

# Creativity and collaboration in e-marking of professional examination: the institute of chartered accountant of Nigeria (ICAN)

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## Introduction

As a PhD student and a researcher, several research have found that working as a team always improve the quality of work in an organization.<sup>1</sup> Katzenbach & Smith<sup>2</sup> defined a team as “a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, set of performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable”. Benefits like higher production, innovation, and employee satisfaction are typically what drive a work team. Because when working as a team it prompts up new ideas through unveiling opportunities that lead to innovation. According to Yuan et al.<sup>3</sup> individual creativity was the base for developing collective creativity, and human race has always recognized and rewarded creativity, innovation that most frequently occurs when people work together. This desire to solve problems might lead to new ways of doing things, better outcomes, and more efficient performance. Studies have proved that when a team is properly managed it can contribute to organizational value and competitive advantage.<sup>4</sup>

Understanding the fundamental components of collaboration, which include communication, coordination, transparency, accountability, and trust, appears crucial. Teamwork makes the dream work as the self-managing team selects how to organize work and how it will be coordinated.<sup>5</sup> The best way to train other or learning new process is by collaboration, gain new experience and knowledge.

The most crucial point is that a team’s structure should be determined by its members’ character qualities, soft skills, and fundamental values rather than their knowledge, experience, or training.<sup>6</sup> Although sometimes working in a group promotes laziness, when some members may not contribute much to the work. It is good when the number is small, and the work can be divided into parts among them, and each member will work on the mandate giving and submit for compilation. It obvious that what makes innovation works is the collaboration of people. But since the work is in collaboration and leadership is provided, it always results to quality work.

Individual differences are factors why some people usually consider as an excuse for preference to working alone. Drucker<sup>7</sup> in his analysis on individual perception and that it is always different, for instance “half full and “half empty” are descriptions of the same phenomenon but have vastly different meanings. What determines whether people see a glass as half full or half empty is mood rather than fact, and a shift in mood frequently defies measurement. This appears a problem and through team creativity it can jointly solved and exploited for big innovation opportunities.<sup>8</sup> Innovations are not automatic and rarely happen except on failure or expected success. New opportunities rarely fit the way the industry has always approached the market, defined it, or organized to serve it. Innovators therefore have a good chance of being left alone for a long time.

Businesses are being forced to be more creative to meet customer wants and engage on a global scale as global marketplaces and technological innovation continue to expose the manufacturing sector. It is crucial that technology and innovation professionals comprehend creativity and know how to encourage it among their colleagues as they get ready for future leadership roles in their companies.

## Background

The Institute of Chartered Accountant of Nigeria (ICAN) is a professional body established in 1965. The institute has over 50,000 members and marks more than 90000 exams annually. ICAN has mission to produce world -class chartered accountants and regulate their ethical standard and technical competence in the public interest. In compliance with global trends, ICAN is investing in technology to facilitate more effective and efficient service delivery for their members. The body in 2018 collaborate with RM Results and offers end-to-end digital assessment solutions and has extensive experience of working with accountancy bodies such as ACCA and ICAEW and was therefore, a natural choice of strategic partner for ICAN. The virtual collaborative marking team of this professional organization has, in the meantime, been successful in resolving the issue of team members geographically dispersed, which may have significant ramifications for team collaboration (Hoegl & Proserpio, 2004), and this innovation has resulted to great performance of ICAN in the recent year.

## Team composition and diversity

According to earlier research, diversity fosters innovation as long as there are no biases or prior notions that prevent the team from performing,<sup>9</sup> and innovation comes from individual creativity.<sup>3</sup> Collective decision contribute to innovation as employees are giving opportunity to share their knowledge and experiences on a particular issue. As teamwork is proofed as an instrument to manage culturally diverse workforces. Literature review showed that diversity is not limited to race and gender it may also include other types such as disability, socioeconomic status, thinking style, culture, personality, life experience, religious and spiritual beliefs.<sup>10</sup> Success is jointly shared, and failure is minimal, because of collaboration. As working

in isolation can bring boredom and less quality of ideas. The independent people most of the time end up messing up things due to their overconfidence, and not willing to open to ideas

### Principles of innovation

The challenges posed by competitors due to changes of environment create a need for firms to continue to search for knowledge that can be used in pursuit of innovation.<sup>11</sup> Innovation is a competitive advantage for businesses, and these businesses typically grow through information sharing. Innovation should only have one purpose to avoid contradictory results. It requires discovery of new ideas to invest on and protect it from exploitation of the competitors. For an innovation to be successful, it must be focused and maintained simple.<sup>12</sup> The most important thing to remember is that innovation is work and not genius.<sup>13</sup> Undoubtedly, some innovators are more skilful than others, but these people frequently stand out in specific spheres

### Knowledge

Choo, Detlor & Turnbull<sup>14</sup> state that "Knowledge is considered as a combination of grounded perception, contextual information expert intuition, standards and framed understanding that postulates a specific environment and structure for assessing and integrating innovative experiences and information" The exchange and interpretation of information between individuals within an organisation, allows knowledge to be created and maintained. Drunkard (1995) affirmed that "the most vital economic resource to achieving competitive advantage is knowledge". The previous studies concluded that efficient knowledge is used as a primary source for developing core competencies and improving performance,<sup>15</sup> creating value, and attaining competitive advantage (King and Zeithalm, 2003, Rahimli, 2012),<sup>16</sup> which subsequently results in an organization's success. Knowledge is most often acquired through collaboration. Maie & DeKeyser,<sup>17</sup> mentioned explicit (documented) and tacit (experience) as two types of knowledge that creativity develops from. Most of the organizations that recognise the value of knowledge now regard it as intellectual capital,<sup>18</sup> and therefore, decision making within the organization is based on the knowledge of the phenomenon.

This extension of knowledge management is supported by previous studies in human resources management, marketing, finance, education, and retail.

### Innovation and knowledge

Innovation and knowledge are indispensable to organizations and are intangible resources. Even though these are two distinct ideas, yet they are related.<sup>20</sup> People are regarded as an organization's greatest asset because they tend to be self-motivated, and knowledge can help for competitive advantage.<sup>21</sup> Knowledge acquisition, knowledge creation, knowledge documentation, knowledge transfer, knowledge sharing, and knowledge application are the three dimensions of knowledge.<sup>22</sup> Like any other activity, innovation requires talent, creativity, and knowledge. However, when everything is said and done, innovation calls for hard, intentional work. Talent, inventiveness, and expertise are useless without dedication, tenacity, and devotion.

### Digital trust

The conviction that technology, people, and processes interact or work together to meet people's digital expectations, including a sense of security, confidence, or control to assist the development of a secure digital environment.<sup>23</sup> In today's international practice, it is central to any organization/firm's success to embrace technology culture as a basis for trust.<sup>24-27</sup> Therefore, digital trust is crucial into

the environment of any organization, especially for establishing and maintaining connections with all stakeholders.<sup>28-29</sup>

### Conclusion

The emergency of technology into ICAN is a motivation to shift to team-based for effective performance. Team design has moved beyond a configuration of same-location employees to now include members from different geographic locations. The result is the creation of virtual teams with new types of work patterns, decision making styles, and relationships. Organizations must acknowledge the value of knowledge as a crucial resource with the potential to influence prosperity, increase economic value, and enhance effectiveness. Teams can make it easier to share and integrate knowledge to improve performance and outcomes as knowledge is dispersed among organizational personnel and other non-affiliated people. Teams are formed by firms to unite people with the appropriate knowledge and abilities to work together on tasks of the firm.

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### Conflicts of interest

We declare there are no conflicts of interest.

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