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EMOTIONALLY INTELLIGENT SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND TEACHER MOTIVATION CULTURE IN CROSS RIVER STATE PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined emotionally intelligent school leadership and teacher motivation culture in Cross River State public secondary schools. A correlational design was adopted for this study. The population comprised 4,473 teachers in all 290 public secondary schools in Cross River State. A stratified random sampling technique was adopted to select 626 public secondary school teachers in the three State education zones. Two research questions were generated to guide the study. One instrument, the "Emotionally Intelligent School Leadership and Teacher Motivation Culture Questionnaire" (EISLTMCQ), was used for data collection. Collected data were subjected to descriptive and inferential statistical analyses. The finding of this study revealed a significant relationship between self-awareness and Teacher Motivation Culture in Cross River State public secondary schools. The results further revealed that the relationship between Social Skills and intrinsic motivation and professional efficacy was not statistically significant. It was concluded that self-awareness was significant in Professional efficacy and overall Teacher Motivation Culture while insignificant with Extrinsic Motivation and Intrinsic Motivation, and that an increase in social skills was associated with a decrease in all the sub-variables of Teacher Motivation Culture. It was recommended that

School management should ensure a comprehensive approach that considers self-awareness with a focus on intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation and overall teacher motivation as crucial for achieving teacher motivation in public secondary schools. In addition, school administrators should ensure overall teacher motivation in the schools by using self-awareness and social skills to actualize teacher intrinsic motivation and professional efficacy while upholding the school culture.

Keywords: self-awareness, social skills, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, professional efficacy

1. Introduction

One of the most powerful determinants of organisational culture, teacher morale, and student achievement is the quality of leadership in any educational institution. In the present educational administration, school leaders are increasingly expected to exceed technical managerial competence to the demonstration of relational, interpersonal, and emotionally sophisticated capacities which can bring about productive, inclusive, and motivating school environments. This is the essence of emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive, understand, manage, and strategically engage emotions in oneself, as well as in relationships with others in ways that may attain personal and organisational objectives (Mayer et al., 2016; Petrides et al., 2016).

Across the globe, educational systems battle with the challenges of teacher retention and quality of instruction. This has made the emergence of emotionally intelligent school leadership a pivotal stride for the creation of conditions under which teachers thrive professionally, remain intrinsically committed to their work, and able to sustain high professional efficacy (Berkovich & Eyal, 2017; Leithwood et al., 2020).

In this study on emotionally intelligent school leadership and teacher motivation culture in Cross River State public secondary schools, the independent variable is emotionally intelligent school leadership with the sub variables: Self-Awareness and Social Skills while the dependent variable is teacher motivation culture , (in terms of Intrinsic Motivation, Extrinsic Motivation and Professional Efficacy) in public secondary schools, Cross River state

Emotionally intelligent school leadership is that exercise of educational administrative authority through the intentional, reflective, and strategic use of emotional awareness, empathy, relational skill, and interpersonal sensitivity in ways that may advance institutional goals, nurture teacher professional wellbeing, and cultivate productive school cultures (Goleman et al., 2017; Mayer et al., 2016). Emotionally intelligent school leaders demonstrate a distinctive capacity to read and respond to the emotional climate of their institutions, so as to identify and address the motivational needs of teachers and create the conditions of psychological safety and professional belonging for sustained engagement and high performance.

In Cross River State, teachers navigate significant professional stressors like resource scarcity, heavy workloads, inconsistency in salary payments, low commitment to teacher professional development and workshops, delayed promotions and limited institutional recognition. But the emotional intelligence of school administrators is a determinant of the motivational environment within which teaching and learning occur (Owan et al., 2022; Uche & Eze, 2021).

Teacher motivation culture is about the accepted shared values, beliefs, norms, and practices which collectively define the school as a social and professional institution that appreciates the teaching profession (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Schein & Schein, 2017). The school leader's emotional intelligence is therefore a critical determinant of the cultural conditions that either nurture or suppress teacher motivation across its multiple dimensions. In this study, it is the deeply embedded system of shared values, beliefs, norms, behavioral expectations, symbols, rituals, and relational patterns that collectively influence the morale of the social and professional character in the school (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Schein & Schein, 2017).

