

# Two Therapeutic Approaches to Creativity Motivation of Management Trainees: An Experiment in Nigeria

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Article abstract

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# Two Therapeutic Approaches to Creativity Motivation of Management Trainees: An Experiment in Nigeria

by

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*The purpose of the study is to investigate the effect of problem solving and cognitive restructuring approaches in improving the creativity motivation of management trainees through enhancing their individual creative behaviour. A 3 x 2 factorial design was adopted in this study. The sample of study consisted of 102 subjects randomly drawn from a stratum of management trainees undergoing Masters Program in Business Administration in three Universities in Ibadan, Nigeria. Three validated instruments were used for data collection before and after therapy. Analysis of covariance and t – test statistics were used to test the generated hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The results obtained showed that both the creative problem-solving and cognitive restructuring techniques were effective in improving management trainees' creative behaviour and consequently raising their level of creativity motivation. However, creative problem-solving technique was found to be significantly more effective than cognitive restructuring technique in raising subjects' creativity motivation. The findings also indicated that the intervention strategies were effective in raising the creativity motivation of both Type A and Type B personality subjects. However, while problem-solving technique was more effective for Type B personality subjects, cognitive restructuring technique was found to have more effect in raising the level of creativity motivation of Type A subjects. Based on the outcome of the study, managers and researchers wishing to foster motivation for creativity in the organizations can do so, not only by paying attention to work environments that enhance creativity motivation, but also by trying to improve the creative behaviour of individuals at work using these or similar intervention measures.*

## Introduction

Creativity is the production, conceptualization, or development of a useful idea that may include processes and procedures (Shalley, Gilson and Blum, 2000). It is a key player in all spheres of human progress and has become increasingly important in this epoch of rapid technological advancements. As House (2003) notes: "No matter how stable an industry is, today it is changing at least 10 times faster than 25 years ago," organizations need to be creative to achieve high levels of productivity and to survive. Bingham (2001) putting it bluntly states: "It is a question of innovate or die". Thus, creativity is a crucial capability that organizations need to foster in their employees.

To enhance the creativity of individuals at work, Amabile (1998) and Adams (2006) argue that a confluence of the three components of expertise, creative thinking skills and motivation (especially intrinsic motivation) are needed. Motivation is, therefore, an important factor in creative production. Creativity motivation is the drive and interest in creativity. It is when one is creatively motivated that it becomes easier to identify problems that need to be resolved, perceive the need for change and with interest and passion commit oneself creatively to the implementation of change.

Nakamura and Csikzentmihalyi (2002) note that motivational attributions play more important roles in individuals than those who change the culture for particular cognitive attributes. There are some literatures indicating that motivation in creativity and innovation is more important than personality trait (Bishop, 2005). Thus, it is not just a matter of creative personality or intelligence, but the one with motivation to improve or develop something that matters. To be creative, one must be motivated. Amabile (1998) states that to influence intrinsic motivation in the work place means to influence knowledge and creative thinking styles which are longer term pursuits (cited in Adams 2006).

Some studies have shown that intrinsic motivation – which is the motivation to engage in activity primarily for the interest in the task – and the sense that something is worth doing for its own sake has more positive influence in creative output than extrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation engages in activity primarily in order to meet some goals external to the work itself. According to Amabile (1997) “people will be most creative when they feel motivated primarily by the interest, satisfaction and challenge of the work itself and not by external pressures (i.e. the extrinsic motivation)”.

In recent years, however, research has shown that people can be motivated by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. But a distinction was made between extrinsic motivations that are informational and enabling (synergistic extrinsic motivation) and extrinsic motivations that are controlling (non-synergistic extrinsic motivation). While synergistic extrinsic motivation is said to be conducive for creativity, particularly if the initial level of intrinsic motivation is high, non-synergistic extrinsic motivations have been found to be detrimental to motivation (Amabile, 1993, 1996).

