

## **INFLUENCE OF SELECTED LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE ELEMENTS ON THE PERFORMANCE OF SOMALILAND DIPLOMATIC INSTITUTIONS**

**Abdirashid Osman Ibrahim.  
Dr. Susan Were Makokha.  
Prof. Guyo Wario.  
Dr. Patrick Maluki.**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study investigates the relationship between diplomatic service management, leadership capability, and the performance of Somaliland's diplomatic institutions. Grounded in the theoretical frameworks of Realism and Transformational Leadership, the research employed a cross-sectional survey design, collecting data from 249 respondents across public and diplomatic sectors. Data were gathered through a structured questionnaire and analyzed using SPSS version 27, combining statistical modeling and qualitative content analysis. The findings reveal that leadership capability and diplomatic service management are significant predictors of institutional performance and constitute key determinants of the current underperformance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its overseas missions. The study concludes that a comprehensive transformation of Somaliland's diplomatic apparatus is essential for improving effectiveness. This transformation should prioritize the selection of high-caliber, visionary leadership with specialized diplomatic expertise and the professionalization of diplomatic services through merit-based recruitment. It further emphasizes the establishment of a foreign service institute (diplomatic academy) to

strengthen diplomats' capacity through modernized training systems. In addition, enhancing incentive structures, strengthening policy development capacity, granting greater administrative autonomy, and establishing transparent and accountable financial systems for both internal and external resource mobilization are critical to improving institutional performance. Ultimately, the study underscores the need for strong political commitment at the highest level and a transition from personality-driven, ad hoc practices toward a modern, institutionally grounded diplomatic system. If effectively implemented, such transformation complemented by the gradual integration of digital technologies and emerging tools such as artificial intelligence is likely to result in more agile, efficient, and well-governed diplomatic institutions capable of navigating a dynamic geopolitical environment, leveraging emerging opportunities, mitigating risks, and advancing national interests.

**Key Words:** Diplomatic Service Management; Leadership Capability; Institutional Performance; Diplomatic Institutions; Public Sector Governance; Somaliland.

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Background information**

Diplomacy in its modern form has its immediate origins in the Italian Peninsula in the late fifteenth century AD. Nevertheless, its remote origins are to be found in the relations between the 'Great Kings' of the Near East in the second, or possibly in the late fourth millennium BCE (Liverani, 2001). It is not surprising therefore that it was this period that saw the birth of genuine resident embassy; that is to say, a resident mission headed by a citizen of the prince of the republic whose interests it served (Berridge, 2010). The Italian system, the spirit, and methods of which are captured so well in the dispatches of Niccolo Machiavelli, evolved into the French system. This was the first fully developed system of diplomacy and the basis of the modern-essentially bilateral-system (Berridge, 2010).

Diplomatic institutions especially ministry of foreign affairs originated in France and since then went through successive developmental stages. It was often assumed that it was in France that the first foreign ministry began to emerge when in 1589 Henry III gave the whole responsibility of foreign affairs to one of his secretaries of state (Berridge, 2010). According to Berridge (2010), the modern foreign ministry with organized archive and defined bureaucratic structure emerged at the beginning of nineteenth century. Even in Europe, however, it was well into the nineteenth century before foreign ministries which remained small and became bureaucratically sophisticated (Berridge, 2010).

Berridge (2010) identifies the increasing pressure of multiplying international relationships and thickening networks of resident embassies as the main factor which led to the emergence of the ministry of foreign affairs. He adds that the multiplying international relations and thickening networks of resident embassies led to inconsistency in the formulation and execution of foreign policy. Consequently, foreign policy execution by the overseas missions further increased the quantity of correspondences flowing home from the resident embassies and missions.

By this time, they were divided into different administrative units ('departments' or 'bureaux') on the basis, either of specialization in a particular function (for example, protocol or treaties) or a particular geographical region (Berridge, 2010). Generally, ministry of foreign affairs has several departments or directorates. These can be either functions-based or geography-based departments.

The transformational approach first appeared in the leadership literature in late 1970s in the works of Burns (1978) and Bass (1985). Bennis and Nanus (1985) also contributed to the development of the transformational approach. According to Northouse (2010), Downton (1973) was the first person who termed the transformational leadership. "One of the most encompassing approaches to leadership-transformational leadership-is concerned with the process of how certain leaders are able to inspire followers to accomplish great things (Northouse 2013)." "Transforming leadership

occurs when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality" (Burns, 1978).

### **Statement of the Problem**

The main function of foreign ministries and diplomatic missions is to ensure that the nation's interests are successfully pursued in relations with other nation-states and in international organizations (Vienna Convention, 1961). According to Avtsinova & Hegemony (2015) the performance of diplomatic institutions is reliant on good governance and leadership of country's foreign relations in which there is a sustained focus on a foreign policy approach that negotiates consistently at the local, national and multilateral levels that will likely enable stakeholder mobilization towards the cause of sustainable human development. A survey by Bogaturov (2017) shows that a well modelled governance and effective leadership diplomatic institutions can increase diplomacy and foreign relations performance by over 20 percent.

Nevertheless, despite its autonomy and having both formal and informal cooperative arrangements with wide variety of states and 10 intergovernmental organizations including UN, Somaliland diplomatic institutions are viewed as lacking aggressive foreign policy results that could have increased its diplomatic performance (Gorka, 2011). Further, a study by Berouk, (2011) shows that Somaliland has lagged behind in its diplomatic performance although it remains part of the geostrategic region in the Horn of Africa thus making Somaliland a strategic location that may offer a new opportunity to promote its diplomatic relations to a new height. While the international actors have an interest to establish close relations with Somaliland covering both bilateral and multilateral areas, a number of literatures Hoehne, M. (2011) & Eubank, N. (2010) agrees that Somaliland has failed to establish concrete external policies aimed at improving these relations and deepen cooperation with international actors to maximize the strategic benefits that Somaliland can derive from these relationships.

From the foregoing, it is evidently clear that there is a dismal performance posted by the diplomatic institutions of Somaliland based in their strategic points around the world. While there is dearth of literatures and relevant materials that highlights much of the diplomacy and foreign relation performance of Somaliland, there is a clear fact from the evidence earlier stated that the performance of diplomatic affairs is a strong function of how the foreign missions are governed and led. Interestingly, the presence of structured leadership and governance framework in Somaliland diplomatic institutions have not impacted on its performance thus yielding a contradictory position in the sources of available empirical materials. These forms the gap of this study that necessitates to re-examine the influence of selected leadership and governance elements on the performance of diplomatic institutions of Somaliland.

### **Research Objectives**

- i. To establish the influence of diplomatic services management on the performance of diplomatic institutions of Somaliland
- ii. To examine the influence of leadership capability on the performance of diplomatic institutions of Somaliland.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Hans Morgenthau (1948) put forward the theory of realism to explain international anarchy and how different states pursue their national interests.

