

# Achieving Good Governance and Sustainable Development in Nigeria Through Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Development in Education

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**Abstract**

This study aims to investigate how the integration of emotional intelligence and leadership development in education can contribute to achieving good governance and promoting sustainable development in Nigeria. The study employs qualitative research method in which analytic approach was used to review literature on emotional intelligence and its important, influence of emotional intelligence on leadership and sustainable development, the role emotional intelligent play on good governance, and how emotional intelligence can be used to nurture leadership development in Nigeria education system. Drawing from analysis of relevant literature, the author advocates the integration of emotional intelligence into the curriculum. It is believed that integration of emotional intelligence would equip educators and students with self-awareness, empathy, effective communication, and conflict resolution skills. This would empower future leaders to navigate complex social landscapes. This, in turn, would enable them to address societal issues with a greater understanding of the human dimensions involved. The researcher made further recommendations which include inter alia, that: The Nigerian government should prioritize the integration of emotional intelligence and leadership development programs among Educators. Educators should emphasize ethics, social responsibility, and sustainability across various subjects and cultivation of leadership skills among students. Furthermore, more trained Guidance Counsellors should be employed in the Nigerian educational sectors to cushion the effect of unwholesome development of emotional intelligence and enhancing good governance and sustainable development in Nigeria.

### **Background to the Study**

The development of a nation depends largely on her education. This is because education is viewed as key to human development and an instrument for good governance and leadership development. Education is the sum total of all those experiences that enlighten somebody's mind, increase one's power of knowledge, foster insight, develop different ability and attitudes and strengthen one's will power (Ogunyiriofo, 2002). Good governance and sustainable development are key pillars for the growth and stability of societies. However, achieving good governance often requires effective leadership and emotional intelligence, both of which can be fostered through education. As such, for an individual to be emotionally intelligent with good leadership quality, he/she needs to be educated, to prepare for life by means of gearing up to the emerging needs of society.

Emotions are intense feelings that influence people's state of mind such as, anger, happiness, perseverance, anxiety, worry, sadness, enthusiasm, hope, persistence, fear and creativity, etc., which are both positive and negative. Any action, if not accompanied by the right level of emotions, can fall flat. Mangal (2013) stated that emotion would prove to be helpful or harmful depending on its intensity/frequency, situation and type. Whether emotion is helpful or harmful depends on one's experience that could either develop or damage it. Hence, we need to manage not only our negative emotions but also learn to put our positive emotions to work for us.

The concept of "emotional intelligence" emerged in psychology during the early 1990s and gained popularity through the work of psychologists Peter Salovey and John Mayer. Mayer and Salovey (1995), defined emotional intelligence as a type of intelligence that includes the skills to identify emotion, to incorporate it in thought, to comprehend it and to manage it. Salovey and Mayer's proposal emphasized the importance of accurately recognizing and interpreting emotions in oneself and others, as well as the ability to skillfully manage and express emotions in ways that are adaptive and beneficial. Emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in leadership development as it enables leaders to effectively navigate social interactions, make informed decisions, inspire and motivate their teams.

Rampant corruption, inadequate infrastructure, social inequalities, poor governance and lack of visionary leadership have been identified as major factors contributing to various challenges fighting against sustainable development in Nigeria today. Emotional intelligence and leadership development as transformative forces could foster a solution if the leaders are by equipped with self-awareness, empathy, effective communication, and conflict resolution skills.

### **Literature Review**

Abraham, (2000), defined emotional intelligence as a set of talents that are attributable to the ability of assessing self-emotion and that of others and use it as drive for better achievement in the life of the individual. Furnham, (2003,) posits that emotional intelligence is the ability to observe, recognize and address the emotions and regulate

them so that the individual can affect the moods of others. A person who lacks emotional equilibrium cannot regulate his own emotions or control that of others even if he has high level of intelligence.

Governance is the process by which rulers take a stand about public affairs and the process by which such stand is implemented or not. Good governance is the process of measuring extend to which government conduct public affairs and manage the economy and assure the accomplishment of human rights that is corruption free and free of abuse with regard for the rule of law United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNISCAP, 2009). Major characteristic of good governance includes participatory, transparent, equitable, consensus effective and efficient, oriented, accountable, responsive, and inclusive.

