

EXAMINING THE ROLE OF SELF-AWARENESS, SELF-REGULATION, AND SELF-MOTIVATION IN ENHANCING LEADERSHIP PERFORMANCE IN BAYELSA STATE PUBLIC SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT: This study investigated the Role of Self-Awareness, Self-Regulation, and Self-Motivation in Enhancing Leadership Performance in public senior secondary schools in Bayelsa State. A descriptive correlational survey research design was employed to examine how these core components of emotional intelligence influence principals' leadership effectiveness. The study population comprised 222 principals, out of which a stratified random sample of 149 was selected to ensure proportional representation across the state's educational zones. Data were collected using a self-developed and validated questionnaire structured into demographic and variable-specific sections. Reliability was confirmed through the test-retest method, yielding Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of .969 and .884. Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were used to answer the research questions, while Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) tested the hypotheses at the 0.05 significance level using SPSS version 29. Findings revealed that self-awareness, self-regulation, and self-motivation significantly contribute to improved leadership performance among school principals in Bayelsa State. The study recommended that the Ministry of Education should encourage emotional intelligence in terms of self-awareness, self-regulation, and self-motivation to enhance leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Bayelsa State.

Keywords: Self-Awareness, Self-Regulation, Self-Motivation, Leadership, Performance, Bayelsa State, Public, Senior, Secondary Schools.

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INTRODUCTION

Emotional intelligence (EI) refers to the ability to perceive, control, and evaluate emotions. According to Goleman (2016), who popularized the concept, emotional intelligence encompasses a set of skills that contribute to the accurate appraisal and expression of emotions in oneself and others, effective regulation of emotions, and the use of feelings to motivate, plan, and achieve in one's life. Emotional intelligence is the capacity to be aware of, control, and express one's emotions, and to handle interpersonal relationships judiciously and empathetically.

According to Mayer et al. (2016), emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive, understand, manage, and use emotions to facilitate thinking. This model includes the abilities to accurately perceive emotions in one and others, use emotions to facilitate thinking, understand emotional meanings, and manage emotions.

Bar-On (2022) asserted that Emotional intelligence is a cross-section of interrelated emotional and social competencies, skills, and facilitators that determine how effectively we understand and express ourselves, understand others, and relate with them, and cope with daily demands. Emotional intelligence is typically divided into three key dimensions which involve self-awareness, self-regulation, and motivation. Self-awareness has to do with the ability to recognize and understand one's own emotions and their impact on others. Self-Regulation is the capacity to manage and regulate one's emotions in healthy and productive ways. Self-motivation is the drive to pursue goals with energy and persistence. These three key dimensions of EI affect leadership effectiveness, depending on the usage and abilities to use them, and can impact administration positively or negatively.

Leadership is a huge task that requires sets of activities to be done, strengths to carry out the task and good mannerism to achieve it. A leader who is insensitive cannot be result-oriented or may not achieve more. For effective performance to be recorded, every leader must be intelligent emotionally.

Northouse (2018) opined that Leadership performance involves the ability of leaders to effectively guide and influence their team or organization towards achieving its goals. Key elements include the leader's ability to set clear vision, communicate effectively, motivate and inspire others, and manage resources efficiently. Leadership performance is the outcome of leadership behaviors that influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute towards organizational success. This includes strategic decision-making, fostering an innovative culture, and ensuring team cohesion and productivity. Similarly, Dost et al. (2017) defined Leadership performance as the effectiveness with which leaders can develop a vision for the future, align people by communicating this vision, and motivate and inspire them to overcome challenges and achieve the vision. This performance is critical for driving organizational change and achieving sustained success.

School leaders like principals needs more of emotional intelligence to understand the students dynamics as well as the teachers feelings and motivation scheme to be able to relate with them, since the school success is recorded on teamwork bases and not on the sole effort of the leader alone.

Leadership performance in the context of school principals involves effectively managing the school, fostering a positive school culture, ensuring high academic standards, and promoting the professional development of staff. Effective principals are visionary leaders who can inspire and motivate teachers and students, make sound decisions, and build strong relationships within the school community. Self-aware principals can better understand their strengths and weaknesses, leading to more informed decision-making and strategic planning. This awareness helps in managing stress and avoiding emotional triggers that could negatively impact their leadership. Principals who practice self-regulation can maintain their composure and adapt to changing circumstances. This quality is essential for managing conflicts and maintaining a positive school environment. It also fosters a climate of trust and respect among staff and students. Self-motivated principals are more likely to be resilient and persistent in achieving school goals. Their enthusiasm and commitment can inspire teachers and students, leading to improved academic performance and a more cohesive school culture. Empathetic principals are better at understanding and addressing the needs and concerns of their staff and students. This quality enhances communication and strengthens relationships, creating a supportive and inclusive school environment. Principals with high social awareness can navigate the social dynamics of the school community effectively. They are skilled at building networks, managing

interpersonal relationships, and creating collaborative relationships between them and the teachers as well as among the staff members of the school in general. Hence, carrying out a study to examine how emotional intelligence in leadership can enhance performance is very important and needed, which is the purpose of the study.

Statement of the Problem

The issue of inadequate leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Bayelsa State has become a growing concern. This entails that leadership performance in public secondary schools has been inadequate, affecting the overall quality of education. Many school leaders struggle to effectively manage staff, motivate students, and achieve organizational goals. This may be attributed to low levels of emotional intelligence (EI) among these leaders, which impacts their ability to understand and manage emotions, and also create conducive learning environments. Despite its proven role in enhancing leadership effectiveness, emotional intelligence is often overlooked in the leadership practices of these schools, leading to poor overall performance. This entails that despite the recognized importance of EI in leadership effectiveness, its role in improving leadership performance in these schools has not been fully explored.

Low emotional intelligence of school principals may resist change or fail to inspire their teams to embrace new initiatives. Emotional intelligence enables leaders to remain resilient and adaptable, guiding their teams through transitions with confidence and poise. Leaders play a pivotal role in the development and retention of employees. Those lacking in EI may neglect to provide constructive feedback, recognize achievements, or support professional growth. When principal lacks these basic skills, then lack of trust, confidence, engagements and collaboration will ensue. Hence, it is imperative for principals to learn how to integrate emotional intelligence and effective leadership style for optimum performance.

This study aims to address this gap by investigating the impact of emotional intelligence on leadership performance in public senior secondary schools. It is based on the above that the study sought to examine how emotional intelligence enhances leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Bayelsa State.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Bayelsa State. The study intends to achieve the following objectives:

- Determine how emotional intelligence in terms of self-awareness enhances leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Bayelsa State.
- Ascertain how emotional intelligence in terms of self-regulation enhances leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Bayelsa State.
- Examine how emotional intelligence in terms of self-motivation enhances leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Bayelsa State.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide the study”

- How does emotional intelligence in terms of self-awareness enhance leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Bayelsa State?
- How does emotional intelligence in terms of self-regulation enhance leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Bayelsa State?
- How does emotional intelligence in terms of self-motivation enhance leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Bayelsa State?

Hypotheses

The following formulated hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence in terms of self-awareness and leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Bayelsa State.
- There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence in terms of self-regulation and leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Bayelsa State.
- There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence in terms of self-motivation and leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Bayelsa State.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Self-Awareness Theory (Shelley Duval and Robert Wicklund, 1972)

Self-awareness theory was first developed by Shelley Duval and Robert Wicklund in 1972. They hypothesized that individuals can either focus on the external environment or the internal environment at any given moment.

