizational survival and development. Wang (2016) <sup>[22]</sup> defines creativity as ideas that are both novel and useful regardless of the type of idea, the reasons behind its production, or the starting point of the process.

Creativity can be explained as production of new ideas; a creative employee is one who can come up with new suggestions/ideas for the services to be constructed, the flood of the communication and understanding it in the same way which would affect the work done by the employee during his working hour (Amabile, as cited in Siddiqi & Qureshi, 2016) <sup>[19]</sup>. Creativity is explained as a design in which the employee make such innovative construction in which the work related problems are resolved in rightful manner with step by step process, some explain it as the ability of the individuals how they can develop useful solution to meet the challenges and overcome the problem they faced in the organization (Amabile, as cited in Siddiqi & Qureshi, 2016) <sup>[19]</sup>. A creative employee is one who has the ability to be aware of

the organization and must be sensitive so that he can tackle the problem, he must have sharp mind so he is able to remember his task for long time, and he must be adaptive, it is because due to globalization there is rapid change in the technology as well the culture so a creative employee would be one who is able to adapt all the changes before time, in this way he would be termed as creative (Evans, as cited in Siddiqi & Qureshi, 2016) <sup>[19]</sup>.

Several recent studies of leadership have examined the influence of leaders on employees' creative behaviours. Followers' and employees' creative achievement is likely to be mediated primarily by their degrees of psychological involvement in creative processes (Carmeli & Schaubroeck, 2007) <sup>[4]</sup>. In linking to creativity, theoretical evidences have suggested that psychological empowerment, in turn, makes a critical contribution to employee creativity by positively affecting an employee's intrinsic motivation (Amabile as cited in Lee & Tan, 2012) <sup>[12]</sup>. Psychological empowerment is conceptualized as an experienced psychological state or set of cognitions (Zhang & Bartol, 2010) <sup>[23]</sup>. Lee and Tan (2012) <sup>[12]</sup> agree that creativity is not only generated from the overall firm strategy and access to resources but more fundamentally from the minds of the individual employees, alone or with others, carrying out the work of the organization every day. Creativity is derived from an individual's accumulated creative thinking skills and expertise based on their formal educations and past experiences (Amabile, as cited in Lee & Tan, 2012) <sup>[12]</sup>. From the studies of Kota-Nitta and Maeda (2016) <sup>[10]</sup>; Siddiqi and Qureshi (2016) <sup>[19]</sup>; Wang, Xue, and Su (2010) <sup>[21]</sup>; and Lee and Tan (2012) <sup>[12]</sup>, it is obviously deciphered that there is a positive correlation between competency in creativity and academic staff job performance.

### **Emotional Intelligence Competency and Academic Staff Job Performance**

Furthermore, experts opine that the ability to recognize our feelings and those of others and manage emotions well in ourselves is the major contributing factor to employees' performance. Gunu and Oladepo (2014) <sup>[7]</sup> reveal that emotional intelligence (EI) has been found to be an important predictor of various enviable organizational outcomes such as job performance, job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behaviour, and organizational commitment. The duo further argue that emotional intelligence involves managing feelings so that they are expressed appropriately, therefore enabling people to work together towards a common goals in a constructive and transparent environment. When the executives of the universities value feelings, so will the employees. Thus, if the university's administrators feel optimistic; confident; creative; flexible; tolerant; respectful; and compassionate, the people around them (students) will likely mirror these feelings (Gunu & Oladepo, 2014) <sup>[7]</sup>.

