

# **Determinants of Perceived High-Performance Management Competency among School Middle Managers**

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## **Abstract**

To investigate the perceived performance management competency of selected school middle managers, data on intelligence quotient, emotional quotient, 2015 individual performance commitment and review and non-intellective profile of the respondents were gathered and correlated through an IQ test, performance and EQ surveys and data mining, alongside a focused group discussion with key informants. In the study, the respondents were described as mostly middle-aged and married females with master's degree, administrative experience of not less than 10 years, stable mental abilities, slight vulnerability in EQ values and beliefs and EQ outcomes, but generally with proficient emotional intelligence and outstanding 2015 individual performance commitment review rating. Their perceived high-performance management competency is between Intermediate to Advanced, while their overall perceived competency in all dimensions is Intermediate. Results to the correlation analyses revealed that there were no significant relationships between IQ and EQ and their non-intellective profile; however IPCR results were strongly correlated to civil status and sex. There were no significant relationships between the respondents' perceived high-performance management competency and intellective and non-intellective profiles, but there was significant relationship between their perceived high-performance management competency and the EQ section on Values and Beliefs. Based on the EQ sections, there was a significant relationship between Emotional Literacy and decade of birth and civil status as there was significant relationship between their EQ Competencies and decade of birth. Moreover, there was significant relationship between their EQ Values and Beliefs and highest educational attainment; however there was no significant relationship between the overall EQ sections and the respondents' non-intellective profile. Lastly, the focused group discussion revealed that being consultative and democratic, respectful, humanitarian, decisive, and technically competent are desirable middle management qualities.

*Keywords:* perceived high-performance management, emotional intelligence, intelligence quotient, individual performance commitment and review

## **Introduction**

Middle managers are often the unrecognized personnel behind the success of most organizations. They are the so-called "managers of managers" since the implementation of policies and programs in the line organization are within their able hands (Inutsikt, 2003). Their competence is evident by how well the rank-and-file perform and achieve certain goals as a result of their efforts to sustain high or optimum performance among themselves and their subordinates. As prime movers and initiators (Luna, 2014), they are burdened by not just too many tasks and functions, but as well as high expectations from both top management and subordinates. It is in this perspective that their management should provide the initiatives in setting ways to attain targets by communicating goals up and down the organizational ladder.

In a school setting, the school middle managers play decisive roles in handling academic and/or non-academic affairs. Particularly, pointing out principals or school heads, it was theorized that successful leaders are those who plan out for the school's vision, however at the same time, pose as instructional models, initiate development efforts and form linkages for the school. The middle manager's position, based on the wisdom of the old, is therefore deemed vital to the growth of the school as a learning organization (Wohlstetter and Mohrman, 1993).

With the enormous expectation set upon them, school middle managers must possess high performance management competence. Like all other executives in any organization, their image is that of a "superman." Thompson (as cited in Morphet, et al., 2006) stressed that they should be the ablest, the most industrious, the most indispensable, the most loyal, the most reliable, the most self-controlled, the most ethical, the most honest, fair, and impartial key personnel in the organization.

### **The Purpose of the Study**

The study aimed to describe the high-performance management competency among selected school middle managers at the Mindanao State University in the Philippines and to correlate results to the respondents' non-intellective profile which included variables such as sex, age (decade of birth), civil status, highest educational attainment, and number of years of managerial experience and their intellective profile which consisted of their Intelligence Quotient (IQ), Emotional Quotient (EQ), and 2015 Individual Performance Commitment and Review Rating (IPCR). The results of the study bear significance in providing insights to effective middle management.

### **Research Questions**

Specifically, the study purported to answer the following questions:

1. What is the non-intellective profile of the respondents, based on:
  - a. Sex;
  - b. Decade of birth;
  - c. Civil Status;
  - d. Highest Educational Attainment; and
  - e. Number of Years of Managerial Experience?
2. What is the intellective profile of the respondents, in terms of:
  - a. Intelligence Quotient;
  - b. Emotional Quotient; and
  - c. 2015 Individual Performance Commitment and Review?
3. How do the respondents perceive their level of high performance management competency?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' non-intellective and intellective profiles?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' non-intellective profile and their perceived high performance management competency?
6. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' intellective profile

and their perceived high performance management competency?

7. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' perceived high performance management competency and the following EQ sections:
  - a. Current Environment;
  - b. Emotional Literacy;
  - c. EQ Competencies;
  - d. EQ Values and Beliefs; and
  - e. EQ Outcomes?
8. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' non-intellective profile and the results of the EQ sections?
9. Based on a Focused-Group Discussion, what other information would be divulged by the discussants to provide clearer understanding of the research outcomes?

