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FOSTERING TEAM GREEN CREATIVITY THROUGH WORK PASSION AND EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE: A STUDY OF SUSTAINABLE ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP

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ABSTRACT

The study explores the relationship between work passion, emotional competence and team green creativity on academic staff in public universities of Nigeria under the premise of sustainable academic leadership and in the context of Social Information Processing Theory. A cross-sectional survey, using stratified random sampling technique was adopted, and data were collected from 307 academic staff of five public universities in North Central Nigeria. The hypothesized relationships were tested using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) with the data being analyzed using SmartPLS 4.0. The findings showed that both work passion and emotional competence significantly positively related to team's green creativity. Emotional competence demonstrated a strong effect as compared to work passion indicating emotional competence proved to be the greater determinant of team green creativity. The findings highlight the pivotal role of interpersonal and emotional skills for enabling collaborative environmental innovation in a difficult education scenario. Emotional intelligence development and training programs for academics should be made a core part of academic professional development program packages, focused on developing work passion and emotional competence. Policymakers should work on systemic issues like chronic underfunding and infrastructure issues that hinder academic staff creativity. Academic staff training must be emphasized and integrated into the curriculum to provide them with the skills needed to promote team green creativity. This study is one of the first studies to empirically explore the interaction between work passion and emotional competence on team green creativity in the context of Nigerian higher education. It is an extension of the Social Information Processing Theory to the

field of sustainable academic leadership and offers new perspectives on the psychological and interpersonal factors that drive collaborative environmental innovation in African education.

Keywords: Team green creativity, work passion, emotional competence, sustainable academic leadership, Social Information Processing Theory

INTRODUCTION

Environmental degradation poses one of the most pressing existential threats confronting Nigeria. The Federal Government reports that desertification has impacted over 40 million Nigerians and affected 43 per cent of the country's landmass (Folorunso & Folorunso, 2022). Similarly, 33 per cent of Nigerian soils are already degraded, with regeneration taking up to 1,000 years to produce just two to three centimeters of soil (Iseki et al., 2026) . Nigeria generates approximately 32 million tons of waste annually among the highest in Africa yet less than 10 per cent of plastic waste is recycled (Chukwuka et al., 2025). Furthermore, 85.6 million Nigerians live in areas vulnerable to surface water loss from deforestation (Nneka et al., 2023). Such alarming statistics call for innovative and urgent action in all sectors. The education sector plays a pivotal role in tackling environmental issues. The education system is a proactive institution that has the responsibility to raise the next generation. Therefore, the system should be able to foster environmental consciousness and sustainability thinking. The need for incorporating climate justice and environmental into education curricula has been expressed by stakeholders more.

It highlights the need for collective academic's green creativity, that is, the ability to think creatively and find solutions as a team to solve environmental sustainability problems in their respective contexts (Robertson et al., 2025). Team green creativity is not the same as individual creativity. It is about solving the problem collectively where different views, different resources, different ideas and functions bring out innovative sustainability results. Creating a sustainable educational ecosystem requires academic teams to imagine and design green initiatives in Nigeria where environmental problems are not only present but are many and complex, including curriculum innovation, reducing waste, or educating the community about the environment. However, the current study found that the creativity of team green in the teaching profession in Nigeria has not been studied extensively. Zakari and Victor (2025) noted that creativity is lacking in Nigerian education, which may be attributed to the lack of attention it is given by the planners.

It is therefore of great urgency to understand the antecedents of team green creativity. Work passion and emotional competence are two constructs from psychology that seem to be promising predictors. Work passion a strong inclination toward an activity one loves, finds important, and invests significant time and energy in provides the motivational fuel that drives academics to transcend routine expectations and engage in innovative, sustainability-oriented practices (Bostan et al., 2025). Passionate employees exhibit higher engagement, creativity, and persistence (Ramos et al., 2025). In Nigeria, studies confirm that passion significantly drives lecturers' engagement (Shokunbi, 2016). However, the specific relationship between work passion and team green creativity, particularly within sustainable academic leadership, has not been systematically examined.