Self-awareness is the ability to recognize and understand one’s own thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Self-awareness theory is a framework that explains how people use their internal standards and self-evaluation to understand their behavior and make changes to their self-concept. This theory has been studied in various fields, including psychology, sociology, and leadership.

Self-awareness is the capacity to take oneself as the object of thought where people can think, act, and experience, and they can also think about what they are thinking, doing, and experiencing. Duval and Wicklund proposed that, at a given moment, people can focus attention on the self or on the external environment. Focusing on the self enables self-evaluation. When self-focused, people compare the self with standards of correctness that specify how the self ought to think, feel, and behave. The process of comparing the self with standards allows people to change their behavior and to experience pride and dissatisfaction with the self. Self-awareness is thus a major mechanism of self-control. According to Duval & Silvia (2021), Research since the 1970s has strongly supported self-awareness theory. When people focus attention on the self,

they compare the self with standards, try harder to meet standards, and show stronger emotional responses to meeting or failing to meet a standard. The tendency to change the self to match a standard depends on other variables, particularly perceptions of how hard it will be to attain the standard. Remarkably, many experiments have shown that when people are not self-focused, their actions are often unrelated to their personal standards of self-awareness is needed for people to reduce disparities between their actions and their ideals. Self-awareness theory was enriched by new research methods.

According to the theory, anything that makes people focus attention on the self will increase self-awareness. Researchers accomplish this by placing people in front of large mirrors, videotaping them, having people listen to recordings of their voices, or making people feel like they stick out. Momentary levels of self-awareness are measured by people's use of self-referential words and pronouns and by how quickly people recognize self-relevant information.

Self-awareness theory remains a fruitful and controversial theory. One new direction is the application of self-awareness theory to clinical disorders involving negative self-evaluation (e.g., depression) and excessive self-consciousness (e.g., social anxiety). Many researchers have proposed that self-awareness creates clearer perceptions of internal states, emotions, and traits. Other researchers, however, have noted that the self-concept is fluid, complex, and contextual it is not a static object that can simply be apprehended and examined. Ironically, Duval and Silvia (2021) said that by making some aspects of the self especially salient, self-awareness may exaggerate and bias judgments of what the self is like.

Duval and Silvia (2021) asserted that Self-awareness theory consists of two components: private self-awareness and public self-awareness. Private self-awareness is the ability to focus on internal thoughts, feelings, and emotions. Public self-awareness, on the other hand, is the ability to focus on external aspects, such as appearance and behavior, and how they are perceived by others.

Emotional Intelligent

According to Mayer et al. (2016), in recent years, Emotional Intelligence (EI) has become the focus of interest for numerous researchers. EI is understood as the ability to facilitate the recognition and regulation of emotions and the generation of adaptive behaviors (Ololube, 2024).

Emotional intelligence can be conceptualised as the cognitive capacity to comprehend and regulate one's own emotional states, while also exhibiting proficiency in perceiving and exerting impact on the emotional experiences of others in one's social environment. The terminology was initially introduced by Mayer et al. (2016), and subsequently gained widespread recognition through the efforts of psychologist Daniel Goleman. Over ten years ago, Goleman emphasised the significance of emotional intelligence in the context of leadership. Emotional intelligence is defined as the ability to control someone's wishes and to delay their fulfilment, to regulate others' mood, to isolate feeling from thinking, to place you into another's shoes and to hope. Also, it includes a range of skills such as self-control, persistence, zeal and ability to motivate others (Davies et al., 2009). According to Goleman (2018), emotional intelligence involves the following elements: self-awareness, empathy, handling relationships, managing feelings, motivation.

Emotional intelligence (EI) consists of a person's self-awareness and their ability to manage their own and other people's emotions. To be effective in a leadership role, emotional intelligence is crucial. Leaders who wish to create an impression must have a solid understanding

of the effect their emotions and behaviours have on those around them. Leadership effectiveness is proportionate to the leader's capacity to foster positive relationships and work effectively with others.

According to Baron (2022), the emotional intelligence of an individual evolves in parallel with age, due to the influence of a set of social, psychological, affective and personal factors that influence a person's capacity to adapt effectively to possible vicissitudes at the behest of the environment.

Types of Emotional Intelligent (EI)

Ioannidou and Konstantikaki (2008) opined that EI include:

- **Knowing our feelings:** Conscience, recognising an emotion the moment it is created, is the cornerstone of emotional intelligence. The ability to understand and appreciate our emotions is the key to psychological insight and self-understanding. While the inability to see our real feelings, leaves us at their mercy.
- **Controlling our emotions:** To manipulate and control our emotions so as they are appropriate at any time is an ability built on conscience. People lacking this ability are always fighting feelings of depression, while those who are distinguished for it can overcome setbacks and disappointments of life more quickly.
- **Exploration of incentives:** Control of emotions so as to serve an objective is essential to focus attention, to find incentives, to self- possession and to creativity. Emotional self-control seems to be behind any kind of achievement. People who have this ability tend to be much more productive and effective.
- **Recognition of other person's emotions:** Empathy, an ability that has its basis in emotional awareness, is a fundamental human skill. Empathetic people are more amenable to silence social signals indicating what other people may want or need (Leiberg & Anders, 2016). This makes them better in professions related to community outreach, teaching, sales and administration
- **Handling relations:** The art of interpersonal relations according to Goleman et al. (2016) is to a large extent, the skill of handling other's feelings. These are skills leading to popularity, leadership acumen and interpersonal success. People who have largely those skills usually stand out in terms of smooth interaction with others and always distinguish in social scene.

Importance of Emotional Intelligence in Leadership

According to what Bennis (2019) taught his students, technical abilities that got you your first promotion are no guarantee of getting your next one. Emotional intelligence is a crucial factor to think about if you want to be a leader (Gaubatz & Ensminger, 2017). You can't effectively coach a team, deal with stress, provide constructive criticism, or work with people without it. Emotional intelligence is the key differentiator between top achievers and their counterparts who share equal levels of technical expertise and knowledge. The principals of secondary schools are responsible for establishing a culture conducive to learning. According to Foltin and Keller (2012), the absence of emotional intelligence may have far-reaching effects, including decreased employee engagement and increased turnover. Emotional intelligence may seem inconsequential,

yet it's crucial to leadership and interpersonal skills (Srivastava, 2013). Put yourself in the shoes of the people you're interacting with. High EQ people are able to empathise with others and control their emotional responses, making them less stressed and better communicators than their low EQ counterparts (Mayer et al., 2016).

Self-Awareness and Leadership Performance in Public Senior Secondary Schools

Self-awareness is often considered the foundational component of emotional intelligence, which encompasses the ability to perceive and regulate one's emotions and understand the emotions of others. Emotionally intelligent leaders who are self-aware can manage their reactions to stressful situations, making them more resilient and approachable. Research indicates that emotionally intelligent leaders who demonstrate a high degree of self-awareness tend to perform better in leadership roles because they can foster better relationships with their teams and encourage a collaborative, empathetic work environment (Goleman, 2001).

