

The Influence of Emotional Intelligence on the Academic Performance of Students in Economics in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State

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Abstract

In this study, the researcher investigated the influence of emotional intelligence on the academic [performance of students in Economics in [public secondary schools in Anambra state. The design adopted for the study is a correlational research design. The population of the study consist of 2,160 students of SS1 students of 2018/2019 session in all the 240 public secondary schools in Anambra State. A simple random sampling technique was used to select 400 students from the population. The instrument used for data collection was titled, "Influence of Emotional Intelligence on the Academic Performance of Students in Economics in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State Questionnaire" (IEIAPSEASQ). The instrument consists of two sections, section A is concerned with items on academic activities of students in Economics while section B contains items on academic performance of students in Economics. The instrument was validated by three experts, two in Educational Management and Policy and one from Educational Foundations, all in the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The reliability of the instrument was established using pilot-testing and analysis using Cronbach alpha which yielded 0.86 and 0.84 respectively with an average of correlation value of 0.85 which was considered high enough for the instrument to be reliable. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses. Findings reviewed that there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and students' activities and performance in Economics. It was however recommended among other things that the analysis of students' academic performance should be done taking the role of emotional intelligence into consideration.

Key Words: Emotion, Intelligence, Students, Academic Performance

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I. Introduction

The relationship between the mind and emotions seems to be vague to many people. Many believe that acceptable ideas could be possible without emotions. However, serious emotions have shown to have strong connection with good thinking. Emotional intelligence can be defined as the ability to recognize and control one's emotional dynamics, show empathy and viability in order to track down staggering obstacles with resilience and viability. Coleman defined it as the process of monitoring one's own and other people's emotions in so as to differentiate between them, label them properly and use information derived from the alternate emotions to guide thinking and attitude⁴. Emotional intelligence could be traced to the concept of social intelligence which was initially traced to Thomdike in 1920. It is regarded as the capacity to comprehend and manage people and to act wisely in human relations^{6,7,17}. Emotional intelligence is a device that could be used to control impulses, express empathy and deal with obstacles with resilience and flexibility⁶.

Though a recent concept, the connection between emotional intelligence and the workings of the mind cannot be underestimated. Thoughts are production of the mind and these thoughts function with and within

human emotions. In other words, they have the ability to influence and be influenced by emotions. Emotions are not just than feelings. They are the compendium of one's being or deposition as derived from one's circumstances, mood, interactions and relationship with others. Abu Rayyashet *al*, stated that there is a common denominator between emotions and thoughts on one hand, and between the mind and the heart on the other hand as they interact together with one another to help man with good thoughts and sound judgement.²⁰ An emotionally distressed person they added cannot regulate his emotions or coordinate his mentality even if he shows a high level of intelligence.

Research has shown that thoughts generated outside emotions do not often result in acceptable decisions or correct judgements. In most cases, it is difficult to have good thinking without the support of the emotion. Khawaldeh and Coleman are of the opinion that it is not even necessary to attempt setting aside emotions while trying to create a balance between good thoughts and emotions.¹⁶ Oyakhilome stated that emotional intelligence is one of the fundamental human aspects that play a very effective role in monitoring the behavioural performance of an individual.¹⁸ Its fundamental focus according to him is to identify and observe emotions as the person interact with others, attain to his duties and adapt to his environment or circumstance. Edumarks working on Mayer and Salovey's paper identified some models of emotional intelligence⁵. These according to them are:

- a. Emotional self-consciousness- that is recognising one's feeling at a particular time and understanding the influence of those moods on others around the person.
- b. Self-Regulation - that is controlling one's emotions and expecting their outcomes to avoid acting on impulse.
- c. Motivation - that is using emotional forces to achieve goals through liking one's learning activities and facing problems with resilience.
- d. Showing empathy to the emotions of others and
- e. Showing social skills through relationship management, encouraging others and stimulating desired responses from them.

Oyakhilome writing on the above models, stressed on the collaboration between the mind and emotions. He wrote that thoughts are pictures of the mind that reveal their actions through emotions and give vent to intelligence.¹⁸ Therefore, he stated that it is almost impossible for the mind to generate useful thoughts that convert to intelligence without the support of the emotions. Emotional intelligence, Edumark added is good thought acted out through emotions⁵. They also contend that emotional intelligence cannot be isolated from academic achievement. This is because a student that is emotionally traumatized cannot concentrate on his academics. Such emotional disorientation which could result from parents' marital crisis, poverty of parents that has led to poor feeding, ill-health and even lack of money could affect the academic activities and academic performance of such a student in Economics or even in other subject.

