

## SELF-AWARENESS AND TEAM PERFORMANCE IN INSURANCE FIRMS IN PORT HARCOURT, RIVERS STATE

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### ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between self-awareness and team performance in insurance firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The study was anchored on the Human Relations Theory and Social Exchange Theory. The study adopted the quasi-experimental design. The population of this study consisted of 810 staff of fifteen (15) Insurance Firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State as obtained from the Human Resource Department of the respective firms in Rivers State. The sample size of the study was 267 selected from 810 population of selected Insurance Firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The research data for this study was collected mainly from the primary source. The bivariate data were analysed using Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient ( $r^o$ ). The result showed that self-awareness has a strong positive relationship with measures of team performance (team timely delivery, team goal attainment) in insurance firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. It was concluded that self-awareness contributes to better team performance in insurance firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Based on the findings and conclusion, it was recommended that management of insurance firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State should provide training in emotional intelligence and mindfulness in order to enhance employees' ability to understand and manage their emotions, improve empathy, and enhance their overall well-being. This will in turn improve performance, and fosters a more positive and productive work environment.

**Keywords:** Self-awareness, team performance, timely delivery, goal attainment

### INTRODUCTION

In recent times, organizations are confronted with the challenge of figuring out how to use both human resources and accessible technology to enhance their performance and acquire a competitive advantage over competitors. Most firms increasingly rely on designing teams in different ways in order to use their resources effectively and consequently increase their competitiveness. Teams play a pivotal role in bridging the relationship between individual performance and organizational performance (Edmondson, 2012). Team is a set of members and competitors who have a mutual role to play, and who are dynamically involved together. Prior studies have been conducted on team performance, for example; Hadi (2007) investigated on strategies for improving team performance. Hari (2018) researched on team effectiveness and perceived employees' performance in Nepalese service sector. Halar, *et al.*, (2016) investigated

determinants of team performance. The results indicate that team member involvement; methods of compensation and team member empowerment have significantly positive effects on overall team performance in organizations. This study examines how self-awareness predict team performance in an organization.

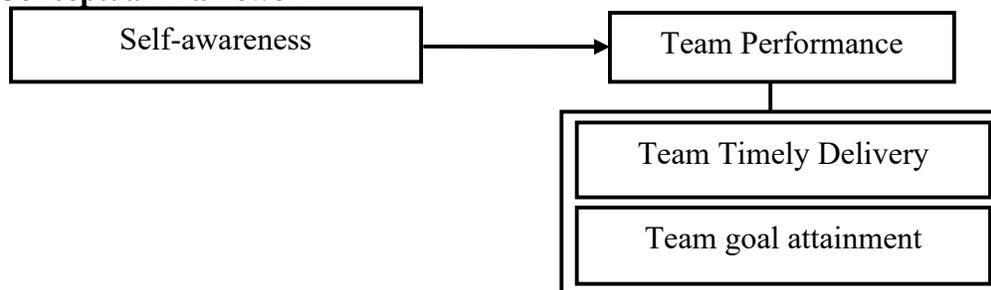
Victoroff and Boyatzis (2012) mentioned that self-awareness is “knowing one’s internal state, preference, resources and intuition”. It’s not automatic to have the ability to recognize our personal moods and reactions when in the spot light, privately and still be able to remain conscious afterward whether in teams or individually (Goleman, *et al*, 2002). Self-awareness also involves having a realistic assessment of one’s abilities. People who have this strength are aware of their strengths and weaknesses, open to candid feedback from others, and willing to learn from past experiences. Fubara (2020) opined that, self-awareness is being aware of personal emotion, behavioral pattern and understanding their cause and reflecting on the patterns of behavior which you display as a consequence of that emotion. Self-awareness helps a manager to understand their emotions, reactions, strength, weakness, thoughts, beliefs and motivation in the workplace. Managers need to consciously understand that people are not the same and feelings provoke certain behaviors. By extension, managers need to understand their organization in the committee of organizations, their strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities.