The drive for global conquest that led to World War II provoked strong criticism of the liberal idealist paradigm. Critics blamed the outbreak of war on what they believed to be the so-called idealists' naïve legalistic and moralistic assumptions about the possibility of peace and progress through human aspirations and alleged that idealist were utopians who neglected the harsh realities of power politics and humans' innate compulsion to put their personal welfare ahead of the welfare of others (Colette, Taylor & Cornelius 2014). Realism is "a paradigm based on the premise that world politics is essentially and unchangeably a struggle among self-interested states for power and position under anarchy, with each competing state pursuing its own national interests" (Kegley & Wittkopf 2006). The theory of realism and its off-shoot theories also support the variable of management of diplomatic services in that the states by employing all diplomatic means at their disposal including the use of military force to achieve their interests. The use of available diplomatic means creates competition and conflict among the states with various conflicting and divergent interests. Continuous intelligence gathering and espionage become part and parcel of the day today activities of the diplomats in enhancing management.

For a non-recognized state like Somaliland, the efficacy of its diplomatic apparatus is a fundamental pillar of its quest for international legitimacy. While the nation has cultivated regional ties, these efforts often fall short of achieving sovereign recognition (Aideed, 2025). This review argues that internal management failures—spanning recruitment, training, planning, and communication—represent the primary hurdle to Somaliland's success, outweighing external political barriers.

A diplomatic institution's primary assets are its personnel; thus, professional training is a high-value investment in future performance (Rana, 2016). Modern management treats structured, lifelong learning as a core metric, often "hard-wiring" educational milestones into promotion models to ensure technical competency (Rana, 2016). In Somaliland, however, a "quota-based" system driven by clan patronage often supercedes merit, leading to institutional decay and a "brain drain" (Osman, 2025). Warsame (2026) describes this as a "culture of incompetence" where partisan loyalty replaces expertise in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). For small states,

prioritizing professional qualifications over political considerations is essential, as career diplomats provide the "deep knowledge" required for complex negotiations (Cici, 2024).

Effective management relies on aligning organizational objectives with employee skills to maximize service delivery (Nghiyoonanye et al., 2015). In Somaliland, institutional performance is hindered by a failure to strategically market national assets, such as the Berbera Corridor, in trade negotiations (Duale & Ahmed, 2014). Aideed (2025) critiques current budgeting for favoring opaque lobbying contracts over the development of a professionalized domestic corps. Furthermore, the absence of a "coherent economic plan" is fueled by patronage-linked appointments rather than technical suitability (Warsame, 2026), leaving the MFA reliant on personalized leadership rather than a formalized policy framework (Duale & Ahmed, 2018).

High-performing institutions leverage digital infrastructure as a tool of "soft power" to deepen strategic alliances (Truby et al., 2026). In contrast, Somaliland often engages in "symbolic diplomacy," utilizing domestic media to amplify minor activities while masking structural policy failures (Aideed, 2025). While Somaliland manages regional security effectively, its diplomatic service struggles to translate this operational success into formal recognition (Duale & Ahmed, 2014), largely due to a centralized decision-making process that excludes research-based analysis (Barkhad, 2025).

The erosion of merit-based progression devalues staff expertise and decreases motivation (Cici, 2024). Successful performance management requires "top management commitment" to maintain service quality (Nghiyoonanye et al., 2015). Formalizing qualifications through a diplomatic academy could protect the professional corps from political volatility and foster morale (Rojas, 2021). Ultimately, stable international relations depend on the consistency provided by career diplomats; frequent political shifts create uncertainty that strains foreign partnerships (Cici, 2024). For Somaliland to improve its standing, it must embed foreign policy execution into the core fabric of its government institutions (Duale & Ahmed, 2018).

The literature confirms that Somaliland's diplomatic efficacy is inextricably linked to the quality of diplomatic service management. Transitioning from a reactionary model to a proactive strategy requires dismantling patronage networks and institutionalizing meritocratic benchmarks. As Rana (2016) concludes, the care a ministry handles its professional development is the ultimate indicator of its efficacy on the global stage.

The transformational approach first appeared in the leadership literature in late 1970s in the works of Burns (1978) and Bass (1985). Bennis and Nanus (1985) also contributed to the development of the transformational approach. According to Northouse (2010), Downton (1973) was the first person who termed the transformational leadership. "One of the most encompassing approaches

to leadership-transformational leadership-is concerned with the process of how certain leaders are able to inspire followers to accomplish great things (Northouse 2013).” "Transforming leadership occurs when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality" (Burns, 1978). It involves a strong personal identification with the leader. Followers join in a shared vision of the future, going beyond self-interest and the pursuit of personal rewards (Rosenbach & Sashkin, 2014).

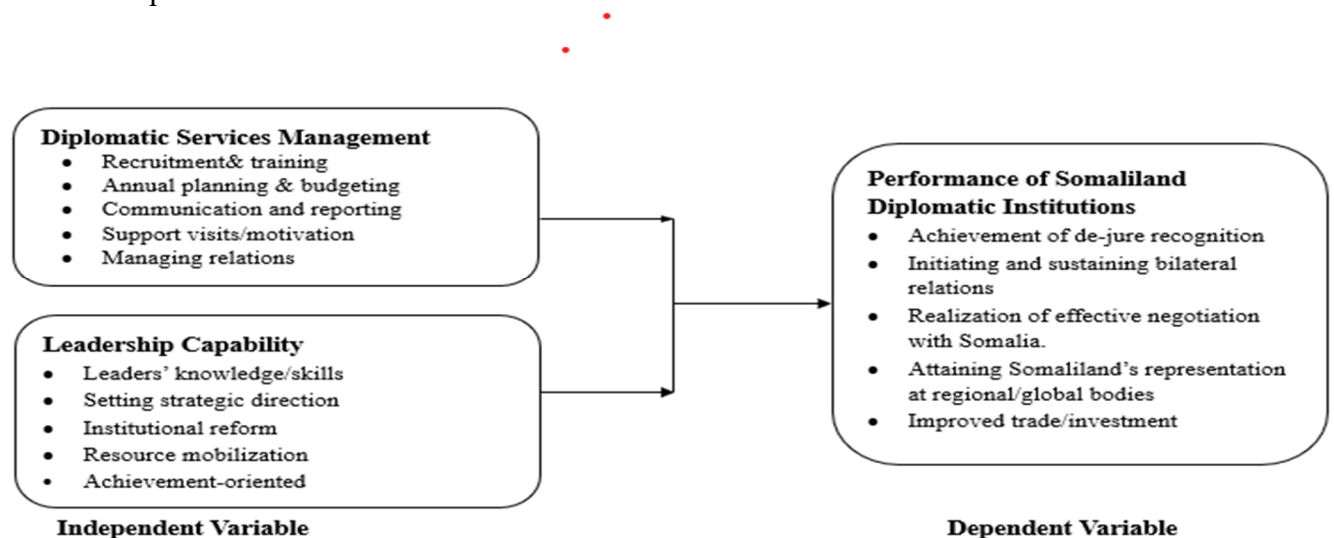
Further, the transformational leader influences followers to perform beyond expectations. This means first creating an awareness of the importance of achieving valued outcomes. To do this, transformational leaders work to define shared values and beliefs. This is what enables followers to get beyond their own self-interest and commit themselves to team, group, or organizational goals (Rosenbach et al, 2014,). They add that “transformational leaders then help followers develop strategies for accomplishing goals hence a strong platform for support. They enable followers to develop a mental picture of the vision and transform purpose into action (Rosenbach et al, 2014)”.