In the case of teacher motivation, it is a complex and multidimensional psychological construct that encompasses the full range of internal and external forces that energize, direct, and sustain teachers' professional behavior and commitment (Deci & Ryan, 2017; Watt & Richardson, 2020). When teachers are motivated, they become professionally engaged practitioners who invest discretionary effort in their work, pursuing continuous professional growth, even under institutional stress conditions and resource scarcity. In Nigerian public secondary schools, the motivational landscape of teachers is shaped by the interplay of institutional, cultural, economic, and interpersonal factors, in which the quality of school leadership and the character of school culture exert significant influence (Owan et al., 2022; Uche & Eze, 2021).

Sustaining adequate levels of teacher motivation culture in Nigerian public secondary schools has become critical because of the decades of chronic underfunding, infrastructural deterioration, inequitable remuneration, and weak professional development which have, in turn, caused teacher demotivation, disengagement, and discouragement. (Adeyemi, 2019; Nwankwo & Ezeugbor, 2020). The theoretical foundation for this draws from multiple scholarly traditions of emotional intelligence of self-awareness and social skills through which leaders can influence organizational outcomes (Goleman et al., 2017).

Self-awareness is the capacity to accurately perceive and understand one's own emotional states, strengths, limitations, and impact on others, which in turn can equip school leaders to exercise reflective, principled, and relationally sensitive authority towards institutional trust and models of emotional maturity and healthy school cultures (Bradberry & Greaves, 2017; Petrides et al., 2016). It is a foundational dimension of emotional intelligence in school leadership's capacity to accurately perceive, understand, and reflect upon their own emotional states, values, motivations, strengths, limitations, and behavioral patterns, vis-à-vis their interactions with teachers, students, and other institutional stakeholders (Bradberry & Greaves, 2017; Goleman et al., 2017). A self-aware school leader is one who exercises leadership from a position of honest self-knowledge, recognizing the impact of their emotional expressions and behavioral tendencies on the institutional climate they are responsible for cultivating. Boyatzis et al. (2019) documented that self-aware leaders are more likely to engage in authentic leadership behavior, characterized by consistency between espoused values and enacted practice, transparency in decision-making and genuine responsiveness to feedback from staff.

In social skills, leaders possess the capacity to manage relationships, inspire collective vision, constructively navigate conflict, build collaborative networks and translate emotional intelligence from an individual attribute into an organisational force to shape the interpersonal fabric of school life (Boyatzis et al., 2019; Leithwood et al., 2020).

Representing the outward expression of emotional intelligence in leadership practice, social skills translate internal emotional awareness into the interpersonal behaviours and organisational strategies towards shaping institutional culture and teacher motivation. For school leaders in Cross River State, social skills manifest in the capacity to build trusting relationships with teaching staff, to communicate institutional vision in ways that inspire professional commitment, to mediate interpersonal conflicts within school communities, and to create the collaborative professional cultures that sustain teacher motivation across its intrinsic, extrinsic, and efficacy dimensions. Leithwood et al. (2020) opine that principals who invested deliberately in relationship building, collegial communication, and collaborative decision-making processes produced significantly higher levels of teacher job satisfaction, professional commitment, and institutional loyalty than those who managed through directive authority.

Teacher motivation culture here is the accepted, complex, multidimensional set of psychological forces that initiate, direct, sustain, and give meaning to teachers' professional behaviour, engagement, and commitment in schools (Deci & Ryan, 2017; Watt & Richardson, 2020). It is that dynamic and layered phenomenon that encompasses the motives by which teachers invest in their work, and maintain professional commitment to either flourish or languish in the system. In Nigerian public secondary schools, teacher motivation culture is of urgent practical significance with well-documented challenges of teacher disengagement, truancy, inconsistent lesson deliveries, absenteeism, and other unhealthy attitudes that undermine educational quality in the country (Adeyemi, 2019; Nwankwo & Ezeugbor, 2020).

The intersection of these leadership competencies with the cultural and motivational dimensions of school life in Cross River State public secondary schools makes up the central intellectual concern of this study by examining self-awareness and social skills among some other factors not mentioned here due to space constraints and research focus as dimensions of emotionally intelligent leadership in teacher intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and professional efficacy.

Intrinsic motivation here is the internal, self-generated drive to engage in professional activities for the inherent satisfaction, meaning, intellectual stimulation, and sense of personal fulfilment with or without external rewards (Deci & Ryan, 2017; Ryan & Deci, 2020). Teachers who are intrinsically motivated teach because they find the work inherently meaningful, with their deepest professional values, pursuing continuous professional growth because they see teaching as personally rewarding in themselves. This is seen as the most sustainable and educationally productive basis for teacher professional engagement (Kunter et al., 2013; Ryan & Deci, 2020).

