

Self-Awareness Competence as Correlate of Academic Heads' Administrative Behaviour in South-South Public Universities, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study correlated self-awareness competence and administrative behavior of academic administrators in public universities South-South geo-political zone in Nigeria. The research question and hypothesis proposed establish the significance of correlation between the independent and dependent variables. As a result, 13 public universities and 550 academic heads in six States, South-South Nigeria was grouped into clusters and seven universities and 350 respondents were sampled in Rivers, Bayelsa and Delta States. Two independent measurement scales titled Self-Awareness Questionnaire (SEAQ) and Administrative Behaviour Questionnaire (ABQ) computed with Cronbatch Alpha presented 0.75 and 0.78 reliability index. However, final analysis was based on 200 quantitative responses actively gathered and computed with Pearson product moment coefficient for relationship, and hypothesis was tested with z statistics at 0.05 significant level. Available empirical evidence from the study revealed r-value of 0.308 for self-awareness, which affirmed positive relationship between the understudied variables. Furthermore, the tested hypothesis showed z-rval 0.778 at df 199 greater than zrcrit 0.195 and the observed correlation between self-awareness competence and administrative behaviour was statistically significant. In conclusion, academic heads in public universities were encouraged to further enhance their self-awareness domain of emotional intelligence because their action and inaction have greater consequences to their role behaviour, institutional goals and organisational climate of universities.

Keyword

university organisation, collegiality, emotional intelligence, self-awareness, administrative behaviour

1. Introduction

Universities are bureaucratic institutions having defined organisational and managerial structures providing guidelines for its administration, positions, power, responsibility and membership. Its organisational structure and management is dominated by intellectuals pooled from different academic

lineage, profession and diverse cultural orientations who although hold divergent views but respect one another opinion in decision making. University organization consists of bounded set of subsystems and activities constantly interact and constitute a single social entity. These subsystems in university are essentially college, faculty and academic department, centre interrelated and contributing to one another in relatively stable state. Academic units create an environment for development, preservation and transmission of knowledge and research. Okeke (2011) believed that university organisation is a collegial association of academics who work together for their mutual benefits whose sources of power and authority within the collegial ideal are grossly dependent on the degree of expertise possessed and exercised by individuals and groups. Collegial governance model adopted in most cases in university promotes internal members participation in academic and general administration.

Trackman (2008) also supported this proposition that governance should be with those who have the greatest stake in the institution of higher learning and are best equipped to understand its academic mission. Participative management offers all academic members enabling environment to learn and acquire relevant managerial, administrative and leadership experiences in various academic faculties and university community. Collegial governance model enhances institutional efficiency, effectiveness and strengthens the overall quality of management decisions, improve staff morale and increase job satisfaction. As academic members in university community they are frequently preoccupied with the transactional leadership function of planning, organising, coordinating, and staffing. Thus, National Universities Commission (NUC, 1997, p. 65) referred to them as academic and administrative leaders and more than any other factor; the strength of a university lies in the leadership of faculties and department. Yelder and Codling (2004) considered academic leaders as those who tend to be highly competent and qualified senior academics that by virtue of their academic accomplishments advance to the role of managing and leading academic programmer. In this context, they are saddled with day-to-day management of personnel, resources and administrative activities; pursue the overall purposes of the university by maintaining excellence in teaching and research and community service. They assumed the leadership role in research, encourage members to achieve goals, inform others of progress and coach others to work better, give positive and critical feedback. However, it has been assumed that intellectuals assembled together are better managers and leaders at various academic units. Intelligence, therefore, determines individual member's level of participation at the top echelon of management in universities, career progression, success and personal fulfillment. This assertion is mere fallacy and inadequate in meeting the complexities and challenges of leadership in today universities. Hoy and Miskel (1991) to administer a social organization according to purely technical criteria of rationality is irrational, because it ignores the non-rational aspects of social conduct. Stenberg (2002) considers intelligence as ineffective predictor of leadership performance, Gardner (1983) limited in explanation of cognitive ability and its consequent performance outcomes, Bar-On (1996) inconsequential for determining success in life and career.