The Transformational Leadership theory states that this process is by which a person interacts with others and is able to create a solid relationship that results in a high percentage of trust, that will later result in an increase of motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic, in both leaders and followers. The essence of transformational theory is that leaders transform their followers through their inspirational nature and charismatic personalities. Rules and regulations are flexible, guided by group norms. These attributes provide a sense of belonging for the followers as they can easily identify with the leader and its purpose.

The transformational theory of leadership supports the variable leadership capabilities by emphasizing that leadership first creates an attractive vision that motivates followers. “They enable followers to develop a mental picture of the vision and transform purpose into action (Rosenbach et al, 2014).” The transformational leaders influence followers to perform beyond expectations by creating an awareness of the importance of achieving valued outcomes. Followers join in a shared vision of the future, going beyond self-interest and the pursuit of personal rewards (Rosenbach et al, 2014). They define shared values and beliefs which enable the followers to commit to organizational goals. “Transformational leaders then help followers develop strategies for accomplishing goals (Rosenbach et al, 2014)” which can lead to effectiveness beyond expectation and thereby effective institutions. In other words, if transformational leaders are appointed to diplomatic institutions, the institutions will be turned into affective organizations capable of achieving foreign policy objectives. This theory supports the variable leadership capability.

## Conceptual Model and Hypothesis

Conceptual framework is defined as a visual or written product, one that “explains, either graphically or in narrative form, the main items to be studied, the key factors, concepts, or variables and the presumed relationships among them (Miles & Huberman, 1994). A conceptual framework is a written or visual representation of an expected relationship between variables. Variables are simply the characteristics or properties that you want to study notes (Swaen, 2015). The conceptual framework is generally developed based on a literature review of existing studies and theories about the topic.



## Empirical Review

Appropriate management of diplomatic services plays a key role in the performance of diplomatic organizations. Diplomatic institutions give a due attention to the recruitment and retaining of diplomats to avoid politicization of diplomatic appointments and poor performance. Empirical evidence regarding the politicization of diplomatic appointments suggests a strategic divide between career professionals and political appointees. Adopting a comparative exploratory methodology, Niklasson and Jezierska (2024) analysed 669 ambassadors across seven countries and four administrative traditions. Their findings reveal a dual-track recruitment system: while 82% are career professionals, the US remains an outlier with 35% non-career appointments. Crucially, the study identifies hidden politicization: states prioritize politically connected professionals for high-stakes missions to maintain policy control, while granting low-hardship postings to amateurs as rewards for patronage.

Muthoka and Katuramu (2025) examined the gender recruitment and retention rates within Kenya's Ministry of Foreign and Diaspora Affairs. Based on a sample of 175 respondents and utilizing embedded mixed-methods design—integrating questionnaires with key informant interviews, they found a strong, significant correlation ( $r = .930$ ) between gender-inclusive recruitment and high-quality diplomatic service delivery. The researchers concluded that the underrepresentation of women in leadership roles significantly constrains diplomatic

effectiveness, as diverse management teams are essential for superior decision-making and international negotiation outcomes.

In his empirical study, Castrillón-Kerrigan (2025) explored the extent of diplomatic politicization within the Colombian foreign

service, specifically investigating how patronage and clientelism influence overseas appointments over merit-based professionalism, found that politicization is the prevalent norm, with political appointees filling 53.65% of all overseas roles and a staggering 80.81% of ambassadorships. The study reveals that nearly half (49.18%) of the positions specifically reserved for career Foreign Service Officers (FSOs) were occupied by political appointees, suggesting that the provisional exception has been perverted into a widespread practice that undermines professional standards and demoralizes career staff.

Assessing diplomatic service delivery within the Namibian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and utilizing a quantitative survey of 80 randomly selected employees, Nghyoonanye, Hoabeb, and Karodia (2015) established that effective institutional management is predicated on the strategic alignment of organizational objectives with the specific standards and skills of the workforce. Their research suggests that the maximization of human resources for service delivery is only possible when individual performance targets are harmonized with the broader mission of the diplomatic institution (Nghyoonanye et al, 2015). For the purpose of this research, this finding underscores the importance of annual planning and budgeting as a tool for ensuring that the Somaliland diplomatic corps is technically equipped to meet national foreign policy mandates.

Adopting a qualitative explanatory research design, Irungu and Kimaita (2024) investigated the evolutionary trends of digital diplomacy within Kenya's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Their study analyzed the digital footprint of 18 diplomatic missions and found that while digital platforms are widely adopted, a significant engagement gap exists due to low public interaction. They conclude that the successful integration of Artificial Intelligence is a critical management intervention that does not replace human diplomats but rather augments their technical capacity to handle communication and reporting with greater precision. Furthermore, they identify that a lack of specialized training and policy frameworks remains a primary barrier to institutional performance in developing states.

Beyond the geopolitical competition for hardware, recent empirical evidence suggests that the internal management of diplomatic services must evolve to treat technological mastery as a core pillar of national influence. Truby et al. (2026) observe that AI proficiency has become an essential component of state power, requiring diplomatic institutions to shift their operational focus toward knowledge sharing and standard setting. They argue that such diplomatic efforts are necessary to ensure that a nation's interests are effectively represented within global technological ecosystems.

For a developing diplomatic service, this implies that institutional performance is no longer measured solely by traditional bilateral relations, but by the capacity to participate in the technical governance of emerging technologies.

Rojas (2021) utilizes institutional self-assessment and strategic policy analysis to examine the modernization of the Matías Romero Institute, emphasizing the necessity for diplomatic academies to evolve their training and recruitment models. His research highlights that professionalization is achieved by transitioning from generalist education to specialized degree programs in areas such as consular diplomacy and economic promotion, ensuring high technical standards within the foreign service.

Arben Cici (2024) utilizes an expert policy review and comparative analysis to examine how legislative frameworks favouring political appointments over merit-based career diplomacy impact the foreign policy effectiveness of small states. He found that while career diplomats provide the deep knowledge and continuity essential for complex negotiations, political patronage leads to inconsistent, ad-hoc strategies and the creation of unaccountable sultanates of ambassadors. Furthermore, Cici highlights that bypassing meritocratic progression demoralizes seasoned professionals, causing a critical attrition of expertise and eroding the professional morale necessary for long-term relationship building. Ultimately, he argues that for countries with limited budgets, prioritizing professional qualifications over political expediency is the only way to ensure institutional rigor and successful strategic outcomes in the global arena.

Megahed *et al* (2012) in their study on developing a multiple-jobs competency model for diplomats in Egypt and Bahrain found that the basic selection criteria of diplomats include bachelor's degree from accredited institution, demonstration of excellence in one of the foreign languages and age limit not exceeding 30 years upon application (Megahed, *et al*, 2012). The same study also found that the recruitment procedure for some of the ministry of foreign affairs is similar. The ministries run a set of written examinations for those who satisfy the entry criteria and those successfully pass the written examinations are subject to oral interviews to assess the interpersonal communication, public speaking, conflict resolution etc. Most respondents felt strongly that current recruitment methods are no longer enough, especially to cope with a rapidly changing environment of world politics (Megahed, *et al*, 2012). According to the study, the current recruitment methods of MFAs are no longer adequate to cope with the rapidly changing environment of world politics and that the old notion that skills are accumulated on the job is no longer sufficient.