Extrinsic motivation on its own is the engagement in professional activities driven by external factors such as financial remuneration, promotion prospects, formal recognition, avoidance of negative consequences, or compliance with institutional expectations and authority structures (Deci & Ryan, 2017; Watt & Richardson, 2020). While extrinsic motivation is frequently contrasted unfavorably with intrinsic motivation in the scholarly literature, it is still a crucially significant dimension of teacher professional behavior, especially in institutions where intrinsic motivation alone cannot sustain adequate levels of professional engagement (Ryan & Deci, 2020; Uche & Eze, 2021) and efficacy.

Professional efficacy is about teachers' beliefs in their own capacity to execute the professional tasks required for positive influence on student learning outcomes, navigating institutional challenges competently for a meaningful contribution to the collective goals of the school community (Bandura, 1997; Klassen & Tze, 2014). Teachers with high professional

efficacy are more likely to persist in the face of instructional challenges, using innovative pedagogical strategies, invest in professional development, and maintaining high expectations for student achievement even under unfavourable institutional conditions.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

In Nigerian public secondary schools, teacher motivation culture is one of the most critical unresolved challenges confronting educational administrators, policymakers, and school leaders. With the repeated cycles of educational reform, policy intervention, and institutional restructuring, the motivational landscape of public secondary school teachers in Nigeria still remains deeply troubled and characterised by widespread professional disengagement, declining intrinsic commitment and inadequate extrinsic incentive structures, alongside low levels of professional efficacy in the teaching workforce (Adeyemi, 2019; Nwankwo & Ezeugbor, 2020). These deficits are not just personal failures of individual teachers but broader institutional outcomes resulting from decades of administrative neglect, cultural deterioration, and leadership inadequacy that eroded the professional conditions that have over the years sustained teacher motivation (Owan et al., 2022; Uche & Eze, 2021).

In Cross River State, the problem of teacher motivation culture in public secondary schools is of certain urgency. There have been pervasive patterns of teacher absenteeism, truancy, non-delivery of lessons, professional disengagement, non-preparation of lessons, indecent or unethical dressing, professional growth resistance, instructional inadequacy, and voluntary career attrition which in turn, undermine student learning outcomes and schools' effectiveness across the state's public secondary schools (Emunemu & Imobekhai, 2022; Owan et al., 2023) in the three educational zones (Calabar, Ikom and Ogoja). These deficits are rooted in a complex interplay of structural, cultural, and leadership-related factors, whereas the quality of school leadership and the character of institutional teacher motivation culture are the most actionable determinants. Despite this recognition, the specific mechanisms remain insufficiently understood and empirically underexplored.

The emotional intelligence of school leaders therefore is a dimension that has attracted growing scholarly attention internationally, being a significant determinant of teacher motivation culture outcomes. Researchers assert that school principals who exhibit high emotional intelligence, particularly in the domains of self-awareness and social skills, are significantly more effective in creating motivating school cultures, sustaining teacher professional commitment, and fostering the efficacy beliefs that enable teachers to perform effectively even under challenging institutional conditions (Berkovich & Eyal, 2017; Leithwood et al., 2020). The problem now is of the inadequate attention given to school teacher motivation culture within the Nigerian educational system.

The concept of school teacher motivation culture has specific manifestations, determinants, and consequences in the context of Cross River State public secondary schools although it is poorly documented (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2018). This is because school teacher motivation culture is shaped by personal, social, ethnic, and institutional dynamics that vary across individual and national contexts.

It is against this background that this study investigates the relationship between emotionally intelligent school leadership and teacher motivation culture in the public secondary schools, Cross River State. It examines how the self-awareness and social skills of school leaders relate to teacher intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and professional efficacy in the school to generate insights for leadership development policy, teacher motivation strategies and interventions across the educational system of Cross River State and Nigeria as a whole.

1.2. Objectives of the study

The objective of the study was to investigate the:

1. relationship between **s**elf-awareness and teacher motivation culture (in terms of intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation and professional efficacy) in public secondary schools.
2. relationship between social skills and teacher motivation culture (in terms of intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation and professional efficacy) in public secondary schools

1.3. Research Questions

1. How does self-awareness relate to teacher motivation culture (in terms of extrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation, and professional efficacy) in public secondary schools
2. How do social skills relate to teacher motivation culture (in terms of extrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation, and professional efficacy) in public secondary schools

1.4. Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between self-awareness and teacher motivation culture (in terms of extrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation, and professional efficacy) in public secondary schools
2. There is no significant relationship between social skills and teacher motivation culture (in terms of extrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation, and professional efficacy) in public secondary schools

