

# Correlate of Emotional Intelligence and Academic Staff Job Performance of Federal Universites in the South East, Nigeria

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#### **ABSTRACT**

There is an ever increasing problem of creating a fit between work-life balances, managing individual emotions and meeting the demands of job requirements in achieving operational ascendency in organization. This problem necessitated the need for organizations to continue to look out for individual workers with high emotional intelligence that can effectively manage their emotions and responds to work for the desired performance. It is the complexity inherent in balancing the aforementioned while achieving the goal of the organization gave vent to this study. The study investigated the effect of emotional intelligence on academic staff job performance of Federal Universities in the South East, Nigeria. The specific objectives are: to determine the extent to which self-awareness relates to academic staff lob performance, to ascertain the extent to which self-management relates to academic staff job performance, and to establish the extent to which social awareness relate to academic staff job performance of federal universities in the south East, Nigeria. Correlation research design shall be employed because the study seeks to establish the degree or extent of the relationships among the studied variables and the data shall be gotten through structured questionnaire designed in 5-point likert scale. The data collected was analyzed with Pearson Correlation Coefficient. The result indicated that there is positive and significant relationship between self-awareness and academic staff job performance (r=0.65, p<0.005, n=496), that there is a positive and significant correlation between self-management and academic staff job performance (r=0.59, p<0.005, n=496) and that there is a positive and significant relationship between social awareness and academic job performance (r=0.45, p<0.005, n=496). The implication is that a holistic understanding of the dimensions of emotional intelligence would not only enable the individual workers to effectively manage their emotions but help the workers to overcome challenges and defuse conflict in pursuance to the attainment of goal.

**Keywords:** Self-awareness, Self-management, Performance, Work-life Balance, Operational Ascendency Dexterity and Social awareness.

#### INTRODUCTION

Organizations whether construed as political, socio-technical and rational systems, are increasingly demanding for superior skills, operational capability, higher productivity, and improved work-related attitudes from their workers. These demands according to Krett (2021) had made organizations including institutions of higher learning to lay emphasis on emotional intelligence that seeks to integrate perceptions, emotions and feelings of individual workers into positive thoughts as needed for improved job performance. The reality of engendering emotional intelligence within the operational ambit of any organization as observed by Shroulder (2020) underscores firm's efforts to buoy-up job performance through the

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instrumentality of effective self-controlled mechanism in responding to work demands. This, however, is predicative of the fact that individual workers who have high emotional intelligence can effectively manage their emotions while responding to work expectations (Zhongwu and Yapeng, 2021). Therefore, Sambu (2019) conceptualized emotional intelligence as the cognitive ability to conceive feelings that engenders positive thinking. In other words, it is concerned with the creative capacity that helps individuals to create feelings for positive thoughts in fostering enthusiastic and intellectual development needed for improved job performance.

Historically, the concept of emotional intelligence has its antecedent in the 1990, when Peter Salavoy and John Mayer in their article "Emotional Intelligence" (Zhongwu and Yapeng, 2021). In 1995, Goleman, a psychologist and behavioral science journalist popularized emotional intelligence in his book, Emotional Intelligence in describing person's ability to manage his feelings so that those feelings are expressed appropriately while responding to work expectations in effective manner. The adoption and application of emotional intelligence in organizations gained wider acceptance especially when Goleman emphasized its imperativeness in organization (Kalpana, 2013). Today, most organizations including tertiary institutions have adopted and implemented emotional intelligence in generating operational ascendency in day-to-day operations management that is capable of handling variegated emotions and use such emotional information to guide perceptions and thinking in creating convivial working environment. This is why Kalpana (2013) opines that emotional intelligence underlines the entire domain of individual capability to control emotions and constitutes critical considerations that organization must carefully examined on their employment relations. However, this concept among other considerations is measured with self-awareness, self management and social awareness, respectively.

