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# **SOCIAL AWARENESS AND RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT AS EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENT VARIABLE OF LEADERS AND EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATION OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The role of emotional intelligence in leadership effectiveness has become increasingly relevant in higher education administration. This study explored the impact of social awareness and relationship management on the administration of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. Social awareness enables university leaders to recognize and respond to the emotional and professional needs of faculty, students, and stakeholders, fostering an inclusive and supportive academic environment. Relationship management facilitates effective communication, conflict resolution, and collaboration, which are essential for institutional efficiency. Using a descriptive research design, the study surveyed 400 university leaders from three public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria, employing a structured questionnaire to measure the influence of social awareness and relationship management on administration, using a reliability index of .862. The findings indicated a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence variables and effective university governance. Social awareness enhances decision-making, empathy, and inclusivity, while relationship management improves interpersonal relations, trust-building, and teamwork. Additionally, the study highlighted gender differences in leadership perceptions, with male and female leaders demonstrating varying levels of emotional intelligence competencies. The research concluded that integrating emotional intelligence training into leadership development programs can strengthen university administration. Recommendations include capacity-building workshops for university leaders, prioritizing emotional intelligence in leadership appointments, and fostering an emotionally intelligent academic culture. As higher education institutions navigate complex challenges, emotionally intelligent leadership remains critical for institutional success and sustainability.

**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence, Social Awareness, Relationship Management, Leadership, Public Universities, Effective Administration.

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## INTRODUCTION

The role of emotional intelligence (EI) in effective leadership has garnered increasing attention in recent years, particularly in the context of educational administration. As universities continue to face complex challenges, leaders in public universities are expected to not only excel in academic management but also navigate intricate social dynamics, foster strong relationships, and demonstrate heightened emotional awareness. Among the key components of emotional intelligence are social awareness and relationship management—two critical variables for leaders aiming to foster an effective administrative environment.

Emotional intelligence, first coined by Daniel Goleman in the 1990s, refers to the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions, as well as the emotions of others (Goleman, 1995). Goleman's model highlights five key components of EI: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills, with social awareness and relationship management being particularly important for leaders in educational settings. Social awareness is the ability to accurately perceive and understand the emotions and concerns of others, while relationship management involves the capacity to build and maintain healthy interpersonal relationships, resolve conflicts, and inspire collaboration (Goleman, 2006). These skills are not only crucial for interpersonal interactions but are also vital for navigating the complex relationships within a university community, including faculty, students, staff, and external stakeholders.

The significance of social awareness and relationship management in the effective administration of public universities cannot be overstated. Public universities, which serve as critical institutions for higher education, often operate within a complex and multifaceted environment where leaders must balance competing interests (Ololube, 2024a). Faculty members seek academic freedom and research opportunities, students demand quality education and support services, and government bodies impose budgetary constraints and policy regulations. In this context, leaders must possess the emotional intelligence necessary to recognize the diverse needs of these stakeholders and manage relationships effectively to create a harmonious and productive university environment.

Social awareness, in particular, enables university leaders to recognize the emotional needs and concerns of various stakeholders within the university community. For instance, students may face academic or personal challenges that require empathy and understanding from university administrators. Faculty members may need support in navigating institutional changes or balancing teaching and research responsibilities. Leaders' are able to make informed decisions that reflect the concerns of the community, thus promoting a sense of inclusivity and support by being attuned to their emotions (Ololube, 2024b). Furthermore, social awareness helps leaders anticipate potential issues, enabling proactive problem-solving rather than reactive management.

Relationship management, on the other hand, involves the ability to influence, motivate, and guide individuals within the organization to achieve collective goals. Leaders who excel in relationship management are skilled at building trust and fostering cooperation among diverse groups, which is essential for cultivating a collaborative and effective academic environment. To Ololube (2024a), effective communication and conflict resolution are key components of relationship management, ensuring that disagreements are addressed constructively and that the university's mission is pursued harmoniously.