2. Methodology

This study adopted correlational design. The area covered was Cross River State of Nigeria with the three Education Zones: Calabar, Ikom and Ogoja. The population for this study comprised 4,473 teachers in the 290 public secondary schools in Cross River State. The stratified random sampling technique was used to select 14 percent of the public secondary school teachers in each stratum as sample for the study. One research instrument: Emotionally Intelligent School Leadership and Teacher Motivation Culture Questionnaire (EISLTMCQ) was used for data collection in this study. The questionnaire had section A, B and C. Section A of the instrument was designed to measure the demographic variables of the respondents: gender, educational qualifications. Section B was designed to measure the Emotionally Intelligent School Leadership: (self-awareness and social skills). Section C of the questionnaire measured the Teacher Motivation Culture variables: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and professional efficacy. The items had four options ranging from: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The items in the questionnaires were constructed using ideas from literature related to the measured variables. The respondents responded objectively based on their degree of agreement or disagreement on the measured attributes and phenomena.

Draft copies of the instrument were submitted to the two experts in Educational Management and two experts in Measurement and Evaluation from the Faculty of Educational Foundation Studies, College of Education, University of Calabar, Calabar to vet the items for face and content validity. However out of sixty (60) items that were developed on EISLTMCQ for the study, forty-eight (48) were retained after modification, while twelve (12) items were dropped on account of ambiguity and irrelevance. So in total, forty-eight (48) items were used all together after vetting. To ascertain the reliability of the instruments, the instrument was trial tested on 50 respondents from selected public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. After the instruments were administered and retrieved from the respondents, they were coded, and the data subjected to statistical analysis using Cronbach alpha reliability scale. The reliability coefficients ranged from .79 to .92.

Table 1. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for all sub-scales in the study instrument (N = 50)

Sub-scales	No. of items	X	SD	A
Self-Awareness	6	15.23	2.86	.88
Social Skills	6	13.61	2.83	.92
Intrinsic Motivation	6	12.58	2.29	.79
Extrinsic Motivation	6	13.92	2.37	.91
Professional Efficacy	6	12.56	2.63	.89

The researchers administered the instruments to the respondents in the schools. The respondents were encouraged to give their sincere responses to the items without bias. They were given one week to fill the questionnaires on their own. A coding schedule was designed to score the responses. The questionnaires were organized in the order of the variables they were designed to measure. All positively worded items were scored as follows: strongly agree (SA) - 4 points, agree (A) - 3

points, disagree (D) - 2 points, strongly disagree (SD) - 1 point. The patterns were reversed for all negatively worded items. The items on the questionnaires were measured and presented in a tabular form for clarity. The scores of respondents on the respective sub-scales were summed and transferred to appropriate statistical packages for analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data generated from the questionnaires while Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was used to answer the research questions.

3. Results

Table 2: Summary of descriptive statistics of the research variables N=626

S/N	Variables	$\overline{X}$	SD
1	Self Awareness X_1	12.88	3.68
2.	Social Skills X_2	14.77	2.56
3	Extrinsic Motivation Y_1	16.60	3.07
4	Intrinsic Motivation Y_2	17.42	2.81
5.	Professional Efficacy Y_3	16.88	2.95
6.	Overall Teacher Motivation Culture (Y_1-3)	50.84	5.89

Table 2 presented the means and standard deviations of the research variables. This indicated the lowest mean for self-awareness. On the other hand, the highest obtained mean value for the sub-variables of the dependent variable was X = 17.42 for intrinsic motivation, followed by professional efficacy (X = 16.88), and extrinsic motivation (X = 16.60). However, the Overall Teacher Motivation Culture indicated a mean value X = 50.84. The standard deviations obtained for all the sub-variables were moderate, with a similar spread in the responses of teachers sampled for this study.

Research question 1: To what extent does self-awareness relate to Teacher Motivation Culture (in terms of intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and professional efficacy and Overall Teacher Motivation Culture)?

To answer this question, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was employed and the results are as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Summary of the analysis of the relationship between Self Awareness and the sub-variables of Overall Teacher Motivation Culture

Variables	$\overline{X}$	SD	r
Self awareness (X_1)	12.88	3.68	
Extrinsic motivation (Y1)	16.60	3.07	-.046
Intrinsic motivation (Y2)	17.42	2.81	.067
Professional Efficacy (Y3)	16.88	2.95	.227
Overall Teacher Motivation Culture (Y1 – Y3)	50.84	5.89	.120

Table 3 showed a very weak positive relationship between Self-Awareness and Intrinsic Motivation (r = .067), weak positive relationships between Self-Awareness and Professional Efficacy (r = .227) and between Self-Awareness and Overall Teacher Motivation Culture (r = .120). On the other hand, the relationship between Self-Awareness and Extrinsic Motivation showed a very weak negative correlation (r = -.046).