Several academic studies have been conducted over the years in effort to improve team performance. Alonazi (2020) investigated the impact of self-awareness on job performance in the period of COVID-19 crises using cross sectional analysis. Poornima and Sijatha (2020) examined the impact of self-awareness on leadership effectiveness using Chittoor District. Chong, Falahat, and Lee (2020) investigated the relationship between the level of self-awareness and job performance of academicians in Malaysia. Yaseen (2020) investigated how self-awareness and organizational politics affects employee turnover and performance in the banking sector of Malaysia. Despite the numerous academic studies on how to improve performance in an organization, little or no attention has been made on the variables of Self Intelligence and Team Performance in the financial sector of Nigeria. This study sought to bridge this gap by examining the relationship between self-awareness and team performance in insurance firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Specific objectives include:

- i. To examine the relationship between self-awareness and team timely delivery in insurance firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.
- ii. To determine the relationship between self-awareness and team goal attainment in insurance firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

**Conceptual Framework**



**Figure 1:** Conceptual Framework for Self-Awareness and Team Performance

**Source:** From the Researcher's Desk (2025)

**Research Questions**

Based on the research objectives, the following research questions guided the researcher:

- i. What is the relationship between self-awareness and team timely delivery in insurance firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?
- ii. What is the relationship between self-awareness and team goal attainment in insurance firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?

**Statement of Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were given in null form so as to arrive at a logical conclusion and to achieve its stated objectives.

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between self-awareness and team timely delivery in insurance firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between self-awareness and team goal attainment in insurance firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Theoretical Review**

Various theories have been formulated to give explanation on Self-Awareness and Team Performance. This study is anchored on the Human Relations Theory and Social Exchange Theory.

**Human Relations Theory**

The Human Relations Theory was propounded by Elton Mayo (1932). The theory explains that developing and maintaining harmonious relations between employed and supervisors, teachers and students is quite fundamental to all organization. Follet, May, Owen (2003) in Akpakum (2008) were the early advocates of this theory and in their work, they emphasized the human side of the theory, which is that a satisfied employee is an important part of an organization. The theory therefore emphasized that an increase of employee morals through communication and trust will increase their productivity or achievement. The human relations theory basically holds that financial remunerations through a significant motivator is not the driving force behind workers productivity or satisfaction (Focho, 2001). Other non-economic factors such as the physical and psychological atmosphere can be powerful motivators (Usman, 2005).

The relevance of this theory to the study is that it highlights the role of workers and social factors in the effectiveness of internal communication and the issues such as social intelligence. In summary, the human relation approach deals with the interaction between management and employees, their motivation and influence on organizational events. This throws more light on what management and employees ought to do to ensure effective internal communication. The human relations approach lacks adequate focus on work. It puts all the emphasis on interpersonal relations and on the informal group. It tends to overemphasize the psychological aspects at the cost of the structural and technical aspects. The human relations approach is criticized for its failure to take into account the impact of larger economic, social and technological factors on the productivity of workers in organization.

### **Social Exchange Theory**

The Social Exchange Theory was put forward by Homan (1958). The social exchange theory explains interpersonal relationships by positing the economic cost benefit analysis as precondition for social engagement and exchange. The exchange perspective views the employment relationship as consisting of social or economic exchanges (Yu, *et al.*, 2018). Economic exchange relationships involve the exchange of economic benefits in return for employees' effort and are often dependent on formal contracts which are legally enforceable. On the other hand, social exchanges are 'voluntary actions' which may be initiated by an organization's treatment of its employees, with the expectation that the employees were obligated to reciprocate the good deeds of the organization (Sungu, Weng & Kitule, 2019).

Perceptions of favorable exchange/rewards from the employees' viewpoint are expected to result in increased commitment to the organization. Another perspective of the social exchange theory is the norm of reciprocity which is based on two assumptions: (a) people should help those who have helped them, and (b) people should not injure those who have helped them (Chernyak-Hai & Rabenu, 2018). Therefore, employees who perceive that the organization values and treats them fairly will feel obligated to pay back or reciprocate these good deeds with positive work attitudes and behaviors (Bos-Nehles & Veenendaal, 2019). The above theory is applicable to the study as it highlights the need for the organization to enable its resources meet two of the outlined characteristics. For an organization to remain competitive and thus improve its performance, its employees must be well managed so as to become valuable and costly to imitate. There is a need therefore for an organization to enable its employees which is the most important resource that they have, to meet the criteria. This can only be achieved through employing of effective employee development in other to make them different and unique from the employees of other organizations.