Studies have shown that emotional intelligence significantly influences leadership effectiveness in educational settings. A study by Miao et al. (2017) demonstrated that EI,

particularly social awareness and relationship management, positively affects the performance of leaders in various organizations, including educational institutions. Leaders with high EI are more likely to exhibit transformational leadership behaviors, which are associated with enhanced motivation, job satisfaction, and organizational performance. In the context of public universities, such leaders are better equipped to navigate the complexities of higher education administration and foster an environment conducive to learning and growth.

Social awareness and relationship management are indispensable components of emotional intelligence that significantly contribute to the effective administration of public universities. University leaders who demonstrate high levels of EI can navigate complex social dynamics, manage diverse stakeholder interests, and foster an inclusive and collaborative academic environment. As the demands on higher education institutions continue to grow, the importance of emotionally intelligent leadership in the administration of public universities will only increase, making the development of these skills crucial for future academic leaders.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The effective administration of public universities is critical for ensuring academic excellence, organizational efficiency, and overall institutional growth. However, one of the key challenges facing university leaders is the inability to effectively manage relationships and foster a conducive social environment within the institution. This issue is often linked to insufficient emotional intelligence, particularly in the domains of social awareness and relationship management. Social awareness refers to the ability to recognize and understand the emotions of others, while relationship management involves using that awareness to manage interactions constructively. When leaders in public universities lack these emotional intelligence competencies, it can lead to poor communication, conflicts, low morale, and ultimately hinder institutional progress.

Despite the recognized importance of emotional intelligence in leadership, the role of social awareness and relationship management as critical emotional intelligence variables in the administration of public universities remains underexplored. This gap in research poses a significant problem, as it prevents university leaders from harnessing these emotional intelligence skills to improve decision-making, foster collaborative work environments, and ensure effective governance. This study aims to address this gap by examining how social awareness and relationship management influence leadership effectiveness and the overall administration of public universities.

### **Aim and Objective of the Study**

The aim of the study was to investigate leader's emotional intelligence for effective administration of public universities in Rivers State. The study objectives were the following:

- Ascertain the extent social awareness as part of leader's emotional intelligence influence effective administration of public universities in Rivers State.
- Ascertain the extent relationship management as part of leader's emotional intelligence influence effective administration of public universities in Rivers State.

## **Research Questions**

The following research questions were posed to guide the study:

- To what extent does social awareness as part of the leader's emotional intelligence influence administration of public universities in Rivers State?
- To what extent does relationship management as part of the leader's emotional intelligence influence effective administration of public universities in Rivers State?

## **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were formulated to further guide the study:

- There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female leaders on the extent leader's social awareness influence effective administration of public universities in Rivers State.
- There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female leaders on the extent leader's relationship management influence effective administration of public universities in Rivers state.

## **CONCEPTUALIZATION**

### **Social-Awareness Emotional Intelligence**

Social-awareness is the ability to understand and be compassionate to the feelings, views, opinions and challenges of other people. Social-awareness cannot only be equated with understanding people's need but as well as caring for them (Goleman, 2006). It also entails understanding social circumstances that influence people's behaviors and performance. A boss that is socially aware can envisage office politics and its related connecting dots and impacts in the organization.

Social awareness which encompasses the skill of deploying the skill and competency of empathy, respect, kindness, cooperation, motivation, self-regulation, social-emotional and emotional awareness and listen actively, read verbal and nonverbal cues for negative emotions, particularly anger and fear and to judge the trustworthiness of others and harness this into achieving set objectives. This is the ability to sense, understand and react to others emotions while comprehending on social networks (Goleman, 1998). This concept entails understanding the feeling of other without experiencing them. Social awareness accentuates on an individual's ability to identify, perceive and react to other's emotions while being a part of the social network circuitry.