The second critical predictor is emotional competence, which is defined as recognition, understanding, regulation and effective use of emotions (Palmquist et al., 2026). Academic staff with high emotional competence handle inter-personal aspects of collaboration and creativity, deal with frustrations of innovation, and facilitate psychologically safe spaces for the exchange of new ideas (Lasekan et al., 2025). This has been acknowledged by the increasing emphasis on emotional intelligence in teaching effectiveness as observed in the agricultural academics in Oyo State (Funaab, 2025), the emotional

intelligence of university lecturers coping with professional challenges (Unijerps, 2025), and the relationship between the emotional intelligence of administrators and academic job satisfaction in Cross River State (Unijerps, 2025). But the link between the emotional competence of team members and the generation of green creativity on the team level is not explored.

This investigation is made urgent due to the grave problems facing the education sector in Nigeria. According to the UNESCO Education Commission, Nigeria allocates only 7.5 per cent of its national budget on education, which is far less than the recommended 15–20 per cent (Ezewuzie et al., 2025). The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) has criticized the 7 per cent total education budget for 2025, saying it is below the UNESCO benchmark. Overcrowded classrooms, insufficient materials, and worn-down infrastructure are the challenges faced by education sector where about $1 billion in funding shortage and 60 per cent of learning infrastructure in poor condition, each year (The Source, 2025). Because of its unique cultural, institutional and socio-economic context, the results of learning in other settings cannot be readily generalized to Nigerian education (Poelmans & Sahibzada, 2004). Second, while a few studies have examined the individual effects of work passion and emotional competence on creativity, none have investigated the joint effect on team green creativity. The notion of synergism (passion bringing motivational energy; emotional competence bringing interpersonal skills to facilitate effective collaboration) remains a theoretical possibility and hasn't been examined empirically. Thirdly, although the concept of sustainable academic leadership is well-established, there is very little empirical research on the role of academic leaders in promoting green creativity through passion and emotional competence in Nigeria.

This study addresses these gaps by investigating the influence of work passion and emotional competence on team green creativity within sustainable academic leadership in Nigerian public universities. Specifically, this study seeks to: (1) examine the relationship between work passion and team green creativity among Nigerian academic staff; (2) examine the relationship between emotional competence and team green creativity; (3) determine the combined influence of work passion and emotional competence on team green creativity; and (4) provide empirical evidence to inform policy and practice for cultivating academic passion, emotional competence, and green creativity in Nigerian educational institutions. By focusing on these relationships, this study contributes to the body of knowledge on sustainable academic leadership and environmental education in developing-country contexts, offering practical insights for educational administrators, policymakers, and academic-training institutions seeking to enhance Nigerian academic's creative capacity to address the nation's pressing environmental challenges.

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING

This study is anchored in the Social Information Processing Theory (SIPT), as originally articulated by Salancik and Pfeffer (1978). SIPT posits that individuals, particularly within organizational settings, do not form attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors in isolation. Rather, they actively process social information from their immediate environment, including cues from colleagues, supervisors, and the broader organizational culture, to construct meaning and guide their actions.

From this viewpoint, the workplace is a rich environment for employees to receive, interpret, and internalize social cues, which then influence their perception, motivation, and response. From this point of view, the workplace is a rich environment for social cues to be received, interpreted, internalized, and then influence perceptions, motivation, and behavior (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). This theoretical prism is especially suitable for the study of the relationship between work passion and emotional competence on the team green creativity in the Nigerian universities in the context of sustainable academic leadership in

universities. SIPT thus provides a thorough theoretical model for explaining the two mechanisms by which work passion and emotional competence affect team green creativity. The theory states that people actively make sense of the workplace by social information in their surroundings (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). Nigeria's publics make constant inferences about what constitutes appropriate, valued and rewarded behavior by continuously observing and interpreting the behaviors of their peers, especially those of leaders. When academic leaders are passionate about an effort to sustain innovation in sustainable practice, the effort has been considered worthwhile and valued. Emotionally competent academic leaders indicate that those who share their ideas, take risks, and work collaboratively feel safe and encouraged. When combined, these social cues can foster a team environment conducive to green creativity.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Work Passion and Tean Green Creativity