### **Conceptual Review**

#### **Concept of Self-Awareness**

Victoroff and Boyatzis (2012) mentioned that self-awareness is "knowing one's internal state, preference, resources and intuition". It's not automatic to have the ability to recognize our personal moods and reactions when in the spot light, privately and still be able to remain conscious afterward whether in teams or individually (Goleman, *et al*, 2002). Self-awareness also involves having a realistic assessment of one's abilities. People who have this strength are aware of their strengths and weaknesses, open to candid feedback from others, and willing to learn from past experiences. This courage comes from certainty, through self-awareness, about our capabilities, values and goals as cited by (Fatt, 2002). Self-aware people have the "ability to accurately perceive own emotions and stay aware of them as they happen. This includes keeping on top of how one tends to respond to specific situations and people"" as quoted in Cheok and O'Higgins (2011).

Self-awareness is the ability to understand and appreciate the culture, values, and norms of employees at an organization (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2008). The procedural definition of organizational awareness is: It is a set of practices that are exercised to understand the attitudes of employees, appreciate their customs and traditions, beliefs, and values, and try to understand unspoken norms in the organization. The first category of social intelligence, social awareness,

encompasses primal empathy, atonement, empathic accuracy, and social cognition. Social awareness is the ability to accurately notice the emotions of others and "read" situations appropriately. It is about sensing what other people are thinking and feeling and being able to take their perspective using your capacity for empathy. Goleman (2006) explains that our ability actually comes from neurons in an extended circuit connected to the amygdala. They read another person's face, voice, etc. for emotion and help direct us on how we should speak to them.

### **Team Performance**

Team is a set of members and competitors who have a mutual role to play, and who are dynamically involved together. Katzenbach and Smith (2013) opined that team can be determined as being a small or large number of people, with a group of performance objectives, who have a commitment to a set target and an approach for which they are mutually responsible. This explanation indicates that teams must be of a manageable size and that all individuals in a team must be committed to achieving team objectives. As a result, team members must be mutually accountable for all their actions and the results of these actions, simply because of the overall effects on team performance. According to DeChurch & Mesmer-Magnus, (2010), team performance can be defined as "the objective or subjective judgment of team on how effectively a team can meet its valued objectives". Team performance can be an indicator of whether an organization is successful in considering both individuals' behavioral factors (e.g., employee involvement) and the organization's environmental factors (e.g., leadership Support). In order to ensure successful team performance, every individual of team must complete team goals assigned to them through their specialized expertise and skills while navigating team processes (Bell, 2017). For the purpose of this study, team performance can be measured using team timely delivery and team goal attainment.

### **Team Timely Delivery**

Team timely delivery is a measure of employee team performance. Team timely delivery reflects the ability of team members to produce a response within an allotted time determined by the task requirements. Delays in completing a task are due both to the time required for processing information and making decisions and to the time required to effect communications among decision makers. Team timely delivery measures whether a unit of work was done correctly and on time, given that time is the most crucial resource to be considered in the performance of any activity. Time determines the imperativeness of any other resources in accomplishing organizational set out objectives and goals (Ugwulashi, 2011). It is an essential resource every manager needs to achieve the goals and objectives of an organization (Adejo, 2012). Time, according to Nwaiwu (2020), is the interval between the beginning and the end of an operation. It is so delicate that it cannot be saved but can only be spent and once misused it can never be regained. Time is an immaterial resource, inelastic, scarce and erodes fast and once spent, cannot be won back, stored or recalled for use (Kalu, 2012). It is an essential resource; it's irrecoverable, limited and dynamic. Irrecoverable because every minute spent is gone forever, limited because only 24hours exist in a day and dynamic because it is never static (Adejo, 2012).

