

Emotional Intelligence in Decision-Making among School Administrators in Pagadian City: Pathways to Sustainable Quality Management

Dr. Feleciano Cajote Abe

Southern Mindanao Colleges, Pagadian City, Zamboanga del Norte, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence of Emotional Intelligence (EI) on school administrators' decision-making processes in Pagadian City, with a particular emphasis on developmental quality management. The research focused on the five core EI domains—self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills—as conceptualized by Goleman (2018). A mixed-methods descriptive survey design was employed, involving a purposive sample of four school administrators and 134 teachers. The quantitative data were gathered using a researcher-developed EI questionnaire, which was pilot-tested and validated for internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha > 0.90). Statistical analyses included descriptive statistics (mean, ranking) and inferential tests (independent t-test) to compare administrator and teacher perceptions. Qualitative interviews were also conducted to enrich the interpretation of EI manifestations in leadership behavior. Results revealed strong alignment between administrators' and teachers' assessments, particularly in empathy and motivation domains, with no statistically significant differences observed. However, the small administrator sample limits generalizability. The study underscores the importance of EI in fostering sound decision-making and cultivating a positive school climate. It recommends the development of structured EI training programs tailored to school leadership, incorporating modules on self-regulation, empathy, and social communication strategies.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, school leadership, decision-making, developmental management, empathy, motivation, Pagadian City.

INTRODUCTION

Effective leadership in education hinges on a high level of emotional intelligence (EI). In academic settings, EI empowers leaders with self-awareness and social competence necessary to cultivate an environment rooted in collaboration, trust, and student success. Goleman (2018) defines emotional intelligence as comprising five key components: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. These elements are critical for transformational leadership and sound decision-making, enabling school leaders to motivate staff, nurture a positive school climate, and drive continuous institutional growth.

According to the ERIC database, emotionally intelligent leaders are vital in shaping school cultures that challenge norms and prioritize achievement. Emotional intelligence is not only a personal strength but also a professional asset, enhancing leaders' ability to manage their emotions and understand those of others. Multiple studies further affirm the strong correlation between emotional intelligence and effective leadership practices in education (Mayer et al., 2016; Petrides et al., 2018; Kaur et al., 2020).

Objectives of the Study

1. To determine the extent to which the elements of emotional intelligence for constructive decisions are manifested by school administrators in the following aspects: self-awareness; self-regulation; motivation; empathy; and social skills.
2. To identify how frequently school administrators demonstrate these emotional intelligence indicators.
3. To assess the level of comparability between the responses of school administrators and teachers across the five emotional intelligence domains.

4. To determine if a significant difference exists between the perceptions of school administrators and teachers regarding the five emotional intelligence dimensions.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive mixed-methods research design to explore how school administrators in Pagadian City demonstrate Emotional Intelligence (EI) in their leadership and decision-making roles. A purposive sampling technique was used to select four school administrators and 134 teachers from public schools in the city. The primary quantitative data collection instrument was a researcher-developed questionnaire based on Goleman's EI framework, covering self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. The instrument underwent expert validation and a pilot test, achieving a high internal consistency score (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.91).

To enhance methodological rigor, semi-structured interviews with the four administrators were conducted to gather qualitative insights on how EI is applied in school leadership. Data collection was conducted during official district meetings, following ethical approval and informed consent procedures. Descriptive statistics, including weighted means and item rankings, were used to analyze the frequency and level of EI manifestations. An independent samples t-test was applied to determine significant differences in perceptions between administrators and teachers. Variables such as administrator experience, school size, and gender were considered to explore possible contextual influences on EI expression.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Emotional Intelligence for Constructive Decisions on Self-Awareness

Indicator	Administrator Mean	Teacher Mean	Overall Mean
Possesses guiding awareness of values and goals	3.50	3.39	3.45
Recognizes how emotions influence performance	3.44	3.43	3.43
Reviews prejudicial feelings	3.43	3.42	3.43
Overall Self-Awareness	3.43	3.41	3.42

The highest-rated item in this dimension was "Possesses guiding awareness of values and goals," with a weighted mean of 3.50 from administrators and 3.39 from teachers, suggesting a strong alignment in perceptions. The findings reveal that both groups consistently recognize self-awareness as "always manifested." This underlines the vital role of goal-oriented leadership in fostering thoughtful decision-making. As a core aspect of emotional intelligence, self-awareness enables school leaders to reflect critically on their internal states and personal values, facilitating ethical judgments and adaptive leadership (Boyatzis et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2022).