Self-awareness is the experience of one's own personality (Munro, 2021). It is concern with the ability to examine yourself, manage your emotions, integrate your goal-related-attitude with the desired values and have a better understanding of how others perceive you. On the other hand, self-management is the ability to control and manage our perceptions, thoughts, and emotions in a constructive ways (Zhongwu and Yapeng, 2021). While individual capability to effectively consider variegated perspectives of others and groups in relating with them is referred to as social awareness (Petrides and Kokkinaki, 2007). However, a number of studies have been carried out to examine the impact of emotional intelligence on organizational performance (Munro, 2021). But, considering the imperativeness of adopting and applying this concept in the Nigeria tertiary institutions, studies investigating such link are relatively few. Hence, this study aims to fill the gap by examining the correlate of emotional intelligence and academic staff job performance of the federal universities in the South East, Nigeria. Therefore, considering the important of engendering emotional intelligence in driving high performance organizations, the study focused on the key indications, such as self-awareness, self-management and social-awareness as construct dimensions of emotional intelligence on academic staff performance.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The cognitive capability needed to effectively manage individual emotion, perceptions and thoughts in creating convivial working environment that seeks to balance work and family expectations remained a current challenge to organizations. This concern is continually being exacerbated by the ever evolving socio-economic challenges that have negatively impacted the perceptions, emotions and thoughts of individual workers. From the foregoing notwithstanding, the federal universities in the South East, Nigeria have failed to train the workers on the dynamism of emotional intelligence to have acquired the in-built capacity to manage emotions in creating positive thoughts for the desired goal-related-attitude needed for improved job performance (George 2018). This situation has questioned the potentiality of workers self-awareness that would have enabled them to be aware of, control, and express their emotions in handling interpersonal relationships effectively and empathetically. As a result, the academic staff job performance is

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affected, but the extent to which such action has affected their job performance is yet to be established in the federal universities of the South East, Nigeria.

In addition, the problem associated to lack of trained academic staff on the acquisition of skills about emotional intelligence seems to have impaired their perspectives on self-management capability. From the aforementioned, George (2018) observed that lack of self-management on emotions and thoughts result to depression, stress, and psychological trauma. Therefore, the existentiality of psychological trauma, depression and stress on work place result to work disinterestedness, hence affect job performance. But the magnitude of its direction is yet to be ascertained, thus this study.

Finally, having trained workers on social awareness skills would enable academic staff of the university to develop problem solving capability, stress resistance, managing time effectively, emotions management mentality and understanding perspectives of other workers. But, the problem of not having prerequisite knowledge on social awareness creates impaired-framework on inter-personnel relationships and truncates effective understanding of perspectives from other workers. This situation leads to counter-productive-attitude from the workers, hence affect their job performance. It would be difficult to determine the underlying net effect(s) of the interactions self-awareness, self-management and social awareness as construct dimensions of emotional intelligence on academic job performance of the federal universities in the South East, Nigeria, without research-based evidence, hence this study.

# The Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to determine the extent of relationship between emotional intelligence and academic staff job performance of federal universities in the South East, Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives are:

- 1. To ascertain the extent of relationship between self-awareness and academic staff job performance of federal universities in the South East, Nigeria.
- 2. To investigate the extent of relationship between self-management and academic staff job performance of federal universities in the South East, Nigeria.
- 3. To establish the extent of relationship between social awareness and academic staff job performance of federal universities in the South East, Nigeria.

# The Concept of Emotional Intelligence

Marjanović, and Dimitrijević (2013) see emotional intelligence as the propensity to clearly understand and effectively manage your emotions, and those around you. Individual workers with high level of emotional intelligence are always coordinated and can exhibit maturity in face of economic crises. The veracity of the aforementioned as observed by Marjanović, and Dimitrijević (2013) is predicated on the fact that people with high level of emotional intelligence have the ability to perceive, manage and control their emotions while responding effectively to their work demands. This is why Zhongwu and Yapeng, (2021) affirmed that individual workers should be groomed to acquire the prerequisite skills on emotional intelligence for operational excellence in work place. Also, Sambu (2019) opines that emotional intelligence is the cognitive dexterity an individual exhibits in managing his/her emotions that promote good thinking. In order words, it is the potentiality or expertness to precisely see feelings, to get to and create feelings, to help thought, to get feelings and passionate learning, and proactively responds to it. However, the assumption behind the institutionalization of emotional intelligence in the institutions of higher learning lies within the variegated responsibilities of teachers in the tertiary institutions. For instance, a teacher in the tertiary institution is saddled with the responsibility of covering his/her course allocation per semester, supervised students research works, grade examination papers, attend workshops/conferences and the alike coupled with their family responsibility. These expectations add more pressure on their workloads. From the

ISSN No. 2454-6186 | DOI: 10.47772/IJRISS | Volume VIII Issue I January 2024



aforementioned, Sambu (2019) suggested that individual workers should be trained on the acquisition of emotional intelligence skills in order to balance work and family expectations. However, emotional intelligence is measured along with self awareness, self management and social awareness, respectively.