The components of social awareness competence are primal empathy, service orientation and organization awareness (Goleman, 2001). However, Goleman (2006) added more components to social awareness which is social cognition and Attunement. They are important factors that enhance performance in the organization. Social-emotional learning theory is underpinned by the work of Daniel Goleman, who builds the idea of social and Practice emotional intelligence (EQ) around a number of key social awareness components, they include:

Emotional self-awareness: Understanding what one is experiencing and comprehending how different moods might affect people around us is known as emotional awareness. This skill enable better team play as it helps the person get in and out of emotion intentionally to achieve a particular aim without upsetting any existing balance or tilting it to a more desirable direction.

Self-regulation: Self-regulation like emotional awareness is the art of managing one's emotional response by anticipating results in order to avoid becoming emotional and irrational in personal, professional and social contexts. Motivation Understanding how to harness emotional aspects to learn and achieve any goal at all is part of motivation. Motivation is core dimension of social awareness as it is one indicator that keeps a person committed to achieving a set goal even if it means consciously working on being better or working on a better relationship with other.

Empathy: Empathy is the ability to understand and consider the feelings and circumstances of another. It is worth noting that negative emotions play a big part in impulse control, empathy, and conscience. Lower levels of empathy may contribute to social conflict and, as a result, increase the intensity of unpleasant emotions felt by employee, coworkers and colleague.

Respect is described as having concern for the experiences, emotions, wishes, or rights of another individual or group. It is a vital ingredient in healthy and group or team that is socially aware that will ensure greater better inter and intra relationships and foster productivity.

Kindness refers to the act of being kind and considerate to others, and it is particularly vital even if you disagree with their viewpoint. These are all related concepts with very thin line of demarcation albeit with one functional relationship with the other indicators (respect, empathy, self-awareness) and this can lead to better and more productive teams.

Ololube (2024a) defined active listening as the ability to actually listen to pay attention and take the time to comprehend what is being said. An active listener is able to decode all kinds of cues and nuances as well as listen without emotional interferences.

Cooperation is a vital component of coming up with a solution or a way to collaborate with other people or groups. It frequently necessitates compromise, yet it aids in the achievement of common objectives. Most often than not, positive social awareness or depth of social awareness manifests more readily in the propensity to cooperate. A more socially aware person is more likely to cooperate either within a team or firm than the opposite (Goleman, 2006).

There is a substantial and favorable link between social awareness and company growth. From review and examination of texts and empirical works of other scholars and researchers one can safely conclude that a socially aware or intelligent organization can use or encourage the use of social emotional-self-awareness, self-regulation motivation, empathy, respect kindness, active listening skills and above all cooperation. Fubara (2020) summed that purposeful work place interactions bring out the best in employees, resulting in a productive organization. Since humans are social animals, any effort to over quantify decisions without resources to the vagaries of human interactions and its attendant consequences will lead to unprecedented inaccuracies and error. It is essentially germane that firms have embedded in the corporate culture provisions for appreciating and understanding people and the mechanism of their interaction and intentionally hone ways to beneficially harness them for the greater good and growth of the firm as It will be simpler for organizations to grow in the organization when managers understand the environment, and are sensitive to the social spectrum of human needs, and their skill set, and then develop purposeful interactions (Eleodor & OPrescu, 2012).

Social competencies determine how individuals handle relationships. Empathy involves sensing other's feelings and perspectives, and taking an active interest in their concerns

(Goleman, 1998).Individual with this competence are able to pick up emotional cues of others and adapt their behavior accordingly. The first competency in this domain is leadership. This involves inspiring and guiding individuals and groups. Individuals with leadership skills are able to express themselves and fire up enthusiasm for a shared vision and mission.

### **How Social Awareness Enhance Effective Administration**

Social awareness is the ability to be aware of and understand the social environment in which you work, it can help build trust within an organization by making employees feel like they are being heard and their concerns are valued (Ololube, 2024a). It encompasses some competencies such as respect empathy, organize strength in others, offering support, demonstration of cultural humility, empathetic people discern others emotions, concerns and needs, they read and understand emotional current and is able to sustain emotion all through the work (Lauren 2019).

