# MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

**EMOTIONAL CAPITAL, AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP, TRUST AND DIPLOMATIC SERVICE QUALITY.**

**A CASE OF EMBASSIES AND CONSULATES IN UGANDA**

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO MAKERERE UNIVERSITY BUSINESS SCHOOL IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER OF LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE DEGREE OF MAKERERE UNIVERSITY**

**PLAN A**

**NOVEMBER, 2023**

## DECLARATION

I Adebowale Oyeyemi Fehintola, declare that this dissertation is a result of my concerted research effort. It has never been submitted to any other institution for consideration.

Signature..... Date 22-11-2023

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## APPROVAL

This research dissertation has been submitted for examination with my approval as the University Supervisor.

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Supervisor

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this research dissertation to my lovely wife and my family as well as the MLG class especially my group mates for the tremendous time and support rendered in accomplishing my research.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I thank the Almighty God for the blessings and favour in my life. I thank my research supervisors; Dr Mugambwa Joshua and Mr. Lubogo Richard for the continuous support and guidance rendered to me during the entire journey of accomplishing this research dissertation.

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between emotional capital, authentic leadership, trust and diplomatic service quality. Specifically, the findings in this study, were specific to study objectives; to determine the relationship between emotional capital and service delivery quality; to determine the relationship between authentic leadership and diplomatic service quality; to determine the relationship between trust and diplomatic service quality; and lastly to determine the combined effect of emotional capital, authentic leadership and trust on diplomatic service quality. The study adopted a cross sectional study and data was collected using a questionnaire. Staff in embassies and consulates were the unit of inquiry and embassies and consulates were the unit of analysis. Questionnaires were received from 82 respondents giving a response rate of 100%. Data analysis was done with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences. With the help of SPSS, Cronbach Alpha was above 0.7 which meant that other studies like correlations and regressions could be carried-out.

The correlation results showed that there is a significant positive relationship between emotional capital and diplomatic service quality, there is a significant positive relationship between authentic leadership and diplomatic service quality and there is a significant positive relationship between trust and diplomatic service quality. Regression results indicate that emotional capital, authentic leadership and trust predict 40.5% of diplomatic service quality. There are a number of limitations with this study; the study focused on a cross sectional research design, the data collection instrument was a standard questionnaire which limited the ability to collect respondents' own views. The study recommends further study to be conducted on a longitudinal research basis so as to study variables for a long period of time.

# CHAPTER ONE

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.0 Introduction to the study

This chapter encompasses several key elements, including the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the study's purpose, its objectives, research questions, the significance it holds, the scope of the study, and the conceptual framework. These components collectively provide a comprehensive context for understanding the research and its significance within its defined scope.

## 1.1 Background

In today's interconnected world, diplomatic services play a pivotal role in fostering international cooperation and resolving global issues. Diplomatic service quality is essential for maintaining peaceful relations between countries, encompassing activities such as trade negotiations, problem-solving, policy implementation, and conflict resolution (Costigliola, Immerman & Scaglia, 2019). It entails the intricate practice of nurturing harmonious connections among nations and individuals, addressing complex topics like trade, environmental concerns, technology, and security (Prestia, 2017; Jing, Klaus, Zhang & Yuan, 2017; Dittmer & McConnell, 2016). Historically, diplomatic services were predominantly associated with Western nations (Kumar, 2022). However, this concept has evolved globally, benefiting countries and their citizens in various ways, including governance, economic relations, social services, international travel, and trade agreements. Nevertheless, the quality of diplomatic services in many embassies and consulates has faced scrutiny due to issues like delayed responsiveness and assistance (Burns, Grossman, & Ries, 2020; American Foreign Service Association, 2020).

Countries in the global North, such as the United States and England, have long enjoyed high-quality diplomatic services (American Foreign Service Association, 2020). In contrast, nations like Nigeria and other West African countries face challenges in this regard (Saliu, 2014). Diplomatic services are vital for promoting a nation's interests and strengthening global relations, addressing issues like great power competition, trade negotiations, climate change, and terrorism (Burns, Grossman & Ries, 2020). However, challenges, including insider politics during the Trump administration (Wiseman, 2020) and security threats in various countries (United Nations, 2013), have impacted service quality. While scholars in international relations, governance, and public relations highlight the benefits of diplomatic services, limited research exists on the quality of diplomatic service quality as an outcome or predictor particularly in embassies and consulates in Uganda. Existing studies suggest that diplomatic service quality demands social skills and abilities commensurate with representing both foreign and home countries (Burns et al., 2020). Insider politics, information security, and security threats have been identified as challenges in ensuring diplomatic service quality (Rosenbach & Aki, 2009). For example, over 40 percent of embassy staff annually voice grievances about mistreatment, internal politics, and external pressures (American Foreign Service Association, 2020; Radio Tamajuz, 2017), casting shadows on the quality of services provided by embassies and consulates.

Studies have highlighted that quality service delivery is determined by a number of factors including emotional intelligence (Baczynska & Thornton, 2017); Total Quality Management, Six Sigma (Leena, Surya, Kandappan & Jaykumar, (2014); leadership (Alvesson & Einola, 2019); trust (Burns et al, 2020). However this study investigated the influence of emotional capital (emotional intelligence), authentic leadership and trust on the quality of diplomatic service quality. Emotional capital, characterized by self-awareness and self-reliance, is crucial for diplomats to serve diverse populations effectively, diplomats need emotional capital to

navigate the challenges inherent in their roles. Emotional capital encompasses skills such as self-awareness and self-reliance (Pri, 2019). Authentic leadership, which emphasizes sincerity and genuineness, fosters confidence and trust among individuals (Alvesson & Einola, 2019). It also embraces cultural diversity, leading to improved decision-making, customer care, and innovation (Egel & Fry, 2016). Trust, built on competence and compassion, is essential for effective diplomatic service (Burns et al., 2020). Trust is a cornerstone of public administration and diplomatic service, measured by consistency, compassion, and competency of those in service (Burns et al., 2020; Costigliola, Immerman & Scaglia, 2019).

Service quality theory suggests that meeting or surpassing client expectations is crucial for evaluating service quality. This study endeavored to investigate the relationship between emotional capital, authentic leadership, trust, and diplomatic service quality. It sought to shed light on how these factors can enhance diplomatic services and address the challenges faced by diplomatic personnel. Overall, this research is crucial in ensuring that diplomatic services meet the evolving needs of nations and their citizens in an ever-changing global landscape, preventing any issues that may undermine the quality of these services.

### 1.2 Problem statement

In the realm of international relations, diplomacy has long demonstrated its adaptability to changing global dynamics (Vladimir, 2022). However, more than 40 percent of diplomatic staff in embassies and consulates annually voice grievances about mistreatment, internal politics, and external pressures (American Foreign Service Association, 2020; Radio Tamajuz, 2017). For example, in the South Sudan embassy staff have raised issues of mistreatment, job insecurity, delayed salary payment among others casting shadows on the

quality of services provided by the embassy as clients complain of delays in documentation verification and clearance (Radio Tamajuz, 2017). The decline in diplomatic service quality is a pressing issue, underscoring the importance of this study in comprehending and mitigating the underlying challenges in diplomatic service quality in embassies and consulates in Uganda. Therefore, this study sought to explore the relationship between emotional capital, authentic leadership, trust, and diplomatic service quality within embassies and consulates in Uganda.

### 1.3 Purpose

The major purpose of this study was to establish the relationship between emotional capital, authentic leadership, trust and diplomatic service quality among embassies and consulates in Uganda.

### 1.4 Research objective

i. To establish the relationship between emotional capital and diplomatic service quality

ii. To establish the relationship between authentic leadership and diplomatic service quality

iii. To establish the relationship between trust and diplomatic service quality

iv. To establish the combined effect of emotional capital, authentic leadership, trust on diplomatic service quality

### 1.5 Research questions

i. What is the relationship between emotional capital and diplomatic service quality?

ii. What is the relationship between authentic leadership and diplomatic service quality?

iii. What is the relationship between trust and diplomatic service quality?

iv. What is the combined effect of emotional capital, authentic leadership and trust on diplomatic service quality?