#### **Self-Awareness**

Most scholars have attempted to define self-awareness based on their own perception and understanding on the concept. Grayson (2013) see it as the capacity to perceive one's sentiments, to separate between them, to comprehend what one is feeling and why, and to recognize what caused the emotions. While, Makin (2015) argues that self-awareness is how an individual whole-heartedly understand and appreciate his/her own character, perceptions, feelings, motives and desires. On the other hand, it is concern with the understanding of who you are, the aptness exhibited in differentiating your emotion and perceptions from others. From the three approaches to definition of the self-awareness, one common factor that links them is having the dexterity of understanding oneself, perceptions among others.

## **Self-Management**

Kalpana (2013) sees self-management as the capability to effectively handle our demeanor, perceptions and thoughts in different situations or circumstance. It is concern with the demonstration of dexterity in developing goal-related-attitudes in the face of challenges within and outside work place. The development of such capability will help individuals to surmount the prevailing circumstances in a productive way (Petrides and Kokkinaki, 2007). In the same vein, self-management according to (Gunu and Oladepo (2014) is amongst the critical factor that needs to be ingrained and aligned with individual workers that could reflect on their approach, attitudes and the alike in responding to the dictates of work. This study sees self-management as the cognitive ability to coordinate oneself in any given circumstance.

#### **Social Awareness**

Martin and Chapel (2021) see social awareness as the ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures, to understand social and ethical norms for behavior, and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports. In the same vein, Makin (2015) contends that social awareness is the ability to comprehend and appropriately react to both broad problems of society and interpersonal struggles. This means that being socially aware relates to being aware of your environment, what's around you, as well as being able to accurately interpret the emotions of people with whom you interact.

## **Academic staff Job Performance**

Job performance is outcomes achieved and accomplishments made at work (Norwood, 2018). It is aimed at results as planned. Academic staff job performance is result oriented which seeks to utilize various performance management maxim of policies, practices, and design features that interact to produce employee performance. This integrative perspective represents a configurationally approach to strategic human resources management which argues that patterns of HR activities, as opposed to single activities, are necessary to achieve organizational objectives. Motowidlo (2020) also aligned with the aforementioned definition as he maintained that job performance is the totality of expected value to the organization emanating from the discrete behavioral episodes individual workers exert on the job over time frame

## **EMPIRICAL REVIEW**

Mohd, Norliza, Norulhusna and Hazilah (2022), explored the implication of emotional intelligence on job performance of Malaysia Telecommunication firms. It was designed to ascertain how emotional intelligence

ISSN No. 2454-6186 | DOI: 10.47772/IJRISS | Volume VIII Issue I January 2024



has impacted on their job performance. Cross sectional data driven with structured questionnaire was administered on the sample. Convenience sampling technique was used while data collected were analyzed with Pearson correlation coefficient. The result, however, indicated that employees with high level of emotional intelligence perform credibly well on job performance as opposed to those with low emotional intelligence. The study recommended that organizations should introduce emotional intelligence development programs for existing staff to improve their performance at work.

Zahidul (2021) surveyed emotional intelligence and its impacts on employees' performance: A study on business organizations in Bangladesh. Emotionally intelligent people can manage and control their own emotions. They can also understand and manage the emotions of others in appropriate manner. Some studies found that high emotional intelligence make employees more productive than employees with low emotional intelligence. Other studies revealed that emotional intelligence has significant impacts on employee motivation and performance. Thus, this study has measured emotional intelligence and its impact on employee performance at different levels of management in business organizations of Bangladesh. A survey has been conducted on 85 employees from 20 business organizations who work at different levels of management in the organizations in Bangladesh. Research shows that employees working at top level management have relatively high emotional intelligence than employees working at mid-level and lower-level management. Finally, the study suggests that emotional intelligence of employees can be improved through training, coaching, mentoring, educating and supporting employees.

Sambu (2019) investigated the impact of emotional intelligence on job performance. a case of an international school in Nairobi, Kenya. It was aimed at ascertaining the extent to which emotional intelligence affected teachers' performance in Nairobi city in Kenya. Correlation design was adopted while purposive sampling technique was used. Meanwhile, forty seven (47) teachers were sampled through self administered questionnaire. The data were analyzed with Pearson correlation coefficient and t-values for test of level of significance. The research found positive correlations between emotional intelligence, job performance and the length of service, hence emotional intelligence and the length of service can be used to predict job performance.

Guu and Oladepo (2022) examined the impact of emotional intelligence on employee performance and organizational commitment: A case study of Dangote flour Mills workers. It was aimed at determining the impact of emotional intelligence on organizational commitment and performance. Descriptive research design was employed while questionnaire items were also distributed to the sample of one hundred and twenty (120) workers drawn from the population of the study. Regression analysis was used to analyze the collected data. The study revealed that there was a significant relationship between employee emotional intelligence, organizational commitment, and their performance. The coefficient of determination between EI and organizational commitment was 56.90%. Emotional intelligence accounted for 27.90% of the variation in employee performance.