An increasing body of empirical research has shown that employee creativity and job enthusiasm are positively correlated across a variety of organizational contexts. For example, Lin et al. (2024) examined the relationship between paradoxical leadership and employee creativity in Chinese businesses and discovered that harmonious work passion acted as a mediation mechanism between paradoxical leadership and creative outcomes and was positively linked with employee creativity. However, the study also found that stretch goals can lead to an obsessive work passion in a high team performance climate, which in turn undermines radical creativity. These results shed light on how team-level factors affect employee creativity through motivational internalization processes and highlight the crucial role of team motivational climates in shaping these processes (Liu et al., 2026). In other study, Aslam et al. (2020) found that employee work enthusiasm moderated the association between access to strategic knowledge and employee service creativity, according to research of 364 frontline workers in Malaysia's hospitality industry. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

H1: Work passion is positively related to team green creativity

Emotional Competence and Team Green Creativity

Important insights have been obtained from the application of emotional competence research to the field of environmental sustainability. In a study conducted by Subaasi et al. (2026), emotional intelligence was found enhanced the indirect effect of green transformational leadership on green recovery performance through green service offering adaptability and green creativity. According to the findings, workers with high emotional intelligence are better able to understand their leaders' green initiatives and form stronger bonds with them, which, in turn, foster green creativity. Thus, we speculate that:

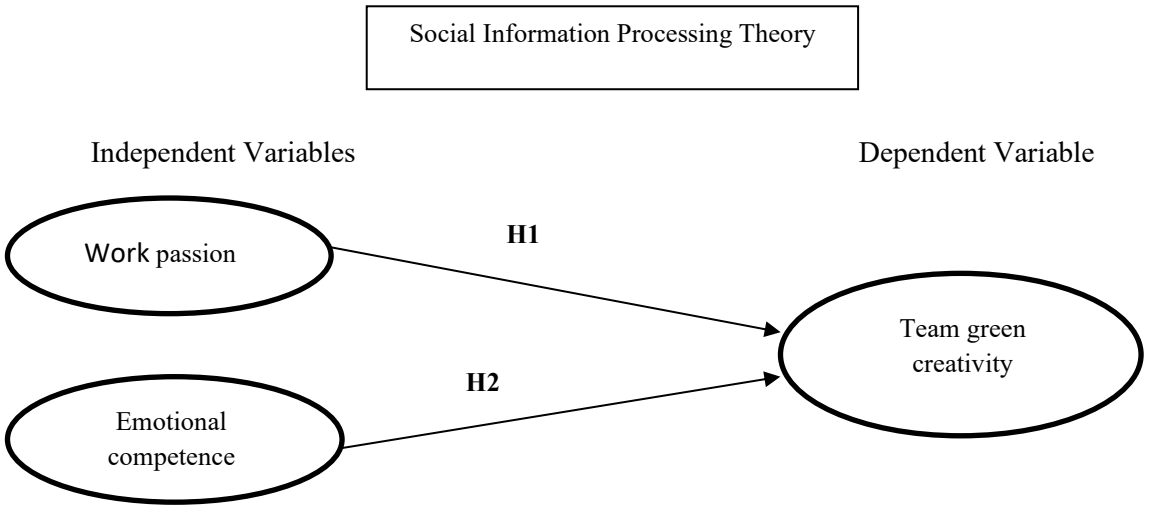
H2: Emotional competence is positively related to team green creativity

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

Figure 1 shows the research framework tested in this study. The research framework consists of a theoretically informed, empirically tested and practically viable model that will guide the investigation of the antecedents of team green creativity in Nigerian universities. The logical coherence and justification of the hypothesised relationships among work passion, emotional competence, and team green creativity seem well established. The framework adequately fulfils important research gaps that have been identified in the literature regarding green creativity in non-Western educational contexts. In sum, the framework

was found to be robust for empirical studies and will be useful for the practice of academic staff leadership for sustainable development in Nigerian educational institutions.

Figure 1
Research Framework



METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research method used in this study is quantitative, based on the post-positivist paradigm (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Specifically, a cross-sectional survey design was used to explore the relationships among work passion, emotional competence, and team green creativity among academic staff in Nigerian public universities. The cross-sectional design is suitable for this study because it can collect data at the same time and be used to identify the relationships between variables, and it can save a lot of money and time (Saunders, 2012). This design is explanatory and predictive, seeking to establish the direction and strength of hypothesized relationships as outlined in the conceptual model.