Leadership is a process where actors who are in charge of the affair of the public, create, implement or interpret the rules that are compulsory on existing social institutions and play the state roles (Dagaci 2009). Developing, and effectively applying good leadership is a key part of any leaders' job and success. Leadership development is the process of developing and refining those key proficiencies. Sustainable development is the development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. For a development to be sustainable it must look to balance different, and competing, needs against an awareness of the environmental, social and economic limitations facing a society.

### **Theories of Emotional Intelligence**

The theory of emotional intelligence was categorized in three classes by Irene and Athanasios (2022). Below is the highlight of their classification.

1. Mayer, Salovey & Caruso: This theory of ability considers emotional intelligence as an ability of the mind that corresponds with its assembly and association, with the other types of intelligence, which refer mainly to cognitive abilities.
2. BarOn's theory: This theory of personality framework interprets emotional intelligence as a mixture of adaptation capacities and natural traits.
3. Goleman's theory: This theory of performance try to explain and also forecast the efficiency and work performance, based on the way which their nature is organized.

### **Importance of Emotional Intelligence**

Emotional Intelligence impacts both mental and physical wellbeing of an individual as highlighted by Jayashree et al. (2017).

1. **Health** – Managing our stress have direct impact on our physical health which is greatly influenced by our emotional intelligent. By recognizing our emotional state and our responses to trauma in our lives we can then manage to control stress and preserve good health.
2. **Mental Well-Being** – Emotional intelligence upsets our attitude and viewpoint towards life. It can also help to improve psychological trauma such as anxiety,

depression and mood swings. A high level of emotional intelligence is directly connected to a positive attitude and happier viewpoint towards life.

3. **Relationships** – Having a good understanding and control of our emotions, can help us makes effectively communicate of our feelings and to understand and relate with whom we are in relationships. Stronger and more fulfilling relationships could be achieved from understanding the needs, feelings, and responses of those around us.
4. **Conflict Resolution** – Communication is key to avoid and resolve conflicts. By communication, we can understand the needs and desires of others and offer effective negotiation can be put in place before conflicts even start. Hence, it is easier to give people what they want if we can perceive what it is.
5. **Success** – Higher emotional intelligence helps to increase self-confidence and improve our ability to focus on a goal. Which in turn help us to overcome setbacks and have high resilient outlook.
6. **Leadership** – Persons with higher emotional intelligence will understand what makes other people happy. They relate with free mind and builds stronger bonds with them. Thus, increased work satisfaction and achievement of the organizational goals. An emotionally intelligent leader is also able to build stronger teams by strategically utilizing the emotional diversity of their team members achievement a goal for all.

### **Component of EI and its influence on Leadership, and Sustainable Development**

Jayashree et al. (2017), highlighted the major components of emotional intelligent which have influence on leadership and development as summarized.

1. **Self-awareness and Empathy:** Emotional intelligence involves self-awareness, understanding one's emotions, strengths, and weaknesses. Leaders with high emotional intelligence are better equipped to understand the needs and concerns of their constituents, fostering empathy and compassion. This empathy enables leaders to make informed decisions that consider the social and environmental impacts, ensuring sustainable development that benefits all stakeholders.
2. **Relationship Management and Collaboration:** Emotional intelligence encompasses relationship management skills, such as effective communication, conflict resolution, and collaboration. Sustainable development necessitates collaboration among various stakeholders, including government agencies, businesses, communities, and civil society organizations. Leaders with strong emotional intelligence can build trust, establish fruitful partnerships, and facilitate cooperation, leading to more effective implementation of sustainable development initiatives.
3. **Resilience and Adaptability:** Emotional intelligence equips leaders with resilience and adaptability, essential qualities for navigating the complexities and challenges of sustainable development. Leaders who possess emotional intelligence can handle setbacks, overcome obstacles, and adapt their strategies in the face of changing circumstances. This flexibility ensures that sustainable development efforts remain agile and responsive to evolving needs and circumstances.

### **Contribution of Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Development in Promoting Sustainable Development.**

In Nigeria, where the pursuit of good governance and sustainable development is crucial, the role of emotional intelligence in shaping leaders and fostering positive change cannot be overstated. Several scholars have explored the connection between emotional intelligence, leadership development, and its impact on governance and sustainable development.

Research supports the relevance of emotional intelligence in the context of good governance and sustainable development in Nigeria. According to Agwu and Agbaeze (2020), "emotional intelligence is a key determinant of leadership effectiveness in the public sector." Aina and Salami (2019) argue that emotional intelligence is a pathway to good governance and sustainable development, emphasizing its role in ethical leadership.