Given the importance of motivation in creative output, numerous studies have examined factors that may influence an individual’s motivation (especially intrinsic motivation). An extensive review of these studies revealed that creative work environments enhance the intrinsic motivation of employees and this affects their creative behaviour positively while those that act as barriers to intrinsic motivation decrease creative output (Amabile, 1993; Zhou and Shalley, 2003; Shalley, Zhou and Oldham, 2004; and Egan, 2005).

Among these dimensions of work environments that stimulate intrinsic motivation, Amabile suggests a focus in the six areas of challenge, freedom, provision of resources in both time and money, work group features, supervisory encouragement and organizational support (Adams, 2006). Some other documented dimensions include the presence of creativity goals (Carson and Carson, 1993), developmental (versus controlling) feedback and evaluation (Zhou and Oldham, 2001), workday design (Elsbach and Hargadon, 2006) and self-determination, competence and relationships (Jian, Qian and Fei, 2006).

Enhancing motivation for creativity, however, is not only a matter of fostering a conducive organizational creative climate as is presently being emphasized. It is also a matter of personal outlook. The individual within the organization as Majaro (1993) notes, must nurture confidence and the willingness to have a go both in themselves and in their colleagues if the organization’s full creative potential is to be tapped. In addition to fostering a motivating environment for creativity, there is also the need for building up certain personal behaviour for creative functioning. These include sensitivity to problems, persistence, independence in judgment, thought and action, freedom from fear of failure, willingness to take sensible risks, tolerate ambiguity, overcome obstacles and self-efficacy. But since some people tend always to have an internal censor damping down their own creativity and those of the people around them, the above attributes could most likely be acquired if these individuals are motivated to be creative by helping them to identify and remove the person-centered blocks to creativity classified by Adam (1986) as perceptual, emotional/psychological and intellectual. It is easier for a person who is personally predisposed to acquiring and utilizing creative abilities to respond positively to the provided creative work environment.

Moreover, most of the organizations in developing countries, laden with creative and innovative barriers, it is of paramount importance to equip their employees with an inner drive to move onwards despite the obstacles. This inner drive acquired or enhanced by ridding oneself of the person-centered barriers to creative behaviour produces in one a disposition that facilitates the development of interest, passion, commitment and a challenging attitude to ones work. As Hudson (1966) noted years ago, the personality and motivational aspects of man tend to reinforce interest, attitude, affects and drive towards creativity performance. Couger (1996) further stated that to expand one’s solution space, one needs to be aware of one’s personal blocks. In his words: “awareness not only allows us to know our strengths and weaknesses better but gives us the necessary motivation and knowledge to modify or break down these blocks”.

Thus, the theoretical basis behind this study is that for any organization that desires seriously to plan for its growth and progress, it is not enough to rely only on creating a supportive work environment to enhance motivation for creativity. There is also a need to reduce the individual’s person-centered barriers to creative behaviour. It is assumed that when attempts are made to improve one’s creative behaviour – given a conducive or not so conducive environment – the individual will be motivated to be creative.

The study is, therefore, aimed at improving the creativity motivation of management trainees through inculcating in them positive behaviour for creativity and innovation using two therapeutic approaches. The study also compared the

effectiveness of the two training methods in raising the creativity motivation level of both Type A and B personality subjects.

## Hypotheses

- There will be no significant difference among subjects treated with Cognitive Restructuring (CR) and Problem-Solving Techniques (PST) and the control group in their level of creativity motivation.
- There will be no significant difference between the subjects exposed to Cognitive Restructuring (CR) technique and those exposed to Problem-Solving Technique (PST) in their level of creativity motivation.
- There will be no significant difference between Type A and Type B personality subjects exposed to Cognitive Restructuring (CR) technique and those exposed to Problem-Solving Technique (PST) in their level of creativity motivation.

## Research Design

A 3 x 2 factorial design was used for the study with two experimental groups and a control group. The experimental groups were exposed to problem-solving and cognitive restructuring techniques. These with the control group formed the rows. The columns were constituted by the personality types of subjects grouped into type A and type B.