Beyond this is the fact that the secondary school stage is a time of emotional crisis in the life of every student. This is the period that their bodies shoot-out due to the growth of their hormones and tissues. At this stage, they look attractive to the opposite sex and their tendency to explore their feelings or emotions is high. So, they battle with their confidence, self-regulation, belongingness, social competence, collaboration and curiosity⁴. There is therefore a consistent struggle between their emotions and their academic activities and academic performance in Economics. Their ability to manage this conflict between their emotions and the academic activities at this stage determines the extent of their academic achievement.

In addition to the above situation, their transition to the tertiary institutions marks the beginning of a very serious challenge at the realm of their emotion. Lazzara opined therefore that it is difficult measuring students' academic activities and academic performance without putting their emotional challenges into consideration.¹⁹ The problem with such measurement is that most of their studies are centred on cognitive intelligence with little or no attention on non-cognitive aspects especially the affective domain.

II. Statement Of The Problem

The purpose of this work is to investigate the influence of emotional intelligence on academic performance of students in Economics public secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria. Emotional intelligence is the ability to handle one's feelings and passion and that of others with consideration.

The mind is the centre of activities but it does not act or operate in isolation. Most of the issues that form thought of the mind are arisen at the level of emotion. This means that man has a two-fold nature, the inward man and outward man. The inward man is the mind or soul while the outward man is the emotion. The emotion by definition comprises the physical body and five sense. The link between this two is inseparable, so when a student has emotional disorder, his concentration academically is affected and his academic activities and performance drops. Such emotional problem could emanate from relationship crisis, parents' separation or divorce, non-payment school fees or even sickness or demise of parents or one of them.

Unfortunately, the assessment of academic performance has always conducted without the considering the input of the emotions on students' academic activities. In addition to this, there has been no adequate empirical research on the influence of emotional intelligence of students of public secondary schools in Anambra State. This is the reason why this paper is designed to investigate the influence of emotional intelligence on the academic performance of students in Economics in public secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria.

III. Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions

1. What is the relationship between students' emotional intelligence and their academic activities in Economics in public secondary schools in Anambra State?
2. What is the relationship between students' emotional intelligence and their academic performance in Economics in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

IV. Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were adopted to and the study

1. There is no significant relationship between students' emotional intelligence and their academic activities in Economics in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. There is no significant relationship between students' emotional intelligence and their academic performance in Economics in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

V. Method

The design adopted for the study was a correlational research design. The design was used to ascertain the influence of emotional intelligence on the academic performance of students in Economics in public secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of 2,160 SS1 students of 2018/2019 session in all the 240 public secondary schools in Imo state. A simple random sampling technique was used to select 450 students from the population. The instrument used for the study was titled Influence of Emotional Intelligence on Academic Performance of Student of Public Secondary Schools Questionnaire (IEIAPSPSSQ)". The instrument consists of two sections, section A and B. Section A is concerned with items on academic activities of students in Economics while section B contains items on students' academic performance in Economics.

The instrument was validated by three experts, two from the Department of Educational Management and Policy and one from the Department of Measurement and Evaluation, all from the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The reliability of IEIAPSPSSQ was established using pilot-testing and analysis using Cronbach alpha which yielded 0.86 and 0.84 for section A and B respectively, and overall correlation value of 0.85 which was considered high enough for the instrument to be reliable. For the purpose of data analysis, each of the instrument was scored. The four-point rating scale was used in scoring the responses of the respondents item by item. Each item was weighted and calculated as: Strongly Agree (SA) = 4 points, Agree (A) = 3 points, Disagree (D) = 2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 point. Data were collected by the researcher himself were used to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses. The coefficients of correlation were classified into the form of relationship they exhibit. In testing the null hypotheses, where p-value is equal to or greater than the level of significance (0.05), the null hypothesis is accepted but if otherwise, it is rejected.

VI. Results

Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question 1

What is the relationship between students' emotional intelligence and their academic activities in Economics in Public secondary schools?

Table no 1: Pearson Correlation Coefficient of Students' Emotional Intelligence and their academic activities

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	rx _y	Relationship
Emotional Intelligence (X)	489	16.81	1.98	0.83	High positive relationship
Academic Activities (Y)		28.85	1.83		

Table no 1 indicates a correlation value of 0.83 showing a high positive relationship between the dependent and independent variables. This is to say that students' emotional intelligence was a strong factor in determining their academic activities in Economics.