Emotional intelligence has continued to invoke increasing scientific awareness in study of

organisational leadership, employee outcomes, altruistic behaviour and job satisfaction. Salovey and Mayer (1990) conceived emotional intelligence as managing and regulating emotions, understanding and reasoning about emotion, assimilating basic emotional experiences, perceiving and appraising emotions. Thus, emotional intelligences enable leaders and academic administrators understand and assess people behaviours, attitudes and potentials and adopt an acceptable management practices in universities. Gardner (1983) classification of multiple intelligence into intrapersonal intelligence the capacity to understand oneself, to appreciate one's feelings, fears and motivations, interpersonal intelligence (the capacity to understand the intentions, motivations and desires of others) have several implications to academic administrator leadership behaviour in university administration. More importantly, self-awareness is responsible for significant shift in behaviour of leaders towards people and situations within the university community. Olowo (2011) observed that leaders high in self-awareness understand their emotions, drives, needs and how these elements affect their thoughts, behaviour and job performance. Boyatzis (1982) equally posits that accurate self-assessment is a hallmark for superior performance. It therefore provides those in formal position vital psychological insights for self-understanding and self-management. Academic administrators who are aware of their emotions and explore these non-rational elements are more likely to work with others and vigorously pursue their vision. Amos, Ristow and Ristow (2004) emotional intelligence enables leaders create a mutually agreed set of values to facilitate development of workers potential within the system.

Goleman (2001) such leaders are sensitive to workers feelings about the work environments, intervene when problems arise, understand political and social conventions that impact organisational performance and set up healthy work climate. Emotional intelligence therefore is non-cognitive intelligence which is emotional, personal, social ability and skills that influence an individual's ability to cope effectively with environmental demands and pressures (Bar-On, 2000). It has been presumed that deficiency in emotional intelligence is the reason why many leaders lack success and the springboard for crisis of interest. Although several scientific evidence seemed to validate and support the relationship between emotional intelligence and organisational leadership but none have empirically established its degree of influence in administrative behaviour in universities. On the other hand (Damasio, 1994; Goleman, 1996; Dulewicz & Higgs, 2000; Hayward, 2005) lamented with nostalgia the few researches conducted in the context of organisation and emotional intelligence with its corporate benefits. Hence the study is conceived to determine how self-awareness competence of emotional intelligence correlates with administrative behaviour in public universities.

1) Research Question

To what extent does self-awareness correlate with academic heads' administrative behavior in public universities?

2) Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between academic heads' self-awareness competence and their administrative behavior in public universities.

1.1 Self-Awareness Competence as Catalysts for Administrative Leadership Behaviour

The limitations and inadequacy of traits, personality and situational theories in explaining leadership characteristics in rapidly changing working environment has resulted to renewed interest in emotional intelligence. Critics of the traditional leadership behaviour advocated for a new style of leadership that can react to the increasingly sophisticated traditional models. Several studies have examined the consequential impacts of emotional intelligence on organizational success, employee productivity and job satisfaction. It is generally believed that emotional intelligence principles empowered those in higher managerial level in organization to understand and assess behaviour of people, attitudes, adopt appropriate management practices to prevailing situations. Emotional intelligence is a constellation of competencies that enables a leader to recognize his behaviour, moods, impulses and how to manage them best according to environmental demands. Goleman (1997, in Dulewicz Higgs, 2000) conceptualized emotional intelligence to encompass knowing your feelings and having ability to manage them, self-motivation—get job done, be creative and perform at your zenith and demonstrating high sense of empathy and handle relationship effectively. It is therefore the ability to understand oneself, manage oneself, and understand others and being able to manage them contributes to optimal social functioning in organisation and life.

Damasio (1994) noted that it enables them to understand the significance of emotional states regarding the person-environment relationship to guide one's attention, decision making and behavioural responses. Specifically, self-awareness component of emotional intelligence is considerably a major determinant of leader's mental and emotional lifestyle and stability. It therefore provides essential foundation that supports and strengthens other aspects of emotional intelligence. Goleman (1996) has advocated for the need to go beyond meta-cognition to explore the concept of meta-mood. By implication, the ability to be aware of one's mood, thoughts, the non-reactive, and non-judgment and attention significantly influence behavioural dispositions of a leader. As a result, they show high concern for feedback and learn from their mistakes, know where they need to improve and when to work with others who have complementary strengths. Intrapersonal, self-control and adaptability competencies have been found to be predictor of superior job performance. McClelland (1998) outlined achievement drive, developing others; adaptability, influence, self-confidence and leadership to be powerful competencies that distinguished top performer from average ones. Thus, self-awareness competence are essential indicators of leadership potential, how we relate, make decision and communicate with others in the workplace. These competences empowered academic administrators with capacity to improve teaching, research and learning experiences. Despite the complexity of administration and challenging work environment, highly emotional intelligent academic administrator develops capacity for needed changes, guide and direct instructional improvement. They integrate and incorporate their personal characteristics, academic development role, development strategies and institutional context to drive the fulfillment of institutional goals.