Cherniss and Goleman (2021) opined that Leaders with high self-awareness can also recognize how their emotions influence their actions and those of their teams, allowing them to mitigate negative emotional responses and enhance positive ones. This capacity to manage emotional states leads to better decision-making and conflict resolution, which are critical aspects of leadership performance. Such leaders according to Eurich (2017) are better equipped to make sound and objective decisions. Being self-aware means understanding one's biases, limitations, and tendencies, which can help in avoiding emotional decision-making or the overvaluation of one's personal preferences. Self-aware leaders can critically evaluate situations, seek feedback from others, and make decisions that are aligned with the organization's goals rather than being driven by personal impulses.

Furthermore, Sadler-Smith (2008) asserted that self-awareness enables leaders to reflect on past decisions and learn from mistakes, fostering continuous growth and improved judgment over time. This reflective practice enhances leadership effectiveness, particularly in complex environments where strategic decision-making is essential.

In a similar vein, Clawson (2021) stated that effective communication is a hallmark of successful leadership, and self-awareness plays a pivotal role in this domain. Leaders who are self-aware understand how their communication style and tone affect others, allowing them to tailor their interactions to the needs of their audience. A leader who understands their own emotions and the impact of their words is more likely to communicate in a clear, respectful, and motivational manner.

More so, according to George (2013), self-aware leaders are more open to receiving feedback from their teams. They recognize their own fallibility and are willing to listen to constructive criticism, which fosters an atmosphere of trust and transparency. This open communication, in turn, enhances team cohesion and increases overall performance.

Boyatzis and McKee (2015) stressed that Self-aware leaders are better positioned to adapt to change because they are conscious of their limitations and are open to learning and personal development. A leader who knows their own strengths and weaknesses can more easily pivot strategies, seek new skills, or delegate tasks when necessary. This flexibility is crucial for navigating uncertainty and fostering innovation within an organization. Leaders with high self-awareness also tend to be more mindful of the external environment and the needs of their team, allowing them to adjust their leadership style as required. For instance, a self-aware leader may

adopt a more collaborative approach when facing complex challenges, empowering their team to contribute ideas and take ownership of solutions.

Sutton et al. (2015) asserted that the relationship between self-awareness and leadership performance is multifaceted and deeply intertwined. Self-awareness enhances emotional intelligence, decision-making, communication, and adaptability, all of which are essential for effective leadership. Self-awareness improves our communication, confidence, and job performance.

Types of Self-Awareness

There are two distinct kinds of self-awareness, public and private:

Public self-awareness: Being aware of how we can appear to others. Because of this consciousness, we are more likely to adhere to social norms and behave in ways that are socially acceptable. While there are benefits to this type of awareness, there is also the danger of tipping into self-consciousness. Those who are especially high in this trait may spend too much time worrying about what others think of them.

Private self-awareness: Being able to notice and reflect on one's internal state. Those who have private self-awareness are introspective, approaching their feelings and reactions with curiosity. For example, you may notice yourself tensing up as you are preparing for an important meeting. Noticing the physical sensations and correctly attributing them to your anxiety about the meeting would be an example of private self-awareness. When self-awareness tips into self-consciousness, we are reluctant to share certain aspects of ourselves.

Self-awareness has a lot of benefit include the following: It gives the power to influence outcomes, it helps to become better decision-makers It gives us more self-confidence — so, as a result, we communicate with clarity and intention, It allows to understand things from multiple perspectives, It frees assumptions and biases, It helps build better relationships, It gives a greater ability to regulate our emotions, It decreases stress and It makes happier

Self-Regulation and leadership performance in Public Senior Secondary Schools

According to Jacobs et al. (2018), self-regulation is another key component of emotional intelligence and plays a significant role in leadership performance. The ability to regulate one's emotions, even under stress, and to keep one's spirits up in the face of adversity is what is known as self-regulation. Those who struggle to self-regulate are more likely to act on impulse and respond emotionally rather than rationally. In most cases, a response is automatic. However, the ability to go smoothly from reaction to response increases with emotional intelligence.

Self-regulation is the ability to control one's behavior, emotions, and thoughts in the pursuit of long-term goals. More specifically, emotional self-regulation refers to the ability to manage disruptive emotions and impulses, in other words, to think before acting. More so, Self-regulation involves being aware of your behavior and how it can help you to reach your goals. The American Psychological Association (APA) defined self-regulation as “the control of one's behavior through self-monitoring, self-evaluation, and self-reinforcement.

One of the most direct links between self-regulation and leadership performance is the ability to manage emotions effectively. Leaders are often faced with stressful situations that can

evoke strong emotional responses. Those with high self-regulation can manage these emotions, prevent reactive behaviors, and respond thoughtfully rather than impulsively. This ability helps leaders to maintain a calm and authoritative demeanor, which inspires confidence in their teams. As Goleman (1998) pointed out, emotional intelligence, including self-regulation, is critical to leadership because it helps leaders avoid emotional hijacking situations where emotions overwhelm rational thinking.

According to Boyatzis and McKee (2015), Leaders with strong self-regulatory abilities tend to take a more measured approach to decision-making, avoiding impulsive decisions that might be driven by temporary emotions. This discipline ensures that their decisions are aligned with organizational goals and values rather than personal whims or emotional reactions. Research has shown that leaders who can regulate their emotions are more likely to make ethical and balanced decisions, which leads to better organizational outcomes.

Self-regulation also enhances a leader's adaptability because it allows them to remain flexible and open-minded in the face of new information or evolving circumstances. Leaders who can self-regulate are less likely to become entrenched in a particular mindset and are better able to respond to feedback and change course when necessary. This adaptability according to George (2013) is essential in leadership, as rigid or reactive leaders can struggle to lead effectively in dynamic environments. It also contributes to a leader's ability to build trust and influence others. When leaders manage their emotions and behaviors effectively, they create a sense of stability and fairness, which is crucial for fostering trust within their teams. Followers are more likely to trust and be influenced by leaders who demonstrate self-discipline, as they are perceived to be more reliable and consistent. Trust, in turn, enhances leadership performance by improving communication, collaboration, and team morale (Dirks & Ferrin, 2012).

Examples of self-regulation include being able to handle intense emotions like frustration, disappointment, or embarrassment; being able to calm down after something exciting has happened; refocusing attention after finishing one task and starting another; controlling impulses; behaving appropriately and getting along with other people.

The important of self-regulation is that it helps people to handle stress and conflict while strengthening relationships and overall well-being. Self-regulation helps us control those impulses and act in more appropriate ways. And being able to calm back down has physical effects, like slowing a pounding heart.

If a person is upset, sad, angry, or excited, self-regulation helps them calm down, regulate their feelings, and then behave in acceptable and productive ways. It also helps control emotions so that they are not overwhelming.

Self-regulation is necessary in order to learn and perform, in school or on the job. It helps people sit still at a desk, listen to what needs to be done, and refocus after completing a task. Socially, self-regulation allows people to behave in socially acceptable ways and build relationships by not letting strong emotions or impulses dictate their behavior.

Self-regulation act in accordance with values, calm people when upset, cheer them when feeling down, maintain open communication, persist through difficult times, put forth their best effort, remain flexible and adapting to situations, see the good in others, stay clear about their intentions, take control of situations when necessary and View challenges as opportunities.