This study was conducted on academic staffs working in one of the public universities in North Central Nigeria. North Central is one of the six zones in Nigeria, encompassing the following states: Benue State, Federal Capital Territory (FCT – Abuja), Kogi State, Kwara State, Nasarawa State, Niger State and Plateau State (National Bureau of Statistics, 2024). The zone has several federal and state universities, which is suitable to test the research variables involving various institutional settings. The study was conducted on five selected public universities in North Central Nigeria. The universities were purposefully selected to provide representation across the spectrum of public universities (federal and state), and to reflect diversity in institutional attributes such as age, size and disciplinary focus. The five universities in the study include: 1. University of Ilorin (UNILORIN), 2. University of Jos (UNIJOS), 3. University of Abuja (UNIABUJA), 4. Federal University of Technology, Minna (FUTMINNA) and 5. The Benue State University, Makurdi (BSUM).

For this study, a stratified random sampling method was used. Stratified random sampling is suitable when the population comprises different groups (called strata), and it is necessary to include a representative sample from each group (Iliyasu & Etikan, 2021). The strata were the universities, and participants were

randomly selected from each stratum using a random number generator. This method enabled the selection of the sample to be representative of the total population of the academic staff in the five North Central Nigerian Universities and gave each academic staff member at the universities an equal chance of selection. To maximize responses, data were collected online and on-site from September to November 2025. A total of 420 questionnaires were sent out, and 350 were returned, for a response rate of 83.3%. However, only 307 cases are usable for further analysis.

Measures

A structured questionnaire was utilized in this study, consisting of four parts: (A) Demographic information, (B) Work passion, (C) Emotional competence, and (D) Team Green creativity. The scales were all adapted from previously validated publications in the scholarly literature, with some modifications to fit the Nigerian university context. The 5 items of green creativity were adapted from Tang et al. (2018). The items for measuring work passion were taken from Robertson and Barling (2013), and the items for measuring emotional competence were developed by Tang et al. (2018). Participants answer based on a 5-point Likert scale (1 Strongly Disagree - 5 Strongly Agree).

Data Analysis

The study's focus on complex interactions among variables led to the selection of Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) as the analytical method, which aligns with our goals (Hair et al., 2019). With a copyright license obtained for this study, PLS-SEM is a viable option to address the challenges of our investigation, as it is flexible enough to analyse complex models with multiple latent constructs (Hair et al., 2022). Smart-PLS 4 was used for data analysis. The evaluation of the measurement model and the structural model are two essential components of the PLS-SEM study (Hair et al., 2019). Constructs with high indicator load, convergence, compound reliability (CR), and discriminant validity must be chosen in accordance with the measurement model parameters. The magnitude and relevance of path coefficients are assessed using the bootstrap evaluation of the structural model, a technique appropriate for PLS-SEM and recommended by Hayes and Preacher (2010) and Hair and Alamer (2022). Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability were used to assess the constructs' reliability. All constructs showed satisfactory reliability over the 0.70 limits, according to the study's findings. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was also used to evaluate convergent validity, and the results were satisfactory, with AVE values exceeding 0.500. Table 2 provides specifics about the validity and reliability of the model. By examining correlations between latent variables and the square root of AVE, discriminant validity was verified using the method suggested by (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

RESULTS

Socio-Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1 shows the socio-demographic characteristics of the 307 respondents. It is noted that 54.7% of the respondents were males and 45.3% were females. Most of the respondents (38.4%) were age between 35–44 years old, and followed by those in the range of 45–54 age group (29.0%), indicating a mid-career academic staff. In terms of highest academic qualification, majority of the respondents (67.1%) had a doctoral degree (PhD). While 28.0% of the respondents had a master degree, reflecting the high level of qualifications desired of Nigerian academics. The distribution of the respondents by academic ranks is evenly spread with 33.2% of the respondents were Lecturer II/I, 26.4% were the Senior Lecturers, 16.9% were Associate Professors, 12.4% were Professors, and 11.1% were Assistant Lecturers, with a distribution

pattern similar to the typical progression of an academic career in Nigerian Universities. Likewise, 70.5% of the respondents have more than six years of teaching experience, suggesting that they have a high level of expertise in their profession. The distribution of the sample across the five participating universities is reasonable (81.8% Federal University, 18.2% State University) and has diverse institutional perspectives. The general pattern of the demographic characteristics shows that the sample comprises highly qualified, experienced mid-career professionals from various institutional environments, thereby lending credibility to their responses and the generalizability of the results to the larger population of academic staff in the public universities of Nigeria.

