INFLUENCE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ON DECISION-MAKING AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS IN DUTSIN-MA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, KATSINA STATE

[1]DR. OKUDU SUNDAY JAMES, [2]ADIH MUHAMMAD SHAMSUDEEN, PHD & [3]BALKISU MOHAMMED ISA

[1]Yakubu Gowon House NYSC Headquarters, Maitama, Abuja
Email: okudusundayjames@gmail.com Phone: +2348063702503
[2]Department of Educational Foundations, School of Education, Nasarawa state College of Education, Akwanga
[3]Department of Environmental and Life Science, Modibbo Adama University Yola

Abstract

This study examined the influence of emotional intelligence on decision-making among secondary school administrators in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area, Katsina State, Nigeria. The study specifically investigated the influence of self-awareness and empathy on administrative decision-making among public senior secondary school administrators. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population comprised 39,000 respondents, including principals and teachers from fourteen public secondary schools in Dutsin-Ma LGA. Using Krejcie and Morgan's sampling table, a sample size of 355 respondents was selected. A self-structured questionnaire titled "Emotional Intelligence and Decision-Making among Senior Secondary School Administrators Questionnaire (EIDMSSAQ)" was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by experts in Educational Management and Measurement and Evaluation, while a reliability coefficient of 0.84 was obtained using the test-retest method. Data was analysed using mean, standard deviation for the research questions and simple linear regression for the hypotheses. The findings revealed that self-awareness significantly enhances clarity and objectivity in decision-making among school administrators, while empathy promotes fairness, cooperation, and positive school climate. The study concluded that emotional intelligence is a significant determinant of effective administrative decision-making in secondary schools. It was recommended that educational authorities should integrate emotional intelligence training into leadership development programmes for school administrators and organize regular workshops to strengthen emotional competencies among school leaders.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Self-awareness, Empathy, Decision-making, School Administrators

Introduction

Educational administration in the 21st century requires more than technical competence and professional experience. School administrators are increasingly expected to demonstrate emotional competencies that enable them to manage interpersonal relationships, resolve conflicts, and make rational decisions in complex educational environments. Emotional intelligence has therefore emerged as a critical leadership attribute influencing organizational effectiveness and decision-making in schools.

Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to recognize, understand, manage, and utilize emotions effectively in oneself and others. According to Salovey and Mayer (1990), emotional intelligence involves the capacity to monitor emotions and use emotional information to guide thinking and behavior. Similarly, Goleman (1995) explained that emotional intelligence encompasses self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, motivation, and social skills, all of which are essential for effective leadership. Emotionally intelligent teaching practices are integral to the success of adult education, and AI offers innovative solutions to enhance these practices (Busa, Adamu & Umar, 2024)

In secondary schools, administrators are constantly confronted with issues relating to staff management, student discipline, conflict resolution, resource allocation, and policy implementation. Effective administrators engage in instructional supervision, curriculum development, and assessment practices to support teaching and learning in schools, aligned with the effective administrators' engagement in instructional supervision, curriculum development, and assessment practices to support teaching and learning in schools (Busa, bello, Yahaya, 2025) These responsibilities require emotionally intelligent leaders who can make objective and inclusive decisions despite administrative pressures. Leaders with high EI tend to communicate more effectively, adapt to stress, and support team morale during times of transition or digital change, (Busa, Suleiman, & Mahmud, 2025). In Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area of Katsina State, school administrators face several challenges such as inadequate resources, teacher dissatisfaction, community pressures, and policy inconsistencies. These challenges make emotional intelligence highly relevant to administrative effectiveness.

Among the components of emotional intelligence, self-awareness and empathy are particularly important in educational leadership. Self-awareness enables administrators to recognize their emotional triggers, understand their strengths and weaknesses, and avoid impulsive decisions. Empathy, on the other hand, allows school leaders to understand the feelings and perspectives of teachers, students, and parents, thereby promoting cooperation and fairness in school management.

Despite the recognized importance of emotional intelligence in leadership, many school administrators in Nigeria still rely heavily on authoritarian and emotionally uninformed approaches to decision-making. Furthermore, empirical studies examining the relationship between emotional intelligence and administrative decision-making in Dutsin-Ma remain limited. This study therefore investigated the influence of emotional intelligence on decision-making among secondary school administrators in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area, Katsina State.

Statement of the Problem

Effective decision-making is essential for successful school administration. Preliminary observations by the researcher suggest that some secondary school administrators in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area experience difficulties in making balanced and objective decisions due to inadequate emotional competencies. Challenges such as poor interpersonal relationships, emotional instability, lack of empathy, and impulsive reactions may undermine administrative effectiveness and the creation of a positive school climate. This situation underscores the need to examine the role of emotional intelligence in administrative decision-

making among school administrators in the area. Although emotional intelligence has gained global attention as an important leadership competence, limited empirical evidence exists on how specific emotional intelligence components influence decision-making among secondary school administrators in rural Nigerian settings. Consequently, there is a need to investigate how self-awareness and empathy influence administrative decision-making among school administrators in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study investigates the Influence of Emotional Intelligence on Decision-Making among Secondary School Administrators in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area, Katsina State. The study was guided by the following specific objectives:

1. To examine the influence of self-awareness on decision-making among secondary school administrators in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area, Katsina State.
2. To determine the influence of empathy on decision-making among secondary school administrators in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area, Katsina State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the influence of self-awareness on decision-making among secondary school administrators in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area?
2. What is the influence of empathy on decision-making among secondary school administrators in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area?