Cundic (2018) identified some of the ways to improve self-regulation:

- Leading and living with integrity: being a good role model, practicing what you preach, creating trusting environments, and living in alignment with your values;

- Being open to change: challenging yourself to deal with change in a straightforward and positive manner and working to improve your ability to adapt to different situations while staying positive;
- Identifying your triggers: cultivating a sense of self-awareness that will help you learn what your strengths and weaknesses are and what can trigger you into a difficult state of mind;
- Practicing self-discipline: committing to taking initiative and staying persistent in working toward your goals, even when it's the last thing you feel like doing;
- Reframing negative thoughts: working on your ability to take a step back from your own thoughts and feelings, analyze them, and come up with positive alternative thoughts;
- Keeping calm under pressure: keeping your cool by removing yourself from the situation for the short-term whether mentally or physically and using relaxation techniques like deep breathing;
- Considering the consequences: stopping and thinking about the consequences of giving in to "bad" behavior (e.g., what happened in the past, what is likely to happen now, what this behavior could trigger in terms of longer-term consequences);
- Believing in yourself: boosting your self-efficacy by working on your self-confidence, focusing on the experiences in your life when you succeeded and keeping your mistakes in perspective. Choose to believe in your own abilities and surround yourself with positive, supportive people.

Self-Motivation and Leadership Performance in Public Senior Secondary Schools

People who are emotionally intelligent are motivated by things beyond external rewards like fame, money, recognition, and acclaim. Instead, they have a passion to fulfill their own inner needs and goals. People with this emotional intelligence skill seek internal rewards, also known as intrinsic motivation. They experience flow from being totally in tune with an activity and pursue peak experiences.

Those who are competent in motivation tend to be action-oriented. They set goals, have a high need for achievement, and are always looking for ways to do better. They also tend to be very committed and are good at taking initiative. Motivation is about one's drive to improve and achieve setting high standards for oneself and working consistently towards one's goals. Motivation is also about optimism and resilience, and finding the positive in a situation, even or especially those that do not go well.

Self-motivation is the force that keeps pushing an individual to go on, it is the internal drive to achieve, produce, develop, and keep moving forward. Self-motivation includes the personal drive to improve and achieve commitment to their goals, initiative, or readiness to act on opportunities, and optimism and resilience. Self-motivation and personal time management are key skills in this area. Self-motivation is the internal drive that leads an individual to take action towards a goal. It keeps the person moving forward, even when it is not convenient.

Self-motivation is the ability to find enthusiasm, interest, and passion for a particular task, using them as the driving force to complete it. Self-motivation is an intrinsic factor that propels leaders to pursue and achieve goals with vigor. According to Locke and Latham's Goal-Setting Theory, individuals who are highly self-motivated are more likely to set challenging and specific goals, which leads to higher performance (Locke & Latham, 2002). In leadership contexts, self-motivated leaders are not only focused on their personal achievements but also

extend this goal-oriented mindset to the organization. They inspire their teams to align with strategic objectives and maintain consistent performance. This goal-oriented approach is critical for leadership performance, as it ensures a clear vision and a roadmap for success.

One of the hallmarks of leadership is the ability to navigate complex challenges and setbacks. Hence, Self-motivated leaders are typically more resilient and persistent, as they derive their energy from internal sources rather than external validation. According to Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory, individuals who believe in their capabilities are more likely to persevere in the face of adversity (Bandura, 1997). Leaders with high self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation are better equipped to handle difficult situations, maintaining their performance and decision-making under pressure. This resilience, fueled by self-motivation, directly enhances leadership performance by ensuring that leaders remain focused and proactive even in challenging times.

A self-motivated leader not only drives personal performance but also positively impacts the motivation and engagement of their team members. According to Kouzes and Posner's Leadership Challenge Model, exemplary leaders inspire others by being passionate, committed, and optimistic (Kouzes & Posner, 2017). When a leader is self-motivated, this enthusiasm and drive tend to be contagious, fostering a work environment where team members feel motivated to perform at their best. Leadership performance, in this sense, is enhanced not only through the leader's actions but also through their ability to inspire and elevate the performance of others. Self-motivated leaders often serve as role models within organizations, demonstrating commitment, discipline, and a strong work ethic. This form of behavioral integrity, where actions are aligned with values and goals, is essential for leadership effectiveness. Research suggests that leaders who exhibit consistency between their words and actions are more likely to gain the trust and respect of their followers, which, in turn, improves overall leadership performance (Simons, 2014). When self-motivation is shown, leaders inspire others to adopt similar traits, creating a culture of self-driven excellence within the organization.

Bass and Riggio (2006) stated that self-motivation is also closely linked to a leader's desire for continuous self-improvement and adaptability. The concept of 'transformational leadership' posits that leaders who are self-motivated to develop their skills and knowledge are better equipped to adapt to changes and guide their teams through transitions. Self-motivated leaders are more likely to seek out opportunities for learning, whether through formal education or personal experiences, which enhances their leadership capabilities. This adaptability and willingness to evolve directly contribute to improved leadership performance, particularly in dynamic environments.

Therefore, self-motivation is a critical determinant of leadership performance. It fosters goal orientation, resilience, team motivation, role modeling, and continuous self-improvement, all of which are essential components of effective leadership. When individuals possess high self-motivation, they have the inner resilience to persist in the face of adversity, a quality that is crucial in achieving personal and professional goals (Mayer et al., 2016). This intrinsic motivation propels individuals towards achievement and productivity, fostering a proactive approach to challenges. A person's passion for achieving goals is driven by an intrinsic desire to excel. Self-motivated individuals are often characterized by a high need for achievement and are committed to doing well (Boyatzis, 2019). They constantly set and pursue goals that stretch their abilities, which can lead to greater self-fulfilment and a sense of accomplishment.

According to Baumeister (2013), self-motivation requires a dedication to personal values and goals, especially when faced with obstacles. Self-motivated individuals stay aligned with their objectives, reinforcing their determination to succeed even when the journey becomes

challenging. Also, Optimism in self-motivated individuals helps them to remain hopeful and persist through setbacks, thereby enhancing resilience (Peterson, 2020). Optimistic individuals are more likely to maintain positive mind-sets, which can significantly influence their motivation levels.

Research supports that self-motivation in EI is strongly linked to personal and professional success. Studies have shown that individuals who are intrinsically motivated tend to achieve higher job satisfaction, lower stress levels, and improved mental health (Luthans, 2020). More so, Cherniss (2020) said that this component of EI enables individuals to work with minimal supervision, take ownership of their tasks, and manage setbacks effectively. For instance, self-motivated individuals tend to approach tasks with a solution-focused mind-set, promoting a culture of resilience and adaptability in the workplace.

Leadership

According to Northouse (2018), Leadership is the process of influencing, guiding, and directing individuals or groups toward achieving a common goal. It involves the ability to inspire and motivate people, as well as the capacity to make decisions and take responsibility for the outcomes. Effective leadership requires various skills, including communication, emotional intelligence, problem-solving, and adaptability, enabling leaders to navigate challenges and drive their teams toward success. Leadership can take different forms, such as transformational leadership, which focuses on inspiring change, or transactional leadership, which emphasizes structured rewards and penalties (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Additionally, leadership plays a crucial role in shaping organizational culture, fostering collaboration, and ensuring the alignment of team efforts with strategic objectives.