Organizational awareness has to do with all levels of understanding different aspects of the organization which includes working structure and culture of the organization, it also consists of understanding of political, social and economic issues affecting the organization. This is the most important factor in managing proactive change in an organization it tells to improve stuff in decision, team building, communication and cultural leadership effectiveness for them it's going to help create an increase revenue and profit by publishing competitive advantage and creating consistent results. Ololube (2024a) outlined four major qualities common among successful leaders, such leaders understand what is required to run an organization effectively about objectives and take action to implement the objectives, they are visible within the institution and the way of every event involved in day to day operation and attentive to declared awareness of their influence within and without the organization they are highly committed and lawyer to their organization and staff. Social awareness is crucial in effective administration as it fosters better understanding and communication within an organization.

Being socially aware allows administrators to have empathy and understanding for the needs and concerns of employees, stakeholders, and the community at large helps administrators make decisions that consider diverse perspectives. Effective Communication of Administrators with social awareness can communicate clearly and respectfully, fostering a positive environment and ensuring messages are received as intended.

Skills in Conflict Resolution Being attuned to social cues enables administrators to identify and address conflicts early, resolving issues before they escalate, also building relationships by understanding social dynamics helps administrators build stronger relationships, trust, and cooperation among team members, which is essential for efficient workflows. Cultural Competence awareness of social and cultural nuances aids in creating policies and practices that are inclusive and respectful of diverse backgrounds Senge, 1990).

### **Relationship Management Emotional Intelligence**

Blake and Mouton explored how managers use task and relationship behaviors to influence Subordinates stated that leaders need to focus on concern for production and respect for people to lead an organization. According to Blake and Mouton, the factor and concern for production refersto the bottom line, the results, the performance, or profits of the organization. And Production, in other words, is whatever an organization hires people to accomplish. The factor and concern for people and refers to the subordinates or colleagues in an organization and their

dynamics, especially between the leaders and those they manage. Blake and Mouton state that managers' assumptions about people to determine effectiveness are essential. People are people regardless of the context of the work – industry, government, educational and medical institutions, or the home.

The Relationship Management contains competencies that have the most direct effect on interactions with other people. In a fundamental sense, the effectiveness of one's relationship skills hinges on one's ability to attune to or influence the emotions of another person. Developing Others means to understand people's developmental needs and help in building their abilities. Although this ability is crucial for those who manage the leading work, it has also emerged as a vital skill for effective leadership at high levels (Goleman, 2000). Inspirational Leadership implies a desire to lead others. Inspirational leaders are able to articulate and arouse enthusiasm for a shared vision and mission, to step forward as needed, to guide the performance of others while holding them accountable, and to lead by example. Influence is the ability to persuade, convince, or to impact on others in order to get support on specific agenda or course of action. Conflict Management Conflict Management is the ability to handle difficult individuals, groups of people, or tense situations with diplomacy and tact. This competency entails finding the best solution to a given problem or disagreement. Teamwork and Collaboration Teamwork and Collaboration represents the ability to work cooperatively with others, to be the part of a team, to work together as opposed to working separately or competitively.

The importance of emotions as an influence on leadership began to emerge as a concept in the 1980's. The emotional, value-based aspects of leadership are believed to influence the achievements of groups and organizations. Much of this dynamic, value-based leadership concentrated on the characteristics and effects of charismatic and transformational leadership with its recognition of the importance of emotion. Ololube (2024a) indicated that emotional intelligence is a multifaceted construct and that there is no clear, simple definition of it. Opinions are divided as to what constitutes the most accurate interpretation of emotional intelligence. Nonetheless, following are a few of the more widely used definitions at present.

