EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AS A PREDICTOR OF SCHOOL ADJUSTMENT AMONG JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA.

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Abstract

The study investigated emotional intelligence as a predictor of school adjustment among JSS students in Rivers State, Nigeria. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The study was anchored on Social Learning Theory by Albert Bandura. The study adopted a correlation research design. The population of the study comprised all the 27,386 (13,331 male and 14,055 female) students in the 275 public junior secondary schools in Rivers State. The sample size of the study comprised all the 439 (225 male and 214 female) public junior secondary school students one (JSSI) in the sampled 35 schools and 6 Local Government Areas in Rivers State, Nigeria. The multi-stage sampling approach was adopted using cluster and stratified sampling technique. One adapted and modified non-cognitive instrument titled "Emotional Intelligence Scale" (EIS) developed by Belinda Davies in 2010 and oneself designed instrument titled "School Adjustment Scale" (SAS) was used for the study. Face, content and construct validities were ensured. The reliability coefficients were 0.70 and 0.75 for EIS and SAS respectively. The multiple and linear regression analysis were used to answer the research questions, while Anova associated with multiple regression and t-test with linear regression were used to test the null hypotheses. It was found that there was a significant joint contribution of emotional intelligence (self-regulation, self-awareness, empathy, motivation and social skills) on school adjustment among JSS students in Rivers State. Emotional intelligence independent prediction showed that self-regulation, self-awareness and social skills significantly predicted school adjustment in secondary schools in Rivers while empathy and motivation do not. It was recommended among others that the school administrators should include emotional intelligence measure as one of the criteria for junior secondary school admission.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence (Self-awareness, Self-regulation, Social-skills, Motivation and Empathy) and School Adjustment

Introduction

The process of adapting to the status of being a student and the vast areas of the school environments are issues that can increase adjustment challenges. There is no way one can make mention of adjustment without due recourse to the way one uses adaptability skills to overcome so many hitches both seen and unseen. Good in Raju and Rahamtulla (2007) stated that adjustment is the process of finding and adopting modes of behaviour suitable to the environment or the changes in the environment. Adjustment requires high level of social, affective and cognitive skills that will help the person become stable. In the same vein, Kulshrestha in Raju and Rahamtulla (2007) explained that the adjustment process is a way in which the individual attempts to deal with stress, tensions, conflicts etc., and meet his or her needs.

Psychology Wiki (2017) opined that school adjustment is the process of adapting to the role of being a student and to various aspects of the school environment. School adjustment is a clear indicator that shows whether the student will be able to cope with the human, environment and other constituents of school setup. Although adjustment contains many aspects like social, emotional, physical and educational dimensions; the best aspect is social adjustment which is the prerequisite to the other aspects of adjustment (Mazaheri, Baghiyan, & Fatehizadeh, 2006). It is very tasking and time taken for some students to adjust to the school settings where they enrolled for education. Kiff (2012) explained that adjustment is the balancing of internal needs and external demands on the organism.

Emotion of an individual is a very important stake in the behaviour manifestation of such an individual. Ones knowledge of his emotion could be seen as being emotional intelligent and lack of knowledge of emotion does not connote emotional intelligence. Akinade (2008) saw emotional intelligence as a form of intelligence that refers to how effectively people perceive and understand their own emotions and the emotions of others and can regulate and manage such behavior. To Akinade, emotional intelligence is not just peoples' intelligence on their own emotion but also of the emotion of other people. Colman (2003; 241) saw emotional intelligence as "ability to monitor one's own and other people's emotion, to discriminate between different emotions and label them appropriately, and to use emotional information to guide thinking and behavior". In the light of the definition above, emotional intelligence deals with peoples' ability to monitor and manage their own emotions likewise other people's emotion.