Table 1
Socio-Demographic Profile of Respondents (n = 307)

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	168	54.7
	Female	139	45.3
Age Group	25 – 34 years	62	20.2
	35 – 44 years	118	38.4
	45 – 54 years	89	29.0
	55 years and above	38	12.4
Marital Status	Single	54	17.6
	Married	241	78.5
	Divorced / Separated / Widowed	12	3.9
Highest Academic Qualification	Master's Degree	86	28.0
	Doctoral Degree (PhD)	206	67.1
	Other (e.g., Fellowship)	15	4.9
Academic Rank	Assistant Lecturer / Graduate Assistant	34	11.1
	Lecturer II / Lecturer I	102	33.2
	Senior Lecturer	81	26.4
	Associate Professor (Reader)	52	16.9
	Professor	38	12.4
Years of Teaching Experience	1 – 5 years	48	15.6
	6 – 10 years	83	27.0
	11 – 15 years	72	23.5
	16 – 20 years	61	19.9
	More than 20 years	43	14.0
University Affiliation	University of Ilorin (UNILORIN)	74	24.1
	University of Jos (UNIJOS)	63	20.5
	University of Abuja (UNIABUJA)	58	18.9
	Federal University of Technology, Minna	56	18.2
	Benue State University, Makurdi	56	18.2
Employment Type	Federal University	251	81.8
	State University	56	18.2

Measurement Model

Peripheral loadings of less than 0.70 are usually obtained by social science researchers; factor loadings greater than 0.70 are desirable. Even if indicators are removed right away, the implications of the item's removal on the convergent validity, content, and composite reliability must be examined. Only when deletion raises composite reliability or extracted average variance (AVE) above the specified range will items with outer loadings between 0.40 and 0.70 be eliminated (Hair et al., 2019). Table 2 and Figure 1 display the measurement model's factor loading. The dependability of the construct was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability in addition to the examination of outside loadings. The investigation's conclusions showed that all the study's constructs had adequate reliability over the 0.70 limit. AVE is used to evaluate convergent validity as well as idea dependability. Because the AVE was higher than 0.500, the results show adequate convergent validity. The model's validity and reliability are shown in Table 3. By comparing the correlations between the latent variables and the square root of AVE, the discriminant validity was ascertained (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Thus, the discriminant validity is proven. Table 3 displays the discriminant validity results. HTMT (Heterotrait-monotrait ratio) in PLS-SEM enables the detection and mitigation of potential multicollinearity and ensures construct separation, which is crucial for reliable studies, particularly in complex contexts. Table 4 shows the findings.

Table 2
Convergent Validity

Construct	Item	Loading	CA	CR (rhoa)	CR (rhoc)	AVE
Emotional Competencies (EC)			0.921	0.921	0.938	0.718
	EC1	0.789				
	EC2	0.818				
	EC3	0.869				
	EC4	0.865				
	EC5	0.867				
	EC6	0.873				
Team Green Creativity (TGC)			0.857	0.893	0.899	0.647
	TGC1	0.715				
	TGC2	0.833				
	TGC3	0.867				

Construct	Item	Loading	CA	CR (rhoa)	CR (rhoc)	AVE
	TGC4	0.883				
	TGC5	0.861				
Work passion (WP)			0.934	0.946	0.945	0.635
	WP1	0.742				
	WP10	0.804				
	WP2	0.911				
	WP3	0.851				
	WP4	0.842				
	WP5	0.862				
	WP6	0.815				
	WP7	0.833				
	WP8	0.855				
	WP9	0.782				