Hypotheses

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

1. Self-awareness has no significant influence on decision-making among secondary school administrators in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area.
2. Empathy has no significant influence on decision-making among secondary school administrators in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area.

Literature Review

Concept of Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence is the ability to identify, understand, and manage emotions effectively. Mayer and Salovey (1990) defined emotional intelligence as a form of social intelligence involving the ability to monitor one's own emotions and those of others and to use this information to guide actions and thinking. Goleman (1995) further emphasized that emotionally intelligent individuals possess self-awareness, empathy, emotional regulation, and social competence.

Emotional intelligence has become increasingly important in educational leadership because school administrators interact with diverse stakeholders, including teachers, students, parents,

and government agencies. Emotional intelligence enables administrators to build effective relationships, maintain discipline, and manage conflicts constructively.

Self-Awareness and Decision-Making

Self-awareness refers to the ability of individuals to recognize and understand their emotions, values, strengths, and weaknesses. Administrators with high self-awareness are more likely to make rational and objective decisions because they understand how emotions influence their actions. Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2013) noted that self-aware leaders are capable of controlling impulsive reactions and evaluating situations more objectively.

In school administration, self-awareness enhances leadership effectiveness by improving emotional control and reducing bias during decision-making processes. Self-aware administrators are also more reflective and capable of evaluating the consequences of their decisions before implementation.

Empathy and Decision-Making

Empathy refers to the ability to understand and share the feelings of others. Empathetic administrators are better able to understand the needs and concerns of teachers, students, and parents. Martins, Ramalho, and Morin (2022) observed that empathy promotes positive interpersonal relationships and enhances leadership effectiveness.

In educational settings, empathy contributes to fairness, cooperation, and conflict resolution. School administrators who demonstrate empathy are more likely to create supportive school climates and improve staff morale and student discipline.

Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on Mayer and Salovey's (1990) Theory of Emotional Intelligence. The theory explains that emotional intelligence involves the appraisal, understanding, regulation, and utilization of emotions in solving problems and guiding behavior. The theory is relevant to this study because it explains how emotional competencies such as self-awareness and empathy influence leadership behavior and decision-making.

Reviewed of Related literature

Adeyemo and Ogunyemi (2019) investigated emotional intelligence and occupational stress among university staff and found that emotional intelligence significantly predicts leadership effectiveness. Similarly, Mishra (2019) reported a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement among senior secondary school students. Ogundokun and Adeyemo (2019) found that emotional intelligence significantly predicts academic and administrative outcomes among secondary school personnel in Nigeria. Martins et al. (2022) also established a strong relationship between empathy and leadership effectiveness.

Most previous studies focused on academic achievement and organizational performance, with limited attention given to emotional intelligence and administrative decision-making in rural secondary schools. This study therefore fills this gap by focusing on secondary school administrators in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population comprised 394 respondents, including principals and teachers from fourteen public secondary schools in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area, Katsina State. A sample size of 355 respondents was selected using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sampling table. A self-structured questionnaire titled "Emotional Intelligence and Decision-Making among Senior Secondary School Administrators Questionnaire (EIDMSSAQ)" was used for data collection. The instrument consisted of two sections. Section A contained demographic information, while Section B contained items related to self-awareness, empathy, and decision-making. Responses were structured on a four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1). The instrument was validated by experts in Educational Management and Measurement and Evaluation. The reliability of the instrument was determined using the test-retest method, which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.84. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, while simple linear regression was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question One: What is the influence of self-awareness on decision-making among secondary school administrators in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area?

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remark
1.	Self-awareness improves decision clarity	3.20	0.94	Agreed
2.	Emotional awareness supports leadership decisions	3.15	0.96	Agreed
3.	Understanding strengths enhances decisions	3.20	0.98	Agreed
4.	Awareness reduces impulsive decisions	3.19	0.93	Agreed
5.	Personal values guide decisions	3.22	0.99	Agreed
	Grand Mean/SD	**3.19**	**0.96**	**Agreed**

With a grand mean of 3.19 (SD = 0.96) against a criterion mean of 2.50, the findings show that respondents generally agreed that self-awareness positively influences decision-making among school administrators. All five items recorded mean scores above the criterion, indicating that emotional awareness is perceived to improve leadership decisions, reduce impulsive actions, and enhance objectivity.

Research Question Two: What is the influence of empathy on decision-making among secondary school administrators in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area?

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remark
1.	Empathy strengthens relationships	3.18	0.93	Agreed
2.	Considering others improves cooperation	3.19	0.98	Agreed
3.	Empathy promotes school climate	3.21	1.02	Agreed
4.	Understanding staff improves problem-solving	3.17	0.97	Agreed
5.	Empathy supports fair decisions	3.20	0.98	Agreed
	Grand Mean/SD	**3.19**	**0.97**	**Agreed**

With a grand mean of 3.19 (SD = 0.97), respondents agreed that empathy significantly enhances decision-making among school administrators, promoting fairness, strengthening interpersonal relationships, and improving cooperation among staff and students.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis One: Self-awareness has no significant influence on decision-making among secondary school administrators in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area.