Ololube (2024) defined leadership as the action or an act of guidance of leading a group of people or an organisation. Leaders in varying backgrounds possess certain essential characteristics. Leaders ought to have the option to set up contact with their equivalents, manage their subordinates and guide them, intervene in clashes, resolve issues by weighing different other options, apportion scant assets appropriately and face challenges and activities. Leadership is a powerful social cycle that includes collaborations among pioneers, individuals and outside electorates. Great pioneers are made, not conceived. Leadership is a practical skill and a research area that helps individuals to influence or lead teams, organisations, or individuals. Great leaders are created through an endless cycle of self-study, training, preparing and experience. Great leaders are persistently working and concentrating on improving their administration aptitudes; they are not settling for the status quo. Authority is a cycle by which an individual impacts others to achieve a target and coordinates the association such that it makes it more durable and cognizant. Leaders complete this cycle by applying their administration ascribes, for example, – convictions, values, morals, character, information and abilities.

Importance of Leadership

- **Leaders Provide Task Support:** Leaders uphold the supporters by gathering the authoritative assets and helping them achieve their undertakings as per principles of execution.

- Building the Team Spirit: No individual can work alone. Leaders create cooperation among supporters to work, aggregate and arrange their exercises with authoritative exercises and objectives a leader functions as chief of the group.
- Motivation: Leaders spur the workers to take up occupations that they, in any case, may not be eager to work out.
- Provides Feedback: At the point when individuals run after very much characterised targets, they need a steady input of their presentation, which helps in accomplishing their objectives adequately. Leaders give them this criticism.
- Introducing Change: Successful leaders can persuade individuals about the need and advantages of authoritative change. The change cycle can, consequently, be easily completed. Maintain Discipline: Leadership is an incredible impact that upholds discipline in the association beyond what formal principles and guidelines can. Individuals will be submitted and faithful to rules and guidelines if their chiefs believe in them.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive correlational survey research design. The target population comprised all principals of public senior secondary schools in Bayelsa State. At the time of the study, there were 222 principals across the state's educational zones: Brass (12), Ekeremor (27), Kolokuma/Opokuma (13), Nembe (16), Ogbia (34), Sagbama (28), Southern Ijaw Zone I (27), Southern Ijaw Zone II (21), and Yenagoa (44). A detailed breakdown is presented in the corresponding table (not shown here). The sample consisted of 149 principals, representing 67% of the total population.

Data were collected using a self-developed questionnaire titled Emotional Intelligence in Leadership Performance Questionnaire (EMLPQ). The instrument comprised two sections:

- Section A gathered demographic data.
- Section B included 24 items, structured to address the research questions and test the null hypotheses.

A modified 4-point Likert scale was used with the following response options: Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1).

The questionnaire was validated by three experts from the Department of Educational Management. They assessed the instrument's content and face validity in line with the study's objectives, research questions, and hypotheses. Feedback from the reviewers was incorporated to improve item clarity and alignment, resulting in the final version of the instrument used for data collection.

The reliability of the instrument was tested using the test-retest method. Twenty copies were administered to 20 principals not included in the main study. The responses were analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded reliability coefficients of .969 and .884, which confirms a high level of internal consistency and reliability of the instrument.

The researcher, assisted by two trained research assistants, administered all 149 questionnaires to the selected principals. Efforts were made to retrieve completed questionnaires immediately after administration to ensure a high return rate and completeness of responses.

Data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were used to answer the research questions. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was employed to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 significance level using SPSS version 29. The benchmark for interpreting the Likert scale responses was calculated as: $(4 + 3 + 2 + 1 = 10) \div 4 = 2.50$. Thus, any mean score of 2.50 or above indicated agreement, while a score below 2.50 signified disagreement.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Answer to Research Questions

Research Question 1: How does emotional intelligence in terms of self-awareness enhance leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Bayelsa State?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation analysis on how self-awareness enhance leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Bayelsa State

S/N	Items	Mean	SD.	Remark
1	Self-awareness gives the leader the power to influence outcome for enhanced leadership performance.	3.4228	1.09162	Agree
2	Self-awareness makes the leader to be free from self-assumptions and biases for enhanced leadership performance.	3.1074	1.13388	Agree
3	It also helps the leader to become better decision-maker for enhanced leadership performance.	3.0403	1.24596	Agree
4	It gives the leader more self-confidence, which helps him to communicate with clarity and intention for enhanced leadership performance.	3.1074	.93823	Agree
5	Self-awareness also allows the leader to understand things from multiple perspectives for enhanced leadership performance.	2.6846	1.24166	Agree
6	Self-awareness also helps the leader to build better relationships with others (followers) for enhanced leadership performance.	2.9262	1.01405	Agree
7	It gives the leader a <u>greater ability to regulate his/her emotions</u> for enhanced leadership performance.	3.0537	1.11371	Agree
8	Self-awareness also decreases stress on the leader and makes him happier for enhanced leadership performance.	2.8926	1.19764	Agree
Grand mean and SD.		3.0293	1.12209	Agree

The analysis in Table 1 presented the findings on how self-awareness enhances leadership performance among leaders in public senior secondary schools in Bayelsa State. The results indicate an overall positive impact of self-awareness, as shown by the grand mean score of 3.0293 and a standard deviation of 1.12209, suggesting general agreement among respondents on the influence of self-awareness on leadership performance.

On influencing outcomes, leaders agreed that self-awareness equips them with the power to influence outcomes effectively, with a mean score of 3.4228 and a standard deviation of 1.09162. This suggests a strong consensus on this aspect. Data on freedom from bias revealed that respondents agreed that self-awareness helps leaders avoid self-assumptions and biases,

reflected by a mean of 3.1074 and standard deviation of 1.13388. For better decision-making, a mean score of 3.0403 and a higher standard deviation of 1.24596 indicate agreement, though with slightly more varied views, on the role of self-awareness in enhancing decision-making. The data for improved communication indicated that self-awareness was linked to increased self-confidence, aiding leaders in communicating with clarity and intention. This dimension scored a mean of 3.1074 with a relatively low standard deviation of 0.93823, indicating more consistent responses.

Likewise, information for multiple perspectives showed that leaders acknowledged that self-awareness helps them understand multiple perspectives, though this had the lowest mean score of 2.6846 and a standard deviation of 1.24166, showing agreement with more variability. Results for better relationships depicts that self-awareness was seen as a factor in fostering better relationships with followers, as indicated by a mean of 2.9262 and a standard deviation of 1.01405. Emotional regulation provided that leaders agreed that self-awareness enhances their ability to regulate emotions, scoring a mean of 3.0537 and a standard deviation of 1.11371. Reduced stress and increased happiness revealed that respondents agreed that self-awareness decreases stress and promotes happiness, with a mean of 2.8926 and a standard deviation of 1.19764.

The findings affirm that self-awareness positively contributes to various dimensions of leadership performance, including influencing outcomes, reducing biases, improving decision-making, communication, and emotional regulation, as well as fostering relationships. The grand mean further supports the conclusion that self-awareness is a critical factor in enhancing leadership effectiveness in educational institutions. However, variability in responses (indicated by standard deviations) suggests differing levels of emphasis on specific aspects of self-awareness among respondents.

Research Question 2: How does emotional intelligence in terms of self-regulation enhance leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Bayelsa State?