Figure 1
Measurement Model

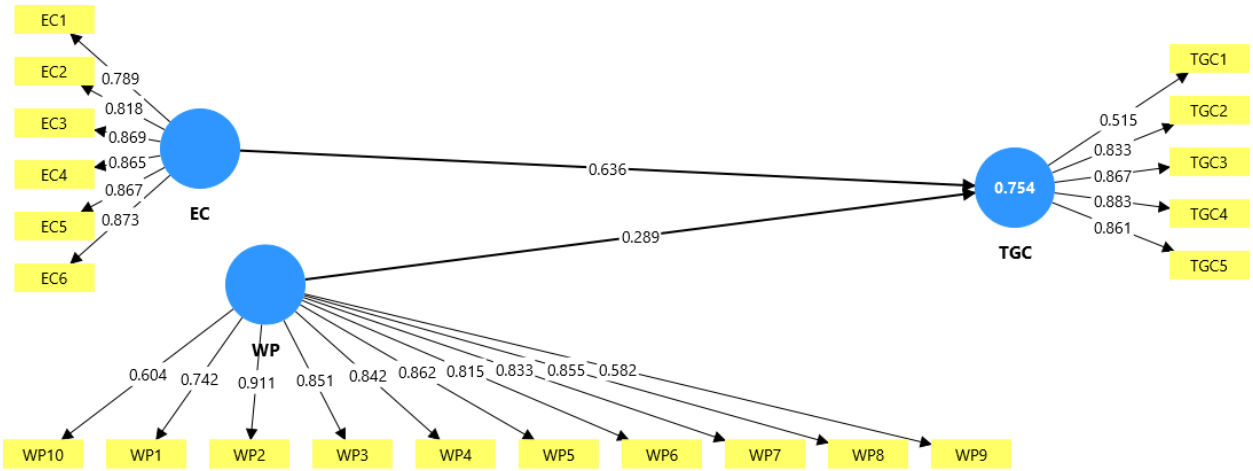


Table 3
Discriminant Validity Fornell and Lacker

	EC	TGC	WP
EC	0.847		
TGC	0.845	0.804	
WP	0.721	0.748	0.797

Table 4
Discriminant Validity Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT)

	EC	TGC	WP
EC			
TGC	0.830		
WP	0.755	0.798	

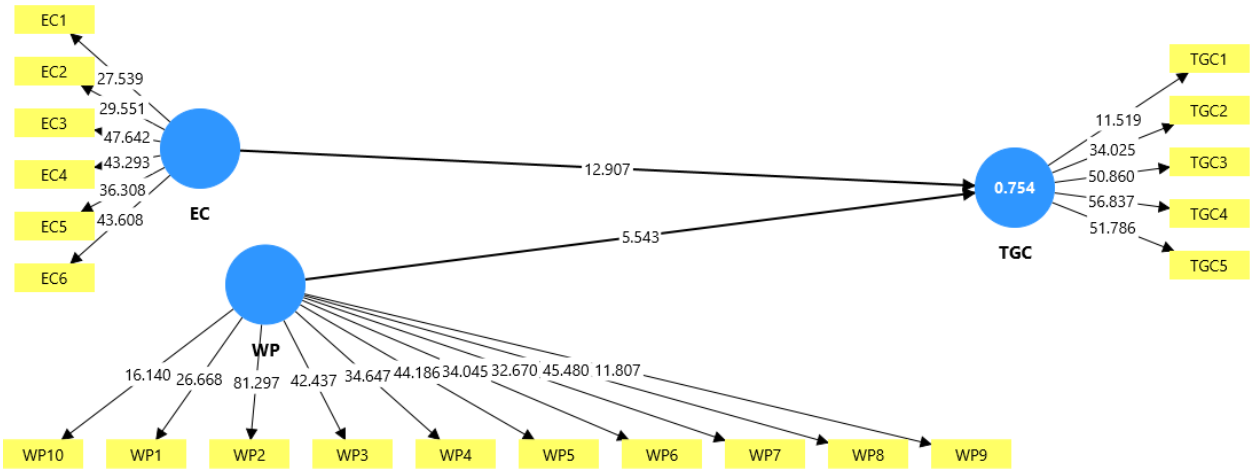
Structural Model

As shown in Table 5 and Figure 2, the results of the structural model analysis revealed that both hypothesised direct relationships were statistically significant, thereby supporting H_1 and H_2. Specifically, emotional competence demonstrated a strong and significant positive effect on team green creativity ($\beta = 0.636$, $t = 12.907$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that academic staff with higher levels of emotional competence are more likely to engage in team-based green creative behaviors. Similarly, work passion had a moderate but significant positive effect on team green creativity ($\beta = 0.289$, $t = 5.543$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that passionate academic staff contribute meaningfully to their teams' capacity to generate novel and useful sustainability-oriented ideas. Of the two predictors, emotional competence was shown to be a stronger predictor of team green creativity, with the effect size much larger than the work passion. This finding backs the theoretical basis of the study and validates the importance of emotional competence and work passion as antecedents of the team's green creativity among academic staff in public universities in Nigeria. Together, these two variables account for a significant amount of the variance in team green creativity, highlighting the importance of emotional and motivational aspects in promoting collaborative innovation and approaches to the environment within academic teams.