In the Nigerian education system, emotional intelligence and leadership development have been recognized as essential components for promoting good governance and sustainable development. Umar and Abdulwahab (2021) highlighted that emotional intelligence fosters effective leadership within educational institutions, contributing to overall governance and development. Ikegwuonu and Idike (2020), propose a conceptual framework linking emotional intelligence and good governance in Nigeria.

Studies have shown the positive impact of emotional intelligence and leadership development on sustainable development. Oluwatobi, Gbadeyan, and Ighodalo (2018) found evidence supporting the relationship between emotional intelligence, leadership effectiveness, and sustainable development in Nigeria. Adeyemo, and Adeoye (2021), emphasized emotional intelligence and leadership development as catalysts for good governance. Overall, these studies highlight the importance of emotional intelligence and leadership development in Nigeria's pursuit of good governance and sustainable development, emphasizing the need for their integration within the education system.

### **The Role of Emotional Intelligence in Good Governance**

Emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in good governance by enhancing decision-making, relationship building, conflict management, and consensus building. Several studies have examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and good governance, particularly in the context of sustainable development in Nigeria (Osibanjo, Adeniji, & Obayori 2017; Okpala & Onyekwelu, 2018; Onwuzo, 2020; Edem & Nyor, 2021). These studies provide valuable insights into the impact of emotional intelligence on various aspects of governance.

One area where emotional intelligence contributes to good governance is decision-making. Emotional intelligence involves the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's emotions and those of others. Leaders with high emotional intelligence are more likely to make informed decisions that take into account the emotions and needs of

individuals and communities. They can consider different perspectives, empathize with stakeholders, and anticipate the potential consequences of their decisions (Osibanjo *et al.*, 2017). By incorporating emotional intelligence into decision-making processes, leaders can promote fairness, inclusiveness, and long-term sustainability.

Moreover, emotional intelligence plays a vital role in relationship building within governance structures. Effective governance requires strong relationships between leaders, citizens, and various stakeholders. Leaders who possess emotional intelligence can establish rapport, trust, and mutual understanding with others. They are skilled in active listening, empathy, and effective communication, which fosters positive relationships and enhances cooperation (Okpala & Onyekwelu, 2018). By nurturing healthy relationships, leaders can build consensus, encourage participation, and gain support for their governance initiatives.

In the realm of conflict management, emotional intelligence is invaluable. Conflicts often arise within governance systems due to differing interests, perspectives, and values. Leaders who possess emotional intelligence are equipped with the skills to manage conflicts constructively. They can regulate their emotions, remain calm under pressure, and approach conflicts with empathy and understanding (Onwuzo, 2020). Emotional intelligence enables leaders to facilitate dialogue, resolve disputes, and find win-win solutions that address the underlying concerns of all parties involved.

Consensus building is another crucial aspect of good governance that is influenced by emotional intelligence. Effective governance requires collaboration and cooperation among diverse stakeholders to achieve common goals. Leaders with high emotional intelligence can navigate complex relationships, identify shared interests, and create an inclusive and participatory decision-making process (Edem & Nyor, 2021). By actively engaging stakeholders, considering their emotions and perspectives, and fostering a sense of ownership, leaders can build consensus and promote sustainable development.

### **Emotional Intelligence and Educational Leadership**

Emotional intelligence plays a vital role in educational leadership, offering numerous benefits to educational institutions. Research has shown that emotionally intelligent leaders have a positive impact on the overall school climate, student outcomes, teacher satisfaction, and organizational effectiveness (Beghetto & Plucker, 2006; Brackett *et al.*, 2009; Hargreaves, 2005).

One significant benefit of emotionally intelligent leaders in educational institutions is the creation of a positive school climate. These leaders are skilled in understanding and managing their own emotions as well as the emotions of others, including students, teachers, and staff. They foster an environment of empathy, respect, and trust, which contributes to a positive and supportive school culture (Hargreaves, 2005). Students and teachers feel valued and motivated, leading to increased engagement and better overall well-being within the school community.