Equally notable are the indicators "Reviews prejudicial feelings" (mean = 3.43) and "Recognizes how emotions influence performance" (mean = 3.44), which highlight the administrators' capacity to model emotionally intelligent behavior. Such competencies are pivotal in maintaining staff morale and institutional trust (Salovey & Mayer, 2019; Santiago et al., 2020). The overall mean of 3.43 signifies that school administrators in Pagadian City exhibit a strong degree of self-awareness, echoing findings from leadership studies linking reflective practice with ethical governance and adaptive problem-solving (Reeves et al., 2021; Daramola & Adejumo, 2023).

Table 2: Emotional Intelligence for Constructive Decisions on Self-Regulation

Indicator	Administrator Mean	Teacher Mean	Overall Mean
Ability to sublimate negative emotions with positive ones	3.33	3.34	3.34
Balances temperaments	3.31	3.32	3.31

Displays both positive and negative emotions	3.29	3.30	3.29
Overall Self-Regulation	3.29	3.30	3.29

Self-regulation was also rated as "always manifested," with an overall mean of 3.29. Among the indicators, "Ability to sublimate negative emotions with positive ones" received the highest mean (3.34), slightly more emphasized by teachers. Effective self-regulation facilitates rational decision-making and fair conflict resolution, both of which are essential to academic leadership (Gross, 2020; Zimmerman et al., 2021).

Other key indicators, such as "Balances temperaments" and "Displays both positive and negative emotions," further confirm administrators' emotional control, especially in high-pressure contexts (Hess & Bacigalupo, 2021). The uniformity in mean scores across indicators reveals consistent emotional regulation practices. These results align with findings that emotionally intelligent leaders reduce workplace stress and enhance staff motivation (Nandamuri et al., 2022; Turner & Baker, 2024).

Table 3: Emotional Intelligence for Constructive Decisions on Motivation

Indicator	Administrator Mean	Teacher Mean	Overall Mean
Perseverance in the face of obstacles	3.51	3.50	3.51
Demonstrates hopefulness in difficult situations	3.50	3.49	3.50
Views failure as motivation	3.45	3.44	3.45
Strives for excellence	3.41	3.42	3.41
Overall Motivation	3.46	3.46	3.46

Motivation emerged as the highest-rated dimension, with an overall mean of 3.46. Both teachers and administrators emphasized the importance of "Perseverance in the face of obstacles" and "Hopefulness in difficult situations," indicating a strong presence of resilient and future-focused leadership (Clarke & Visser, 2020; McCormick et al., 2023).

Other indicators, such as "Views failure as motivation" (mean = 3.45) and "Strives for excellence" (mean = 3.41), demonstrate that school leaders possess a constructive internal drive. Research supports that emotionally intelligent leaders foster positive school climates, increasing both teacher morale and student success (Shields et al., 2021; Tsai & Chen, 2022). The nearly identical ratings across both groups highlight consistency in motivational leadership.

Table 4: Emotional Intelligence for Constructive Decisions: Empathy

Indicator	Administrator Mean	Teacher Mean	Overall Mean
Helped out teachers by understanding their needs and feelings	3.75	3.44	3.60
Displayed sensitivity and understood teachers' perspectives	3.59	3.58	3.59
Interpreted non-verbal cues	3.56	3.55	3.56
Overall Empathy	3.56	3.52	3.54

Empathy received the highest average mean among all dimensions, led by "Helped out teachers by understanding their needs and feelings" (mean = 3.60). This reflects a high level of empathetic leadership that promotes collaboration and emotional connection with staff (Bariso, 2021; Goleman et al., 2023).