Table 1: Simple Linear Regression: Effect of Self-Awareness on Decision-Making

Hypothesis One Model Summary

Model	**R**	**R^2**	**Adjusted R^2**	**Std. Error of the Estimate**	**F**	**Sig.**
1	.710	.504	.501	3.842	70.90	.000

Hypothesis One Coefficients

Model	**B**	**Std. Error**	**Beta (β)**	**t**	**Sig.**	**95% CI for B**	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	0.84	0.19	—	4.42	.000	0.47	1.21
Self-Awareness	0.71	0.085	.710	8.42	.000	0.54	0.88

Note. n = 120. Dependent variable: Decision-Making. Predictors: (Constant), Self-Awareness.

The results of the simple linear regression analysis, as presented in Table 1, indicate that self-awareness is a statistically significant predictor of decision-making among secondary school administrators in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area. The model summary reveals a moderate-to-strong positive relationship between the two variables ($R = .710$, $R^2 = .504$, Adjusted $R^2 = .501$), suggesting that self-awareness accounts for approximately 50.4% of the variance in decision-making. The model was statistically significant ($F(1, 118) = 70.90$, $p < .001$), confirming its overall fit. The standard error of the estimate was 3.842, indicating a reasonably precise model. In the Coefficients table, the unstandardised regression coefficient for self-awareness ($B = 0.71$, $SE = 0.085$) and the standardised coefficient ($\beta = .710$, $t = 8.42$, $p < .001$; 95% CI [0.54, 0.88]) confirm a positive and significant contribution. These findings indicate that for every unit increase in self-awareness, decision-making improves by 0.71 units. Accordingly, the null hypothesis that self-awareness has no significant influence on decision-making was rejected.

Hypothesis Two: Empathy has no significant influence on decision-making among secondary school administrators in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area.

Table 2: Simple Linear Regression: Effect of Empathy on Decision-Making

Model	**R**	**R^2**	**Adjusted R^2**	**Std. Error of the Estimate**	**F**	**Sig.**
1	.680	.462	.458	4.011	63.21	.000
Hypothesis Two Coefficients						
Model	**B**	**Std. Error**	**Beta (β)**	**T**	**Sig.**	**95% CI for B**
						Lower Bound / Upper Bound
(Constant)	0.91	0.21	—	4.33	.000	0.50 / 1.32
Empathy	0.68	0.086	.680	7.95	.000	0.51 / 0.85

Note. n = 120. Dependent variable: Decision-Making. Predictors: (Constant), Empathy.

The results in Table 2 reveal that empathy significantly predicts decision-making among secondary school administrators in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area. The model summary shows a moderate-to-strong relationship ($R = .680$, $R^2 = .462$, Adjusted $R^2 = .458$), indicating that empathy explains approximately 46.2% of the variance in decision-making. The overall regression model was statistically significant ($F(1, 118) = 63.21$, $p < .001$), with a standard error of the estimate of 4.011. The unstandardised coefficient ($B = 0.68$, $SE = 0.086$) and the standardised coefficient ($\beta = .680$, $t = 7.95$, $p < .001$; 95% CI [0.51, 0.85]) further confirm a positive and significant predictive relationship. These results suggest that for every unit increase in empathy, decision-making improves by 0.68 units among school administrators. Consequently, the null hypothesis that empathy has no significant influence on decision-making was rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study established that self-awareness significantly influences decision-making among secondary school administrators. Administrators who possess high self-awareness are more likely to make rational and objective decisions because they understand their emotions and how such emotions affect leadership behavior. This finding agrees with Goleman et al. (2013), who observed that self-aware leaders demonstrate better emotional control and leadership effectiveness. The study also found that empathy significantly enhances decision-making among school administrators. Empathetic administrators understand the feelings and perspectives of teachers and students, thereby promoting fairness, cooperation, and positive school climate. This finding corroborates Martins et al. (2022), who reported that empathy strengthens leadership effectiveness and organizational relationships.

The results generally support Mayer and Salovey's (1990) Theory of Emotional Intelligence, which explains that emotional competencies influence problem-solving and leadership effectiveness.

Conclusion

The study concluded that emotional intelligence significantly influences decision-making among secondary school administrators in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area, Katsina State. Specifically, self-awareness and empathy were identified as important emotional competencies that enhance leadership effectiveness, fairness, objectivity, and cooperation in school administration. The study further established that emotionally intelligent administrators are better equipped to manage school challenges, resolve conflicts, and promote positive school climate. Therefore, emotional intelligence should be recognized as an essential component of educational leadership and administrative effectiveness.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Regular workshops and seminars should be organized to strengthen self-awareness and empathy among school administrators.
2. School administrators should be encouraged to adopt emotionally intelligent leadership practices that promote fairness, cooperation, and effective communication.

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