## 1.6 Scope of the study

### 1.6.1 Geographical scope

The study was conducted in embassies and consulates within Kampala Capital City. This is because all embassies and consulates are situated in the Kampala city

### 1.6.2 Subject scope

The study was limited to concepts of emotional capital, authentic leadership, trust and diplomatic service delivery in embassies and consulates in Kampala Capital City. The focus on these variables is justified by the fact that these factors contribute greatly to service quality. The reason for choosing diplomatic service quality is built on the fact that today the world works as one village and diplomatic missions play a greater role in strengthening relationships that make the world one village.

### 1.6.3 Time Scope

The study was carried-out from the year 2023 January. This is because of the nature of the study program that requires one to complete it in 2 years

## 1.7 Significance of the study

The findings of this research will contribute in the following ways

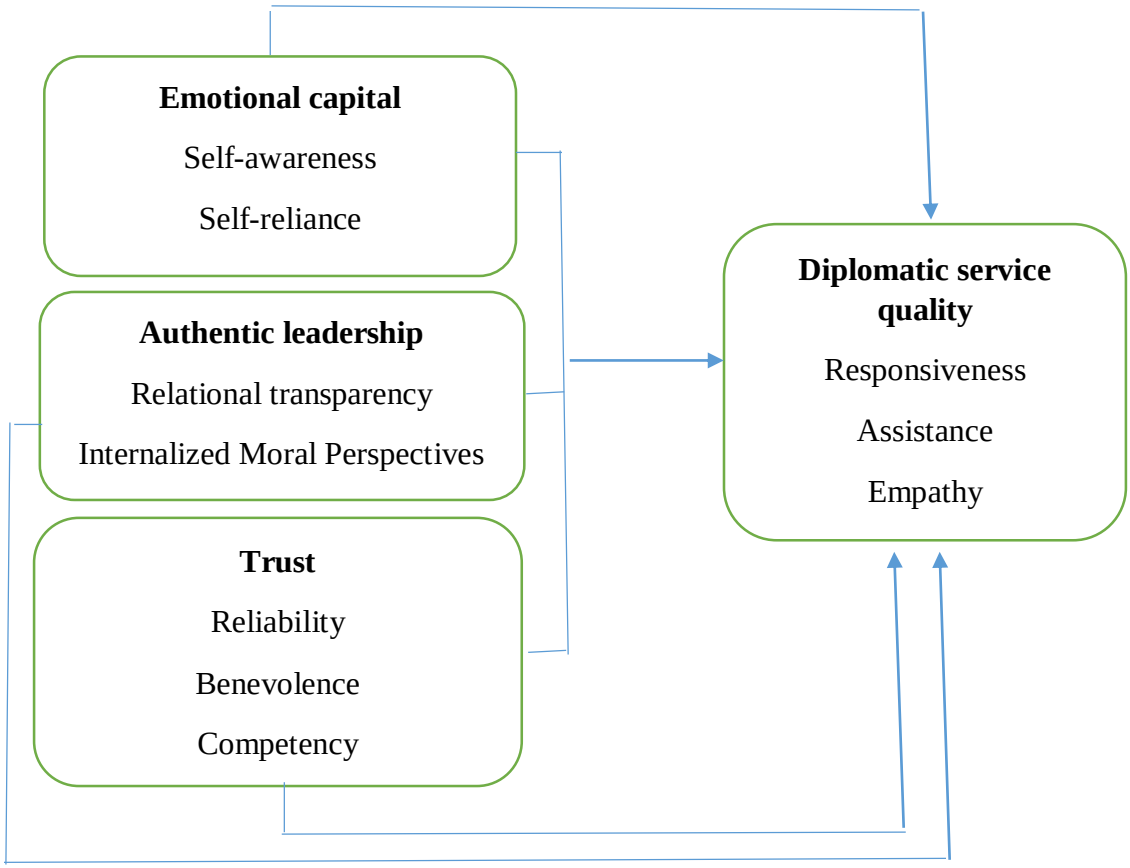
I. The research will contribute valuable insights into the realms of emotional capital, authentic leadership, and trust as pivotal elements in diplomatic service delivery. This addition of knowledge will address a significant gap in the existing literature, particularly in terms of understanding diplomatic service quality as a tangible outcome. By shedding light on the intricate dynamics of

these factors within the context of diplomacy, the research will enable a deeper comprehension of how they contribute to the overall effectiveness of diplomatic services.

II. The findings of this study serve as a foundational resource for governments and policymakers. They will gain a more comprehensive understanding of the essential prerequisites for diplomats serving in foreign countries, which can, in turn, inform and enhance foreign policy strategies. This knowledge will enable governments to tailor their policies to better equip diplomatic personnel and ensure that foreign policy aligns with the goal of achieving higher diplomatic service quality. In essence, it will foster more effective international relations and diplomacy.

III. The study's results provide a valuable benchmark for recognizing and appreciating embassy staff in embassies and consulates. By identifying the significance of emotional capital, authentic leadership, and trust in diplomatic service quality, the research will underscore the importance of these qualities in the performance of diplomatic personnel. This recognition can lead to more informed decisions regarding training, incentives, and career development opportunities for embassy staff, ultimately fostering a more motivated and efficient workforce within diplomatic missions. Consequently, this will have a positive impact on the quality of diplomatic services provided to citizens and the international community.

### 1.8 Conceptual framework




**Source:** *Walumbwa et al, 2008); Pri, (2019); Rush-Call, (2021); Ramya, (2019); Kumar et al, (2018)*

#### 1.8.1 Description of the conceptual framework

The conceptual framework underscores the interconnectedness of three pivotal constructs within the domain of diplomatic service quality: emotional capital, authentic leadership, and trust. Emotional capital, encompassing self-awareness and self-reliance, plays a foundational role in shaping the delivery of diplomatic services. Self-awareness equips diplomats with a profound understanding of their own emotions and strengths, enabling them to navigate complex situations with heightened emotional intelligence. Self-reliance, on the other hand, empowers diplomats to effectively manage the pressures and challenges inherent in their roles. As a result, emotional

capital fosters key attributes within diplomatic services, including responsiveness, assistance, and empathy.

Authentic leadership further contributes to diplomatic service quality by promoting relational transparency and internalized moral perspective among leaders within diplomatic missions. Relational transparency cultivates an environment of openness and sincerity, where leaders serve as genuine role models. Internalized moral perspective instills a strong ethical compass within leaders, guiding their decisions and actions. These authentic leadership qualities permeate the diplomatic service, reinforcing attributes such as responsiveness, assistance, and empathy among diplomatic personnel.

Trust, characterized by reliability, benevolence, and competency, acts as a bridge connecting these constructs to the desired outcomes of diplomatic service quality. Diplomats and embassy staff must be perceived as reliable in their commitments, benevolent in their intentions, and competent in their execution of duties. Trust serves as the bedrock upon which diplomatic services, including responsiveness, assistance, and empathy, are built. Citizens and international partners must trust that diplomatic missions are committed to their well-being, competent in addressing their needs, and benevolent in their intentions, fostering a conducive environment for the delivery of high-quality diplomatic services.

In summary, this conceptual framework delineates how emotional capital, authentic leadership, and trust collectively influence the attributes of responsiveness, assistance, and empathy within diplomatic service quality. Each construct plays a unique yet interconnected role in shaping the overall effectiveness and impact of diplomatic missions in serving their constituents and maintaining harmonious international relations.

# CHAPTER TWO

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1 Theoretical review

### 2.1.1 Service Quality Theory

For decades, many researchers have developed a service perspective (Zeithaml, 2009, Ramsaran & Fowdar, 2007). Chang (2008) describes that the concept of service quality should be generally approached from the customer's point of view because they may have different values, different ground of assessment, and different circumstances. Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry (1990) mention that service quality is an extrinsically perceived attribution based on the customer's experience about the service that the customer perceived through the service encounter. According to the work of Kumra, (2008), service quality is not only involved in the final product and service, but also involved in the production and delivery process, thus employee involvement in process redesign and commitment is important to produce final tourism products or services. Another research study on service quality is presented by Grönroos, (2007) who focuses on a model that is a comparison between customer expectations of the service and their experience of the service they have received before. This model is named "total perceived service quality". As he emphasizes on what customer is really looking for and what they evaluate, the service quality is based on two dimensions. The first dimension is the technical quality and this dimension refers to the outcome, what is delivered or what the customer gets from the service. The next dimension is the functional quality which refers to the manner in which the service is delivered or how it is delivered. Both dimensions affect the corporate image and the perception of quality in various ways. According to total perceived service quality model, perceived quality of a service is not only affected by the experiences of the quality dimensions that the consumer used for evaluating

whether quality is perceived as good, neutral, or bad. It is al also affected by the perceived quality of given service as well as the outcome of the evaluation process.