Research question 2: To what extent do Social Skills relate to Teacher Motivation Culture (in terms of extrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation, professional efficacy and Overall Teacher Motivation Culture)?

To answer this research question, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was employed and the results are as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Summary of the analysis of the relationship between Social Skills and the sub-variables of Teacher Motivation Culture

Variables	$\overline{X}$	SD	R
Social Skills (X_2)	14.77	2.56	
Extrinsic Motivation (Y_1)	16.60	3.07	-.095
Intrinsic Motivation (Y_2)	17.42	2.81	-.064
Professional Efficacy (Y_3)	16.88	2.95	-.078
Overall Teacher Motivation Culture ($Y_1 – Y_3$)	50.84	5.89	-.125

Table 4 showed that the relationships between Social Skills and Extrinsic Motivation (r = -.095), Intrinsic Motivation (r = -.064), Professional Efficacy (r = -.078), and Overall Teacher Motivation Culture (r = -.125) were all very weak and negative.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between self-awareness and Teacher Motivation Culture (in terms of intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and professional efficacy) in public secondary schools.

Table 5: Summary of the analysis of the relationship between Self-Awareness and the sub-variables of Teacher Motivation Culture (N = 626)

Variables	$\overline{X}$	SD	R	Sig
Self-Awareness (X_1)	12.88	3.68		
Extrinsic Motivation (Y_1)	16.60	3.07	-.05	.247
Intrinsic Motivation (Y_2)	17.42	2.81	.07	.092
Professional Efficacy (Y_3)	16.88	2.95	.23*	.001
Overall Teacher Motivation Culture ($Y_1 - Y_3$)	50.84	5.89	.12*	.003

*Significant at $p < .05$, df = 624.

Table 5 showed correlation coefficients between **Self-Awareness** and Teacher Motivation Culture in terms of intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, professional efficacy and Overall Teacher Motivation Culture. The results revealed that the relationships between Self-Awareness and Professional Efficacy (r = .23*) and between Self-Awareness and Overall Teacher Motivation Culture (r = .12*) were statistically significant at the .05 level with 624 degrees of freedom. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected for Professional Efficacy and Overall Teacher Motivation Culture. On the other hand, the relationships between Self-Awareness and Extrinsic Motivation (r = -.05) and between Self-Awareness and Intrinsic Motivation (r = .07) were not statistically significant at the .05 level with 624 degrees of freedom. Consequently, the null hypothesis was upheld for these sub-variables of Extrinsic Motivation and Intrinsic Motivation.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between Social Skills and Teacher Motivation Culture (in terms of intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, professional efficacy and Overall Teacher Motivation Culture) in public secondary schools.

In this hypothesis, the independent variable is **Social Skills** while the dependent variable is **Teacher Motivation Culture**, in terms of extrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation, professional efficacy and Overall Teacher Motivation Culture. To test this hypothesis, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was employed and the results are as shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Summary of the analysis of the relationship between Social Skills and the sub-variables of Teacher Motivation Culture (N = 626)

Variable		$\overline{X}$	SD	R	Sig
Social Skills (X_2)		14.77	2.56		
Extrinsic motivation	(Y_1)	16.60	3.07	-.10*	.018
Intrinsic motivation	(Y_2)	17.42	2.81	-.06	.110
Professional Efficacy	(Y_3)	16.88	2.95	-.08	.051
Overall Teacher Motivation Culture	(Y_1 _ Y_3)	50.84	5.89	-.13*	.002

*Significant at $p < .05$, df = 624.

Table 6 showed the correlation coefficient of the relationship between Social Skills and Overall Teacher Motivation Culture in terms of Extrinsic Motivation, intrinsic motivation, professional efficacy and Overall Teacher Motivation Culture. The results revealed that the relationships between Social Skills and Intrinsic Motivation (r = -.06) and between Social Skills and Professional Efficacy (r = -.08) were not statistically significant at the .05 level with 624 degrees of freedom. Hence, the null hypothesis was upheld for these sub-variables. On the other hand, the results revealed a statistically significant negative relationship for Extrinsic Motivation (r = -.10*) and Overall Teacher Motivation Culture (r = -.13*). Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected for the sub-variables of Extrinsic Motivation and Overall Teacher Motivation Culture of the teachers sampled for the study. This means that higher Social Skills scores were associated with lower Extrinsic Motivation and Overall Teacher Motivation Culture.