While historical analysis often views unrecognized states as passive recipients of regional policy, recent scholarship suggests a more proactive agency. Williams *et al.* (2025) argue that small states—by navigating power asymmetries through active architecture of their strategic environments—can exert disproportionate influence. For the Somaliland diplomatic service, this

theoretical framework suggests that institutional performance is not merely a product of recognition, but rather the strategic management of niche partnerships to pursue national interests.

### **Leadership Capability**

Dare (2022) conducted a mixed-methods empirical study investigating the influence of leadership on the performance of the Dangote Group in Nigeria. The study utilized a robust sample consisting of 201 survey participants for quantitative analysis and a purposive, convenience sample of 10 key managers and supervisors for in-depth qualitative interviews. The findings revealed that organizational growth in an African context is fundamentally driven by a leadership framework that prioritizes loyalty and contextual adaptation over traditional Western individualistic models. Specifically, the researcher found that resource mobilization and strategic direction are most effective when leaders leverage social capital and community trust. Furthermore, the study emphasized that achievement-oriented leadership, measured through performance gap analysis, is critical for navigating the complexities of emerging economies. For institutions in Somaliland, this research suggests that diplomatic performance is optimized when leadership capacity is aligned with local cultural values and institutional reform initiatives.

Bwanga, Kanyamuna, and Qutieshat (2023) conducted an empirical study utilizing a qualitative desk review methodology to evaluate the nexus between leadership approaches and public service delivery in Zambia. By analyzing a comprehensive sample of secondary materials, including peer-reviewed journals, national development plans (7NDP), and Public Service Reform Programme (PSRP) reports, the researchers identified that centralized, bureaucratic leadership structures significantly impede institutional efficiency. The findings demonstrate that while the introduction of Performance-Based Contracts for senior management in 2016 catalyzed an accountability shift, a lack of decentralized authority and technical skills remains a barrier to effective resource mobilization. Ultimately, the study argues that for public institutions to achieve achievement-oriented results, leadership capacity must transition toward New Public Management frameworks that prioritize citizen-focused responsiveness over traditional hierarchy.

Abdi, Hashi, and Latif (2024) conducted an empirical study involving 292 federal and state employees in Somalia to investigate the link between ethical leadership and public sector performance. Utilizing Structural Equation Modeling (SEM-PLS), the researchers found that ethical leadership directly enhances institutional outcomes while simultaneously reducing the detrimental effects of perceived organizational politics. The study further established that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) acts as a partial mediator, and organizational social capital serves as a moderator that strengthens the positive impact of ethical leadership on performance. These findings suggest that for institutions in a post-conflict environment, leadership capacity is defined by the ability to foster trust and merit-based systems over political favouritism.

Utilizing a mixed-methods approach to investigate strategic management within 38 public sector institutions in Hargeisa, Abi and Dahir (2024) analyzed quantitative data from 324 employees alongside 31 key informant interviews. Their findings reveal that while strategy formulation processes exist, they are characterized by a top-down approach that excludes lower-level staff and key stakeholders. The study identifies inconsistent implementation driven by insufficient resource allocation (budgeting), a lack of specialized employee training, and weak leadership. Furthermore, the researchers highlight a significant deficit in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) mechanisms, with performance reviews restricted to senior management. Consequently, this empirical evidence suggests that institutional performance in Somaliland is constrained by a disconnect between strategic planning and operational execution.

In their quantitative empirical study, Donkor et al. (2021) examined how leadership styles influenced performance through organizational commitments. Collecting and analysing data from a sample from 330 employees across 16 Ghanaian public sector organizations and utilized Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), they found that transformational leadership significantly enhances employee performance by fostering deeper organizational commitment. On the contrary, the findings reveal that transactional leadership, when applied in isolation, tends to decrease commitment and cause performance to dwindle. The study confirms a critical augmentation effect suggesting that public sector performance is maximized only when leaders complement transactional reward systems with transformational qualities like vision and inspiration (Donkor et al, 2021). Ultimately, the research advocates for a shift away from purely rule-based management toward more holistic, commitment-focused leadership frameworks in African public institutions.

In a systematic literature review utilizing the PRISMA protocol, and synthesizing global research, Hameduddin and Engbers (2022) investigated the recursive relationship between leadership and public service motivation (PSM). Their findings indicate that while leaders act as credible role models who can actively inculcate motivation in subordinates (Social Learning Theory), individuals with high pre-existing PSM are also significantly more likely to emerge as effective leaders (Personality Theory). The study identifies transformational, servant, and ethical leadership as the most potent styles for enhancing performance by fulfilling followers' self-esteem needs and providing aspirational goals. However, the research demonstrates that national culture and institutional settings moderate the relationships and therefore cannot be universal. necessitating context-specific leadership prototypicality. Consequently, the study proposes leadership development that aligns with local cultural expectations to effectively drive public service outcomes (Hameduddin and Engbers, 2022).

Collette *et al* (2014) investigated the relationship between visionary leadership and the perception of organizational effectiveness in nonprofit organizations. They found that significant relationships existed between visionary leadership and perceived organizational effectiveness.

They also found that some significant correlations between high leadership behaviors and perceived organizational effectiveness. “Visionary leaders with high leadership skills facilitated the greatest perceived organizational effectiveness in their respective organizations (Collette *et al*, 2014).

Maj *et al* (2015) also investigated the antecedents for shared leadership particularly the importance of external empowering leadership and task and goal interdependence as well as the relationship between shared leadership and team effectiveness. “Results indicated that an external empowering team leader and interdependence in the team significantly predicted the extent of shared leadership, which, in turn, was positively related to team leader ratings of team effectiveness (Maj *et al*, 2015).

Beugre *et al* (2006) analyzed the impact of the external environment on the emergence of particular forms of transformational leadership. They identified three types of transformational leaders – revolutionary, evolutionary and transgressor. Revolutionary transformational leaders are likely to emerge in organizations operating in volatile environments and whose members show either a high or a low degree of receptivity. However, evolutionary-transformational leaders are likely to emerge in less volatile environments whose members show a high degree of receptivity, and transgressor-transformational leaders would emerge in less volatile environments whose members show a low degree of receptivity (Beugre *et al*, 2006).

Erkutlu (2008) examined the influence of leadership behaviors on both organizational and leader effectiveness at boutique hotels. The study reveals that “there are significant relations between leadership behaviors and both organizational and leadership effectiveness. The findings support the suggestion in the literature that transformational leadership behaviors stimulate organizational commitment and job satisfaction in the hospitality industry (Erkutlu, 2008).

Rao and Abdul, (2015) investigated impact of transformational leadership on team effectiveness and the effects of support for innovation and psychological empowerment in this association. “The findings suggest that transformational leadership has significant positive impact on team effectiveness and, on the contrary, transactional leadership has significant negative effect on team effectiveness. Two dimensions of psychological empowerment such as meaning, and self-determination have partial mediation effect in the relationship between transformational leadership and team effectiveness (Rao & Abdul, 2015).

In their study on reform, transformation and restructuring, (Pederson & Hartley, 2008), examined the central “modernization” and improvement themes of public service reform in Denmark and the UK. They identified that managing the tensions and paradoxes of governance regimes has become a key element of the work of public service managers, and that this means that three sets of dynamics need to be worked with namely the dynamics of self-creation, the dynamics of strategising and the dynamics of networking and negotiation (Pederson *et al*, 2008).