### **How Relationship Management enhance Effective Administration**

Relationships management is another critical competence needed by the academic leader to build a community of friendship among colleagues in the university and environment relationship management consists of essential social skills such as influence openness and communication most important element of emotional intelligence is application of the competencies in the relationship category of the developmental needs and reinforce their abilities in talent for excellent mentorship and on outstanding leadership. Goleman (2000) noted that although this ability is crucial for those managing frontline works, it has also marched as a vital skill for effective leadership at high levels the greatest attributes of every leader is that he is proficient in conflict management. Conflict management competence is having their ability to identify problem as it is brewing and taking steps to nip it in the bud and appease those involved. Such leaders listen and handle troublesome staff and situation with diplomacy, encourage debate and open communication.

Key leadership principle is essential elements of emotional intelligence. for instance, it may appear difficult to share a vision with her team members in a zealous, comparing motivational way without certain degree of emotional intelligence. An enthusiastic leader must support, give timely feedback and develop career of his subordinates. Literature upheld that

strong coaching and mentoring have positive impact on individual performance, higher level of loyalty job satisfaction provider opportunity for promotion and pay. it increases turnover in organizational excellence in developing others it's rightly considered as second next important to the team leadership the more positive leadership style of a leader, the more positive helpful and cooperative and those in the group. Such emotional climate helps in greater extents to build relationship especially among colleagues in the university community and people from the external environment, they give more support to a leader's vision that show concerned and care for them.

## PROCEDURES

This study adopted a descriptive design. This research design was adopted because it describes, measures and establish the opinion held by respondents on the Independent variable of (Emotional Intelligence) and the dependent variables (effectiveness in Administration) and presenting results without manipulation

The population of the study comprised three thousand seven hundred and two (3,702) leader's in three public universities in Rivers State. The sample size of this study was a four hundred (400) respondents principal officers from three public universities in Rivers State using the stratified sampling technique. The sample size was determined using the Creshek and Morgan formula, this formula was used to ensure that a manageable sample was obtained from the population. A proportionate stratified random sampling technique from the population to select the principal officers.

The instrument for data collection was a self-designed Questionnaire. The questionnaire was titled: Social Awareness and Relationship Management as Emotional Intelligence Variable of Leaders and Effective Administration of Public Universities (SARMEIVLEAPU). The instrument had two sections- A and B. Part A was designed to illicit information of demographic data of the lecturer's such as age, gender, work experience, professional qualification. B was designed to elicit information from the respondent on the research questions of the study. A total of twelve items divided into two clusters, with each cluster addressing a particular variable of the study. The questionnaire instrument which was self-developed was structured on modified 4 point Likert rating scale of Very High Extent VHE=4, High Extent HE=3, Low Extent LE=2, Very Low Extent VLE=1.

For the instrument to serve it intended purpose it must be validated .To ensure face and content validity, copies of the instrument were given to the researcher's supervisor and two experts in the areas of educational management within the faculty of Education, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. The suggestions and corrections of these experts were used to improve on the quality of the instrument to ensure it was able to measure what it was designed to measure. They reviewed the items on the instruments in terms of relevance, clarity and appropriateness as related to the study.

The reliability of the instrument were ascertained using the mean and standard deviation, 20 of the instruments were given to the principal officers who were the main study of the population, after two weeks interval, another set of instrument were administered to determine the consistency of the instrument. Reliability was determined by using the Cronbach Alpha method to determine the consistent reliability, which yielded a reliability co-efficient of .862.

The researcher and two research assistants personally administered the copies of the questionnaire to the respondents. It took the researcher two weeks to effectively distribute and



retrieve the questionnaire from the selected schools and the respondents. The completed copies of the instrument were retrieved on the spot from the respondents on each day of the visit or deferred to a suitable date. The researcher and the assistants guided the respondents on how to fill the instrument. Every available items that was ticked had an equivalent a of Very high extent (VHE), high extent (HE), low extent (LE) and very low extent (VLE).