## 2.2 Concepts

### 2.2.1 Diplomatic service quality

In the domain of diplomatic service quality (DSQ), similar to the healthcare sector, the extent to which service providers meet or exceed customer expectations is a critical determinant of success. DSQ can be defined as the measure of how effectively diplomatic missions and personnel respond to the needs of their constituents and international partners, demonstrating attributes such as responsiveness, assistance, and empathy. This concept has gained prominence in recent years, with researchers highlighting its multifaceted nature. Drawing from the SERVQUAL model proposed by Parasuraman and colleagues in 1988, DSQ can be assessed through dimensions such as reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles, all of which play a vital role in measuring the effectiveness of diplomatic missions in providing high-quality services to their stakeholders. Just as in healthcare, DSQ is instrumental in ensuring not only satisfaction but also fostering long-term relationships and partnerships, making it a central focus for diplomatic organizations (Marzo et al., 2021; Javed & Ilyas, 2018).

The period from 2014 to 2021 witnessed a surge in research dedicated to evaluating DSQ, particularly in terms of responsiveness, assistance, and empathy. Diplomatic missions face the challenge of delivering exceptional services that align with evolving stakeholder expectations. Recognizing the significance of responsiveness, assistance, and empathy in addressing complex international issues and maintaining harmonious relations, diplomatic organizations have been compelled to enhance DSQ to ensure satisfaction and trust among their stakeholders. This heightened attention to DSQ underscores its pivotal role in determining the success and

competitiveness of diplomatic missions in meeting the diverse needs of nations, factions, and individuals while promoting peaceful relations (Marzo et al., 2021; Shabbir et al., 2016).

### 2.2.2 Emotional capital

The term emotional capital was introduced in psychology in a series of papers by Mayer and Salovey (1993), though it was Goleman who brought wide popular recognition to the concept of emotional capital in his 1995 book Emotional Intelligence. In their work, Mayer and Salovey (1993) corn that being able to direct one's emotions, as well as being able to understand and influence other people's emotional responses, went a long way towards effective adaptation to an environment. They denied emotional capital as: "Ability to monitor one's own and other's feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions"(1990); "the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to respectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth" (1997).

### 2.2.3 Authentic leadership

Authentic leadership places a strong emphasis on fostering trust between leaders and employees by encouraging active engagement in organizational activities (Walumbwa & Avolio, 2008). When leaders demonstrate trust in their followers, it motivates employees to fulfill their responsibilities with dedication. This leadership style integrates various aspects of leadership, including servant, transformational, charismatic, and spiritual leadership (Hsieh, Wang, 2015). Authentic leaders exhibit qualities such as self-confidence, optimism, flexibility, and ethical values, which contribute to creating an ethical work environment. Moreover, authentic leadership promotes self-awareness, self-regulation, and positive personal growth in both leaders and

followers, leading to improved emotional well-being and stronger leader-follower relationships (Ilies & Morgeson, 2005).

In summary, authentic leadership encompasses key elements such as self-awareness, relational transparency, internalized moral perspective, and balanced information processing (Walumbwa & Avolio, 2008). It relies on open communication and feedback to develop self-awareness, ultimately promoting ethical behavior and team effectiveness within the organization. A workplace guided by authentic leadership is characterized by trust, positive relationships, and a commitment to ethical values, which collectively enhance overall work effectiveness and employee engagement (Rego, Vitória & Magalhães, 2013).

### 2.2.4 Trust

Trust plays a pivotal role in shaping cooperation within organizations, striking a balance between competitive and cooperative relationships and ultimately enhancing overall performance (Raza-Ullah, (2021)). It is cultivated through high-quality social exchange relationships, making it a crucial element in the workplace. Leader behaviors are instrumental in influencing trust and these social exchange relationships, especially during challenging times like the pandemic (Molm et al. Molm & Takahashi, 2000; Awan, 2015). Trust in leaders, characterized by qualities such as openness, reliability, benevolence, and competence, significantly impacts working relationships and cooperation among employees. Trust is not only a belief in another party's reliability but also a catalyst for positive working relationships, fostering a culture of trust within organizations (Mishra, 2013; Islam, 2020).

In the context of organizational relationships, trust becomes indispensable when individuals rely on each other to fulfill their responsibilities. Leaders play a pivotal role in creating a positive work environment and instilling a culture of trust by demonstrating empathy, respect, and courtesy towards their colleagues and followers (Nska-Newe´s, 2015). When employees feel valued and understood by their leaders, they tend to be more engaged, innovative, and cooperative, ultimately leading to increased trust and organizational success. Effective leadership not only enhances trust but also promotes knowledge sharing, team efficacy, and positive overall organizational performance (Meng, 2015; Koohang, 2017).

In summary, trust is the bedrock of cooperative relationships in organizations, influenced by leader behaviors and fostering a culture of trust is essential for maximizing employee engagement and organizational success.

**2.3 Emotional capital 22and diplomatic service quality**

Researchers have delved into the connection between emotions and service quality evaluations, with positive emotions like joy and happiness typically indicating satisfaction, while negative emotions such as rage and guilt often signify dissatisfaction (Ben-Ze'ev, 2000). Happiness, defined as a comprehensive appraisal of one's life by scholars in positive psychology (Diener, Scollon, & Lucas, 2009), influences how individuals perceive and evaluate situations and their ability to cope with adversity (Boehm, Ruberton, & Lyubomirsky, 2017). Importantly, happiness tends to remain relatively stable across various situations, whereas consumers' attitudes towards services may fluctuate based on their experiences (Hellén & Sääksjärvi, 2011). During service interactions, consumers often seek to fulfill psychological needs for inner joy and happiness (Boehm et al., 2017). Research has indicated that individuals in positive emotional states are more likely to evaluate services positively (Ali, Amin, & Cobanoglu, 2016). In the public sector, particularly

among public administrators, emotional intelligence (EI) is of significant importance due to the emotionally intense nature of their roles (Lee, 2018). Public service positions often involve emotionally demanding tasks (Guy and Lee, 2015). EI plays a pivotal role in advancing organizational objectives, fostering teamwork through cooperation and trust (Arfara and Samanta, 2016). Emotionally intelligent employees tend to exhibit positivity, contentment, dedication, and loyalty to their profession and organization, creating an environment conducive to improved job performance (Miao et al., 2017).

Effective emotional management can mitigate workplace burnout (Arfara and Samanta, 2016), enhancing employee engagement and motivation. It is recommended that leaders in public management and administration prioritize EI traits, particularly self-awareness and regulation, when recruiting personnel for the public sector (Lee, 2018; Arfara and Samanta, 2016). Recognizing the impact of EI, organizations should integrate it into their training and development initiatives as it can enhance individual behavior and team performance among emotionally resilient and consistently motivated team members (Sithambaram et al., 2021). EI significantly influences employee performance, with higher levels being associated with improved performance (Law et al., 2004; Van Rooy and Viswesvaran, 2004; Mayer et al., 2012; Cuéllar-Molina et al., 2019). Additionally, organizational culture plays a crucial role in shaping employee emotional capabilities (Alkahtani et al., 2021).

While the existing literature provides valuable insights into the relationship between emotions, service quality, and emotional intelligence, there is a notable gap in research focused on the practical implications and strategies for enhancing emotional intelligence in the public sector,

especially within the context of public administration and diplomacy. Further exploration of how emotional intelligence can be effectively cultivated and leveraged in these specific settings to improve service quality and overall performance is needed. Additionally, examining the role of emotional intelligence in reducing stress and burnout among public sector employees and its subsequent impact on service delivery could contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of its significance in this unique context.

### 2.3.1 Authentic leadership and diplomatic service quality

The impact of leadership behaviors on organizational survival during the COVID-19 pandemic has been a topic of significant interest (Fernandez, 2020; Emmett, Schrah & Schrimper, 2021). Effective leadership in such times demands clear communication, flexibility, compassion, and empathy to manage and support followers (Fernandez, 2020; Emmett et al., 2021). Authentic leadership, characterized by emotional stability and emotional intelligence, has emerged as a crucial factor in navigating employee challenges during the pandemic. Effective leaders require both managerial skills and emotional intelligence (EI), which comprises self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills (Goleman, 2006). Authentic leaders must demonstrate empathy and transparency to foster trust and high-quality social exchange relationships, which, in turn, promote employees' social well-being and overall health (Emmett et al., 2021).