## **Organizational Performance**

Leadership capability is increasingly identified as a pivotal factor in shaping the performance outcomes of organizations characterized by high political sensitivity and complex external dynamic and geopolitical landscape. Examining diplomatic service delivery within the Namibian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and utilizing a quantitative survey of 80 randomly selected employees, Ngiyoonanye, Hoabeb, and Karodia (2015) found that the success of performance management in a Ministry of Foreign Affairs is heavily dependent on top management commitment, without which implementation becomes fragmented and fails to improve service quality.

Malis and Thrall (2025) studied the influence of domestic bureaucracies and diplomatic personnel on foreign policy outcomes utilizing a novel dataset of U.S. diplomatic personnel and 5,000 bilateral executive agreements (1989–2016) across a global sample of embassies. Using a factorial difference-in-differences methodology, they found that a one-standard-deviation increase in embassy capacity leads to an 18-percentage point increase in the rate of signing bilateral agreements (Performance) during periods of high diplomatic autonomy. The findings demonstrate that institutional performance is significantly driven by the career experience and subject-matter expertise of the diplomatic staff rather than just top-down political orders.

Abdi et al. (2024) investigated the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational performance in the Somali public sector. Drawing on social learning theory and social exchange theory. This empirical study utilized a quantitative cross-sectional survey of 292 public sector employees across Somalia (Mogadishu and federal member states) to examine institutional outcomes. Employing structural equation modeling (SEM-PLS), the researchers found that ethical leadership has a significant direct positive impact on organizational performance and is partially mediated by the reduction of perceived organizational politics (governance). This proves that in the Somali context, leadership integrity is a primary driver of institutional success, specifically by mitigating favoritism and building trust necessary for high-level diplomatic performance.

Seabra and Pettigrew (2026) in their empirical study utilized senior executive surveys and regression analysis to examine how organizational capability systems influence performance. The researchers analysed data from 127 English hospital trusts (75% of the population) and found a premature optimization trap, where the development of internal functional and adaptive skills—without the corresponding positional capability of external stakeholder support—results in a significant decline in organizational performance. The study demonstrates that partial reforms concentrating solely on internal processes while neglecting external legitimacy often fail leading to resource dissipation and institutional cynicism. This indicates that performance gains in public institutions are systemic rather than additive, necessitating the synchronized management of both internal leadership capabilities and external governance structures (Seabra & Pettigrew 2026).

In their study investigating the antecedents of organizational performance in Romania with a special focus on manufacturing companies, (Gavrea, *et al.* 2011) found that “the most significant impact on both financial and nonfinancial performance was registered for those practices that regard the strategies, the performance measurement process, innovation and development, external environment and corporate governance.” According to the study, the practices or independent variables of organizational performance include strategy, leadership, employees, structure, quality, performance measurement, innovation and development, information technology, corporate governance, and external factors. In a similar study found that cognitive, emotional, and social competencies influence overall leadership competencies that in turn influence both employee and organizational performance (Almatrooshi, *et al.*, 2016).

Singh (2015) studied the relationship between the employee motivation and empowerment, and organizational performance. He found that a positive relationship existed between the employee motivation and empowerment and the organizational performance. “The more the employees are motivated to tasks accomplishment, the higher will be the organizational performance (Singh, 2015)”. According to the study, empowerment and employee recognition enhance the employee motivation which in turn leads to organizational performance. According to a study conducted by (Gumusluoglu, 2016), transformational leadership demonstrated overall positive effects on overall organizational performance.

Kim (2005) confirms that “people are the important cause of good organizational performance”. He also verifies that that the individual-level factors are important predictors of organizational performance. Another study on correlation of transformational leadership, organizational culture, organizational performance, and programme outcomes in non-governmental organizations in India, reveals that transformational leadership builds organizational culture that furthers NGO Performance. Transformational leadership does not directly influence NGO performance, but it enhances NGO performance promoting organizational Culture (Shiva & Suar, 2012).

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Philosophy**

This study adopted the positivists’ research philosophy. According to positivist’s paradigm, the single reality to be studied exists outside there and hence must be objectively observed and measured independent of the researcher using scientific enquiry. Positivism is the research paradigm that argues that the best way of gaining knowledge is through scientific methods and through observing and measuring facts (Özçelik, Aybas ,& Uyargil , 2016).

### **Research Design**

Cross-sectional design was the most appropriate research design of this study. Survey research was adopted. Kothari (2006) defines survey research as “systematic gathering of information from

a sample of respondents for the purpose of understanding and/or predicting some aspects of the behaviour of the population of interest. Scientists usually ask a random sample of individuals to respond to a set of questions about their backgrounds, past experiences, and attitudes. In most cases, survey research yields data that scientists use to examine relationships between properties and dispositions (Nachmias, 2004b).” This cross-sectional research design was the most appropriate research design as independent variables can be not manipulated like the experimental research design. The study also employed descriptive and exploratory research designs. This design describes the real situation as it is without manipulation. It also explored underlying reasons or the why question to the areas of focus.

### **Target Population**

The population is the entire units of research. “It is the aggregate of all cases that conform to some designated set of specifications (Nachmias, 20014).” The population of this study was all the public institutions (ministries) of Somaliland which are either mandated with international relations and foreign policy/diplomacy or which by their nature have an element of international relations and all advocacy/lobby and diplomatic organizations who support or deal with those public institutions respectively.

The target population of this study was six hundred and ninety eight (698) employees and managers who work for the different ministries of foreign affairs including its overseas missions and liaison offices (81), presidency (99), commerce and industries (162), national planning and development (127), defence (34), and diaspora agency (14), Somaliland chamber of commerce (15), foreign missions in and outside Somaliland (21) and Somaliland advocacy an lobby groups operating abroad (20), experts of IR, foreign policy and diplomacy (110) and political parties (15). Since the study also explored the situation of evolution of the ministry for the last ten years, the target population included those who worked for the ministry but left in the past. These are mostly those who assumed leadership positions in the ministry and are alive.

Diplomats from UK, USA, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Finland were also the research target group. Other comparatively effective diplomatic institutions which were compared with the Somaliland diplomatic institutions, including the ministry of foreign affairs of IGAD region were included. The target population is shown in Table 1.

***Table 1: Target Population***

| <b>Population Sector/Department</b>  | <b>Population</b> |
|--|-------------------|
| The key staff and the leadership of Somaliland Ministry of Foreign affairs and International Cooperation (Including the overseas embassies and liaisons offices) | 81                |
| The key staff and leadership of the ministry of presidency   | 99                |
| The key staff and leadership of the ministry of commerce & Industries  | 162               |

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| Ministry of National Planning and Development   | 127        |
| Ministry of defense   | 34         |
| Diaspora agency   | 14         |
| Chairmen, secretaries of foreign affairs of Political parties   | 15         |
| Experts of IRE, foreign policy, and diplomacy   | 110        |
| Key staff of Somaliland Chamber of commerce   | 15         |
| The key staff and directors & managers of advocacy and lobby groups   | 20         |
| Ambassadors, counselors, secretaries and other senior diplomats of foreign embassies and consulates based in Somaliland   | 9          |
| Ambassadors, counselors, secretary, and other senior diplomats of foreign embassies based in Kenya who deal with Somaliland (UK, USA, Denmark, Norway, Finland & Sweden | 12         |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>698</b> |

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The sample size was two hundred forty-nine (249) from the list of employees of the ministries and agencies.