Table 5
Hypotheses Results

	Original sample (O)	**Sample mean (M)**	**Standard deviation (STDEV)**	**T statistics (|O/STDEV|)**	**P values**
EC -> TGC	0.636	0.637	0.049	12.907	0.000
WP -> TGC	0.289	0.289	0.052	5.543	0.000

Figure 2
Structural Model



DISCUSSIONS

The current study aimed to explore the impact of work passion and emotional competence on the academic staff's team green creativity in Nigerian public universities, within the context of sustainable academic leadership and using the social information processing theory (SIPT). The results of the structural model analysis showed that work passion and emotional competence both have a significant positive influence on team green creativity, with emotional competence being the stronger influence. The findings support hypothesized relationships and provide insights into the psychological and interpersonal processes that support joint environmental innovations in education.

The Influence of Work Passion on Team Green Creativity

As hypothesized, the study revealed a strong positive relationship between work passion and team green creativity. This result aligns with the growing body of research indicating that passionate employees are more creative and engage in their work (Birkeland & Buch, 2020; Lin et al., 2024). The findings provide support for previous studies (Ogunola & Morakinyo, 2020; Shokunbi, 2016), where the passion for work has been seen to influence lecturer engagement and creativity respectively. The discovery showed that researchers who put their ‘heart and soul’ in their profession are more inclined to enhance their colleagues' ability to generate new and useful ideas for sustainability.

Passionate academics are salient social cues for their colleagues from the perspective of Social Information Processing Theory (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). If the members of the academy are enthusiastic, persistent and committed to environmental sustainability initiatives, they will convey to their team members that green creativity is a valued and worthwhile endeavor. The team members process the information through observation and social interaction and adjust their attitude and behavior to increase the green creativity of the team. This interpretation fits the componential theory of creativity, which focuses on task motivation, a key element of passion, as a factor that increases people's persistence when the task is difficult and helps them produce new ways of solving the problem (Amabile et al., 1996).

However, the moderate effect size indicates that work passion alone is insufficient to explain the team's green creativity. This could be attributed to the difficult environment of public universities in Nigeria,

which are perpetually underfunded, poorly equipped, and staffed with many poorly trained academics (Wei et al., 2024). Resource constraints, large class sizes, and weak institutional support can dampen the ability of passionate academics to channel their passion into team creative products. The finding highlights the need to overcome systemic issues to fully tap into the creative potential of passionate academic staff.

The Influence of Emotional Competence on Team Green Creativity

The results of the study indicate that emotional competence is significantly positively related to team green creativity which supports Hypothesis 2. The result aligns with previous studies where emotional intelligence was found positively impacts creativity and innovation across various organizational settings (Farrukh et al., 2023). Also, support the importance of emotional intelligence for academics' effectiveness both in general (Ogbeibu et al., 2021; Hernández-Jorge et al., 2020) and specifically for team-level green creativity in the Nigerian educational context.

As argued by Hobfoll (2001), emotional competence is a personal resource that enables people to build additional resources through positive social interaction and emotional control. Emotionally competent team members can develop "resource caravans" by using an appropriate feedback-seeking, knowledge-sharing, and problem-solving approach within the team, thereby increasing the collective creative capacity of the team (Naeem et al., 2020). This is especially important in Nigeria's educational setting, where they need to face challenges of resource scarcity, and when social and emotional capacities can play a significant role in creative problem-solving.

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

This study has several important theoretical contributions. First, the study has extended the theory of Social Information Processing (SIPT) to educational team green creativity. SIPT has been used extensively to gain insights into the attitudes toward work and task design (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978), but it has not been applied to green creativity and sustainable academic leadership. This study empirically confirms the theoretical mechanisms suggested by SIPT in a new context, as work passion and emotional competence are viewed as social cues that influence team members' perceptions and behaviors. The findings confirmed that academic leaders with these attributes create the social information environment in their universities which can affect how the community perceives and interprets sustainability issues and how they react to them. This expands the scope of SIPT's theoretical contributions from the traditional areas of organizational behavior to the emerging area of environmental sustainability in education.