Abdul Azez (2015) investigated the effect of emotional intelligence on job satisfaction. The study examined the implications of emotional intelligence on job performance of telecommunication workers in Jordan. However, descriptive research design was used, while structured questionnaire was distributed among the three hundred workers drawn from three telecommunication firms within the area. Data generated through primary source were analyzed with multiple regression models and the result indicated that well-being of the people has positive and significant effect on job performance, that emotionality of individual workers also has a positive effect on them and concluded that there is positive effect of the elements of emotional intelligence on the job satisfaction in the sector of the Jordanian telecommunication companies. From the light of the findings, and conclusions drawn, the study recommended that firms should create a clear understanding of emotional intelligence with senior management and work to spread among employees in the organization and use the elements of emotional intelligence among employees to create more job

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satisfaction for them.

## **Critical Analysis of Literature Reviewed**

Most studies according to Mohd, Norliza, Norulhusna and Hazilah (2022) and (Zhongwu and Yapeng, 2021) have showed that workers with high level of emotional intelligence have the potentiality of improving their job performance in a typical as oppose to those with low level of emotional intelligence. In contrast, the study of Martin and Chapel (2021) revealed that employee with high level of emotional intelligence could manipulate those around them. This is because you are aware of your feelings; you might be good at controlling your emotions and hiding your true feeling. Such actions may impair productive capability of the same person. Within the assessment of the two different schools of thoughts, Guu and Oladepo (2022) resolved that no matter how you hide your feelings as to manipulate others, with high level of emotional intelligence it provides emotional abilities and perceptions which enable individual workers to create a positive working environment and equally to contribute to team work. These studies aligned with assumptions of the trait model perspectives in describing individual workers capability in developing positive thoughts, feelings and perspective in achieving the goal of the organization. Most of the studies as reviewed were western-driven linking high emotional intelligence to high performance but studies linking such in Nigerian tertiary institutions are few, hence this study.

# The Trait Model of Emotional Intelligence

The theoretical framework of this study is anchored on Trait Model of Emotional Intelligence propounded by Konstantin (2001) and provides a very clear dimension of Emotional Intelligence. However, the Trait Model is geared more toward emotional self-perception. Essentially, Trait Emotional intelligence according to Konstantin (2001) evaluates how an individual perceives their emotional abilities. These emotional abilities, and their perception of them, then affect their behaviors and perceived cognitive and behavioral abilities. This construct can also be referred to as emotional self-efficacy as it resides almost wholly in the perceptions of the individual, rather than by any objective measures. Because of this, Trait EI is highly resistant to any academic or scientific measurement. While this is true of most self-reporting, the complete lack of any objective measures in the Trait Model makes it particularly difficult to prove or disprove. The Trait Model of Emotional Intelligence essentially has to be conducted within a framework of understanding an individual's personality. Because it relies so heavily on personality characteristics, it is impossible to evaluate someone's EQ using the Trait Model without performing (either previously or simultaneously) a personality evaluation. But because it relies so much on personality, some psychologists do not believe that the Trait Model of EQ has validity as a measure of EQ at all, because it relies so heavily on personality

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study was a cross-sectional study that employed a correlation research design. This is because it seeks to establish the magnitude of the direction of the studied variables. Systematic random sampling was employed while structured questionnaire drawn on 5 point likert-scale was administered on the sample of five hundred and forty six (516) drawn from the five federal universities in the South East, Nigeria. Meanwhile, five hundred and sixteen (516) copies of questionnaire items was administered, out of which, 496 copies were returned, and subsequently used for the analysis. The data collected from respondents were analyzed with Pearson Product Correlation Coefficient via SPSS Version .20

## RESULTS

The following are the correlation results of the tested hypotheses with decomposed variables of emotional intelligence on academic staff performance of the federal universities in the South East, Nigeria. The test of



these hypotheses is based on the assumption that (i) the sampling distributions are normal, and (ii) the sampling distribution is independent.

Table 1: Correlation Results of Self-awareness and academic staff job performance

Correlation between self-awareness and academic staff job performance					
		Self-awareness	Academic staff job performance		
Self-awareness	Pearson Correlation	1	.650**		
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000		
	N	496	496		
Academic staff performance	Pearson Correlation	.650	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			
	N	496	496		
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).					