In this study, both the probability and non-probability sampling techniques were employed. In probability sampling, the stratified random sampling technique was used because of the heterogeneity of the target ministries and departments (Saunders *et al*, 2007). To have a representative sample, the sampling frame or the list of employees of the different ministries and agencies was divided into groups of similar job functions or into their departments.

Then the names in the list of each department were selected using simple random sampling to finally choose the units or participants of the research from whom the data was collected. This was complemented with non-probability sampling techniques (Mugenda & Mugenda 2003). In probability sampling, the purposive sampling techniques was employed. This was appropriate to those who assumed leadership positions but who are no longer working with the ministry of foreign affairs. The reason for selecting the non-probability sampling such as the purposive sampling is to have a representative sample of all different leadership groups of the ministry. This provided useful information about the variables of the study.

A sample size was determined using the formula adopted by Mugenda & Mugenda (2003). Such formula provides an easy way to obtain the sample size;

$$n = \frac{Z^2 pq}{d^2}$$

Where:

n= the desired sample size (when population is greater than 10,000)

z = the standard normal deviation usually at 1.96 corresponding to the 95% confidence limit.

p = expected proportion in the target population estimated to have a particular characteristic (0.5 is used where there is no estimate). q = 1 - P or (1 - 0.5) hence 1.0 – 0.5 = 0.5

d = the degree of accuracy usually 0.05

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 (0.5)(0.5)}{(0.05)^2} = n = \frac{(3.92)(0.25)}{(0.0025)} = n = \frac{(3.8416)}{(0.0025)} = 384.16$$

As the population of the study is below ten thousand (10,000), the formula needs to be adjusted as below:

$$n(\text{adjusted}) = \frac{nN}{n+N} = \frac{385 \times 698}{385 + 698} = \frac{268730}{1083} = 249$$

**Table 2: Population Per Sector/ Department**

| <b>Population Sector/ Department</b>   | <b>Population</b> | <b>Sample Size [ni=(Ni/N)n]</b> |
|--|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| The key staff and the leadership of Somaliland Ministry of Foreign affairs and International Cooperation (Including the overseas embassies and liaisons offices)       | 81                | 29                              |
| The key staff and leadership of the ministry of presidency   | 99                | 35                              |
| The key staff and leadership of the ministry of commerce & Industry  | 162               | 58                              |
| Ministry of National Planning and Development  | 127               | 45                              |
| Ministry of defense  | 34                | 12                              |
| Diaspora agency  | 14                | 5                               |
| Chairmen, secretaries of foreign affairs of Political parties  | 15                | 6                               |
| Experts of IRE, foreign policy and diplomacy   | 110               | 39                              |
| Key staff of Somaliland Chamber of commerce  | 15                | 6                               |
| The key staff and directors & managers of advocacy and lobby groups  | 20                | 7                               |
| Ambassadors, counselors, secretaries and other senior diplomats of foreign embassies and consulates based in Somaliland  | 9                 | 3                               |
| Ambassadors, counselors, secretary and other senior diplomats of Foreign embassies based in Kenya who deal with Somaliland (UK, USA, Denmark, Norway, Finland & Sweden | 12                | 4                               |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>698</b>        | <b>249</b>                      |

These included a comprehensive questionnaire for all variables. The questionnaire is one of the most widely used data collection techniques within the survey strategy (Saunders *et al*, 2007). The questionnaire included both close-ended and open-ended questions for the study variable. “Questionnaires can therefore be used for descriptive or explanatory research (Saunders *et al*, 2007)”. The questionnaire also included Likert-scale questions to enable the respondents to express their opinion and perceptions on the questions put to them. The data was collected by use of drop & pick method.

Pilot testing was done to check for reliability and validity of the instruments. This was done to detect any errors and weaknesses of the data collection instruments. “The purpose of the pilot test is to refine the questionnaire so that respondents do not have problems in answering the questions and there would be no problems in recording the data (Saunders *et al*, 2007)”. The target group was those who work at ministry’ headquarter, overseas missions and others outside the ministry circuit. Based on the testing, the instruments were revised where necessary. This study selected ten percent (10%) of the selected sample for pilot testing. This 10% were excluded from the main study. According to Fink (2003), at least ten questionnaires must be pilot tested. The data collected through pilot test helped to determine the time taken in filling in each of the questionnaires and interviews and adjust time accordingly.

Reliability refers to the extent to which a measuring instrument contains variable errors. That is the errors that appear inconsistently from observation to observation during one measurement attempt or that vary each time a given unit is measured by the same instrument (Nachmias, 2004). Cronbach’s Alpha was be used to check for the instruments’ reliability. Cronbach's alpha is a measure of internal consistency, that is, how closely related a set of items are as a group, (Cronbach, 1951). Cronbach's alpha determines the internal consistency or average correlation of items in a survey instrument to gauge its reliability (Journal of Extension, 1999). A threshold of 0.7 was used as recommended as the minimum level for item loading. All variables had Cronbach’s Alpha values above 0.7 and hence were considered reliable. Brannen (2017) notes that reliable research findings should have Cronbach Alpha coefficients of 0.7 and above. Therefore, the research instrument was considered reliable since all variables had coefficients higher than 0.7. Managing diplomatic services had a reliability coefficient of (0.869). Higher Alpha Coefficient indicates the consistency among that items in measuring the concept of interest.

## **Results and Discussion**

The study used multiple regression analysis to determine the linear statistical relationship between the independent, moderating, and dependent variables of the study. The five hypotheses of the study were tested using linear regression models. F- test was used to test the validity of the model, while ( $r^2$ ) was meant to measure the model’s goodness of fit. The regression coefficient was used to describe the results of regression analysis and outline the nature and intensity of the relationships between the variables under study.

- a) Regression analysis for the relationship between managing diplomatic services and performance of diplomatic and public institutions of Somaliland

Testing Hypothesis One:

The study hypothesized that H01: There is no relationship between managing diplomatic services and performance of diplomatic and public institutions of Somaliland.

Regression model summary results in Table 1(a) indicate the goodness of fit for the regression between managing diplomatic services and the performance of diplomatic institutions of Somaliland was satisfactory in the linear regression model. An R squared (coefficient of

determination) of 0.329 indicates that 32.90% of the variations in performance of diplomatic institutions of Somaliland are explained by managing diplomatic services. However, the model failed to explain at least 67.10% of the variation in performance of diplomatic institutions of Somaliland. This means that there are other factors associated with performance of diplomatic and public institutions which were not explained by the model.

Correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) of 0.694 indicates that managing diplomatic services has a positive correlation with the performance of diplomatic and public institutions of Somaliland. The standard error of 13.70673 shows the deviation from the line of the best fit. The result is shown in table 1(a).

Further ANOVA tests revealed that the  $f_{cal}$  65.951 was greater than the  $f_{crit}$  22.883 with a  $p$  value = 0.000. This implies goodness of fit of the model fitted for the study and that the model was significant in explaining the performance of diplomatic and public institutions of Somaliland. Therefore, at  $p < 0.05$  level of significance, null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis ( $H_{a3}$ ) which states that “there is a significant relationship between the managing diplomatic services and the performance of diplomatic and public institutions of Somaliland” is accepted implying that that managing diplomatic services has significant influence on the performance of diplomatic institutions of Somaliland.