4. Discussions on Findings

The finding of this study revealed a significant relationship between Self-Awareness and Teacher Motivation Culture (in terms of intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and professional efficacy) in public secondary schools in Cross River State. This is in line with Deal and Peterson's (2016) opinion that the concept of school teacher motivation culture has specific manifestations, determinants, and consequences in the context of Cross River State public secondary schools. Collectively, the findings revealed that the relationships between self-awareness and Professional Efficacy and between self-awareness and Overall Teacher Motivation Culture were statistically significant at the .05 level with 624 degrees of freedom, thereby rejecting the null hypothesis for Professional Efficacy and Overall Teacher Motivation Culture. This is consistent with Boyatzis et al. (2019), who reported that self-aware leaders are more likely to engage in authentic leadership behaviour, characterized by consistency between espoused values and enacted practice, transparency in decision-making and genuine responsiveness to feedback from staff. On the other hand, the relationships between self-awareness and Extrinsic Motivation and Intrinsic Motivation were not statistically significant at the .05 level with 624 degrees of freedom thereby failing to reject the null hypothesis for the sub-variables of Extrinsic Motivation and Intrinsic Motivation. Possible reasons for this could be that self-awareness may contribute to Professional Efficacy and Overall Teacher Motivation Culture, as well as to Extrinsic Motivation and Intrinsic Motivation.

The next finding of this study showed the correlation coefficient of the relationship between Social Skills and Teacher Motivation Culture in public secondary schools in terms of intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, professional efficacy and overall Teacher Motivation Culture. The results revealed that the relationships between Social Skills and Intrinsic Motivation (r = -.06) and Social Skills and Professional Efficacy (r = -.08) were not statistically significant at the .05 level with 624 degrees of freedom, thereby upholding the null hypothesis for these sub-variables. This supports Leithwood et al. (2020), who argue that leaders possess the capacity to manage relationships, inspire collective vision, constructively navigate conflict, build collaborative networks and translate emotional intelligence from an individual attribute into an organisational force to shape the interpersonal fabric of school life.

However, the results revealed statistically significant negative relationships between Social Skills and Extrinsic Motivation (r = -.10*) and between Social Skills and Overall Teacher Motivation Culture (r = -.13*). Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected for Extrinsic Motivation and Overall Teacher Motivation Culture. This means that higher Social Skills scores were associated with lower Extrinsic Motivation and Overall Teacher Motivation Culture. Possible reasons for this finding could be diverse. The non-significant relationships of Social Skills with Intrinsic Motivation and Professional Efficacy may suggest that these dimensions are influenced by factors beyond Social Skills alone. The implication of this finding is that a comprehensive approach that considers Social Skills in relation to Teacher Motivation Culture, with a focus on Extrinsic Motivation, is crucial for optimising Teacher Motivation Culture in public secondary schools in Cross River State.

On the other hand, the negative relationships for Extrinsic Motivation and Overall Teacher Motivation Culture indicate that Teacher Motivation Culture is influenced by multiple factors, including Social Skills.

5. Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, it was concluded that self-awareness was significantly related to Professional Efficacy and Overall Teacher Motivation Culture, whereas the relationships with Extrinsic Motivation and Intrinsic Motivation were not statistically significant. Social Skills had very weak negative relationships with Extrinsic Motivation, Intrinsic Motivation, Professional Efficacy, and Overall Teacher Motivation Culture, indicating that an increase in Social Skills was associated with a decrease in the sub-variables of Teacher Motivation Culture.

6. Recommendations

Based on the results of the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. School administrators and education policymakers in Cross River State should consciously invest in building collaborative and inclusive school cultures that nurture teacher intrinsic motivation via the creation of institutional environments where teachers see their work as meaningful, valued, and pedagogically autonomous.

2. Public secondary schools in Cross River State should embed transparent, consistent, and equitable systems for teacher recognition and reward to address the chronic extrinsic motivational deficits that undermine their professional engagements in the school system.

3. The Cross River State Ministry of Education should collaborate with the school principals to prioritise the construction of school cultures that systematically encourage teachers' professional efficacy through continuous professional growth, peer mentorship, and collective achievement as the true definition of cultural values in public secondary school life.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declare no conflict of interest.

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