Furthermore, emotionally intelligent leaders possess strong interpersonal skills that enhance relationships and collaboration within the educational setting. They are effective communicators, active listeners, and empathetic individuals. These leaders create open lines of communication, encourage feedback, and promote a culture of collaboration among all stakeholders (Brackett *et al.*, 2009). By building strong relationships, educational leaders can better understand the needs and concerns of their teachers and students, leading to improved teamwork, teacher-student relationships, and overall school performance. In the context of Nigeria, it is essential to emphasize the need for developing emotional intelligence skills among educational leaders. Nigeria's education system faces various challenges, including limited resources, high student-to-teacher ratios, and socio-economic disparities (Olojo & Adedeji, 2016). Developing emotional intelligence skills among educational leaders can help address these challenges and promote positive change.

To develop emotional intelligence skills among educational leaders in Nigeria, training programs and professional development opportunities should be provided. These programs can focus on self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management, which are key components of emotional intelligence (Olojo & Adedeji, 2016). Through training and ongoing support, educational leaders can enhance their emotional intelligence competencies and apply them to their leadership practices, positively influencing the entire educational institution.

### **Nurturing Emotional Intelligence and leadership Development in Nigeria's Education System**

By nurturing individuals equipped with the skills necessary for personal and professional success, challenges such as lack of awareness, limited resources, and exam-centric approaches can be limited. Also, by adopting strategies like teacher training, curriculum integration, effective counselling, collaborative partnerships, student-centered approaches, and parental involvement, we can pave the way for a brighter future for our students and our nation as a whole.

Leadership development programs for educators in Nigeria should be designed and implemented with a focus on building effective leadership skills and incorporating emotional intelligence training. Several studies emphasize the importance of emotional intelligence in leadership effectiveness, good governance, and sustainable development in Nigeria (Oluwatobi *et al.*, 2018; Aina & Salami, 2019; Afolabi, 2019; Agwu & Agbaeze, 2020; Ikegwuonu & Idike, 2020; Umar & Abdulwahab, 2021; Adeyemo *et al.*, 2021).

To design an effective leadership development program, it is essential to consider the specific needs and challenges faced by educators in Nigeria. The program should include a combination of theoretical knowledge, practical skills, and experiential learning opportunities. It should aim to enhance the leadership capabilities of educators, enabling them to inspire and motivate their students, make informed decisions, and drive positive change in their schools and communities. . Incorporating emotional intelligence enhance

educators to create a positive and supportive learning environment, fostering student success and overall school improvement.

Research supports the integration of emotional intelligence training into leadership development programs in Nigeria. For example, a study by Agwu and Agbaeze (2020), found a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness among Nigerian public sector employees. Another study by Umar and Abdulwahab (2021) emphasized the role of emotional intelligence in leadership development within educational institutions, highlighting its potential for good governance and sustainable development.

These findings are further supported by studies such as those conducted by Aina and Salami (2019), Ikegwuonu and Idike (2020), Oluwatobi *et al.* (2018), Adeyemo *et al.* (2021), and Afolabi (2019). These studies provide evidence of the positive impact of emotional intelligence on leadership effectiveness and its potential to contribute to good governance and sustainable development in Nigeria. By implementing emotional intelligence training, Nigeria can nurture a new generation of educators who possess the skills and qualities needed to lead effectively, inspire others, and promote positive change in the education system.

### **Integration of EI into the curriculum**

Emotional intelligence and leadership development should be integrated into the national educational curriculum as a core subject across all grade levels. This integration can be achieved through the development of specific learning objectives, lesson plans, and assessments aligned with these skills. It is essential to emphasize their importance and demonstrate how they can be applied in real-life situations. Such as acquiring all the necessary skills and knowledge needed to recognize, understand, and manage emotions effectively in oneself and others. Student with high emotional intelligence can build strong relationships, resolve conflicts, and communicate empathetically with other students, teachers, and parents. Including emotional intelligence in the Nigerian curriculum can have a profound impact on the student leadership style, help them become more self-aware, develop better interpersonal skills, and navigate complex social dynamics.

### **Strategies for Implementation**

Among the various strategies for implementing emotional intelligence, Hargreaves, (2005) outlined the following.

- 1. Teacher training and professional development:** Implementing emotional intelligence and leadership development requires well-trained educators. Providing comprehensive training programs and workshops for teachers will enhance their understanding of these skills and enable them to effectively impart them to their students.
- 2. Collaborative partnerships:** Collaboration among various stakeholders, including schools, universities, NGOs, and government agencies, is crucial for



successful implementation. By forming partnerships, sharing resources, and exchanging best practices, we can create a supportive ecosystem that fosters emotional intelligence and leadership development in Nigerian education.