### **Team Goal attainment**

Goals are specific targeted achievements of an individual or organization. Goals have a pervasive influence on employee behavior and performance in organizations and management practice (Locke & Latham, 2002). Goal attainment is perceived as the ability of the organization to meet

its tasks, requirements and objectives through strategic investment into organizing, executing and accomplishing roles and duties in the minimum time possible (Adair 2005). According to Mathis & Jackson (2009) goal attainment is the successful completion of tasks by a selected individual or individuals, as set and measured by a supervisor or organization, to pre-defined acceptable standards while efficiently and effectively utilizing available resource within a changing environment. Consequently, team goal attainment was operationally perceived as: Executing defined duties, meeting deadlines team input and achieving departmental goals. The above should, as pointed by Armstrong (2005), lead to efficiency, specialization, effective feedback and good organizational relation. Employees perform at higher levels when asked to meet a specific goal target. Requesting employees to improve, to work harder, or to do their best is not helpful, because that kind of goal does not give them a focused target. Goal specification enables members know what target to attain and allow them to measure their own progress. Research indicates that specific goals help bring about other desirable organizational goals, such as reducing absenteeism, tardiness, and turnover (Locke & Latham, 2002).

### **Empirical Review**

Alonazi (2020) investigated the impact of self-awareness on job performance in the period of COVID-19 crises using cross sectional analysis. The author employed convenience sampling techniques to select 340 respondents who are nurses from three tertiary hospitals. Regression analysis was employed and the findings revealed that self-awareness has significant positive impact on job performance with a 1 percent increase in self-awareness leads to about 39 percent improvement in job performance. The study however, failed to analyse the level of prediction of self-awareness on the level of performance of the employees.

Poornima and Sijatha (2020) examined the impact of self-awareness on leadership effectiveness using Chittoor District. Survey method was used in the research design while non-experimental and quantitative analysis method was used. They concluded that self-awareness promotes effective leadership. The study however focused on the area of leadership while issues concerning the employee workplace performance was neglected. Kim and Foroudi (2020) investigated the impact of Manager's emotional intelligence and cognitive ability on firm performance using experimental summary design. A total of 623 textile and garments firms were used, all situated in Vietnam. They concluded that firms wherein the manager has a higher cognitive ability on emotional intelligence perform better and increase their productivity. More so, the effects of emotional intelligence on firm performance are more significant when it comes to male than their female cotemporary in the managerial cadre.

Chong, Falahat, and Lee (2020) investigated the relationship between the level of self-awareness and job performance of academicians in Malaysia. The study applied a quantitative method approach in collection of data in selected higher educational institutions. By analyzing data through a bootstrapping technique, the study confirmed the existence of a significantly positive relationship between self-awareness and job performance of academic workers in private higher educational institutions under study. The study further concludes that self-awareness is accountable for and could predict job performance. The study does not explain the relationship that exists between self-awareness and workers performance.

Ramli and Novariani (2020) investigated the effect of self-awareness and organizational commitment to job performance in private hospitals. The study applied a Structural Equation Model (SEM) to primary data collected via a simple survey of a sample of 251 respondents from private hospitals in Indonesia. Final results confirm the existence of significant and positive relationship between self-awareness, organizational commitment and job performance. Akintayo, Shadare, Onikoyi and Olaniyan (2020) assessed the impact of self-awareness on diversity management in Nigeria Breweries. The study employed a survey method to collect data from 100 staff in Nigeria Breweries, Oyo State. The collected data were analyzed using Pearson rho correlation and regression analysis. Findings from results indicate that there is joint, significant relationship between self-awareness on diversity management, and output in Nigeria Breweries.

Yaseen (2020) investigated how self-awareness and organizational politics affects employee turnover and performance in the banking sector of Malaysia. The study employed quantitative research method and made use of survey questionnaire in obtaining information from the respondents. His findings revealed that self-awareness improves employees' turnover intentions and performance in the banking sector. Also, self-awareness and organizational politics are effective variables that determine the turnover intention and performance of the staff in the banking sector. Also, both self-awareness and organizational justice stand as important factors that determine the turnover intention of the workers and their performance. The study however do not consider the level of commitment of the employee based on their emotion. Wen (2019) assessed the influence of self-awareness on the performance of college law teachers using two provinces in eastern china. Survey research design was employed for the study while multiple regression analysis was used to analyze the data collected from the respondents. Findings revealed that female lawyers have more self-awareness than their male counterparts. Also, that self-awareness impacted positively on the performance of the college teachers and hence improves their productivity at workplace.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted the quasi-experimental design, as it deals with people in an organization. The population of this study consisted of 810 staff of fifteen (15) Insurance Firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State as obtained from the Human Resource Department of the respective firms in Rivers State. The sample size of the study was 267 selected from 810 population of selected Insurance Firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The research data for this study was collected mainly from the primary source. The instrument was subjected to a critical assessment by experts in the field of Management. Descriptive statistics, such as frequency counts with simple percentage was used to analyze bio-data of the respondents, while mean score rating and standard deviation was used for univariate analysis. More so, at the inferential level of analyses, the hypotheses were tested with Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient ( $r^o$ ). All analyses were done through the application of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS 23.0).

### DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The following results were obtained from the study:

#### Self-Awareness and Team Timely Delivery

**Table 1: Showed Correlations Analysis on Self-Awareness and Team Timely Delivery**

			Self- awareness	Team Timely Delivery
Spearman's rho	Self-awareness	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.649**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	231	231
	Team Timely Delivery	Correlation Coefficient	.649**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	231	231

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output, 2025

Table 1, indicates a strong correlation between self-awareness and team timely delivery using Spearman Rank Order correlation coefficients. The result showed that self-awareness is statistically positive and significant with team timely delivery ( $\rho = 0.649$ , at  $P-v = 0.000 < 0.05\%$ ). Thus; the null hypothesis is hereby rejected and restated that there is strong positive and significant relationship between self-awareness and team timely delivery in insurance firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

#### Self-Awareness and Team Goal Attainment

**Table 2: Showed Correlations Analysis on Self-Awareness and Team Goal Attainment**

			Self- awareness	Team goal attainment
Spearman's rho	Self-awareness	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.775**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	231	231
	Team goal attainment	Correlation Coefficient	.775**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	231	231

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output, 2025

Table 2, indicates a strong correlation between self-awareness and team goal attainment using Spearman Rank Order correlation coefficients. The result showed that self-awareness is statistically positive and significant with team goal attainment ( $\rho = 0.775$ , at  $P-v = 0.000 < 0.05\%$ ). Thus; the null hypothesis is hereby rejected and restated that there is strong positive and significant relationship between self-awareness and team goal attainment in insurance firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

### Discussion of Findings

The result for hypothesis 1 and 2 showed a strong positive and significant relationship between self-awareness and measures of team performance (team timely delivery, team goal attainment) in insurance firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. In line with the results above, Chong, Falahat, and Lee (2020) studies confirmed the existence of a significantly positive relationship between self-awareness and job performance of academic workers in private higher educational institutions under study. The study further concludes that self-awareness is accountable for and could predict job performance. The study does not explain the relationship that exists between self-awareness and workers performance. Ramli and Novariani (2020) further investigated the effect of self-awareness and organizational commitment to job performance in private hospitals. Final results confirm the existence of significant and positive relationship between self-awareness, organizational commitment and job performance. Akintayo, Shadare, Onikoyi and Olaniyan (2020) also assessed the impact of self-awareness on diversity management in Nigeria Breweries. Findings from results indicate that there is joint, significant relationship between self-awareness on diversity management, and output in Nigeria Breweries. Also, the study supports the work of Yaseen (2020) who investigated how self-awareness and organizational politics affects employee turnover and performance in the banking sector of Malaysia. His findings revealed that self-awareness improves employees' turnover intentions and performance in the banking sector. Also, self-awareness and organizational politics are effective variables that determine the turnover intention and performance of the staff in the banking sector. Also, both self-awareness and organizational justice stand as important factors that determine the turnover intention of the workers and their performance.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the findings, the study concludes that self-awareness contributes to better team performance in insurance firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. This means Teams with high self-awareness are better able to understand and leverage the diverse skills and perspectives of their members. Self-aware individuals are better able to understand and manage their emotions, and how they impact others. This leads to more positive interactions and stronger relationships within the team.

It is therefore recommended that Management of insurance firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State should provide training in emotional intelligence and mindfulness in order to enhance employees' ability to understand and manage their emotions, improve empathy, and enhance their overall well-being. This will in turn improve performance, and fosters a more positive and productive work environment.

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