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were tested at  $\alpha = 0.05$  level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between the respondents' non-intellective and intellective profiles.
2. There is no significant relationship between the respondents' non-intellective profile and their perceived high performance competency level.
3. There is no significant relationship between the respondents' intellective profile and their perceived high performance competency level.
4. There is no significant relationship between the results of the EQ sections and the perceived high performance competency level of the respondents.
5. There is no significant relationship between the results of the EQ sections and the non-intellective profile of the respondents.

### **The Theory**

This study was anchored on the application of the Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986) to performance and performance management. Accordingly, the feeling of being efficacious could strongly motivate members of an organization to highly perform. However, catapulting motivation depends on the performer's work environment, perception and current performance.

### **Literature Review**

Management, according to Rue and Bryars (1994), is a process that involves guiding or directing a group of people toward organizational goals or objectives. As a process, the role that managers have is multifaceted, thus it requires equal attention and competency to be able to dispense all duties and responsibilities.

Mintzberg as cited in Rue and Bryars (1994) identified ten (10) managerial roles, which are classified into three major groups: interpersonal roles, informational roles, and decisional roles, designed for managers to smoothen the rough edges of an organization. Sun Tzu, according to House et al. (2004) presented one overriding principle called Unity. It is said, that it will be chaotic when the leader has no clear orders and the members have low morale.

The foregoing views on management are not mutually independent. According to Harris (1989) having these skills: decision-making, planning, administrative, inter-personality,

and technical skills would largely contribute to high performance. In addition, these skills, when taken together with sensitivity of culture among others, might also improve performance.

Nevertheless, others theorists such as Tiffin (in Curson, 2007) viewed performance management based on mental ability to influence quantitative behavior. However, Stogdill (in Morphet, et al., 2006) cited that the correlation between intelligence and leadership is Low, which was remarked to be even just slightly better than a chance guess.

With the complexity of the times, Cooper and Sawaf (1997) hold that there could be something more important than performance. They pointed to the relevance of a manager's emotional intelligence. Culturally, it is thought that intelligent managers make good managers. However, an element beyond IQ is at work. That something – or a large part of it – is Emotional Quotient (EQ).

In relation, it was Goleman (1998) who coined the term “emotional intelligence” as a concept associated with empathy. Since the theory's popularity in the 1990s, EQ has now become a household name in the industries, including the academe and in educational management. In terms of its implications to leadership and performance, Trabun (2003) presumed that any individual has the ability to perceive and manage his or her competencies based on inherent personal traits or characteristics.

In relation, according to Warren (in Ugaddan, 2013), performance management is essential to organizational growth because it deals with the optimization of performance through certain systematized management mechanisms.

Ljungholm (2015) and Türk (2016) both found a relevant relationship between performance management systems and organizational effectiveness, usually employed instruments in public services, the effect of performance management on performance in public entities, and the values of performance systems which suggest that performance management requires the right skills.

### **Methodology**

With the purpose of determining the intelligence quotient (IQ), emotional quotient (EQ), 2015 Individual Performance Commitment and Review (IPCR) rating, and perceived high-performance management competency level of the 39 selected respondents, the following procedures were embarked:

Three main instruments were prepared: (1) the questionnaire on High Performance Inventory adapted from Harris (1989) that served as the main instrument for this study; (2) the integrated EQ Assessment and Individual Mapping for Emotional Intelligence by AIT and ESSI Systems, Inc. (2007); and (3) the Standard Progressive Matrices (Raven, 2004). In addition, the IPCR was consolidated from office records.

The first phase of data gathering activities involved surveying the respondents' replies to the EQ and HPMI questionnaires with an attached Personal Profile form. Meanwhile, the second phase included IQ testing with the assistance of a licensed psychometrician to facilitate the testing procedure and interpret the results and retrieval of IPCR results. Finally, the third phase which was initiated to triangulate and fill the gaps on the information gathered through the surveys and test, by embarking on some interviews and discussions with key informants and selected respondents.

For results triangulation, interview sessions with key informants and a focused-group discussion with selected respondents were conducted.

For the interpretation of the surveyed data, basic statistics such as frequency count, percentage, and weighted mean were used to describe the respondents' profile, and with the expertise of two statisticians and through the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences or SPSS (version 17), data were further analyzed for correlation using Chi-square and Pearson

Product Moment Correlation Coefficient to determine the level of significance and significance of relationships between the variables of this study.