The data gathered from the respondents to the structured questionnaire was classified into tables. Means and standard deviation scores were used to answer the five (5) research questions. A test of significance was applied to determine the acceptance if the mean score was equal or greater than 2.50, then the item is retained as agreed but or rejected as disagreed if the mean score was less than 2.50. The hypothesis was tested using the independent t-test at .05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

**Research Question One:** To what extent does social awareness as part of the leader's emotional intelligence influence effective administration of public universities in Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation on the social awareness as part of the leader's emotional intelligence influence effective administration of public universities in Rivers State

S/N	Items	Mean	SD.	Decision
1.	Respect for other as part of leader's emotional intelligence improve effective administration	<b>2.74</b>	<b>1.020</b>	High Extent
2.	Demonstrating compassion for others as part of leader's emotional intelligence improves effective administration	<b>2.67</b>	<b>1.049</b>	High Extent
3.	Recognizing the strength in others as part of leader's emotional intelligence improves effective administration	<b>2.65</b>	<b>.97</b>	High Extent
4.	Resolving conflict constructively as part of leader's emotional intelligence improves effective administration	<b>2.54</b>	<b>1.100</b>	High Extent
5.	Offering support when needed as part of leader's emotional intelligence improves effective administration	<b>2.66</b>	<b>1.056</b>	High Extent
6.	Demonstrating cultural humility as part of leader's emotional intelligence improves effective administration	<b>2.46</b>	<b>1.086</b>	High Extent
<b>N=400</b>	<b>Grand Mean &amp; SD.</b>	<b>2.62</b>	<b>1.046</b>	<b>High Extent</b>

Results in table 1 show the summary of mean and standard deviation on the social awareness as part of the leader's emotional intelligence influence effective administration of public universities in Rivers State. Item 1 had a mean set of 2.74 and standard deviation of 1.020 This implies that the respondents agree to a high extent that Taking initiative as part of leader's emotional intelligence improves effective administration of public universities in Rivers State. Item 2 had a mean set of 2.67 and standard deviation of 1.049. This implies that the respondents agree to a high extent that Demonstrating compassion for others as part of leader's emotional intelligence improves effective administration of public universities in Rivers State. Item 3 had a mean set of 2.65 and standard deviation of .97 This implies that the respondents agree to a high extent that Integrity Recognizing the strength in others as part of leader's emotional intelligence improves effective administration of public universities in Rivers State. Item 4 had a mean set of 2.54 and standard deviation of 1.100This implies that the respondents agree that Resolving conflict constructively as part of leader's emotional intelligence improves effective

administration public universities in Rivers State. Item 5 had a mean set of 2.66 and standard deviation of 1.056. This implies that the respondents agree Offering support when needed as part of leader's emotional intelligence improve effective administration of public universities in Rivers State. Item 6 had a mean set of 2.46 and standard deviation of 1.086. This implies that the respondents agree to a high extent that attention control as part of leader's emotional intelligence improves effective administration of public universities in Rivers State. The cluster mean of 2.62 and standard deviation of 1.046 implies that the respondents agree to a high extent that Respect for other as part of leader's emotional intelligence, demonstrating compassion for others as part of leader's emotional intelligence, recognizing the strength in others as part of leader's emotional intelligence, resolving conflict constructively as part of leader's emotional intelligence, offering support when needed as part of leader's emotional intelligence and demonstrating cultural humility as part of leader's emotional intelligence improves effective administration of public universities in Rivers State.