Taylor (2005) emphasized the importance of personal competencies in teaching, learning, academic

culture and process of facilitating the development of others alongside the ability to link theory with practice in academic environment. National Universities Commission (1997) articulated the responsibilities of academic administrators as analyze and maintain database of staff, students' enrolment and graduation statistics, staff-student work load, students' academic record, financial data and external linkages, professional teaching, engage in basic and applied research, represent and present reports at senate. These academic activities are demanding and time-consuming with adverse consequences on their productivity, teaching, research and career development. Amos et al. (2004) believed that superior levels of emotional intelligence enable leaders create mutually agreed set of values to facilitate the development of workers potential within the system. Therefore when emotions are properly managed it drives trust, loyalty and commitment, innovations and accomplishment of leaders. Cherniss (2000) believed that emotional intelligence competencies are critical factor for success in most jobs. The thoughts, feelings, and behaviour exhibited by those in formal positions at different times and situations have several consequences to the overall institutional goals.

2. Methodology

Correlation design adopted in this study explains the relationship and level of significance between self-awareness dimension of emotional intelligence and administrative leadership behaviour in public universities. In this context, the sample of Rivers, Bayelsa and Delta States, seven public universities and 350 academic administrators selected in South-South geo-political zone represents the population. The number of universities and academic heads were grouped into clusters because of the geographical expanse of South- South, Nigeria for the sample. Two independent measurement scales structured in five likert points assess the academic heads' self-awareness competence of emotional intelligence, the administrative leadership behaviour questionnaire in University of Uyo, Akwalbom State, Nigeria. Cronbatch Alpha computed determines the internal consistency of self-awareness and administrative leadership behavior Questionnaires administered to 50 raters having 0.75 and 0.78 reliability index. Quantitative data was organised and analysed with Pearson product moment coefficient and z statistics to establish the relationship and level of significance between self-awareness competence and administrative leadership behaviour in public universities.

3. Presentation of Results

Table 1. Correlation Results Indicating Extents of Relationship between Self-Awareness and Academic Heads Administrative Behaviour

Model	N	$\sum X^2$	$\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	r	ES
SEA	200	270.79	265.57	267.890.308	low	AB

SEA—Self-Awareness;

AB—Administrative behavior;

ES—effect size.

The calculated coefficient value 0.308 indicates positive interaction of the subsisting relationship between self-awareness and administrative behaviour at a low magnitude.

Table 2. Analysis of Correlational Significance between Self-Awareness Competence and Administrative Behaviour

Model	N	R	df	zrcal	zrcrit	remark	decision
200	0.308	199	0.778	0.195	sig	rejected	AB

The hypothesis tested at 0.05 level of significance presented zrcal 0.778 with df 199 greater than zrcrit 0.195 was rejected which shows significant relationship between Self-Awareness (SEA) of emotional intelligence and administrative leadership behaviour

4. Discussion of Findings

The empirical evidence validated and supported the relationship between self-awareness competence of emotional intelligence and administrative leadership behaviour of academic administrators in public universities. Contextually, effectiveness of leadership behaviour of academic administrators in universities appeared to be dependent significantly on self-awareness competence. This non-intellective competence organizes and regulates thoughts, behavior and action that influence role performance in the work environment. Specifically, emotionally intelligent head in the university community are essentially more concerned for team dynamism, committed to high standard in teaching and research, personnel management, departmental development and reputation. The relationship is in congruence with existing emotional intelligence theories, postulations and empirical findings. The scientific outcome was apparently supported by (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Goleman, 1998) who earlier established a positive relationship between leadership, employee performance and emotional intelligence dimensions. It has been observed that self-awareness competences empowered those in managerial positions to understand their strength, motivation, values, goals and conscientious of what they do. Therefore, the ability to be aware, understand and express themselves, relate with others in more acceptable manner, adapt to change increasingly enable them to manage emotional, social and personal problems. In view of the above assertion, scientific literature of emotional intelligence posits that leaders with higher than average emotional intelligence are in general more successful in coping with environmental demands in organization. Academic administrators ought to be sensitive and attune to themselves, to others and the world around them. These emotional intelligence characteristics make them more influential; maintain high commitment and moral standards. Olowo (2011) such leaders proffer different ways to tackle

problems, encourage creativity and see challenges as personal responsibility. Thus, self-awareness competence of emotional intelligence is considerably crucial in leading individuals or team members. In fact the success or failure of the organisation is often attributed to leadership ineptitudes; On the other hand, organisational outlook is significantly impacted by leaders' role behaviour. Hence role behaviour and personal characteristics are critical factor for team leadership development, stable organizational climate and culture that support institutional goals attainment.

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