### Findings

Based on the gathered data, this study was able to derive the following findings:

#### Non-intellective Profile

In terms of the non-intellective profile of the respondents, this study found out that: (1) majority among the respondents were females, composing 71.79% of the total number of respondents; (2) based on decade of birth, it was construed that the average age among the respondents was at least 42 years old; (3) the respondents were mostly married, comprising 76.92% of the total number of respondents; (4) majority held a master's degree at 53.84%; and (5) their average number of years of managerial experience was between 7 to 15 years while with those having less than 5 years of managerial experience at 25.64% only.

#### Intellective Profile

Based on the results of the respondents' intellective profile, the following were revealed: (1) that the respondents' intelligence quotient or IQ was between average and above average, with 43.58% and 48.71%, respectively; (2) their emotional intelligence or EQ was proficient at 51.28%, however a considerable minority at 35.89% was reportedly vulnerable; (3) based on the EQ section mapping, their current environment is optimal, while emotional literacy and EQ competencies are proficient, however EQ values and beliefs, and EQ outcomes are vulnerable; (4) A scrutiny of the specific EQ scales, showed that outlook and personal power (on EQ values and beliefs) and general health (on EQ outcomes) were found to be in caution; finally, (5) the IPCR results for 2015 showed that 76.92% among the respondents perceived themselves as outstanding.

Table 1

Consolidated Intellective Profile of the Respondents

#### *The Respondents' Intelligence Quotient*

	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Superior	Overall
f	0	17	19	3	39
%	0	43.58	48.71	7.69	100.00

#### *The Respondents' Emotional Quotient*

	Caution	Vulnerable	Proficient	Optimal	Overall
f	2	14	20	3	39
%	5.12	35.89	51.28	7.69	100

#### *The Respondents' Individual Performance Commitment and Review Rating*

	Poor	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Very Satisfactory	Outstanding	Overall
f	0	0	0	9	30	39
%	0	0	0	23.07	76.92	100

#### Perceived Level of High Performance Management Competency

The overall perceived level of high performance competency among the respondents was intermediate at 51.29%, with only 43.59% among them who perceived to have an advanced level. In addition, the specific high performance competence dimensions showed that the respondents rated intermediate competence on cultural awareness, communication, public relations, coordination, planning, implementation, financial management, materials resource management, human resource management, supervision, unit monitoring and scanning, general performance evaluation, and personal assessment.

Table 2

The Respondents' Perceived Level of High Performance management Competency

	Basic Competence	Intermediate Competence	Advanced Competence	Overall
f	2	20	17	39
%	5.12	51.29	43.59	100

**Relationships between Non-intellective and Intellective Profiles**

In correlating non-intellective and intellective profiles at 0.05 level of significance, the following results were gathered, that: (1) there was no direct relationship between the respondents' IQ and their personal profile; (2) there was no direct relationship between the respondents' EQ and their personal profile; and (3) there was no direct correlation between the respondents' IPCR result for 2015 and their decade of birth, highest educational attainment, and number of years of managerial experience. Moreover, the IPCR was strongly correlated to civil status at 0.007 and significantly correlated to sex with 0.032 p-value.

Table 3

Relationships between the Respondents' Non-intellective and Intellective Profiles

Determinants		Chi-square Value (x <sup>2</sup> )	p-Value	Remarks
Sex		0.085	0.959	Not Significant
Decade of Birth		4.149	0.843	Not Significant
Civil Status	Intelligence	3.191	0.526	Not Significant
Educational Attainment	Quotient	4.690	0.321	Not Significant
Managerial Experience		7.050	0.316	Not Significant
Sex		0.611	0.894	Not Significant
Decade of Birth		6.228	0.904	Not Significant
Civil Status	Emotional	3.246	0.777	Not Significant
Educational Attainment	Quotient	7.156	0.307	Not Significant
Managerial Experience		8.141	0.520	Not Significant
Sex		4.596	0.032	Significant
Decade of Birth	2015	5.467	0.243	Not Significant
Civil Status	Individual	9.814	0.007	Highly Significant
Educational Attainment	Performance and Review	5.844	0.054	Not Significant
Managerial Experience	Results	2.145	0.543	Not Significant

**Relationship between the Respondents' Non-intellective Profile and Their Perceived Level of High Performance Management Competency**

There was no significant relationship found between the respondents' perceived high performance management competency and their personal or non-intellective profile at 0.05 level of significance.