**Research Question 2:** To what extent does relationship management as part of the leader's emotional intelligence influence effective administration of public universities in Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation on the relationship management as part of the leader's emotional intelligence influence effective administration of public universities in Rivers State

S/N	Items	Mean	SD.	Decision
7.	Attentive listening as part of leader's emotional intelligence improve effective administration	2.61	1.039	High Extent
8.	Shared value as part of leader's emotional intelligence improve effective administration	2.32	1.105	High Extent
9.	Personalization approach as part of leader's emotional intelligence improves effective administration	2.52	1.085	High Extent
10.	Prompt responsiveness as part of leader's emotional intelligence improves effective administration	2.90	.86	High Extent
11.	Support as part of leader's emotional intelligence improves effective administration	2.76	.91	High Extent
12.	Loyalty as part of leader's emotional intelligence improves effective administration	2.86	.98	High Extent
<b>N=400</b>	<b>Grand Mean &amp; SD.</b>	<b>2.66</b>	<b>0.99</b>	<b>High Extent</b>

Results in table 2 show the summary of mean and standard deviation on the relationship management as part of the leader's emotional intelligence influence effective administration of public universities in Rivers State. Item 7 had a mean set of 2.61 and standard deviation of 1.039. This implies that the respondents agree to a high extent that Attentive listening as part of leader's emotional intelligence improve effective administration of public universities in Rivers State. Item 8 had a mean set of 2.32 and standard deviation of 1.105. This implies that the respondents agree to a high extent that Shared value as part of leader's emotional intelligence improve effective administration of public universities in Rivers State. Item 9 had a mean set of 2.52 and standard deviation of 1.085. This implies that the respondents agree to a high extent that personalization approach as part of leader's emotional intelligence improves effective administration of public universities in Rivers State. Item 10 had a mean set of 2.90 and standard deviation of .86. This implies that the respondents agree that prompt responsiveness as part of leader's emotional intelligence improve effective administration of public universities in Rivers

State. Item 11 had a mean set of 2.76 and standard deviation of .91 This implies that the respondents agree Support as part of leader's emotional intelligence improve effective administration of public universities in Rivers State. Item 12 had a mean set of 2.86 and standard deviation of .98 This implies that the respondents agree to a high extent that Attention control as part of leader's emotional intelligence improves effective administration of public universities in Rivers State. The cluster mean of 2.62 and standard deviation of 1.046 implies that the respondents agree to a high extent that respect for other as part of leader's emotional intelligence, Demonstrating compassion for others as part of leader's emotional intelligence, recognizing the strength in others as part of leader's emotional intelligence, Resolving conflict constructively as part of leader's emotional intelligence, loyalty as part of leader's emotional intelligence improves effective administration of public universities in Rivers State.

### Test of Hypotheses

**H0<sub>1</sub>** There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female leader's on the extent Leader's social awareness influence effective administration of public universities in Rivers State.

Table 3: Independent samples t-test of the significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female leader's on the extent Leader's social awareness influence effective administration of public universities in Rivers State.

Gender	N	Mean	SD.	df	t	p	Decision
Males	228	16.17	5.47	398	2.803	.005	<b>Ho<sub>4</sub> Rejected</b>
Females	172	14.50	4.26				

From the result presented in Table 3, it is revealed that male leaders had a mean value of 16.17 (STD = 4.79), while the female leaders had a mean value of 14.50 (SD = 4.26). This result shows that the male leaders strongly believe that the Leader's social awareness improves effective administration of public universities in Rivers State. Further testing using independent sample t-test revealed that a t-value of .2.803 was obtained with a corresponding p-value of .005 which was greater than the chosen alpha value of .05. This result therefore indicates that there is significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female leaders on the leader's social awareness improve effective administration of public universities in Rivers State.

**H0<sub>2</sub>** There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female leader's on the extent leader's relationship management improves effective administration of public universities in Rivers State.

Table 4: Independent samples t-test of the significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female leader's on the extent leader's relationship management improve effective administration of public universities in Rivers State.