Based on the flagged p-value (0.05), the correlation coefficient (r) is 0.65 and calculated p-value of 0.000 is lesser than the critical p-value of 0.05, the study rejects the null hypothesis that self-awareness does not relate to academic staff job performance of federal universities in the South East, Nigeria and accepted the alternate hypothesis that self-awareness relate to academic staff job performance of federal universities in the South East, Nigeria Step 6: Interpretation

Table 2: Correlation Results of Self-awareness and academic staff job performance

Correlation between self-management and academic staff job performance					
		Self-management	Academic staff job performance		
Self-management	Pearson Correlation	1	.590**		
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000		
	N	496	496		
Academic staff job performance	Pearson Correlation	.590	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			
	N	496	496		
**. Correlation is significant at t	he 0.05 level (2-taile	d).			

Since the p-value is (0.05), the correlation coefficient (r) is 0.590 and calculated p-value of 0.000 is lesser than the critical p-value of 0.05, the study rejects the null hypothesis that self-management does not relate to academic staff job performance and accepted the alternate hypothesis that self-management has a significant and positive relationship with academic staff job performance of the federal universities in the South East, Nigeria.

Tale 3: Correlation Results of social-awareness and academic staff job performance

Correlation between social-awareness and academic staff job performance				
			Academic staff job performance	
Social-awareness	Pearson Correlation	1	.451**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0	
	N	496	496	
Service innovative capabilities	Pearson Correlation	0.451	1	

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	Sig. (2-tailed)	0		
	N	495	495	
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).				

Given the flagged p-value is (0.05), the correlation coefficient (r) is 0.451 and calculated p-value of 0.000 is lesser than the critical p-value of 0.05, the study therefore rejects the null hypothesis that social-awareness does not have significant relationship with academic staff job performance and accepted the alternate hypothesis that social-awareness has a significant and positive relationship with academic staff job performance of the federal universities in the South East, Nigeria.

## **DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

The result in Table one showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between self-awareness and academic staff job performance of the federal universities in the South East, Nigeria. This was showed by result of correlation coefficient (r=0.65, p<0.005, n=496) suggested that as these federal universities continue to engender self-awareness perspectives in the generation of the desired ability to control emotions, such actions, will result to a significant increase on academic staff job performance by 65% proportionately.

The result in Table two also displayed the result of the correlation coefficient of (r=0.59, p<0.005, n=496). This implies that there is a significant and positive correlation between self management and academic staff job performance of the federal universities in the South East, Nigeria. This suggested that skill acquisition and implementation on self-management personality trait of individual workers, will result to proportionate increase of academic staff job performance by 59% significantly.

Finally, the result in Table three showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between social-awareness and academic staff job performance of the federal universities in the South East, Nigeria. This was showed by result of correlation coefficient (r=0.45, p<0.005, n=496). The implication of this result is that as the management of these federal universities continue ingrained socio-awareness among their academic staff, such actions, will result to improve job performance.

## **CONCLUSION**

In the light of the findings, the study concludes that there is a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and academic staff job performance of the federal universities in the South East, Nigeria. The implication of the aforementioned positive relationship is that as the organization continues to engender the utilization of self-awareness, self-management and socio-awareness within their operational ambit, such actions, will result to significant increase on academic staff job performance. The result of this study provided empirical evidence on the need for organization to continue to engender their emotional intelligence in the generation of the needed ability for effective control of emotions, thoughts and perceptions in responding to the demands of the work. The strength of this correlation therefore points to the need for organizations to pay concerted attention to the training of their workers to acquire prerequisite skills on emotional intelligence for improved job performance. From the findings, conclusion drawn and the following are recommendation arising therefrom:

1. That the management of these federal universities should continue to explore the opportunities of engendering self-awareness perspectives amongst their academic staff in generating the needed capacity to effectively manage emotions and perceptions in order to enhance enthusiastic and intellectual advancement that will result to improved job performance. This is essentially imperative because the coefficient correlation result showed a positive and significant relationship between self-

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- awareness and academic staff job performance.
- 2. The result of the correlation coefficient showed a positive and significant relationship between self-management and academic staff job performance and hence recommended that these universities should continue to groom their teachers with self-management skills that will enable the workers to maximize their productivity, improve their work performance.
- 3. The result also showed that social awareness has appositive and significant relationship with academic staff job performance and therefore recommended that government through their agency should continue to exploit the opportunities of training their staff for the acquisition of social awareness skills. The acquisition and implementation of social awareness-paradigm will provide them the necessary ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others for desired job performance.

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