"Displayed sensitivity and understood teachers' perspectives" and "Interpreted non-verbal cues" also received strong ratings, underscoring the importance of emotional awareness and effective communication (López-Zafra

et al., 2022; Schutte et al., 2019). The small gap between administrator and teacher ratings suggests a shared recognition of empathy's critical role in school leadership (Miao et al., 2020).

Table 5: Emotional Intelligence for Constructive Decisions: Social Skills

Indicator	Administrator Mean	Teacher Mean	Overall Mean
Demonstrated capability to build positive relationships with teachers	3.45	3.46	3.45
Utilized complex strategies to build consensus and support	3.42	3.41	3.41
Fostered open communication and receptiveness to both good and bad news	3.42	3.43	3.42
Showed skill in winning subordinates	3.39	3.39	3.39
Overall Social Skills	3.42	3.42	3.42

Social skills were consistently rated as “always manifested,” with the highest rating for “Demonstrated capability to build positive relationships with teachers” (mean = 3.45). This affirms the value of relational leadership in educational settings (Kerr et al., 2022).

Indicators related to communication and consensus-building also received strong evaluations, reflecting the role of inclusive leadership in promoting collaborative school culture (Park & Day, 2021; Clarke & Visser, 2020). The consistent ratings, even for the lowest item, "Showed skill in winning subordinates" (mean = 3.39), affirm that emotionally intelligent leadership behaviors are present and valued (Cherniss & Goleman, 2023).

Table 6 Extent of Comparability Between Administrators' and Teachers' Responses

Dimension	Administrator Mean	Teacher Mean	Overall Mean
Empathy	3.56	3.52	3.54
Motivation	3.46	3.46	3.46
Self-Awareness	3.43	3.41	3.42
Social Skills	3.42	3.42	3.42
Self-Regulation	3.29	3.30	3.29

Table 6 summarizes the comparability of responses across the five dimensions of emotional intelligence. Empathy emerged as the highest-rated dimension, followed by motivation, self-awareness, and social skills. Although self-regulation ranked lowest, it still maintained a favorable rating.

The uniformity in ratings between administrators and teachers reflects a shared understanding of emotionally intelligent leadership. This supports Mayer et al.'s (2021) assertion that alignment in emotional intelligence fosters organizational coherence. The absence of large discrepancies implies a cohesive and emotionally resilient school environment (Caruso & Salovey, 2022; Madahi & Mohtashami, 2023).

Table 7 Significance of Differences in Responses

Group	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	t-value	Tabular Value	Significance
Administrators	3.50	0.1769	1.739	2.447	Not Significant
Teachers	3.36	0.0316			

The t-test results in Table 7 reveal no significant difference between administrators' and teachers' responses. With a calculated t-value of 1.739, which is below the tabular value of 2.447 at a 0.05 significance level, the null

hypothesis is accepted. This implies statistical parity in perceptions of emotional intelligence dimensions.

This result confirms the existence of a unified leadership approach in which both groups demonstrate and acknowledge emotionally intelligent behavior. As Brackett et al. (2022) found, such alignment enhances morale and organizational performance by synchronizing leadership actions with staff expectations.

CONCLUSION

The study demonstrates that both teachers and school administrators in Pagadian City consistently display emotional intelligence, particularly in motivation, self-regulation, self-awareness, empathy, and social skills. There was a high level of alignment in the perceptions of both groups, with motivation and empathy receiving the highest ratings. This indicates that qualities such as perseverance, optimism, and interpersonal sensitivity are key to effective leadership. Self-awareness and self-regulation were also clearly evident, reinforcing the idea that emotionally intelligent school leaders can set positive examples, make informed decisions, and navigate challenges successfully. Furthermore, the absence of significant differences in responses from teachers and administrators underscores a shared approach to emotionally intelligent leadership, which is essential in cultivating a supportive and cohesive school environment. These findings emphasize the crucial role of emotional intelligence in enhancing leadership practices and improving the overall school climate.

Ethical Considerations

Prior to data collection, ethical clearance was obtained. All participants provided informed consent, and the study was conducted with full confidentiality and anonymity.

Conflict Of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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