The analysis in Table 2 explored how self-regulation enhances leadership performance among leaders in public senior secondary schools in Bayelsa State. The results reveal a general consensus that self-regulation positively influences leadership effectiveness, as reflected in the grand mean score of 2.7139 and a standard deviation of 1.26073. This indicates an overall agreement with moderate variability in responses across the different aspects of self-regulation.

Information on handling intense emotions revealed that school leaders agreed that self-regulation helps them manage emotions like frustration, disappointment, or embarrassment. This dimension scored a mean of 3.0403 with a standard deviation of 1.11428, indicating a relatively strong and consistent agreement. On the impulse control showed that respondents agreed that self-regulation aids in controlling impulses, this aspect had the lowest mean score of 2.3221 and the highest standard deviation of 1.36693, suggesting significant variability in perceptions. That of appropriate behavior and interpersonal relations indicates that self-regulation was associated with behaving appropriately and fostering better interpersonal relationships, with a mean score of 2.8792 and a standard deviation of 1.24614, reflecting general agreement with moderate variability. Results for task refocusing stated that school leaders agreed that self-regulation enables them to refocus attention when transitioning between tasks, with a mean of 2.6644 and a standard deviation of 1.29245.

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation analysis on how self-regulation enhance leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Bayelsa State

S/N	Items	Mean	SD.	Remark
9	Self- regulation enables the leader to handle intense emotions like frustration, disappointment, or embarrassment for enhanced leadership performance.	3.0403	1.11428	Agree
10	Self-regulation also enables the leader to control his impulses for enhanced leadership performance.	2.3221	1.36693	Agree
11	It also enables the leader to behave appropriately and get along with other people for enhanced leadership performance.	2.8792	1.24614	Agree
12	Self-regulation also enables the leader to refocus attention after finishing one task and starting another for enhanced leadership performance.	2.6644	1.29245	Agree
13	It also helps the leader to handle stress and conflict while strengthening relationships and overall well-being for enhanced leadership performance.	2.9128	1.24082	Agree
14	Self-regulation enables the leader to regulate his feelings and help him behave in acceptable and productive ways for enhanced leadership performance.	2.6309	1.26997	Agree
15	It also helps the leader to control his emotions so that they are not overwhelming for enhanced leadership performance.	2.6040	1.28304	Agree
16	Self-awareness also helps the leader to Maintain open communication with others (followers) for enhanced leadership performance.	2.6577	1.27222	Agree
Grand mean and SD.		2.7139	1.26073	Agree

That for stress and conflict management revealed that respondents acknowledged that self-regulation helps leaders handle stress and conflict while strengthening relationships and well-being, scoring a mean of 2.9128 and a standard deviation of 1.24082. For regulating feelings, the information posited that school leaders agreed that self-regulation aids in managing feelings to behave productively, with a mean of 2.6309 and a standard deviation of 1.26997. Equally, the data for emotional control revealed that self-regulation was viewed as helpful in preventing emotions from becoming overwhelming, with a mean score of 2.6040 and a standard deviation of 1.28304. On maintaining open communication, the results exposed that school leaders agreed that self-regulation supports open communication with followers, with a mean of 2.6577 and a standard deviation of 1.27222.

The findings indicate that self-regulation plays a vital role in enhancing leadership performance by enabling leaders to manage emotions, control impulses, handle stress, and foster effective interpersonal communication. However, the variability in responses (as reflected by the standard deviations) suggests differing perceptions regarding the extent to which self-regulation influences specific leadership aspects. The grand mean reinforces the idea that self-regulation is generally acknowledged as a critical component of effective leadership.

Research Question 3: How does emotional intelligence in terms of self-motivation enhance leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Bayelsa State?

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation analysis on how self-motivation enhance leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Bayelsa State

S/N	Items	Mean	SD.	Remark
17	Self-motivation enables the leader to find enthusiasm, interest, and passion for a particular task, using them as the driving force to complete it for enhanced leadership performance.	2.8456	1.21213	Agree
18	Self-motivation also help the leader to develop the drive and determination to complete various tasks and goals throughout the day for enhanced leadership performance.	2.6711	1.31233	Agree
19	It also helps increase the leader to be productivity and makes him feel proud of the goals he has accomplished for enhanced leadership performance.	3.0671	1.30314	Agree
20	Self-motivation enables the leader to drive to achieve something that can lead to self-betterment, strong and trusting relationships with different people for enhanced leadership performance.	2.7852	1.27111	Agree
21	It allows the leader to perceive things in a more positive light for enhanced leadership performance.	2.6980	1.34418	Agree
22	self-motivated leaders tend to be more organized and confident in carrying out their obligations for enhanced leadership performance.	2.7047	1.18836	Agree
23	Self-motivation helps remove leader's inhibitions and allows him to gain the necessary momentum to start a task for enhanced leadership performance.	2.9195	1.14795	Agree
24	It also helps the leader to maintain an optimistic and positive outlook towards life, both professionally and personally for enhanced leadership performance.	2.6846	1.15716	Agree
Grand mean and SD.		2.7969	1.24204	Agree

The analysis in Table 3 highlighted the role of self-motivation in enhancing leadership performance among leaders in public senior secondary schools in Bayelsa State. The grand mean of 2.7969 and a standard deviation of 1.24204 indicate overall agreement that self-motivation positively contributes to leadership effectiveness, with moderate variability in the responses across various dimensions.

Data for enthusiasm and passion indicates that respondents agreed that self-motivation enables leaders to find enthusiasm, interest, and passion for tasks, using these as driving forces to complete them. This aspect scored a mean of 2.8456 and a standard deviation of 1.21213, reflecting general agreement with moderate consistency. On drive and determination, the data revealed that self-motivation was linked to developing the drive and determination to accomplish daily tasks and goals, with a mean of 2.6711 and a higher standard deviation of 1.31233, indicating agreement but with notable variability in perceptions. Increased productivity further showed that school leaders acknowledged that self-motivation helps boost productivity and instills pride in accomplished goals. This dimension had a higher mean score of 3.0671 and a standard deviation of 1.30314, suggesting stronger agreement but also some variability. For self-betterment and relationships, the respondents agreed that self-motivation drives self-betterment and fosters strong, trusting relationships, scoring a mean of 2.7852 with a standard deviation of 1.27111.

Results for positive perspective exposed the view that self-motivation enable leader's to perceive situations more positively, with a mean score of 2.6980 and a standard deviation of 1.34418, showing agreement but with varied views. On organization and confidence, the

information holds that self-motivated leaders were described as more organized and confident in fulfilling their obligations, with a mean score of 2.7047 and a relatively lower standard deviation of 1.18836, indicating consistent agreement. For overcoming inhibitions, the data revealed that school leaders agreed that self-motivation helps remove inhibitions and provides momentum to start tasks, reflected by a mean of 2.9195 and a standard deviation of 1.14795., and data for optimism and positivity showed that self-motivation was also noted to help leaders maintain an optimistic outlook both professionally and personally, with a mean score of 2.6846 and a standard deviation of 1.15716.

The findings affirm that self-motivation is a critical component of effective leadership, enabling leaders to remain enthusiastic, productive, and goal-oriented while fostering positive relationships and maintaining an optimistic outlook. The grand mean reflects a general consensus on the positive influence of self-motivation, while the standard deviations highlight some variation in perceptions regarding specific aspects of self-motivation's impact on leadership performance.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence in terms of self-awareness and leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Bayelsa State.