*Table 4*

Relationship between the Respondents' Non-intellective Profile and Their Perceived High Performance Management Competency

Determinants		Chi-square Value (x <sup>2</sup> )	p-Value	Remarks
Sex		0.685	0.710	Not Significant
Decade of Birth	Perceived High	3.736	0.880	Not Significant
Civil Status	Performance	4.012	0.404	Not Significant
Educational Attainment	Management Competency	7.367	0.118	Not Significant
Managerial Experience		6.370	0.383	Not Significant

**Relationship between the Respondents' Intellective Profile and Their Perceived Level of High Performance Management Competency**

There was no significant relationship found between the respondents' perceived high performance management competency and their intellective profile at 0.05 level of significance.

*Table 5*

Correlation between the Respondents' Intellective Profile and Their Perceived High Performance Management Competency

Determinants		Correlation Coefficient	Level of Significance	p-Value	Remarks
Intelligence Quotient		$r = -0.066$	Negative Low Correlation	0.691	Not Significant
Emotional Intelligence	Perceived High Performance	$r = 0.260$	Positive Low Correlation	0.110	Not Significant
2015 Individual Performance Commitment and Review	Management Competency	$r = 0.062$	Positive Low Correlation	0.706	Not Significant

**Relationships between the Respondents' Perceived Level of High Performance Management Competency and the EQ Sections**

There was no significant relationship between the respondents' perceived high performance management competency and the results of the EQ sections mapping, specifically in these sections: current environment, emotional literacy, EQ competencies, and EQ outcomes; however, there was significant relationship found between their perceived high performance competency and the EQ section on values and beliefs with 0.014 p-value at 0.05 level of significance.

*Table 6*

Correlation between the EQ Sections and the Respondents' Perceived High Performance Management Competency

Determinants		Correlation Coefficient	Level of Significance	p-Value	Remarks
Section I: Current Environment	Perceived	$r = 0.074$	Positive Low Correlation	0.656	Not Significant

Section II: Emotional Literacy	High Performance Management	$r = 0.204$	Positive Low Correlation	0.213	Not Significant
Section III: EQ Competencies	Competency	$r = 0.206$	Positive Low Correlation	0.208	Not Significant
Section IV: EQ Values & Beliefs		$r = 0.390$	Moderate Correlation	0.014	Significant
Section V: EQ Outcomes		$r = 0.181$	Positive Low Correlation	0.269	Not Significant

### Relationship between the respondents' non-intellective profile and the results of the EQ sections

In view of the correlation between the specific EQ sections and the non-intellective or personal profile of the respondents, it was calculated, that: (1) there was no significant relationship between the EQ section on current environment and the respondents' non-intellective profile; (2) there was no significant relationship between the EQ section on emotional literacy and the respondents' sex, highest educational attainment, and number of years of managerial experience; but, significant relationship was established between emotional literacy and decade of birth with 0.048 p-value and civil status with 0.032 p-value at 0.05 level of significance; (3) There was no significant relationship between the EQ section on EQ competencies and the respondents' sex, civil status, highest educational attainment, and number of years of managerial experience; but, significant relationship was traced between EQ competencies and decade of birth with 0.24 p-value at 0.05 level of significance; (4) there was no significant relationship between the EQ section on EQ values and beliefs and the respondents' sex, decade of birth, civil status, and number of years of managerial experience; however, significant relationship was discovered between EQ values and beliefs and the respondents' highest educational attainment; lastly, (5) there was no significant relationship between the EQ section on EQ outcomes and the non-intellective profile of the respondents.

When taken as an overall set of EQ sections, it was noted that no significant relationship was found between the overall EQ sections and the non-intellective profile of the respondents.

Table 7

Relationship between the Respondents' Non-intellective Profile and Overall EQ Sections

Determinants		Chi-square Value ( $x^2$ )	p-value	Remarks
Sex		44.083	0.094	Not significant
Decade of Birth	All EQ	155.792	0.077	Not significant
Civil Status	Sections	83.185	0.075	Not significant
Educational Attainment		59.742	0.693	Not significant
Managerial Experience		116.629	0.109	Not significant

### Focused Group Discussion and Key Informant Interview Results

The focused group discussion and key informant interview revealed, that: (1) in terms of getting a middle management designation, one could either be appointed, hired, or elected; (2) some respondents were stressed but contented with their jobs and happened to be disappointed mostly with the people they work with; (3) majority would most likely refuse

middle management position in the future; and (4) in terms of their ideation of desirable management qualities, the respondents commonly agreed that good management should be (1) consultative and democratic, (2) respectful of other people's boundaries or limitations, (3) humanitarian, (4) decisive, and (5) technically competent.