Furthermore, coaching and contextual support from exemplary leaders positively influence employees' psychological safety, enhance learning behaviors, and improve the performance of work teams (Edmondson, 1999). Team learning behavior, including feedback, experimentation and discussing failures, is essential for effective leadership (Edmondson, 1999). Humble and empowering behaviors of leaders have also been found to positively impact employees'

organizational citizenship behaviors and foster positive working relationships (Alzahrani, 2020; Ding, 2020).

Social skills, which encompass communication, influence, cooperation and collaboration, leadership, conflict management, catalyzing change, and creating bonds, have become increasingly crucial for leaders during COVID-19 (Goleman, 2006). These skills help leaders manage their emotions and those of others, enabling effective communication, collaboration, and conflict resolution. Leaders need the ability to influence employees, foster team building, and encourage cooperation, all of which contribute to high-quality social exchange relationships (Goleman, 2006).

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought emotional, ethical, and economic challenges (Dolan & Raich, 2021). Trust has become a critical component of working processes and relationships. However, this challenging situation has also created an opportunity for the emergence of strong leaders whom employees can trust (Fernandez, 2020; Carrington & Combe, 2019). During times of crisis, leaders require competencies in areas such as business management, people management, and self-management to navigate rapidly changing and uncertain organizational environments (Wisittigars & Siengthai, 2019). Managerial skills, including decision-making, problem-solving, empathy, communication, cooperation, listening, and negotiation, are vital for effective leadership (Wisittigars, 2019).

Despite the wealth of research on authentic leadership and its impact on various aspects of organizational life, there is a notable gap in the literature regarding its relationship with diplomatic service quality in embassies and consulates, especially in the context of Uganda. This research aims to fill this gap by exploring whether authentic leadership is associated with diplomatic service quality in a unique and critical setting. Understanding this relationship can provide valuable insights into how authentic leadership can contribute to the effectiveness of diplomatic missions and improve the quality of services provided by embassies and consulates. Additionally, investigating the role of authentic leadership in the diplomatic sector during the COVID-19 pandemic can shed light on its relevance in times of crisis and uncertainty, potentially offering practical guidance for diplomatic leaders and policymakers.

### 2.3.2 Trust and diplomatic service quality

A strong and positive working relationship between leaders and employees has been consistently linked to increased trust in the organization and a reduction in workplace conflicts (Oliveira et al., 2020). Trust plays a pivotal role in shaping high-quality social exchange relationships, and the interplay between managers' and employees' levels of trust further enhances these positive social exchanges (Haynes et al., 2020). Trust has a positive influence on satisfaction with social exchange relationships because these relationships hinge on effective communication, financial interdependence, and social interdependence (Bachmann et al., 2015). Moreover, trust is a crucial element in the development of high-quality social exchange relationships, where leaders can establish strong bonds with their followers by fostering trust and reducing excessive control (Corbett & Le Dantec, 2018). However, it's noteworthy that trust has different effects on social exchange norms compared to control – trust tends to promote norms like reciprocity, negotiation, and information sharing which are

integral to fostering positive social exchange relationships (Güçer & Demirdağ, 2014; Schnackenberg & Tomlinson, 2014).

Trust in the workplace is a multi-dimensional concept that involves interpersonal trust, which includes trust in colleagues and leaders, as well as impersonal trust, like trust in the organization itself (Güçer & Demirdağ, 2014; Haynes et al., 2020; Oliveira et al., 2020). Trust in leaders has been a common focus of research (Ullah et al., 2019), but trust in colleagues and trust in the organization have received relatively less attention (Bachmann et al., 2015; Jaškevičiūtė, 2021). Trust in the organization encompasses perceptions of fairness, transparency, and the organization's commitment to its word. It's an area of study that requires further exploration (Jaškevičiūtė, 2021).

Diminished trust in the workplace can act as a barrier, leading to heightened caution among employees and reduced effort, ultimately hampering team effectiveness (Bandura, 2001; Dirks and Ferrin, 2001). Trust in the organization is influenced by factors such as perceived fairness, transparency, and how well the organization keeps its promises (Rawlins, 2008; Schnackenberg and Tomlinson, 2014). Trust in the organization has been linked to various positive outcomes, including organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior, employee performance, knowledge management, and employee well-being (Baştuğ et al., 2016; Singh and Srivastava, 2016; Ekhsan and Saroh, 2021; Fitria, 2020; Jaškevičiūtė, 2021). Trust is central to the social exchange theory, which revolves around the exchange of valuable social and psychological resources (Cross and Dundon, 2019). This theory emphasizes reciprocity, where participants in a relationship feel obliged to reciprocate because they aim to maintain a balance between what they give and receive (Buchanan, 2021).

While prior research has explored the relationship between trust, social exchange relationships, and various outcomes, there remains a notable gap in the literature regarding the influence of authentic leadership on trust in the organization, especially in the context of Uganda. Understanding how authentic leadership impacts trust in the organization and how this, in turn, affects social exchange relationships and employee well-being can provide valuable insights into leadership dynamics in the Ugandan context. This gap presents an opportunity for further research to investigate the relationship between authentic leadership and trust in the organization within the specific context of Uganda and its implications for organizational well-being and effectiveness.

### 2.3.4 Emotional capital, authentic leadership, trust and diplomatic service quality

In light of recent studies, it is increasingly evident that authentic leadership plays a crucial role in navigating challenging times such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Vermeulen, 2017). Authentic leaders are expected to exhibit not only their competency but also their empathy and support for their followers, which can bolster trust within the organization (Gojny-Zbierowska, 2018). This involves empowering employees, demonstrating effective crisis management skills, and fostering motivation and confidence. Skillful leadership during crises necessitates competencies in team building, coordination, problem-solving, and communication, all of which contribute significantly to trust and social exchange relationships (Duarte, 2021; Accenture, 2022).

Moreover, perceived organizational support, where employees feel valued and cared for by the organization, has been found to promote positive attitudes and behaviors toward the organization (Accenture, 2022). Trust, in turn, plays a critical role in shaping social exchange relationships, leading to increased relationship satisfaction, cooperation, and performance within the organization (Ferrin, 2003). Thus, the competence of leaders in addressing employees' physical

and mental needs becomes a pivotal factor in fostering authentic leadership, trust, and high-quality social exchange relationships (Aria et al., 2019).

The relationship between authentic leadership, perceived organizational support, trust in the organization, and employee well-being has also garnered attention (Baykal, 2020; Jaškevičiūtė et al., 2021). Authentic leaders can positively influence employees' perceptions of organizational support and commitment, contributing to improved trust in the organization. Trust in the organization, in turn, is linked to employee well-being. This sequence of effects suggests that employees who experience authentic leadership are more likely to flourish because they feel supported and trust that the organization genuinely cares about their development and success.

Emotional Intelligence (EI) has emerged as an important aspect of leadership effectiveness (Miao et al., 2017). There is growing evidence supporting the positive correlation between EI and various organizational outcomes, including performance and leadership effectiveness (Radhakrishnan and Udaya-Suriyan 2010; Cherniss 2001; Harms and Credé 2010; Vivian-Tang et al. 2010; Shipley et al. 2010; Hur et al. 2011; Lopez-Zafra et al. 2012; Boyatzis et al. 2012). EI, with its components like empathy, self-confidence, and self-awareness, aligns closely with transformational leadership, creating a positive moral shift in individuals and social systems (Alston et al. 2010; Riaz and Haider 2010). Furthermore, EI has been identified as a mediator in the relationship between leadership effectiveness and performance, which directly influences organizational performance (OP) (Hur et al. 2011).

While these findings shed light on the importance of EI, authentic leadership, trust, and perceived organizational support individually, there is a notable gap in research exploring their combined effects, particularly concerning diplomatic service quality. Prior studies have predominantly examined these factors in isolation, predicting various outcomes without necessarily delving into

their collective influence on diplomatic service quality. Therefore, there is a significant knowledge gap in understanding how emotional capital, authentic leadership, trust, and diplomatic service quality interrelate and jointly impact organizational effectiveness, especially in the context of diplomatic services. This gap presents an opportunity for further research to explore the multifaceted relationships among these variables and their implications for diplomatic service quality, which is an essential aspect of government and international relations.