The model  $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_3 + \varepsilon$ . Where  $Y$  is Performance,  $\beta_0$  = a constant,  $X_3$  is management of diplomatic services,  $\beta_1$  is the beta coefficient and  $\varepsilon$  is the error term. The study therefore concludes that management of diplomatic institutions has a positive significant influence on performance of diplomatic institutions in Somaliland.

Further, regression beta coefficients of (0.309) and  $p < 0.05$ , ( $t = 6.122$ ) as presented in table (c) imply that a unit improvement in management of diplomatic services will lead to a 0.309 improvement in performance and this relationship is significant. Model  $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_3 X_3 + \varepsilon$ . Where  $Y$  is Performance,  $\beta_0$  = a constant,  $X_3$  is management of diplomatic services,  $\beta_3$  is the beta coefficient and  $\varepsilon$  is the error term.

The model equation is  $Y: 25.67 + 0.309X_3 + \varepsilon$ . Where  $Y$  is the performance of the diplomatic institutions,  $X_3$  is the managing diplomatic services, and  $\varepsilon$  is the error term.

Given the findings indicate that there was goodness of fit of the model and the model was significant, this implies the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternate hypothesis is accepted.  $H_{03}$ : Managing diplomatic services does not have a positive significant influence on the performance of diplomatic institutions of Somaliland and accept the alternative hypothesis that management of diplomatic services influences performance of diplomatic institutions in Somaliland. The study therefore concludes that management of diplomatic institutions has a

positive significant influence on performance of diplomatic institutions in Somaliland. The findings agree with those by (Megahed, *et al*, 2012) who indicated that aspects of management including planning, recruitment, and accountability affect organizational effectiveness.

*table 1: relationship between managing diplomatic services and performance of diplomatic and public institutions of somaliland*

a) **Model Summary** -Managing diplomatic services.

| Model | R                 | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1     | .694 <sup>a</sup> | .329     | .321              | 13.70673                   |

b) **ANOVA-Analysis of Variance**

|   |              | Sum of Squares   | Df         | Mean Square | F      | Sig.              |
|---|--------------|------------------|------------|-------------|--------|-------------------|
| 1 | Regression   | 12390.540        | 1          | 12390.540   | 69.954 | .000 <sup>b</sup> |
|   | Residual     | 38326.373        | 204        | 187.874     |        |                   |
|   | <b>Total</b> | <b>50716.913</b> | <b>205</b> |             |        |                   |

c) **Coefficients-Regression Beta Coefficients**

|                                   | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients | t     | Sig. |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|------|
|                                   | B                           | Std. Error | Beta                      |       |      |
| (Constant)                        | 25.669                      | 3.921      |                           | 4.546 | .000 |
| Management of diplomatic services | .309                        | .025       | .494                      | 6.122 | .000 |

b) **Regression analysis for the relationship between leadership capability and performance of diplomatic institutions of Somaliland**

Testing Hypothesis One:

The study hypothesized that H01: There is no relationship between leadership capability and performance of diplomatic institutions of Somaliland.

Regression model summary results in Table 1(a) indicate the goodness of fit for the regression between leadership capability and the performance of diplomatic institutions of Somaliland was satisfactory in the linear regression model. An R squared (coefficient of determination) of 0.291 indicates that 29.1% of the variations in performance of diplomatic institutions of Somaliland are explained by leadership capability. However, the model failed to explain at least 70.9% of the variation in performance of diplomatic institutions of Somaliland. This means that there are other factors associated with performance of diplomatic institutions which were not explained by the model.

Correlation coefficient(R) of 0.574 indicates that leadership capability has a positive correlation with the performance of diplomatic institutions of Somaliland. The standard error of 15.52559 shows the deviation from the line of the best fit. The result is shown in table 1(a).

The ANOVA tests in table (b) further revealed that the  $f_{cal} 6.602$  was greater than the  $f_{crit} 3.887$  with a p value =  $0.002 < 0.005$  before moderation. This implies that there was goodness of fit of the model fitted and that the model was significant. This also implies goodness of fit of the model fitted for the study and that the model was significant in explaining the performance of diplomatic institutions of Somaliland. Therefore, at  $p < 0.05$  level of significance, null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis ( $H_{a1}$ ) which states that “there is a significant relationship between the leadership capability and the performance of diplomatic institutions of Somaliland” is accepted implying that that leadership capability has significant influence on the performance of diplomatic and public institutions of Somaliland. The model  $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \epsilon$ . Where Y is Performance,  $\beta_0$  = a constant,  $X_1$  is leadership capability,  $\beta_1$  is the beta coefficient and is the  $\epsilon$ . error term. The study therefore concludes that leadership capability has a positive significant influence on performance of diplomatic institutions in Somaliland

Further, the study results as presented in table (c) showed that there was a positive relationship between the leadership capability and the performance of the diplomatic institutions of Somaliland. The beta coefficient results were ( $\beta = 0.261$ ,  $t = 2.532$ , p-value ( $< 0.05$ )). This implies that a unit improvement in leadership capability will lead to a 0.261 improvement in performance and this relationship is significant. Model  $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \epsilon$ . Where Y is Performance,  $\beta_0$  = a constant,  $X_1$  is leadership capability,  $\beta_1$  is the beta coefficient and  $\epsilon$ . is the error term. The model equation is  $Y = 46.74X + 0.261X_1 + e$

Where Y is the performance of diplomatic institutions of Somaliland,  $X_1$  is the leadership capability.

Given the findings indicate that there was goodness of fit of the model and the model was significant, this implies the null hypothesis ( $H_{01}$ ) is rejected while the alternate hypothesis is accepted.  $H_{01}$ : Leadership capability does not have a positive significant influence on the performance of diplomatic institutions of Somaliland is rejected and the alternative hypothesis that leadership capability influences performance of diplomatic institutions in Somaliland is accepted. The study therefore concludes that leadership capability has a positive significant influence on the performance of diplomatic institutions in Somaliland. The findings agree with those by (Megahed, *et al*, 2012) who indicated that aspects of management including planning, recruitment, and accountability affect organizational effectiveness.

*table 1: relationship between leadership capability and performance of diplomatic institutions of somaliland*

a) **Model Summary –Leadership Capability.**

| Model | R                 | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1     | .504 <sup>a</sup> | .291     | .262              | 15.52559                   |

b) **ANOVA- Analysis of Variance**

|   |              | Sum of Squares   | Df         | Mean Square | F     | Sig.              |
|---|--------------|------------------|------------|-------------|-------|-------------------|
| 1 | Regression   | 1543.974         | 1          | 1543.974    | 6.602 | .002 <sup>b</sup> |
|   | Residual     | 49172.939        | 204        | 241.044     |       |                   |
|   | <b>Total</b> | <b>50716.913</b> | <b>205</b> |             |       |                   |
| 2 | Regression   | 1602.152         | 1          | 1602.152    | 8.026 | .000 <sup>c</sup> |
|   | Residual     | 50197.152        | 204        | 250.122     |       |                   |
|   | <b>Total</b> | <b>51799.304</b> | <b>205</b> |             |       |                   |