3. **Student-Centered Approach:** Promoting student involvement and active participation is key to the implementation of emotional intelligence and leadership development initiatives. Encourage students to engage in activities such as group discussions, projects, and experiential learning, which will enhance their interpersonal skills, self-awareness, and decision-making abilities.
4. **Parental Involvement and Awareness:** Engaging parents in the process is vital for the success of these initiatives. Conduct workshops and seminars for parents to raise awareness about emotional intelligence and leadership development and provide guidance on how they can support their children's growth in these areas at home.
5. **Assessment and Evaluation:** Develop appropriate assessment tools to measure students' progress in emotional intelligence and leadership development. These assessments should go beyond traditional examinations and focus on evaluating students' practical application of these skills in real-life scenarios.

### **Emotional Intelligence and Sustainable Development**

Emotional intelligence (EI) and effective leadership play pivotal roles in achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Nigeria. Sustainable development encompasses economic, social, and environmental dimensions, and the successful implementation of policies and decisions. And these areas require leaders who possess strong emotional intelligence.

Examples of Emotional Intelligence in Sustainable Development in education includes.

**Social Inclusion and Equity:** Emotional intelligence promotes social inclusion and equity among the students, an essential component of sustainable development in education. Trainers with strong emotional intelligence can recognize low performing students and design a strategy to address these social inequalities, ensuring that that such designed promotes equal opportunities. By fostering empathy and understanding, these teachers can create environments where diverse voices are heard and valued, resulting in more inclusive and sustainable outcomes.

**Conflict Resolution and Peace Building:** Nigeria faces various socio-political and ethnic conflicts that hinder sustainable development efforts. If students are trained to have emotional intelligence it will help them to navigate these conflicts by fostering understanding, promoting dialogue, and finding mutually beneficial solutions. Students who possess emotional intelligence can effectively mediate disputes and build sustainable peace, creating an enabling learning environment for development initiatives to thrive.

Overall, the sustainability of emotional intelligence and leadership development initiatives in Nigeria depends on adapting to the cultural context, leveraging available

resources, integrating these concepts into the education system, and addressing resistance through effective change management. By implementing these strategies, Nigeria can foster the growth of emotionally intelligent and effective leaders, leading to positive societal impact and development.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

In a democratic society, the school's basic purpose is the education and development of all students towards individual fulfilment. This important responsibility can be achieved through organization and administration of guidance programme and services by the various school Counsellors, such as providing personal, social and career counselling to promote students' emotional intelligence, good leadership skills, health and adjustment in school and intelligent career decisions and plans. Providing individual group counselling in the classroom settings, assembly ground, and setting a day aside for career day to discuss issues like emotional intelligence, self-discipline, responsibility, value clarification, sex education, qualities of leaderships etc.

The strategic employment of trained guidance counselors in the Nigeria educational sectors emerges as a brilliant solution to combat the detrimental effects of underdeveloped emotional intelligence, while simultaneously propelling good governance and driving sustainable development in the country. By infusing the educational landscape with the expertise and trained guidance counselors, Nigeria can nurture a generation of emotionally intelligent individuals equipped with the vital skills needed to navigate life's complexities. These professionals will provide essential support, assisting students in understanding and managing their emotions, fostering healthy relationships, and cultivating resilience in the face of challenges. Through guidance counselling interventions, they will empower students to become self-aware, empathetic, and socially responsible individuals, capable of making sound decisions and contributing positively to their communities. By addressing emotional intelligence deficits, these professionals will play a vital role in enhancing mental health outcomes, reducing social problems, and fostering a safe and inclusive learning environment which in turn will foster a generation of emotionally and mentally resilient citizens, paving the way for a healthier, happier, and more productive society. As students develop emotional intelligence and leadership skills under guidance counsellors, they will be equipped to assume roles of responsibility and contribute meaningfully to the nation's progress. These emerging leaders will possess the ability to navigate complexities, foster collaboration, and make informed decisions that drive positive change. Through their ethical leadership, they will steer Nigeria towards a future characterized by good governance, transparency, accountability, and sustainable development.

To realize the brilliance of employing trained guidance counsellors, Nigeria must prioritize their recruitment, training, and ongoing professional development. Adequate resource must be allocated to ensure a robust support system that empowers counsellors to excel in their roles. By investing in their expertise, the nation invests in the transformative potential of its youth, thereby fortifying the pillars of national progress and prosperity.

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