# CHAPTER THREE

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 Research Design

The study employed a cross-sectional research design, utilizing a quantitative research approach. A cross-sectional research design was chosen because it allowed the researcher to collect data at a single point in time without the need for revisiting the field (Cooper & Schindler, 2011). This design aligned with the two-year timeline of the researcher's academic program. The quantitative approach enabled the collection of numerical data, facilitating the computation of relationships among the variables under investigation.

## 3.2 Study Location

The research was conducted within the specific context of embassies and consulates located in Kampala, Uganda. This choice was deliberate because it allowed for a focused examination of the diplomatic service delivery process. Embassies and consulates are essential components of a country's diplomatic representation, responsible for implementing and managing various aspects of service delivery within the realm of diplomacy.

## 3.3 Target Population

The population for this study comprised a total of 42 diplomatic entities, which included 22 embassies and 20 consulates. These entities represented the elements or instances, such as diplomatic missions and offices that were considered when gathering data and conducting measurements as part of the research. On this study, embassies and consulates in Uganda were the unit of analysis and staff within these diplomatic entities being the unit of inquiry.

### 3.4 Sampling Procedure and techniques

The study involved selecting a sample from the entire population of 42 embassies and consulates. To achieve this, the researcher employed the simple random sampling technique, as recommended by Burns and Grove (2003). Simple random sampling is a statistical method used to choose a subset of individuals or entities from a larger population. In this approach, every member of the population has an equal opportunity to be included in the sample, and each possible sample of a specific size has an equal probability of being selected.

### 3.5 Research Instruments

The researcher employed a questionnaire as the primary data collection instrument. This questionnaire was structured using a five-point Likert scale to assess the level of agreement or disagreement with specific statements. The scale ranged from 1 to 5, with 1 representing "Strongly Disagree," 2 indicating "Disagree," 3 denoting "Not Sure," 4 signifying "Agree," and 5 corresponding to "Strongly Agree." The questionnaire primarily consisted of closed-ended items for data collection.

### 3.6 Measurement of variables

The variables were assessed as follows:

1. Emotional capital was evaluated using a modified tool adapted from Pri (2019), which measured Self-awareness and Self-reliance.

2. Authentic leadership was appraised using a modified tool adapted from Walumbwa et al. (2008), which assessed Relational transparency and Internalized Moral Perspectives.

3. Trust was gauged using a modified tool based on Burns et al. (2020) and Costigliola, Immerman & Scaglia (2019), encompassing dimensions such as Reliability, Benevolence, and Competency.

4. Diplomatic service quality was examined using a modified tool inspired by the work of Ramya (2019) and Kumar et al. (2018), focusing on dimensions like Responsiveness, Assistance, and Empathy.

### 3.7 Testing for Validity

According to (Noe et al., 2008) validity is defined as how relevant the measurement is to the concept being measured or in other words does it answer the question; does it measure what is meant to be measured? To achieve content validity, the questionnaire was first be tested for validity using the content validity index where experts were requested to indicate the relevance of questions on the study variables. scoring above 0.70 acceptable (Amin, 2005). The tools were validated using expert judgment. Validity was established using content validity index (CVI= selected items/ total number of items). The table below shows the content validity index of the study variables;

**Table 3.7. 1: Validity**

| Variable | Number of Items | Content validity index |
|---|---|---|
| Emotional Capital | 6 | .850 |
| Authentic Leadership | 5 | .780 |
| Trust | 10 | .803 |
| Diplomatic Service Quality | 15 | .785 |

**Source:** Primary Data

### 3.8 Testing for Reliability

Reliability is the extent to which a gradation of casual error is existing in the measurements taking place (Cooper & Schindler, 2011; Noe, et al, 2008). The data collected was measured to reveal consistence in the responses. The internal consistency reliability for the measurement as a whole in this research was measured by Cronbach's Alpha after running SPSS. The international Journal of Medical Education (2011) defines Cronbach's Alpha as internal consistency that shows how closely related are items as a group. Furthermore, as per Nunnally (1978), a scale is deemed to be

reliable, if its Cronbach is greater than 0.5 (a > 0.5). The cronbach alpha for this study was as follows in table 3;

**Table 3.7. 2: Cronbach Alpha**

| Variable | Number of Items | Content validity index |
|---|---|---|
| Emotional Capital | 6 | .725 |
| Authentic Leadership | 5 | .723 |
| Trust | 10 | .764 |
| Diplomatic Service Quality | 15 | .708 |

**Source:** Primary Data

### 3.9 Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS).

### 3.10 Ethical Consideration

During the data collection process, the researcher prioritized ethical considerations. In order to obtain valid responses and ensure the well-being of participants, informed consent was sought from all respondents. The university's guidelines and ethical protocols were followed diligently throughout the data collection process to maintain the highest ethical standards.

It is imperative to highlight that all information gathered from the field was treated with the utmost confidentiality. Respondents' identities and specific embassy or consulate details were not disclosed in any way that could compromise their privacy or security.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the data collected during this study was utilized solely for academic and research purposes. Any potential alternative uses of the data, beyond the scope of this research, would require explicit permission from the respective embassies and consulates involved. This commitment to data protection and responsible research conduct underscored the ethical foundation of this study.

# CHAPTER FOUR

# PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

## 4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results and their interpretation, with a focus on descriptive statistics defining the demographic characteristics of the respondents, as well as correlations and regression analyses of the variables. The research approach employed in this study was quantitative, involving the systematic measurement of numerical data (Kumar R, 2011). It's worth noting that some respondents did not fully complete the questionnaires as required, and as a result, the researcher addressed missing data in accordance with the guidelines (Pampaka et al, 2014) before conducting the analysis. The findings presented in this study are closely aligned with the study objectives, which are: to determine the relationship between emotional capital and service delivery quality; to ascertain the relationship between authentic leadership and diplomatic service quality; to investigate the relationship between trust and diplomatic service quality; to determine the combined effect of emotional capital, authentic leadership, and trust on diplomatic service quality. It's important to highlight that the researcher achieved a 100% response rate, receiving two responses from each embassy and consulate, as initially outlined in the research proposal.

## 4.1 Descriptive statistics (demographic characteristics of respondents)

In this study, descriptive statistics were employed to analyze and present the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Descriptive statistics serve the purpose of simplifying and summarizing extensive data into more comprehensible formats, making it easier for data users to grasp the key insights (Field, 2009).

### 4.1.1 Gender of respondents

The results presented in Table 4.1.1 indicate that among the 82 respondents who participated in the study, the majority were male. This suggests that men continue to hold a dominant presence in embassy and consulate activities, surpassing the representation of women.

**Table 4.1.1: Gender**

| Gender | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| MALE | 54 | 65.9 |
| FEMALE | 28 | 34.1 |
| Total | 82 | 100.0 |

**Source:** Primary Data

### 4.1.2 Position in the organization

Table 4.1.2 reveals that among the 82 respondents who participated in the study, a significant majority held the position of consular associate. This suggests that the consular associate role was the most common among the study participants, indicating a notable presence of individuals occupying this position within the embassies and consulates surveyed. Further analysis and interpretation of this finding can shed light on the organizational structure and roles within these diplomatic entities.

**Table 4.1.2: Position in the Organization**

| | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Administrator | 14 | 17.1 |
| Consular Associate | 22 | 26.8 |
| Assistant Administrator | 9 | 11.0 |
| CLO Assistant Administrator | 14 | 17.1 |
| Public Relations Officer | 4 | 4.9 |
| Receptionist | 3 | 3.7 |
| Diplomat | 4 | 4.9 |
| Head of Political Affairs | 4 | 4.9 |
| Economic Diplomacy Officer | 4 | 4.9 |
| Secretary | 4 | 4.9 |
| **Total** | **82** | **100.0** |

**Source:** Primary Data

### 4.1.3 Level of Education

Table 4.1.3 presents the findings regarding the educational qualifications of the 82 study respondents. The data indicates that a significant majority of the respondents held diploma qualifications. This observation implies that the majority of the participants possessed a certain level of formal education, specifically at the diploma level. This educational background suggests that the respondents had a basic level of literacy, which includes reading and writing skills. This information is crucial for understanding the educational profile of the study participants and can offer insights into their potential qualifications for their roles within embassy and consulate settings.