## Subjects

The subjects of study were 102 management trainees undergoing Masters program in Business Administration from three randomly selected universities at Ibadan, Nigeria. The criteria for inclusion were a score below the mean in the pre-assessment exercise and a willingness to participate in the program and to attend all the eight sessions. Each university was randomly assigned a group making a total of three groups. Then, 34 subjects, who fulfilled the criteria, were randomly drawn from each of the universities and assigned to the group within their university making two experimental groups and the control group.

## Measures

The following instruments were used for the study:

1. Creative and Innovative Behaviour Scale (Nwaneri, 1999). The scale consists of 45 items drawn in a 5-point likert format of 1 (Never) to 5 (always). The construct validity of the instrument using inter-item reliability is 0.68 while the internal consistency reliability co-efficient alpha ( $\alpha$ ) is 0.89.
2. Ibadan creativity assessment scale (ICAS). This was designed by Akinloye (1977). The section D of the first four sub-scales (A-D) taps the creativity motivation of subjects and it has 25 items. Akinboye reports a construct validity of co-efficient alpha ( $\alpha$ ) of 0.77 and a test-retest reliability of  $r = 0.85$  for section D. while the convergent construct validity within the scale was  $r = 0.73$  for originality (Section B) with creativity motivation.
3. T-A Behaviour Inventory (Akinboye, 1999) has 28 items and is used to measure the Type A personality characteristics of "extremes of competitiveness striving for achievement, aggressiveness, haste, impatience, restlessness, hyperalertness, explosiveness of speech, feelings of being under pressure of time and under the challenge of responsibility. Type B. personality individuals are those without Type A pattern. The items are drawn in a 5-point likert scale of 1 (very much unlike me) to 5 (very much like me). Akinboye reported an internal reliability and construct validity of co-efficient alpha of ( $\alpha$ ) or 0.51 while the convergent validity ( $r$ ) was 0.81.

## Procedure

The three randomly selected universities were again randomly allocated to two experimental groups and a control group. From each university, 34 subjects were randomly chosen from among those who met the criteria for participation in the programme, making a total of 102 participants. This method helped to control contaminations across groups and to take care of the varying time schedules for the different programmes. A pretest was administered to the 102 subjects in the three groups. Those in the experimental groups were exposed to the problem solving and cognitive

restructuring techniques. The program lasted for eight weeks of one hour session per week, per group. A post-test was administered at the end of the treatment seasons to all subjects of study.

**Data Analysis**

Data obtained from this study was analyzed using the analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) and T-test. T-test was employed to determine the differential effectiveness of the independent variables, while ANCOVA was used to determine the relative effectiveness of the independent variables (the cognitive restructuring and problem-solving techniques) on the dependent variables (creative behaviour and creativity motivation) as well as the interaction between the independent variables and the covariates. SPSS software package was used to conduct the analysis. The alpha level of statistical decision was 0.05

**Results**

The results obtained from data analysis are reported according to the stated hypotheses.

**I. Hypotheses One**

Table 1 presents the result of the effect of treatment strategies on treated subjects’ creative behaviour. This is the outcome that is expected to impact on the creativity motivation of subjects.

**Table 1: Unadjusted X, Y, mean scores and Adjusted Y-Means of subjects’ Creative Behaviour Scores Based on Treatment (Rows) and Personality Types (columns).**

Treatment Program	Personality Types							
	TYPE A				TYPE B			
	N	X - $\bar{X}$	Y - $\bar{Y}$	Adjusted Y - $\bar{Y}$	N	X - $\bar{X}$	Y - $\bar{Y}$	Adjusted Y - $\bar{Y}$
Cognitive Restructuring Approach (CR)	17	133.35	159.35	163.57	17	128.77	155.24	161.91
Problem-Solving Techniques (PST)	17	144.35	165.53	163.84	17	146.41	174.29	171.50
Control Group (CG)	17	146.11	147.06	144.42	17	148.24	148.82	145.05