Emotions have a substantial impact upon the intelligence of an individual and organization's work culture has been very much affected by the same factor. As stated by Ashkanasy and Daus (2005) the concept of Emotional Intelligence (EI) has gained popularity yet remained an ignorant topic. Kafetsios and Zampetakis (2008) as cited in Kaur and Sharma (2019) <sup>[8]</sup>, EI plays a significant role in emerging perspective of 'affective revolution' in social and organizational psychology. Salovey and Mayer as cited in Kaur and Sharma (2019) <sup>[8]</sup>, define EI as ability to recognise

one's emotions and regulate them accordingly. Many researchers have tried to find the nature of relationship that exists between EI and work performance. Lam and Kirby (2002) <sup>[11]</sup> reveal that employee's performance can be best predicted by EI as it can project their productivity by understanding and managing their emotions in the preferred manner accordingly. "According to researchers, EI empowers an individual to motivate oneself, boost persistence level, control impulses, regulate one's moods and thus, manage one's ability to think, to empathise and to hope" (Kaur & Sharma, 2019, p.1658) <sup>[8]</sup>. Furthermore, Bhalla and Nauriyal as cited in Kaur and Sharma (2019) <sup>[8]</sup>, suggest that an emotionally intelligent person is proficient in two key areas namely, "personal competence" – ability of one to manage self; and "social competence" – ability of one to manage relationships.

According to Perlovsky (2006) as cited in Kaur and Sharma (2019) <sup>[8]</sup> emotions are considered as one of the firm competencies apart from knowledge, dexterity, beliefs and routines used for demonstrating both expressive communication and inner feelings of love, hate, desire, sadness and aversion. Besides, Mayer and Salovey as cited in Kaur and Sharma (2019) <sup>[8]</sup> add to the myriad of definitions by linking emotions with intelligence of person. The concept of EI has its foundation from the time as early as late 1930s, when the concept of non-intellective intelligence came into light. EI has its root in the concept of 'social intelligence' as identified by Thorndike as cited in Kaur and Sharma (2019) <sup>[8]</sup>, and explained as an ability to comprehend, manage and act prudently in human relations. The educational scholars also state that EI helps in understanding and managing emotions of others in order to accomplish organizational needs effectively. Furthermore, Orme (2003) as cited in Kaur and Sharma (2019) <sup>[8]</sup>, elaborates EI as the proficiency of understanding emotions of one-self and others and then, taking favourable actions accordingly. Goleman (2001) <sup>[6]</sup> defines emotional intelligence as the ability through which a person could screen his emotions, other persons' emotions, differentiate between various emotions and label them and consequently he might use this emotional information to guide his thinking and behaviour.

In summation of the broad presentations of various studies of great researchers such as Kaur and Sharma (2019) <sup>[8]</sup>; Shahhosseni, Silong, Ismail and Uli (2012) <sup>[12]</sup>; Gunu and Oladepo (2014) <sup>[7]</sup>; and Munir and Azam (2017) <sup>[15]</sup> on the subject of emotional intelligence competency and academic staff job performance, it is a well-conceptualized notion and postulation that emotional intelligence is a strong correlate of academic staff job performance. These studies have further buttressed the fact that increase work performance of academic staff can only be achieved and sustained through a concerted effort of upgrading the competency levels of these staff through consistent training.

### Statement of the Problem

The romance between the gown and the town has not really yielded impressive benefits to the university system. The February to October, 2022 industrial action of academic staff union of the universities of Nigeria was a deep test on the competency levels in terms of creativity and emotional intelligence of the university's academic staff. Considering the regular industrial actions embarked by academic staff union of the universities (ASUU), one wonders whether

there were no fresh ideas that could provide solutions to all types of workplace challenges. Why will the university's lecturers not see these old problems in new ways and have novel approaches to solving these problems?

Although the federal government of Nigeria has failed in keeping her agreement entered into with the academic staff union of the universities, but the universities' teachers need to think out of the box in creative and resourceful ways by brainstorming and connecting seemingly related ideas, events, and circumstances to find global solutions to the repeated conflict between them and the federal government. Can the application of creativity and emotional intelligence competencies salvage the academic staff job performance from diminishing? One cannot be certain about the answer to this question, since many studies have not clearly stated the relationship between these variables. This is indeed the very reason why this study was conducted to determine the extent creativity and emotional intelligence competency-based management predict academic staff job performance in public universities in Akwa Ibom and Rivers State.

### Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study was to examine the extent creativity and emotional intelligence competency-based management predict academic staff job performance in public universities in Akwa Ibom and Rivers States. Specifically the study sought to:

1. determine the extent creativity competency predict academic staff job performance in public universities in both Akwa Ibom and Rivers States.
2. evaluate the extent emotional intelligence competency predict academic staff job performance in public universities in both Akwa Ibom and Rivers States.

### Research Questions

The following questions were raised to guide the study:

1. To what extent does creativity competency predict academic staff job performance in public universities in both Akwa Ibom and Rivers States?
2. To what extent does emotional intelligence competency predict academic staff job performance in public universities in both Akwa Ibom and Rivers States?

### Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Creativity competency does not significantly predict academic staff job performance in public universities in both Akwa Ibom and Rivers States.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** Emotional intelligence competency does not significantly predict academic staff job performance in public universities in both Akwa Ibom and Rivers States.

### Methodology

This study adopted correlational survey design to predict the relationship among creativity, emotional intelligence, and academic staff job performance in public universities in Akwa Ibom and Rivers States. The population of the study was the five public universities in both Akwa Ibom and Rivers States. As at the time of this investigation the universities had 520 administrators. A sample of 520 academic staff was selected through a total sampling technique. The instruments for the study were designed by the researchers and entitled Creativity and Emotional

Intelligence Competencies Scale (CEICS) and Academic Staff Job Performance Scale (ASJPS) with a reliability coefficient of 0.83 and 0.96 respectively. All the research questions were answered with simple linear regression while all the hypotheses were tested with t-test associated with simple linear regression at 0.05 level of significance. This was done using SPSS version (22).

**Data Analysis**

**Research Question (1):** To what extent does creativity competency predicts academic staff job performance in public universities in Akwa Ibom and Rivers States?

**Table 1:** Simple Regression Analysis on the Correlation between Creativity Competency and Academic Staff Job Performance in Akwa Ibom and Rivers States.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Decision
1	.883 <sup>a</sup>	.780	.780	.32947	High Relationship

a. Predictors: (Constant), CREATIVITY.

Table (1) showed a regression coefficient (R) of 0.883, this indicates a high and positive relationship between creativity competency and academic staff job performance in public universities in Akwa Ibom and Rivers States. Similarly, the R Square value revealed ( $R^2 = .780$ ), this means that creativity competency predicted 78% ( $.780 \times 100$ ) of academic staff job performance in public universities in Akwa Ibom and Rivers States, while the remaining percentage score was predicted by other external variables.

**Research Question (2):** To what extent does emotional intelligence competency predicts academic staff job performance in public universities in Akwa Ibom and Rivers States?

**Table 2:** Simple Regression Analysis on the Correlation between Emotional Intelligence Competency and Academic Staff Job Performance in Akwa Ibom and Rivers States.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Decision
1	.878 <sup>a</sup>	.771	.770	.33642	High Relationship

a. Predictors: (Constant), EMOTIONAL\_INTELLIGENCE.

Table (2) showed a regression coefficient (R) of 0.878, this indicates a high and positive relationship between emotional intelligence competency and academic staff job performance in public universities in Akwa Ibom and Rivers States. Similarly, the R Square value revealed ( $R^2 = .771$ ), this means that emotional intelligence competency predicted 77% ( $.771 \times 100$ ) of academic staff job performance in public universities in Akwa Ibom and Rivers States, while the remaining percentage score was predicted by other external variables.

**Hypothesis H0<sub>1</sub>:** Creativity competency does not significantly predict academic staff job performance in public universities in Akwa Ibom and Rivers States.

**Table 3:** t-test Associated with Simple Regression on the Correlation between Creativity Competency and Academic Staff Job Performance in Public Universities in Akwa Ibom and Rivers States.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
(Constant)	.836	.052		16.071	.000
Creativity	.741	.018	.883	41.542	.000

a. Dependent Variable: JOB\_PERFORMANCE.

Table (3) showed the t-test value associated with simple regression of 41.542, while the significance level was 0.000. This revealed that the probability level of 0.000 is less than the alpha level of 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that creativity competency significantly predicts academic staff job performance in public universities in Akwa Ibom and Rivers States.