**Table 4.1.3: Level of Education**

| | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| PhD | 6 | 7.3 |
| Master | 30 | 36.6 |
| Bachelors | 7 | 8.5 |
| Diploma | 39 | 47.6 |
| **Total** | **82** | **100.0** |

**Source:** Primary Data

### 4.1.4 Age of respondents

Table 4.1.4 presents the findings regarding the age distribution of the 82 study respondents. The data illustrates that a significant majority of the respondents fell within the age range of 29 to 39 years old. This observation implies that embassies and consulates tend to have a relatively youthful workforce. The prevalence of employees within this age bracket suggests that these diplomatic entities may actively recruit and engage individuals in the early to mid-stages of their careers. This information provides valuable insights into the demographic composition of the workforce within embassy and consulate environments, highlighting the age range within which the majority of employees can be found.

**Table 4.1.4: Age of Respondents**

| | **Frequency** | **Percent** |
|---|---|---|
| 18-28 | 7 | 8.5 |
| 29-39 | 49 | 59.7 |
| 40-50 | 17 | 20.7 |
| 51-60 | 7 | 8.5 |
| 60 Above | 2 | 2.4 |
| **Total** | **82** | **100.0** |

**Source:** Primary Data

## 4.2 CORRELATION ANALYSIS

The table below presents the results of the correlation analysis conducted to examine the relationships between the predictor variables (emotional capital, authentic leadership, trust) and the outcome variable (diplomatic service delivery). Pearson's correlation coefficient analysis was chosen for this study because it is a parametric statistic that is suitable for assessing associations between variables when both variables are measured on an interval scale (Garson, 2012).

Pearson's correlation coefficient, denoted as "r," is a statistical measure used to quantify the strength and direction of linear relationships between two continuous variables. In this context, it

was employed to assess the extent to which emotional capital, authentic leadership, and trust are correlated with diplomatic service delivery.

The application of Pearson's correlation coefficient allows researchers to determine whether there is a statistically significant positive or negative correlation between these variables. The results provide valuable insights into the potential interplay between emotional capital, authentic leadership, trust, and the quality of diplomatic service delivery within the context of embassies and consulates in Uganda.

**Table 4.2.1: Correlations**

| | **EC** | **AL** | **T** | **DSQ** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Emotional Capital (EC) | 1 | | | |
| Authentic Leadership (AL) | .314** | 1 | | |
| Trust (T) | .342** | .387** | 1 | |
| Diplomatic Service Quality (DSQ) | .330** | .478** | .589** | 1 |

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

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**Source:** Primary Data

**Relationship Between Emotional Capital and Service Delivery Quality**

The correlation analysis presented in the table above reveals a significant and positive relationship between emotional capital and diplomatic service quality ($r = .330^{**}$, $P < .01$). This finding indicates that there is a meaningful association between emotional capital and the quality of diplomatic service delivery. In practical terms, when emotional capital increases among embassy and consulate personnel, it is accompanied by a corresponding improvement in diplomatic service quality. In other words, individuals who possess higher levels of emotional capital, which includes qualities like self-awareness and self-reliance, are more likely to contribute to the enhancement of diplomatic service quality. Their emotional intelligence, self-confidence, and ability to manage

their emotions may play a crucial role in fostering better diplomatic interactions and service provision.

This result underscores the importance of recognizing and cultivating emotional capital among embassy and consulate staff as a means to enhance the overall quality of diplomatic service delivery in Uganda. It suggests that interventions aimed at improving emotional intelligence and self-awareness may lead to positive outcomes in diplomatic service quality.

**Relationship between Authentic Leadership and Diplomatic Service Quality**

The correlation analysis presented in the table above demonstrates a highly significant and positive relationship between authentic leadership and diplomatic service quality ($r = .478^{**}$, $P < .01$). This finding highlights a strong association between the presence of authentic leadership and the quality of diplomatic service delivery. In practical terms, when authentic leadership is prevalent within embassies and consulates, it is linked to an observable improvement in the quality of diplomatic services provided. Leaders who exhibit qualities such as relational transparency and internalized moral perspectives are likely to inspire their teams to deliver diplomatic services of higher quality.

This result emphasizes the crucial role that authentic leadership can play in enhancing diplomatic service quality in the context of embassies and consulates. Leaders who are transparent, uphold strong moral values, and build trusting relationships with their teams can create an environment conducive to improved service delivery. Thus, fostering authentic leadership within diplomatic missions may be a strategic approach to elevate service quality.

**Relationship Between Trust and Diplomatic Service Quality**

The correlation analysis presented in the table above reveals a highly significant and positive relationship between trust and diplomatic service quality ($r = .589^{**}$, $P < .01$). This finding underscores the substantial association between trust and the quality of diplomatic service delivery. In practical terms, when trust is prevalent within embassies and consulates, it is closely linked to an observable enhancement in the quality of diplomatic services provided. Trusting relationships among team members, as well as between leaders and their teams, are essential for creating an environment conducive to delivering high-quality diplomatic services.

This result highlights the pivotal role that trust plays in shaping diplomatic service quality. Trustworthy leaders and colleagues can inspire confidence, collaboration, and open communication, which are critical factors in improving service quality within diplomatic missions.

**4.3 Regression analysis**

A regression analysis was conducted to assess the extent to which emotional capital, authentic leadership, and trust predict diplomatic service quality. The findings of this analysis are presented in the tables below:

**Regression Results**

**Table 4.3.1: Coefficients**

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| 1 (Constant) | 1.217 | .399 | | 3.047 | .003 |
| Emotional Capital | .052 | .055 | .089 | .957 | .342 |
| Authentic Leadership | .228 | .079 | .275 | 2.895 | .005 |
| Trust | .410 | .087 | .452 | 4.705 | .000 |

a. Dependent Variable: Diplomatic Service Quality

**Source:** Primary Data

**Model Summary**

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | Change Statistics | | | | | Durbin-Watson |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | R Square Change | F Change | df1 | df2 | Sig. F Change | |
| 1 | .654[a] | .427 | .405 | .21934 | .427 | 19.397 | 3 | 78 | .000 | 1.525 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Trust, Emotional Capital, Authentic Leadership

b. Dependent Variable: Diplomatic Service Quality

The results presented in the first table indicate that authentic leadership and trust are both significant predictors of diplomatic service quality, while emotional capital does not appear to have a significant influence. In the second table, it is evident that the combined effect of trust, emotional capital, and authentic leadership predicts approximately 40.5% of the variance in diplomatic service quality, as indicated by the Adjusted R-squared value of 0.405. This suggests that these three factors collectively explain a substantial portion of the variations observed in diplomatic service quality across the studied embassies and consulates.

The Beta values in the regression analysis provide insights into the strength and direction of the relationships. Trust emerges as the strongest predictor of diplomatic service quality with a Beta value of 0.452. This Beta value implies that a one-unit increase in trust within these embassies and

consulates would result in an increase in diplomatic service quality by 0.452 units. This underscores the pivotal role of trust in enhancing service quality within diplomatic missions.

While authentic leadership also significantly predicts diplomatic service quality, its Beta value represents a slightly lower impact compared to trust. Emotional capital, on the other hand, does not appear to exert a significant influence on diplomatic service quality in this context. These findings suggest that, in the realm of diplomacy, fostering trust among embassy and consulate staff is of paramount importance for enhancing service quality. Authentic leadership also plays a valuable role, although to a slightly lesser degree. The results highlight the need for diplomatic missions to prioritize trust-building efforts and consider the leadership qualities exhibited within their organizations to optimize diplomatic service quality.

# CHAPTER FIVE

# DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 5.0 Introduction

The study was carried out to examine of the relationship between emotional capital, authentic leadership, trust and diplomatic service quality. This chapter comprises of discussion of the findings of the study, conclusions, recommendations, limitations to the study and suggested areas for further research.

## 5.1 Discussion of the Findings

This study aimed at finding the relationship between emotional capital, authentic leadership, trust and diplomatic service quality. These findings are in respect to the study objectives as discussed below.

### 5.1.1 Relationship Between Emotional Capital and Service Delivery Quality

The correlation results reveal a significant positive relationship between emotional capital (EC) and diplomatic service quality (DSQ), suggesting that higher levels of emotional capital among embassy and consulate staff are associated with better diplomatic service quality. These findings resonate with previous research, lending support to the notion that emotions play a crucial role in service quality. For instance, Naami and Hezarkhani (2018) examined the link between emotions and service quality, finding that positive emotions, such as joy and happiness, can lead to increased customer satisfaction. Ali, Amin, and Cobanoglu (2016) and Boehm et al. (2017) also noted that individuals in service encounters are inclined to seek psychological needs like happiness and inner joy, leading to more favorable evaluations of services. Therefore, when embassy and consulate staff experience positive emotional states, they are more likely to provide higher-quality diplomatic services.