Results in Table 1 show the pre-test and post-test mean scores of subjects exposed to problem-solving and cognitive restructuring techniques and the control group. The X-mean ( $X - \bar{X}$ ) represents the pre-test scores while the Y- $\bar{Y}$  (unadjusted and adjusted  $Y - \bar{Y}$ ) represents their post-test mean scores. The higher the adjusted ( $Y - \bar{Y}$ ) scores the better the effectiveness of the treatment. From the table, it could be seen that subjects exposed to the treatment techniques had higher adjusted mean scores than the control group on their measure of creative behaviour. The differences were statistically significant ( $F(2,96) = 36.01, p < 0.05$ ) in the analysis of covariance conducted.

**Table 2: Unadjusted X, Y, Mean Scores and Adjusted Y – Means Scores of Subjects’ Creativity Motivation Scores on Treatment Groups and Personality Types.**

Treatment Programme	Personality Types							
	TYPE A				TYPE B			
	N	X - $\bar{X}$	Y - $\bar{Y}$	Adjusted Y - $\bar{Y}$	N	X - $\bar{X}$	Y - $\bar{Y}$	Adjusted Y - $\bar{Y}$
Cognitive Restructuring (CR)	17	128.24	143.24	144.34	17	121.00	132.71	139.09
Problem-Solving Techniques (PST)	17	141.59	148.12	139.49	17	124.71	144.88	148.56
Control Group (CG)	17	133.53	133.29	130.54	17	129.47	130.77	130.97

**Table 3: X - Means, Unadjusted Y – Means and Adjusted Y – Means scores for Treatment Control Groups. Type A and B Personality Combined.**

Treatment Groups	N	X - $\bar{X}$	Y - $\bar{Y}$	Adjusted Y - $\bar{Y}$
Cognitive Restructuring Approach (CR)	34	124.62	137.98	141.72
Problem-Solving Technique (PST)	34	133.15	146.5	144.03
Control Group (CG)	34	131.5	132.03	130.76

**Table 4: Analysis of Covariance on the Adjusted Y – means of Subjects’ Creativity Motivation.**

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Squares	F	P
Rows	201.01	2	100.51	39.93	< 0.05
Columns	3.00	1	3.00	1.19	NS
Interaction	52.04	2	26.02	10.34	<0.05
Within	4107.88	96	2.52		

NS = Not Significant

Tables 2 and 3 show the mean scores before and after treatment. The results show higher adjusted Y-mean scores for the experimental groups when compared with the control group. The differences in the means were statistically significant as shown in the analysis of covariance in Table 4 ( $F(2, 96) = 39.93, P < 0.05$ ). The results in tables 4 also show that there were statistically significant interaction effects ( $F(2, 96) = 10.34, P < 0.05$ ). However, among the personality types (columns), the result yielded no significant difference in the groups ( $F(1, 96) = 1.19, P(NS)$ ).

## II. Hypothesis Two

Table 5 (below) shows the adjusted Y-means of 141.72 for cognitive restructuring technique and 144.03 for problem-solving technique. It can be seen that problem-solving group had a higher post-test adjusted mean score than the cognitive restructuring group. The differences in the mean scores were statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance (t-cal of 5.92 being greater than the t – tab of 2.00).

**Table 5: Comparisons of Adjusted Y – Means Scores of Creativity Motivation of Subjects Exposed to Cognitive Restructuring and Problem-Solving Techniques Using T-test.**

Treatment Groups	N	Adjusted Y - Mean	LMS	Pooled SE	DF	t-value	P
Cognitive Restructuring	34	141.72	2.52	0.39	66	5.92	< 0.05
Problem-Solving Technique	34	144.03	2.52	0.39			

### III. Hypothesis Three

Table 6 (below) is the table of subjects’ adjusted Y-mean scores from which the scheffe multiple range test was computed in table 7.