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p	Decision
Males	228	16.42	4.913	398	3.327	.001	<b>Ho<sub>5</sub> Rejected</b>
Females	172	14.65	3.700				

From the result presented in Table 4, it is revealed that male leaders had a mean value of 16.42 (STD = 4.913), while the female leaders had a mean value of 14.65 (SD = 3.700). This result shows that the male leaders strongly believe that the Leader's relationship management improves effective administration of public universities in Rivers State. Further testing using independent sample t-test revealed that a t-value of 3.327 was obtained with a corresponding p-value of .001 which was greater than the chosen alpha value of .05. This result therefore indicates that there is significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female leaders on the leader's relationship management improve effective administration of public universities in Rivers State.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Social Awareness as Part of the Leader's Emotional Intelligence**

The findings in this regards showed that social awareness as part of the leader's emotional intelligence improve effective administration of public universities in Rivers State. This findings is in tandem with that of Ololube (2024a) who opined that being socially aware allows administrators to have empathy and understanding for the needs and concerns of employees, stakeholders, and the community at large helps administrators make decisions that consider diverse perspectives. Effective Communication of Administrators with social awareness can communicate clearly and respectfully, fostering a positive environment and ensuring messages are received as intended.

Skills in conflict resolution being attuned to social cues enables administrators to identify and address conflicts early, resolving issues before they escalate, Ololube (2024a) furthered reiterate that building relationships through understanding social dynamics, administrators can build stronger relationships, trust, and cooperation among team members, which is essential for efficient work flows. Cultural competence awareness of social and cultural nuances aids in creating policies and practices that are inclusive and respectful of diverse backgrounds (Senge, 1990).

### **Relationship Management as Part of the Leader's Emotional Intelligence**

The findings in this regards showed that relationship management as part of the leader's emotional intelligence improve effective administration of public universities in Rivers State. This findings corroborated with that of Boyatzis (2006) who explored how managers use task and relationship behaviors to influence subordinates. Stated that leaders need to focus on concern for production and respect for people to lead an organization. According to Goleman (2000) and Boyatzis (2006), the factor and concern for production refers to the bottom line, the results, the performance, or profits of the organization. And Production, in other words, is whatever an organization hires people to accomplish. The factor and concern for people and refers to the subordinates or colleagues in an organization and their dynamics, especially between the leaders and those they manage. Boyatzis (2006) stated that managers assumptions about people to determine effectiveness are essential. People are people regardless of the context of the work – industry, government, educational and medical institutions, or the home. The Relationship Management contains competencies that have the most direct effect on interactions with other people. In a fundamental sense, the effectiveness of one's relationship skills hinges on one's ability to attune to or influence the emotions of another person. They furthered posited that

developing others means to understand people's developmental needs and help in building their abilities

## CONCLUSION

The study highlighted the critical role of social awareness and relationship management as emotional intelligence variables in the leadership and effective administration of public universities. Leaders that are equipped with strong emotional intelligence can promote a more inclusive, communicative, and collaborative environment, which is essential to mitigate the complex challenges universities face today. Social awareness enables leaders to understand and respond to the emotional dynamics within their institutions, while relationship management helps in building trust, resolving conflicts, and motivating staff and students. These competencies are pivotal in creating a positive organizational culture that supports academic excellence, innovation, and efficient governance. The findings emphasized the need for university leaders to develop and refine their emotional intelligence skills, particularly in social awareness and relationship management, to enhance their leadership effectiveness. Furthermore, it underscores the importance of integrating emotional intelligence training into leadership development programs for academic administrators. Public universities can improve their administration, create a supportive work environment, and better meet the needs of their academic communities. This study advocates for a shift in leadership paradigms, recognizing the power of emotional intelligence in shaping the future of higher education institutions.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations were made on account of the findings of the study:

- Government should organize capacity building leadership training and workshop for universities leader's in order to enhance service delivery, enhance competencies and work place relationship for the effective and efficient attainment of set objectives and goals.
- Universities leadership should be appointed to people with good human relations rather than those with no empathy for followers and poor work place relationship.
- Universities leader's should be people oriented leader's rather than strictly task oriented leader's.
- Periodic self-assessment test can be conducted on University leader's by to help them improve, practice self-awareness and emotional intelligence.
- Leader's in the universities should demonstrates good leadership behavior and traits in the administration of schools.

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