**Hypothesis H0<sub>2</sub>:** Emotional intelligence competency does not significantly predict academic staff job performance in public universities in Akwa Ibom and Rivers States.

**Table 4:** t-test Associated with Simple Regression on the Correlation between Emotional Intelligence Competency and Academic Staff Job Performance in Public Universities in Akwa Ibom and Rivers States.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
(Constant)	.820	.054		15.240	.000
Emotional_Intelligence	.732	.018	.878	40.439	.000

a. Dependent Variable: JOB\_PERFORMANCE.

Table (4) showed the t-test value associated with simple regression of 40.439, while the significance level was 0.000. This revealed that the probability level of 0.000 is less than the alpha level of 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that emotional intelligence competency significantly predicts academic staff job performance in public universities in Akwa Ibom and Rivers States of Nigeria.

**Creativity Competency and Academic Staff Job Performance in Public Universities**

The outcome of data analysis on the relationship between creativity competency and academic staff job performance showed a high and positive relationship between the two variables in public universities in south-south zone of Nigeria. The product of the current work is in harmony with those of Lee and Tan (2012) <sup>[12]</sup>, and Wang, Xue, and Su (2010) <sup>[21]</sup> who established also that academic staff's creativity competency is a correlate of job performance. Their respective studies revealed a high and positive relationship between the variables. Furthermore, this study was conducted outside Nigeria. The result of the current work showed a significant relationship between creativity competency and academic staff job performance in public universities in Akwa Ibom and Rivers States. This was because t-test value of (0.000) was found to be less than the alpha level at (0.05) significance level. It also reveals that creativity competency predicts academic staff job performance in public universities.

Implicitly, the exhibition of a high and positive level of creativity by academic staff of public universities will compel a corresponding high and positive level of job performance among the academic staff; however, low creativity competency will induce a corresponding low job performance among the academic staff of public universities. The positive relationship between creativity competency and academic staff job performance in public universities implies that as there is increase in the creativity capacities of the academic staff there will be overwhelming increase in the universities' teachers' level of job performance, and vice-versa.

### **Emotional Intelligence Competency and Academic Staff Job Performance in Public Universities**

The outcome of data analysis on the relationship between emotional intelligence competency and academic staff job performance showed a high and positive relationship between the two variables in public universities in the Akwa Ibom and Rivers States of Nigeria. The product of the current work is in harmony with those of Munir and Azam (2017) <sup>[15]</sup>, and Gunu and Oladepo (2014) <sup>[7]</sup> who established also that emotional intelligence competency has positive and high relationship with job performance. Although the study of Gunu and Oladepo (2014) <sup>[7]</sup> was conducted outside the public universities, but in Dangote Flour Mill, yet it exposes that emotional intelligence competency is a predictor of job performance among workers. The result of the current work showed a significant relationship between emotional intelligence competency and academic staff job performance in public universities in the Akwa Ibom and Rivers States of Nigeria. This was because the t-test value of (0.000) was found to be less than the alpha level at (0.05) significance level. It also reveals that emotional intelligence competency predicts academic staff job performance in Akwa Ibom and Rivers States.

Implicitly, the exhibition of a high and positive skill on emotional intelligence will attract a corresponding high and positive of job performance among the academic staff of public universities, while low emotional intelligence competency will illicit low job performance among the academic staff of the public universities. The positive relationship between emotional intelligence competency and academic staff job performance in public universities implies that as the capacities of academic staff are being enhance their job performance output level will definitely increase to the desirable level in public universities in Akwa Ibom and Rivers States, and vice-versa.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of the investigation presented and discussed, creativity and emotional intelligence competencies strongly predicted academic staff job performance in public universities in Akwa Ibom and Rivers States of Nigeria.

### **Recommendations**

From the findings presented and discussed above, the researcher offered the following recommendations.

1. The present high level of competency in creativity should be maintained by constantly exposing the academic staff to tasks that require novelty.
2. The academic staff high level of emotional intelligence should be sustained through a constant exposure of

academic staff to more practical training on emotions management by the university's authority.

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