**Table 6: Treatment Groups (Rows) and Personality Types (Columns) of Adjusted Y – Means of Subjects’ Creativity Motivation Compared.**

Rows	Columns	
	Type A	Type B
Cognitive Restructuring (CR)	(a) 144.34	(d) 139.09
Problem-Solving Technique (PST)	(b) 139.49	(e) 148.56
Control Group (CG)	(c) 130.54	(f) 130.97

**Table 7: Comparisons of Adjusted Y – Mean Scores of Creative Motivation of Subjects using T-test**

Comparisons	N	LMS	Pooled SE	DF	t-value	P
a vs b	34	2.52	0.39	32	12.44	< 0.05
a vs c	34	2.52	0.39	32	35.38	< 0.05
a vs d	34	2.52	0.39	32	13.46	< 0.05
a vs e	34	2.52	0.39	32	13.38	< 0.05
a vs f	34	2.52	0.39	32	34.28	<0.05
b vs c	34	2.52	0.39	32	22.95	<0.05
b vs d	34	2.52	0.39	32	1.03	NS
b vs e	34	2.52	0.39	32	25.82	<0.05
b vs f	34	2.52	0.39	32	21.85	<0.05
c vs d	34	2.52	0.39	32	21.92	<0.05
c vs e	34	2.52	0.39	32	48.77	<0.05
c vs f	34	2.52	0.39	32	1.10	NS
d vs e	34	2.52	0.39	32	26.85	<0.05
d vs f	34	2.52	0.39	32	20.82	<0.05
e vs f	34	2.52	0.39	32	47.67	<0.05

NS = Not Significant

In Table 7, the relative effectiveness of both treatment programmes in raising the creativity motivation of subjects in the various groups (Type A and Type B personalities) are presented. There was a statistically significant difference between Type A personality subjects exposed to CR technique and Type A personality subjects exposed to PST (a vs b) in their level of creativity motivation. CR technique was more effective than problem-solving technique in raising the level of creativity motivation of Type A personality subjects ( $t = 12.44$ ,  $Df = 32$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ).

Between Type B personality subjects exposed to CR technique and Type B personality subjects exposed to PST (d vs e) a statistically significant difference existed ( $t = 26.85$ ,  $Df = 32$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ). PST was more effective than CR technique in raising the level of creativity motivation of Type B personality subjects. A statistically significant difference was found between Type A and Type B subjects exposed to cognitive restructuring technique ( $t = 13.46$ ,  $df = 32$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ). Cognitive restructuring technique raised more effectively the level of creativity motivation of Type A personality subjects than Type B subjects (a vs d).

Between Type A and Type B personality subjects exposed to PST, Type B subjects had a higher level of creativity motivation than Type A subjects (b vs e). The difference was statistically significant ( $t = 25.82$ ,  $df = 32$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ).

## Discussion

The results of the study show that the treatment programs were effective in improving the creative behaviour of treated subjects and consequently raising their level of creativity motivation. The subjects exposed to cognitive restructuring and problem-solving techniques scored significantly higher on the measure of creativity motivation than the control group. This finding implies that both cognitive restructuring and problem-solving techniques are effective instruments which can be utilized by organizations to raise the creativity motivation of the workers regardless of their personality type. It affirms that the techniques have been useful in helping the subjects to recognize and eliminate their behavioural blocks to creative behaviour and consequently improving their motivation for creativity.

The effectiveness of cognitive restructuring technique could be attributed to the fact that most of these behavioural blocks to creativity are rooted on false beliefs and assumptions and any attempt at changing these false cognitions is likely to bring about a change in behaviour. Moreover, the creative problem-solving process, Etuk (1992) asserts, is a good strategy for exploring issues beyond 'obvious' facts, challenging conventional logic and "received wisdom", re-appraising accepted practices and methods of work and for combining hitherto separate and seemingly "irreconcilable" elements. This, most likely, assisted the subjects not only in identifying their behavioural blocks but also in acquiring the knowledge and motivation to uproot or modify them. Nakamura and Csikzentmihaly (2002) further noted in their positive psychology/intrinsic motivation model that a meaningful purpose, for example, the exercise of skills, can be a source of joy and thus serve as a motivation for creativity.