1. Unmoderated    2. Moderated

c) **Coefficients-Regression Beta Coefficients**

|                       | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients | t      | Sig. |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|------|
|                       | B                           | Std. Error | Beta                      |        |      |
| (Constant)            | 46.742                      | 4.031      |                           | 11.609 | .000 |
| Leadership Capability | .261                        | .100       | .174                      | 2.532  | .002 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), leadership capability, foreign policy, management of diplomatic services, institutional resource gaps

b. Predictors: (Constant), leadership capability, foreign policy, management of diplomatic services, institutional resource gaps and cultural orientation

## **Conclusion**

The study concludes that managing diplomatic services, a dimension of Selected Leadership and Governance Elements had a positive and statistically significant influence on the performance of Somaliland's diplomatic institutions. This influence represented the highest contribution to the performance of the diplomatic institutions of Somaliland. The study also concludes that diplomatic services management (lack of well-governed and managed diplomatic corps) were the single most important factor that contributed to the poor performance and stagnation of the diplomatic institutions of Somaliland. This could be further explained by the fact that diplomats are the central engine of diplomatic institutions. Without having professionalized and highly motivated diplomats, the nation is unable to advance its national interests even if it has well-articulated foreign policy and practical and actionable strategic plan. Lack of meritocracy and professional standards in the diplomatic service led to appointment of unqualified personnel to the diplomatic positions regardless of their backgrounds, skills and experience. As result, Somaliland diplomatic institutions for more than 34 years failed to convince a single country to grant international *de jure* recognition to Somaliland despite the significant and impressive democratic governance, free and fair elections and peaceful transfer of power as well as maintaining peace and stability in highly volatile and conflict prone region. The study therefore concludes that an improvement in management of diplomatic services will lead to an improvement in performance of diplomatic institutions in Somaliland. The study found out that there exists a relationship between leadership capability and the performance of diplomatic institutions of Somaliland. could break the Somaliland's current status of legal limbo by transforming the institutions into highly effective, proactive, well-governed and globally aligned national advocacy force.

Furthermore, the study concludes that there is a significant and positive relationship between leadership capability, another dimension of Selected Leadership and Governance Elements and the performance of Somaliland diplomatic institutions. Visionary, knowledgeable, and achievement-oriented leaders with advanced diplomatic skills are essential for the effective reform and transformation of Somaliland's diplomatic institutions. They can break the Somaliland's current status of legal limbo by transforming the institutions into highly effective, proactive, well-governed and globally aligned national advocacy force. Empirical evidence indicates that the performance of the diplomatic corps, and thus the well-being of approximately 6 million citizens, are fundamentally dependent on this leadership capability. Such leadership adds value by developing and articulating a compelling national vision, foreign policy and formulating a detailed and actionable strategic plan to advance core national interests, and mobilizing critical resources from both increased public funding (secured through strategic advocacy) and the Diaspora network (engaged through shared objectives). The research further emphasizes that this leader must address and eliminate internal challenges, including clannism and the prevailing authoritarian, hierarchical culture, while establishing a robust, performance-based system that motivates staff and diplomats through clear objectives and recognized rewards. Consistent follow-up and recognizing and celebrating even minor achievements are vital for maintaining morale. Overall, the study asserts that appointing transformative leadership of this caliber is the most crucial intervention for professionalizing the diplomatic service and achieving international *de jure* recognition.

The study concludes that an improvement in leadership capability is therefore critical for the effectiveness and good governance of the diplomatic institutions which will lead to significant improvement in performance of diplomatic institutions of Somaliland.

### **Recommendations of the Study**

The findings (the results) of this study underscore the urgent need for a comprehensive and systemic transformation of Somaliland's diplomatic institutions to enhance their effectiveness in advancing national interests. Based on the empirical evidence, several key policy implications emerge.

Improving and strengthening leadership capability and professionalization of the diplomatic service are essential. The Government of Somaliland should adopt merit-based and competency-driven recruitment and appointment processes for ministers, ambassadors, and diplomats. Priority should be placed on selecting experienced, visionary, and transformational leaders with strong diplomatic expertise and proven organizational management capacity. Establishing transparent and competitive internal selection systems independent of civil service commission will be critical to maintaining professional standards and improving institutional performance.

The study establishes a compelling case for the foundational reform of Somaliland's diplomatic institutions, which currently lack a comprehensive legal and institutional anchor. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs should advocate for the enactment of a Diplomatic Service Act. This legislation would serve as the primary statutory mandate to authorize institutional transformation and provide the MFA leadership with the authority to initiate the reform process. The proposed Act should codify rigorous standards for leadership capability, administrative autonomy, and merit-based recruitment, while ensuring professional accreditation and sustainable resource mobilization and institutional governance. It should also provide for independent oversight mechanism to ensure accountability, transparency, professional integrity, and effective governance.

Strengthening strategic policy capacity is crucial for effective diplomacy. The Ministry should develop a clear, coherent and well-articulated foreign policy that prioritizes key countries and aligns with Somaliland's national interests. This should be supported by integrated strategic frameworks, including a strategic plan with appropriate structure, diplomatic strategy, advocacy & lobby strategy, and resource mobilization strategy, to improve policy implementation, coordination, and evaluation.

Institutional capacity building must also be prioritized through continuous learning and professional development. The establishment of a Foreign Service Institute, supported by a digital learning platform, would provide structured and ongoing training for diplomats and staff. This would enhance technical competencies, strengthen institutional knowledge, and contribute to the overall effectiveness of diplomatic engagement. Improving performance management and accountability systems is necessary to ensure results-oriented diplomacy. The

Ministry of Foreign Affairs should introduce and adopt performance-driven accountability mechanisms, including structured monitoring and evaluation tools such as mission performance plans to assess both institutional and individual performance. Accelerating supervision through regular communication, reporting, and review processes will further enhance institutional effectiveness and ensure alignment with foreign policy objectives.

Sustained performance also depends on adequate resources and motivation. Strengthening external and internal resource mobilization and incentive structures are essential for organizational performance. The Ministry should develop transparent and accountable mechanisms for mobilizing financial resources and improving budget utilization. In parallel, implementing performance-based incentive systems—including merit-based promotions, career progression pathways, and enhanced operational support—will improve staff motivation, morale, and productivity. Enhancing administrative and operational autonomy is essential to improving institutional agility and responsiveness. Granting the Ministry of Foreign Affairs greater decision-making flexibility will enable timely reforms, reduce bureaucratic constraints, and strengthen its ability to respond effectively to a dynamic geopolitical environment.

Finally, the study demonstrates the importance of innovation and strategic positioning in modern diplomacy. Somaliland should invest in digital diplomacy by developing secure communication infrastructure and leveraging digital platforms to expand its international engagement while minimizing operational costs. Gradual integration of digital technologies and emerging tools such as artificial intelligence will be absolutely essential. At the same time, institutionalizing a proactive and strategic approach to evolving regional and global geopolitical dynamics will enable Somaliland to better position itself, manage risks, and capitalize on emerging opportunities to advance its national interests. Overall, the effective implementation of these recommendations requires strong political commitment at the highest level and a sustained shift from personality-driven, ad hoc practices toward a modern, professional, and institutionally grounded diplomatic system. If successfully realized, this transformation will foster agile, effective, and well-governed diplomatic institutions with the capacity to navigate an evolving geopolitical landscape, capitalize on emerging opportunities, manage risks, and advance Somaliland's national interests.

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