Table 6: PPMC analysis on whether significant relationship exist between emotional intelligence in terms of self-awareness and leadership performance

		Self-awareness	Leadership performance
Self-awareness	Pearson Correlation	1	.815**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	149	149
Leadership performance	Pearson Correlation	.815**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	149	149

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis (Table 6) investigated whether a significant relationship exists between self-awareness (a component of emotional intelligence) and leadership performance among leaders in public senior secondary schools in Bayelsa State.

The Pearson correlation coefficient between self-awareness and leadership performance is .815, which indicates a very strong positive relationship. This suggests that higher levels of self-awareness are strongly associated with better leadership performance. The p-value (Sig. 2-tailed) for the correlation is .000, which is less than the 0.01 significance threshold. This confirms that the relationship is statistically significant, meaning it is highly unlikely that the observed correlation occurred by chance. The analysis is based on a sample size of 149, which is sufficient to provide robust results and minimize potential bias in the findings.

The results demonstrated that self-awareness significantly and positively influences leadership performance. Leaders with higher self-awareness are more likely to perform effectively in their roles. This finding stresses the importance of self-awareness as a critical component of emotional intelligence for enhancing leadership outcomes. The strong and statistically significant correlation highlights the need for leadership development programs to

focus on cultivating self-awareness to improve leadership performance in educational institutions.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence in terms of self-regulation and leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Bayelsa State.

Table 7: PPMC analysis on whether significant relationship exist between emotional intelligence in terms of self-regulation and leadership performance

		Self-regulation	Leadership performance
Self-regulation	Pearson Correlation	1	.782**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	149	149
Leadership performance	Pearson Correlation	.782**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	149	149

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis (Table 7) examined the relationship between self-regulation (a component of emotional intelligence) and leadership performance among leaders in public senior secondary schools in Bayelsa State.

The Pearson correlation coefficient between self-regulation and leadership performance is .782, indicating a strong positive relationship. This suggests that as self-regulation improves, leadership performance tends to increase significantly. The p-value (Sig. 2-tailed) for the correlation is .000, which is less than the .01 significance threshold. This confirms that the observed relationship is statistically significant and unlikely to be due to random chance. The analysis is based on a sample size of 149, providing reliable results and ensuring the validity of the findings.

The results reveal a significant relationship between self-regulation and leadership performance. Leaders who exhibit higher levels of self-regulation are better equipped to manage their emotions, impulses, and actions, which contributes to improved leadership effectiveness. This finding highlights the importance of fostering self-regulation as a critical aspect of emotional intelligence in leadership development programs. It highlights the role of self-regulation in enabling leaders to handle challenges, maintain composure, and enhance their performance within educational institutions.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence in terms of self-motivation and leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Bayelsa State.

Table 8: PPMC analysis on whether significant relationship exist between emotional intelligence in terms of self-motivation and leadership performance

		Self-motivation	Leadership performance
Self-motivation	Pearson Correlation	1	.647**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	149	149
Leadership performance	Pearson Correlation	.647**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	149	149

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis (Table 8) explored the relationship between self-motivation (a component of emotional intelligence) and leadership performance among leaders in public senior secondary schools in Bayelsa State.

The Pearson correlation coefficient between self-motivation and leadership performance is .647, indicating a moderately strong positive relationship. This implies that as self-motivation increases, leadership performance tends to improve as well. The p-value (Sig. 2-tailed) for the correlation is .000, which is below the .01 significance threshold. This confirms that the observed relationship is statistically significant and not due to random chance. The analysis includes a sample size of 149, ensuring reliability and robustness of the results.

The findings indicated a significant and moderately strong positive relationship between self-motivation and leadership performance. Leaders with higher levels of self-motivation are more likely to exhibit enthusiasm, drive, and determination, which enhance their ability to perform effectively in leadership roles. This emphasizes the importance of self-motivation as a vital component of emotional intelligence that contributes to leadership success. These results suggest that leadership development initiatives should incorporate strategies to foster self-motivation to improve leadership outcomes in educational institutions.

DISCUSSION

Self-Awareness and Leadership Performance in Public Senior Secondary Schools

The mean, standard deviation and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis investigated whether a significant relationship exists between self-awareness (a component of emotional intelligence) and leadership performance among leaders in public senior secondary schools in Bayelsa State. The results demonstrated that self-awareness significantly and positively influences leadership performance. Leaders with higher self-awareness are more likely to perform effectively in their roles.

These results are in line with the study of Goleman (2001) who noted that self-awareness is often considered the foundational component of emotional intelligence, which encompasses the ability to perceive and regulate one's emotions and understand the emotions of others. Emotionally intelligent leaders who are self-aware can manage their reactions to stressful situations, making them more resilient and approachable. Research indicates that emotionally intelligent leaders who demonstrate a high degree of self-awareness tend to perform better in leadership roles because they can foster better relationships with their teams and encourage a collaborative, empathetic work environment (Goleman, 2001).

Cherniss and Goleman (c.f., 2021) opined that leaders with high self-awareness can also recognize how their emotions influence their actions and those of their teams, allowing them to mitigate negative emotional responses and enhance positive ones. This capacity to manage emotional states leads to better decision-making and conflict resolution, which are critical aspects of leadership performance.

Furthermore, such leaders according to Eurich (2017) are better equipped to make sound, objective decisions. Being self-aware means understanding one's biases, limitations, and tendencies, which can help in avoiding emotional decision-making or the overvaluation of one's personal preferences. Self-aware leaders can critically evaluate situations, seek feedback from

others, and make decisions that are aligned with the organization's goals rather than being driven by personal impulses.

Also, Sadler-Smith (c.f., 2008) asserted that self-awareness enables leaders to reflect on past decisions and learn from mistakes, fostering continuous growth and improved judgment over time. This reflective practice enhances leadership effectiveness, particularly in complex environments where strategic decision-making is essential.

Similarly, Clawson (c.f., 2021) stated that effective communication is a hallmark of successful leadership, and self-awareness plays a pivotal role in this domain. Leaders who are self-aware understand how their communication style and tone affect others, allowing them to tailor their interactions to the needs of their audience. A leader who understands their own emotions and the impact of their words is more likely to communicate in a clear, respectful, and motivational manner. According to George (c.f., 2013), self-aware leaders are more open to receiving feedback from their teams. They recognize their own fallibility and are willing to listen to constructive criticism, which fosters an atmosphere of trust and transparency. This open communication, in turn, enhances team cohesion and increases overall performance.

Self-Regulation and Leadership Performance in Public Senior Secondary Schools

The mean, standard deviation and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis examined the relationship between self-regulation (a component of emotional intelligence) and leadership performance among leaders in public senior secondary schools in Bayelsa State. The results reveal a significant relationship between self-regulation and leadership performance. Leaders who exhibit higher levels of self-regulation are better equipped to manage their emotions, impulses, and actions, which contributes to improved leadership effectiveness.

These results are in line with the study of Jacobs et al. (c.f., 2018) who emphasized that self-regulation is another key component of emotional intelligence and plays a significant role in leadership performance. The ability to regulate one's emotions, even under stress, and to keep one's spirits up in the face of adversity is what is known as self-regulation. Those who struggle to self-regulate are more likely to act on impulse and respond emotionally rather than rationally. In most cases, a response is automatic. However, the ability to go smoothly from reaction to response increases with emotional intelligence.