Further results of the study depict that though the two therapeutic techniques were effective in improving the subjects' level of creativity motivation, the problem-solving technique was superior to cognitive restructuring approach. The explanation for this finding could be derived from the fact that one of the most important contributions, as noted by West (1995), to individual creativity at work is confidence or sense of efficacy of the individual in his/her own creative ability. Payne (1981) in his expectancy theory of motivation asserted that one is motivated to do something when there is confidence. Therefore, when one lacks confidence in his/her own abilities, challenges become threats and change is to be avoided rather than welcomed.

Knowledge of creative problem-solving process gives one the assurance of knowing what one is doing, thus he/she develops the confidence in self and is more motivated to experiment on his creative abilities. West (1995) opines that approaching problems or issues at work with a sense of confidence or even pleasure and the prospect of generating a variety of creative ways of exploring or defining the problem, transforms the concept of work itself into an adventure rather than a trail. This improves creativity motivation.

Finally, the findings of the study indicated that the intervention strategies were effective in raising the creativity motivation level of both Type A and Type B personality subjects. These results show that while problem-solving techniques was more effective for Type B personality, cognitive restructuring technique had more impact in raising the level of creativity motivation of Type A subjects. These findings could possibly be as a result of the nature of the treatment strategy and the personality correlates of Type A and Type B behaviour pattern. While Type B subjects with a more serene and patient personality could go more in depth in problem-solving, thus benefiting more from the training,



the impatient personality (Type A) who prefer action over reflection benefited more. On the other hand, Type A subjects benefitted from an approach that cognitively helped them modify their false beliefs and attitudes. Moreover, Type A subjects' desires to identify personal characteristics for improvement (lifshitz –Cooney and Zei-Chner, 1985) must have also contributed to their benefit from cognitive restructuring than from problem-solving.

## **Conclusion**

This study has been successful in assisting management trainees to improve motivation for creative output. The two strategies were found effective when compared with the control group in improving subjects' creativity motivation. However, the treatment strategy that raised the level of creativity motivation of subjects more effectively was the problem-solving technique. The strategies were also effective in raising the creativity motivating of both Type A and Type B personality subjects but the degree of impact of the strategies was relative to (determined by) the personality Type.

Based on the outcome of the study, managers and researchers who wish to foster motivation for creativity in organizations, can do so not only by paying attention to work environments that enhance creativity motivation but also by trying to improve the creative behaviour of the employees themselves. Creativity, as generally known, involves an interplay between a person and an organizational context. The awareness of impact of person-centred blocks to creativity motivation and the knowledge that they can be remedied through interventions can go a long way to bring a positive change in the creative and innovative behaviour of workers. It is recommended that Nigerian organizations and their leaders make constant efforts to raise the creativity motivation of their workers using these and other creativity training programs.

Standardized instruments should be used to assess individual blocks to creative behaviour from both the employees and their managers so that appropriate remedies may be employed as soon as possible. Interventions such as those used in this study could be utilized to remedy diagnosed impediments to creative behaviour of both managers and employees. The personality type of the individuals should, however, be put into consideration in the choice of the interventive measure to be used.

The recommended efforts are important since people will be more inclined to be creative when they are motivated to do so. They will, moreover, be more responsive to a conducive environment for creativity if they are rid of their own internal/personal obstacles to creative behaviour. Or may forge ahead in spite of the environment if they are personally motivated, having rid themselves of their own personal barriers. This has implications especially for professions such as nursing which are historically known as being bureaucratic in nature and where services are delivered in an atmosphere of regimentation, overemphasis on conformity and status quo.

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