In the public sector, particularly among public administrators, employees often face emotionally intense tasks and responsibilities (Lee, 2018). These emotionally demanding roles underscore the significance of emotional capital. It equips employees with the capabilities needed to achieve organizational goals and fosters teamwork through enhanced cooperation and trust (Arfara & Samanta, 2016). Emotionally intelligent employees tend to exhibit positive attitudes, job satisfaction, dedication, and loyalty to their organization, thereby creating a conducive work environment that promotes improved job performance (Miao et al., 2017). Additionally, high emotional intelligence can help mitigate burnout among employees in emotionally taxing positions (Arfara & Samanta, 2016). Employees with high emotional intelligence levels are less likely to experience burnout, contributing to higher engagement, sustained focus, and motivation (Sanchez-Gomez & Breso, 2020).

These findings suggest that in the realm of diplomacy, emotional intelligence and the ability to manage and regulate emotions are crucial for enhancing diplomatic service quality. To optimize service quality, leaders in public management and administration should consider emotional intelligence traits, particularly self-awareness and regulation, when recruiting and developing personnel in the public sector (Lee, 2018; Arfara & Samanta, 2016).

In summary, the positive correlation between emotional capital and diplomatic service quality underscores the importance of recognizing and nurturing emotional intelligence among embassy and consulate staff. This not only enhances service quality but also contributes to a more engaged and motivated workforce, ultimately benefiting the diplomatic missions and the constituents they serve.

### 5.1.2 Relationship between Authentic Leadership and Diplomatic Service Quality

The correlation results unveil a significant positive relationship between authentic leadership and diplomatic service quality (DSQ), indicating that higher levels of authentic leadership among embassy and consulate leaders are associated with improved diplomatic service quality. These findings align with previous research and affirm the vital role authentic leadership plays in promoting trust, fostering high-quality social exchange relationships, and enhancing employee well-being and performance. Emmett et al. (2021) supported these results by suggesting that authentic leaders exhibit traits such as empathy and transparency, which are instrumental in building trust and positive social exchange relationships. These relationships, in turn, contribute to the social well-being and overall health, both physical and psychological, of employees. Authentic leadership also encourages humble and empowering behaviors that positively influence employees' organizational citizenship behaviors and working relationships (Alzahrani, 2020; Ding, 2020). When leaders display humility, employees are more likely to engage in organizational citizenship behaviors and improve their relationships within the workplace.

Leaders who empower their employees by involving them in decision-making processes and granting them a sense of meaningfulness in their work contribute to a more engaged and motivated workforce (Alzahrani, 2020). This is particularly relevant in the context of diplomatic service, where employees are expected to work collaboratively and effectively to achieve diplomatic objectives. Moreover, Goleman (2006) emphasized the importance of social skills, which are a fundamental aspect of authentic leadership. These skills, including communication, influence, cooperation, collaboration, and conflict management, are essential for leaders, especially during challenging times like the COVID-19 pandemic. Effective communication, in particular, is crucial for establishing connections with others and fostering collaboration. In the diplomatic sphere,

where building relationships and cooperation are paramount, leaders with strong social skills are better equipped to navigate complex diplomatic situations.

Authentic leadership also positively influences the leader-follower relationship through its components, such as self-awareness, relational transparency, internalized moral perspective, and balanced information processing (Tyagi, 2017). These qualities contribute to the self-development of both leaders and followers, fostering a dynamic and productive relationship that benefits diplomatic service quality. In summary, the positive correlation between authentic leadership and diplomatic service quality underscores the significance of authentic leadership in the diplomatic context. Leaders who exhibit authenticity, transparency, empathy, humility, and empowerment not only promote trust and social exchange relationships but also enhance the overall quality of diplomatic services. This leadership approach contributes to the well-being and performance of diplomatic staff and supports the achievement of diplomatic objectives.

### 5.1.3 Relationship between Trust and Diplomatic Service Quality

The correlation results reveal a significant positive relationship between trust and diplomatic service quality (DSQ), highlighting the pivotal role of trust in enhancing the quality of diplomatic services provided by embassies and consulates. These findings align with previous research, emphasizing the multifaceted impact of trust on various aspects of the workplace and employee well-being. One significant aspect of trust is its influence on social exchange relationships within organizations. Studies such as Haynes et al. (2020) have shown that employees' propensity to trust not only affects the quality of social exchange relationships but also interacts with managers' trust propensity to enhance positive social exchange interactions. This suggests that trust is a critical factor in fostering positive working relationships, which are essential for diplomatic service quality.

Trust also plays a pivotal role in influencing employee satisfaction with social exchange relationships (Siegrist et al., 2021). In the context of diplomacy, where effective communication, financial and social dependence, and strong social bonds between leaders and followers are crucial, trust acts as a foundation for building and maintaining these relationships (Bachmann et al., 2015). A high level of trust facilitates cooperation, collaboration, and effective communication among diplomatic staff, contributing to the overall quality of diplomatic service delivery. Moreover, trust influences employees' perceptions of the organization's behavior and their anticipated experiences. Research has consistently demonstrated that perceived trust in the organization positively impacts various work-related outcomes. For example, trust has been associated with enhanced employee well-being (Kurtessis et al., 2017; Imran et al., 2020; Ho & Chan, 2022), higher employee retention rates (Baranchenko et al., 2020), increased job satisfaction (Andriyanti & Supartha, 2021), improved employee performance (Shabbir et al., 2021), and enhanced organizational performance (Imran and Aldaas, 2020).

Furthermore, the relationship between trust and authentic leadership is noteworthy. Kleynhans et al. (2021a) suggest a positive relationship between trust in the organization and authentic leadership. Authentic leaders, characterized by their transparency, empathy, and integrity, create an environment where trust can flourish. Employees are more likely to trust leaders who demonstrate authenticity, which, in turn, fosters trust in the organization as a whole. This relationship between authentic leadership and trust can have a cascading effect on diplomatic service quality.

In conclusion, trust is a critical factor in diplomatic service quality, influencing social exchange relationships, employee well-being, and various work-related outcomes. The positive correlation between trust and diplomatic service quality underscores the importance of cultivating trust within

embassies and consulates to enhance the quality of diplomatic services provided to stakeholders and the public.

### 5.1.4 Combined effect of emotional capital, authentic leadership and trust on diplomatic service quality

The regression results provide valuable insights into the factors that significantly influence diplomatic service quality (DSQ) within embassies and consulates. It is evident that authentic leadership and trust play critical roles in predicting DSQ, while emotional capital does not appear to be a significant predictor in this context. These findings resonate with earlier research on leadership, trust, and organizational support, shedding light on their relevance in diplomatic settings. Authentic leadership, characterized by qualities such as transparency, empathy, and moral integrity, emerges as a significant predictor of DSQ. These results align with the work of Vermeulen (2017) and others, who have highlighted the positive relationship between authentic leadership and trust. Authentic leaders foster trust, social exchange relationships, and a sense of commitment among their followers. In the context of embassies and consulates, where effective communication, cooperation, and collaboration are essential for diplomatic service delivery, authentic leadership can contribute significantly to enhancing DSQ. Leaders who prioritize authenticity create an environment where employees feel valued, leading to increased trust, better social exchange relationships, and ultimately, improved diplomatic services.

Trust, as another significant predictor of DSQ, reinforces the idea that trust is a cornerstone of effective diplomatic service delivery. The literature has consistently demonstrated that trust within organizations leads to various positive outcomes, including enhanced employee well-being, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. This aligns with the findings of Jaškevičiūtė et al.

(2021), who identified a direct and indirect relationship between trust in the organization and employee well-being. Trust in the workplace is considered a valuable job resource, promoting motivation and overall employee welfare. In the context of diplomatic missions, trust among colleagues and between leaders and staff is crucial for maintaining efficient operations and ensuring high-quality diplomatic services. However, the lack of a significant relationship between emotional capital (EC) and DSQ in this study is an intriguing result. While EC has been identified as a vital factor in promoting emotional intelligence, self-regulation, and reducing burnout, its role in predicting DSQ within diplomatic contexts might be influenced by various other factors. The absence of significance does not necessarily diminish the importance of EC but suggests that its impact on DSQ may be less pronounced compared to authentic leadership and trust in this particular setting.