Research Question 2

There is no significant relationship between students' emotional intelligence and their academic performance in Economics in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table no 2: Pearson Correlation Coefficient of Students' Emotional Intelligence and their academic Performance

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	rxy	Relationship
Emotional Intelligence (X)	489	17.71	1.89	0.79	High positive relationship
Academic Performance (Y)		28.76	1.69		

Table no 2 indicates a correlation value of 0.79 showing a high positive relationship between the dependent and independent variables. This is to say that students' emotional intelligence was a strong factor in determining their academic performance in Economics.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant relationship between students' emotional intelligence and their academic activities in Economics in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table no 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (Ppmc) Analysis of the Relationship between students' emotional intelligence (N = 489)

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rxy	p-value	Decision
Emotional Intelligence (X)	16.81	1.98	0.83	.000	Rejected
Academic Activities (Y)	28.85	1.83			

*p<.05;df = 487; critical r = .098

Table 3 indicates that at 0.05 level of significance and degree of freedom 487, the critical r-value is .098. The calculated r-value obtained in establishing the relationship between students' emotional intelligence and their academic activities in public secondary schools in Anambra State is 0.83 (p<.05). The p-value of .000 is less than the 0.05 level of significance. With these results, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between students' emotional intelligence and their academic activities in Economics was rejected. It was alternately accepted that there is significant relationship between students' emotional intelligence and their academic activities in Economics.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between students' emotional intelligence and their academic performance in Economics in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table no 4: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (Ppmc) Analysis of the Relationship between students' emotional intelligence and their Academic Performance (N = 489)

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	rxy	p-value	Decision
Emotional Intelligence (X)	17.71	1.89	0.79	.000	Rejected
Academic Performance (Y)	28.76	1.69			

*p<.05;df = 487; critical r = .078

Table no 4 shows that at 0.05 level of significance and degree of freedom 487, the critical r-value is .078. The calculated r-value obtained in establishing the relationship between students' emotional intelligence and their academic activities in public secondary schools in Anambra State is 0.79. The p-value of .000 is less than the 0.05 level of significance. With these results, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between students' emotional intelligence and their academic performance in Economics was rejected. It was alternately accepted that there is significant relationship between students' emotional intelligence and their academic performance in Economics.

VII. Discussion

In discussing the findings of the study, it is vital to state that academic activities are not synonyms with academic performance. The difference according to Edumark is an outcome⁵. Academic activities can be explained in terms of efforts made by students while academic achievement deals with the outcome or result of the effort made. The finding of this study shows that there is a positive and high relationship between emotional intelligence and academic activities of students in Economics. This is to say that students' emotional intelligence had a significant impact on their activities in Economics. This finding is in agreement with Coleman who explained that the relationship between the mind and emotional intelligence is inseparable⁴. It is therefore impossible for good thinking to come from the mind in the influence of emotions¹⁶.

Another finding of the study showed that there is a high and positive relationship between intelligence and students' academic performance in Economics. This means that students' emotional intelligence has a high significant influence on their academic performance in Economics. This finding is in line with the findings of Preete that academic performance without emotional intelligence is not futuristic and in fact impossible¹². In support of the above findings, Maraichelvi and Rajan stated that emotional intelligence in its four domains of intrapersonal awareness, interpersonal awareness, intrapersonal management and interpersonal management has been separately and totally found to be significantly associated with academic performance of students irrespective of their levels¹⁰.

Also, Maizatul in his work revealed that emotional intelligence in its dimensions has been found to be significantly related with students' academic performance⁹. According to Fernandez, emotional intelligence has emerged as a significant predictor of academic performance¹⁵. This presupposes that students cannot do well in Economics or in any other subjects in the absence of emotional intelligence. In fact, research has shown that over 40% of the change in the academic performance of students is attributable to emotional intelligence².

VIII. Conclusion

The findings of this study have indicated that there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and students' academic performance in Economics. Based on these findings, the researcher concluded that students should be aware of their emotional intelligence and regulate it to enhance their performance in Economics and even in other subjects of study.

IX. Recommendation

1. Students should possess a good knowledge of their emotional intelligence.
2. Students should also know of the emotional intelligence of people around them and regulate their relationship with them, with empathy.
3. The analysis of student's academic performance in Economics should be conducted putting emotional intelligence in to consideration.
4. Guidance and counsellors of students should pay attention to the role of emotional intelligence on the academic activities and performance of students.

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