### **Discussion**

Bandura (1986) pointed out that human behavior is a direct result of personal, behavioral, and environmental influences; or, between a person's perceived self-efficacy and behavioral change. He further added that self-efficacy which could catalyze high performance management, emanates from performance accomplishments, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and physiological states or good health and well-being among managers.

Based on the results of this study, the perceived high performance competency level of the respondents on all dimensions: cultural awareness, communication, public relation, coordination, planning, implementation, financial management, materials resources management, supervision, unit monitoring and scanning, and general performance evaluation: was intermediate competence. Such result was within the acceptable high performance competency level, however, the respondents may aspire for advanced competency. In relation, effective leadership, and not just management, is a viable energy in developing an organization which would result in an increased effectiveness and efficiency or optimized high performance among members of an organization.

Generally, the results showed that the respondents' profile, intelligence quotient, emotional quotient, and individual performance commitment and review have no significant relationship to their perceived high performance management competency.

Interestingly, Moreland (2009) discussed the possible link between implementation and practice of performance management; that it could be directly affected by the leadership style of the middle manager and his or her ideological relationship with top management responsible for performance management. In consonance, Gerrish (2016) pointed out that various organizations have implemented performance management measures to ensure effectiveness, but such measures were seen to have little effect on actual performance because they were acted based on compliance only. One this note, the FDG and key informant interview revealed that some middle managers have personal issues with the management styles of their immediate supervisors. Consequently, they were not happy in the workplace but were bound by responsibilities inherent to their official positions.

### **Limitations**

Only thirty nine middle school managers who represented the various academic and non-academic offices of the Mindanao State University at Naawan, in Naawan, Misamis Oriental, Philippines responded to the survey. This number was short by around ten respondents to target the total population. But, considerably the reduction was due to the fact that there were a few middle managers who have multiple designations.

Despite the strong endorsement from the chancellor of the University where the study was conducted, but due to the busy nature of the respondents, data gathering extended from April to November 2016. Also, the instruments were too comprehensiveness and demanded time for compliance, foremost the psychometrician suggested that the HPMI instrument should be slightly modified to fit the local context and for convenience.

### **Recommendation**

Although there were no significant relationships established between the major variables and perceived high performance management competence, and since all

determinants to perceived high performance management were at their tolerable levels, it was therefore recommended that a high performance management plan should be developed particularly to train middle managers, including potential middle managers, and to arrest the ominous proliferation of pessimism or indifference in the workplace, and ultimately to propel advanced high performance among the respondents and productivity in the organization.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, as a norm to the non-intellective profile of the respondents, there were more female than male middle managers which reflected gender equality in terms of management opportunities in the academe. They were mostly married and middle aged. Majority earned a master's degree in their fields of specialization and with an average managerial experience of not less than seven years. In addition, as a norm to the intellective profile of the respondents, their intelligence quotient was between average to above average which implied stable mental abilities; although with slight vulnerability in their EQ values and beliefs, and EQ outcomes, generally they have proficient emotional intelligence; and with outstanding performance commitment review. Also, their perceived level of high performance management competency was between intermediate and advanced competence; whereas their overall perceived competence in all dimensions was intermediate.

Based on the hypotheses testing, it can therefore be concluded, that, (1) there were no significant relationships between both IQ and EQ and the respondents' personal or non-intellective profile; however, the respondents' IPCR was strongly correlated to their civil status and sex; (2) there were no significant relationships between the respondents' perceived high performance management competency and their intellective and non-intellective profiles; however there was significant relationship between their perceived high performance management competency and the EQ section on values and beliefs; (3) based on the EQ sections, there was no significant relationship between the respondents' current environment and EQ outcomes and their non-intellective profile; however, there was significant relationship between emotional literacy and their decade of birth and civil status; there was significant relationship between their EQ competencies and decade of birth; and, there was significant relationship between their EQ values and beliefs and their highest educational attainment; and, (4) there was no significant relationship between the overall EQ sections and the non-intellective or personal profile of the respondents. Thus, generally the respondents' profile, IQ, EQ, and IPCR showed no significant influence on their perceived high performance management competency.

Based on the focused group discussion and key informant interview, the respondents could potentially highly perform when the overall school management was set in a condition where (1) consultation and democratic process, (2) respect with regard personal and professional boundaries, (3) human compassion and consideration, (4) decisiveness, and (5) technical competence were present.

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