In summary, these regression results emphasize the importance of authentic leadership and trust in predicting DSQ within embassies and consulates. Authentic leaders who prioritize transparency and empathy create an environment conducive to trust and positive social exchange relationships. Trust, in turn, fosters employee well-being and job satisfaction, contributing to DSQ. While emotional capital did not emerge as a significant predictor in this study, its role in diplomatic service quality may warrant further investigation, considering the complex and emotionally intense nature of diplomatic work.

### 5.2 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study highlights several key areas for improvement to enhance diplomatic service quality within embassies and consulates. These findings are crucial for diplomatic missions seeking to excel in their service delivery and maintain positive working relationships. Consistency

is another critical aspect highlighted in the study. Maintaining consistency in policies, communication, and procedures is essential for effective diplomatic service delivery. When embassies and consulates operate with consistency, it helps reduce uncertainty and fosters trust among employees and stakeholders. Consistency also extends to the care provided to employees and ensuring their well-being. Prioritizing the physical and emotional health of staff members is crucial for maintaining a motivated and engaged workforce. In essence, improving diplomatic service quality within embassies and consulates requires a multifaceted approach. It involves addressing emotional capital, fostering authentic leadership, enhancing trust, ensuring consistency, prioritizing employee well-being, and providing the necessary skills and knowledge. By focusing on these areas, diplomatic missions can continue to uphold their responsibilities effectively and maintain positive working relationships with their constituents.

**3 Recommendations**

1. Diplomatic missions, including embassies and consulates, should prioritize staff training programs focused on enhancing emotional intelligence. By investing in the development of emotional intelligence, employees can better manage their emotions and effectively navigate emotionally intense diplomatic duties, ultimately improving service quality.

2. To enhance service quality, diplomatic missions should place a strong emphasis on leadership development. This can be achieved through structured training initiatives and mentorship programs designed to enhance leadership skills and capabilities among embassy and consulate staff. Effective leadership is essential for fostering a positive work environment and promoting a culture of excellence.

3. Building trust is a cornerstone of effective diplomatic service delivery. Diplomatic missions should uphold trust by consistently adhering to established policies and commitments. By demonstrating a commitment to their word and maintaining policy consistency, embassies and consulates can instill a sense of trust within their staff, contributing to a more reliable and efficient service delivery process.

**Top of Form**

### 5.4 Limitations to the study

The study had limitations and these included;

1. **Limited Data Depth:** The study relied solely on questionnaires with closed-ended questions, which restricted the exploration of respondents' nuanced views and perspectives on cross-border trade and the predictor variables. Future research could benefit from incorporating qualitative methods or open-ended questions to gather richer data.

2. **Cross-Sectional Design:** The research utilized a cross-sectional research design, collecting data at a single point in time. This approach provides a snapshot of the relationships between variables but does not capture changes over time. Longitudinal studies could offer a more comprehensive understanding of how these variables evolve and interact.

3. **Limited Generalizability:** The study was conducted exclusively within embassies and consulates in a specific geographic location. As a result, the findings may not be directly transferable or generalizable to other border regions or diplomatic contexts. Researchers should exercise caution when applying these findings to different settings and consider conducting similar studies in diverse locations to enhance external validity.

## 5.5 Areas for further research

1. Considering the cross-sectional nature of this study, future research could benefit from a longitudinal approach. A longitudinal study would allow for the in-depth investigation of how emotional capital, authentic leadership, trust, and diplomatic service quality behaviors evolve and react over an extended period. This extended timeframe would provide a more comprehensive understanding of these variables and their dynamics.

2. Exploration of Additional Factors: Researchers are encouraged to explore and identify other factors that may influence the quality of services in embassies and consulates. Investigating a broader range of variables could lead to a more comprehensive understanding of the complex dynamics involved in diplomatic service delivery.

3. Comparative Studies: Comparative research across different diplomatic contexts and regions could help identify variations and commonalities in the impact of emotional capital, authentic leadership, and trust on service quality. This approach would contribute to a more robust and context-specific understanding of these variables.

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## Appendix: Questionnaire

Title: Emotional Capital, Authentic Leadership, Trust and Diplomatic Service quality

SECTION ONE: Background Information (Please tick one appropriate category).

Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐

Your position in the project: Administrator ☐ Consular Associate ☐
Assistant Administrator ☐ CLO Administrative Assistant ☐
others ☐ specify ……..

Level of education: PhD ☐ Master's ☐ Bachelors ☐ Diploma ☐ Certificate ☐

Age: 18-28 ☐ 29-39 ☐ 40-50 ☐ 51-60 ☐ 60 Above ☐

SECTION TWO: **Emotional Capital**

This section has statements about Emotional Capital. You are requested to give your opinions by ticking one of the options that suits your choice using the scale provided below: *1: Strongly Disagree, 2: Disagree, 3: Undecided, 4: Agree, 5: Strongly Agree*

| | **Emotional capital** | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **SA** | **Self-awareness** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| SA1 | I am a social person and like relating with others | | | | | |
| SA2 | I am short-tempered | | | | | |
| SA3 | I get convinced very first by the current issues in my workplace | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | **Self-reliance** | | | | | |
| SR1 | I do not need someone to guide me more than once | | | | | |
| SR2 | I handle my duties by myself without disturbing others with consultations | | | | | |
| SR3 | I am knowledgeable about my duties and need minimum supervision | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | **Authentic Leadership** | | | | | |
| | **Relational transparency** | | | | | |
| RT1 | Whatever I do at my workplace is known by my co-workers | | | | | |
| RT2 | I make a self-report to my supervisor for improvement | | | | | |
| RT3 | My behaviors are well known by my colleagues and clients | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | **Internalized Moral Perspectives** | | | | | |
| IMP1 | I respect all co-workers and clients the same way | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| IMP2 | I always say sorry to my co-workers and our clients whenever I mess-up | | | | | |
| IMP3 | My personal behaviors are commiserating to those affected in one way or another | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | **Trust** | | | | | |
| **C** | **Consistency** | | | | | |
| C1 | The organization has consistent policies and procedures | | | | | |
| C2 | Our organizational rules and expectations are consistently applied | | | | | |
| C3 | I feel more engaged when there is consistency in the communication from the leadership | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| **CO** | **Compassion** | | | | | |
| CO1 | I take the time to care for my own physical and emotional well-being | | | | | |
| CO2 | I try to be patient and forgiving to others. | | | | | |
| CO3 | I believe it is important to treat myself with the same compassion I would show to others. | | | | | |
| **CP** | **Competency** | | | | | |
| CP1 | I have the necessary skills and knowledge to perform well in this organization | | | | | |
| CP2 | I feel confident in my ability to handle complex tasks and challenges | | | | | |
| CP3 | I consistently strive for excellence in my work | | | | | |
| CP4 | I am confident in my ability to adapt and learn new skills as needed | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | **DIPLOMATIC SERVICE QUALITY** | | | | | |
| **R** | **Responsiveness** | | | | | |
| R1 | When our clients reach out for assistance, they receive a prompt response | | | | | |
| R2 | The organization takes immediate action to resolve any issues or problems our clients encounter | | | | | |
| R3 | The organization demonstrates a high level of attentiveness and quick turnaround time | | | | | |
| R4 | The organization acknowledges feedback and suggestions promptly | | | | | |
| R5 | The organization is proactive in providing updates and keeping clients informed | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **CT** | **Courtesy** | | | | | |
| CT1 | The organization's staff members are polite and respectful | | | | | |
| CT2 | The organization's staff members use appropriate language and tone in their communication. | | | | | |
| CT3 | The organization's representatives listen attentively to clients' concerns and questions | | | | | |
| CT4 | The organization's staff members are patient and understanding when dealing with my inquiries. | | | | | |
| CT5 | The organization's employees apologize sincerely when mistakes are made | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| **A** | **Access** | | | | | |
| A1 | The organization provides convenient and accessible hours of operation | | | | | |
| A2 | The organization's physical facilities are easily accessible for people with disabilities | | | | | |
| A3 | The organization offers multiple channels for accessing their services (e.g., in-person, phone, website, mobile app). | | | | | |
| A4 | The organization provides clear instructions on how to access their services | | | | | |
| A5 | I can easily find the necessary information or resources on the organization's website or other communication channels. | | | | | |