Second, this study applies the SIPT in conjunction with other theories as a way of explaining creativity, specifically the self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), the componential theory of creativity (Amabile, 1996), and the conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989). This theoretical interlace offers a thorough model of the behavioral consequences of individual-level characteristics to team-level results. The results indicate that work passion operates through motivational mechanisms (SDT and CT), whereas emotional competence operates through interpersonal and resource-based mechanisms (CORT and AET). This multi-theoretical perspective deepens our understanding of the complex mechanisms underlying team green creativity and offers a more comprehensive view than any single theory.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

The recommendations of this study have implications for the following: educational administrators, educational policymakers, and academic-training institutions in Nigeria. These implications are especially

significant in the context of the critical environmental issues facing the country and the importance of education in addressing these issues. First, the university administrators need to acknowledge that emotional competence is an important determinant of team green creativity. Therefore, they need to consider incorporating emotional intelligence (EQ) training into the professional development for academic staff. Emotional competence can be expanded by incorporating training modules on self-awareness, emotional regulation, empathy and relationship management, which can provide academic staff with a better ability to manage the collaboration of their team to promote the creation of green ideas. This is especially crucial given the large effect size of emotional competence in this study. The development of emotional intelligence should be a major priority for universities in North Central Nigeria and elsewhere to support environmental innovation.

Second, administrators need to establish an environment that fosters and maintains the passion for work among academic staff. Although the passion for work has a moderate effect on the green creativity of teams, it remains significant. Administrators should ensure opportunities for academic staff to engage in meaningful, sustainable work; acknowledge and celebrate enthusiastic academic staff; and foster an organizational culture that supports innovation and sustainability efforts. This can involve the formation of green committees, the provision of resources for sustainability projects, and the development of acknowledgement programs that recognize committed efforts towards environmental education.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

While this study is important, some of its limitations need to be noted, and future research is suggested in light of these. First, since this is a cross-sectional study, the relationships between the variables cannot be established as causal. The hypothesized relationships were confirmed, but the direction of causality can only be inferred from cross-sectional data. For instance, it could be that team green creativity improves the work passion and emotional competence, and not the other way around. Longitudinal designs should be used in the future to study the temporal order of these relationships and determine causal direction. Long-term tracking of academic staff after events that boosted their reputation or sustainability, for instance, would generate stronger evidence of the causal mechanisms at work.

Second, the study uses self-report instruments, which can have common method variance and social desirability bias. While the use of procedural remedies and statistical tests (Harman's single factor test) was used to address these concerns, self-report may not be the most complete way to capture the objective nature of team green creativity. Further studies are suggested to use the multi-source data for a more comprehensive and objective assessment. This can involve gathering information from colleagues, supervisors or outside observers to triangulate self-report data of team green creativity. Furthermore, objective measures of green creativity (e.g., the number of sustainability initiatives implemented and awards received for environmental initiatives) could be added to self-report data.

Third, the study is limited to public universities in North Central Nigeria, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other parts of the country or to private universities. Specific cultural, institutional and socio-economic features of this region can influence the interactions among the variables in unique ways. Further studies should be conducted in other parts of Nigeria such as the South-West, South-South, South-East, North-East, and North-West regions, to investigate the uniformity of the results across different geographical and cultural settings. Likewise, comparisons between the public and private universities would give insights into the extent to which the relationships studied in this paper would be moderated by the institutional characteristics. By tackling such constraints and pursuing these future research avenues, researchers can further enrich theoretical and applied knowledge of team green creativity

in the educational context and help build sustainable academic leadership and environmental education in Nigeria and globally.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between work passion, emotional competence, and team green creativity among academic staff in public universities in Nigeria from a sustainable academic leadership perspective, against the backdrop of Social Information Processing Theory (SIPT). The results from five public universities in the North Central region of Nigeria involving 307 respondents, showed that emotional competence and work passion both had significant positive impacts on team green creativity, where emotional competence had a stronger impact. The results lend empirical support to hypothesized relationships and advance the ongoing body of literature for the concept of green creativity in an educational context, sustainable academic leadership, and the use of SIPT in non-Western settings.

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