Self-regulation is the ability to control one's behavior, emotions, and thoughts in the pursuit of long-term goals. More specifically, emotional self-regulation refers to the ability to manage disruptive emotions and impulses, in other words, to think before acting. More so, Self-regulation involves being aware of your behavior and how it can help you to reach your goals. One of the most direct links between self-regulation and leadership performance is the ability to manage emotions effectively. Leaders are often faced with stressful situations that can evoke strong emotional responses. Those with high self-regulation can manage these emotions, prevent reactive behaviors, and respond thoughtfully rather than impulsively.

This ability helps leaders to maintain a calm and authoritative demeanor, which inspires confidence in their teams. As Goleman (c.f., 1998) pointed out, emotional intelligence, including self-regulation, is critical to leadership because it helps leaders avoid emotional hijacking situations, where emotions overwhelm rational thinking.

In line with this study's findings, Boyatzis and McKee (c.f., 2015), found that leaders with strong self-regulatory abilities tend to take a more measured approach to decision-making, avoiding impulsive decisions that might be driven by temporary emotions. This discipline

ensures that their decisions are aligned with organizational goals and values rather than personal whims or emotional reactions. Research has shown that leaders who can regulate their emotions are more likely to make ethical and balanced decisions, which leads to better organizational outcomes.

Self-regulation also enhances a leader's adaptability because it allows them to remain flexible and open-minded in the face of new information or evolving circumstances. Leaders who can self-regulate are less likely to become entrenched in a particular mindset and are better able to respond to feedback and change course when necessary. This adaptability according to George (c.f., 2013) is essential in leadership, as rigid or reactive leaders can struggle to lead effectively in dynamic environments. It also contributes to a leader's ability to build trust and influence others. When leaders manage their emotions and behaviors effectively, they create a sense of stability and fairness, which is crucial for fostering trust within their teams. Followers are more likely to trust and be influenced by leaders who demonstrate self-discipline, as they are perceived to be more reliable and consistent. Trust, in turn, enhances leadership performance by improving communication, collaboration, and team morale (Dirks & Ferrin, 2012).

Self-Motivation and Leadership Performance in Public Senior Secondary Schools

The mean, standard deviation and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis explored the relationship between self-motivation (a component of emotional intelligence) and leadership performance among leaders in public senior secondary schools in Bayelsa State. The findings indicated a significant and moderately strong positive relationship between self-motivation and leadership performance. Leaders with higher levels of self-motivation are more likely to exhibit enthusiasm, drive, and determination, which enhance their ability to perform effectively in leadership roles.

These results are in line with the study of Ololube (2024) observed that people who are emotionally intelligent are motivated by things beyond external rewards like fame, money, recognition, and acclaim. Instead, they have a passion to fulfill their own inner needs and goals. Those who are competent in motivation tend to be action-oriented. They set goals, have a high need for achievement, and are always looking for ways to do better. They also tend to be very committed and are good at taking initiative. Motivation is about one's drive to improve and achieve setting high standards for oneself and working consistently towards one's goals. Motivation is also about optimism and resilience, and finding the positive in a situation, even or especially those that did not go well.

Self-motivation is the force that keeps pushing an individual to go on, it is the internal drive to achieve, produce, develop, and keep moving forward. Self-motivation includes the personal drive to improve and achieve, commitment to their goals, initiative, or readiness to act on opportunities, and optimism and resilience. Self-motivation and personal time management are key skills in this area. Self-motivation is the internal drive that leads an individual to take action towards a goal. It keeps the person moving forward, even when it is not convenient.

Ololube (2024) further noted that self-motivation is the ability to find enthusiasm, interest, and passion for a particular task, using them as the driving force to complete it. Self-motivation is an intrinsic factor that propels leaders to pursue and achieve goals with vigor. According to Locke and Latham's Goal-Setting Theory, individuals who are highly self-motivated are more likely to set challenging and specific goals, which leads to higher performance.

One of the hallmarks of leadership is the ability to navigate complex challenges and setbacks. Hence, Self-motivated leaders are typically more resilient and persistent, as they derive their energy from internal sources rather than external validation. According to Bandura's (1997) study, self-efficacy Theory, individuals who believe in their capabilities are more likely to persevere in the face of adversity. Leaders with high self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation are better equipped to handle difficult situations, maintaining their performance and decision-making under pressure. This resilience, fueled by self-motivation, directly enhances leadership performance by ensuring that leaders remain focused and proactive even in challenging times.

A self-motivated leader not only drives personal performance but also positively impacts the motivation and engagement of their team members. According to Kouzes and Posner's Leadership Challenge Model, exemplary leaders inspire others by being passionate, committed, and optimistic (Kouzes & Posner, 2017). When a leader is self-motivated, this enthusiasm and drive tend to be contagious, fostering a work environment where team members feel motivated to perform at their best. Leadership performance, in this sense, is enhanced not only through the leader's actions but also through their ability to inspire and elevate the performance of others.

Additionally, Simons (2014) observed that self-motivated leaders often serve as role models within organizations, demonstrating commitment, discipline, and a strong work ethic. This form of behavioral integrity, where actions are aligned with values and goals, is essential for leadership effectiveness. Simons (2014) research suggested that leaders who exhibit consistency between their words and actions are more likely to gain the trust and respect of their followers, which, in turn, improves overall leadership performance. Exemplifying self-motivation, leaders inspire others to adopt similar traits, creating a culture of self-driven excellence within the organization.

CONCLUSION

The study investigated emotional intelligence (EI) is a cornerstone of effective leadership, particularly in the dynamic and challenging environment of public senior secondary schools in Bayelsa State. Leaders who exhibit high emotional intelligence possess the ability to understand, manage, and influence their own emotions and those of others. This skill set is vital for fostering positive relationships, resolving conflicts, and promoting a collaborative school culture. In Bayelsa State, where schools often face unique socio-economic challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, limited resources, and diverse student needs, emotionally intelligent leadership is essential for navigating these complexities and achieving institutional goals.

Through empathy, self-awareness, and effective communication, emotionally intelligent leaders can build trust with teachers, students, and the wider community. These qualities enable them to address the concerns of stakeholders, motivate staff, and create a conducive learning environment that supports academic excellence. For example, an emotionally intelligent principal in Bayelsa State can empathize with teachers struggling with overcrowded classrooms and work collaboratively to find innovative solutions, such as implementing peer mentoring programs or advocating for additional resources.

Moreover, EI enhances decision-making by enabling leaders to consider the emotional and practical implications of their actions. This holistic approach ensures that policies and practices are equitable and inclusive, fostering a sense of belonging and commitment among all stakeholders.

Finally, investing in the development of emotional intelligence among school leaders in Bayelsa State is crucial for improving leadership performance and driving sustainable progress in public senior secondary schools. Such leadership can inspire meaningful change, uplift educational outcomes, and transform schools into thriving centers of excellence.

Recommendations

The study's findings stimulate the following recommendations:

- The Ministry of Education should encourage emotional intelligence in terms of self-awareness to enhance leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Bayelsa State.
- The Ministry of Education should inspire emotional intelligence in terms of self-regulation to further enhance leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Bayelsa State.
- The Ministry of Education should motivate school leaders on emotional intelligence in terms of self-motivation to enhance leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Bayelsa State.

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