Understanding of one's emotion requires great deal of competencies and skills to be able to bring to fore the true knowledge of one's emotion. Goleman (1995) saw emotional intelligence as a wide array of competencies and skills that facilitate performance. Individuals need to work in harmony and together with other people, there is great expectation that there will be optimal performance as they collaborate, therefore, competencies and skills that facilitate performance are as a result of understanding their emotions. Goleman and Boyatzis (2001) explained that emotional quotient (EQ) is more critical than intelligence quotient (IQ) in determining the success of students. Bar-on (1997) categorized emotional intelligence as non-cognitive behaviours which address the emotional, personal, social and survival dimensions of intelligence, which are often more important for daily functioning than intelligence quotient (IQ).To this end, the author is of the opinion that ability to manage very effectively ones emotion will to a great extent bring about high performance.

Cooper and Sawaf (1997) defined emotional intelligence as the ability to sense, understand and effectively apply the power and acumen of emotions as a source of human energy, information and influence. To this author, emotional intelligence is the understanding and application of one's knowledge of emotions as a strong base for information and influence. Emotional intelligence could be seen as the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions, so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Muchinsky (2003) saw emotional intelligence as a construct that reflects a person's capacity to manage emotional responses in social situations. The day to day interaction and association with people requires understanding and fruitful application of the understanding of an emotion of an individual or of the group members in order collective collaborate and corroborate their reasons of coming together. Woolfork, Hughes and Walk-up (2008) saw emotional intelligence as the ability to process emotional information accurately and efficiently. Chadha (2009) saw emotional intelligence as the ability of an individual to appropriately and successfully respond to a vast variety of stimuli being elicited from the inner self and the immediate environment.

Being emotional intelligent should be all encompassing and should not be limited to only one aspect of emotion. That is, one should be able to adopt, adapt and tolerate every of his own emotion, others and the one from his immediate environment. The adoption, adaptation and tolerance of

emotional intelligence should be within the purview of what is generally acceptable in such environment or organization. And this agrees with Egbule (2009) when he opined that emotional intelligence is the ability to validly reason with emotions and to use emotions to enhance thought. Somebody's emotion definitely, affects his thinking processes. Therefore thoughts are supposed to be pure for those who have understanding of their emotions and are able to use the knowledge of such emotion to enhance thought. Mishra and Mohapatra (2010) submitted that there are three parameters of emotional intelligence and are categorized into emotional competence, emotional maturity and emotional sensitivity. Emotional intelligence is classified into five components.

Sami (2012) stated that emotional intelligence describes the ability, capacity, skill or self-perceived ability to identify access and manage the emotions of oneself, of others, and of groups. According to him, people who possess a high degree of emotional intelligence know themselves very well and are also able to sense the emotions of others. According to Nelson and Low (2013) emotional intelligence is the single most important variable in personal achievement, career, success, leadership and life satisfaction and it enhance job performance in an organization. Hein (2009) saw emotional intelligence as the mental ability we are born with which gives our emotional sensitivity and potential for emotional management skills that help us maximize our long term health, happiness and survival..

Chada (2009) asserted that emotional intelligence is the ability of an individual to appropriately and successfully respond to a vast variety of stimuli being elicited from the inner self and the immediate environment. Mishra and Mohapatra (2011) explained that, there are three parameters of emotional intelligence which are emotional competency, emotional maturity and emotional sensitivity, emotional competency indicates one's ability and capacity to effectively respond to emotional stimuli elicited by various situations, having high self-esteem, and optimism etc. emotional maturity is reflected in the behavioural pattern exhibited by workers while dealing with the self and the immediate environment. Emotional maturity therefore, indicates one's ability and capacity to objectively evaluate emotions of himself/herself and others, balancing state of heart and mind, adaptability and flexibility etc.

Salovey and Mayer cited in Teibowei (2014) identified two major components of emotional intelligence which are intrapersonal competency and interpersonal competency. Intrapersonal competency is sub-divided as follows:-

i. **Self awareness:** This means the ability to identify one's own internal states, preferences, resources and intuition. It involves recognizing one's emotions and their effects, accurate self-assessment which involves knowing one's emotions and their effects and self-confidence which refers to a strong sense of strength and limitation.

ii. **Self-regulation:** Self regulation could be likened as the ability of students to initiate and control their behaviour towards some impulses that will enable them meet some established standards, objectives, goals or self expectations. The students should be able to say no to plans that are not in consonant with the original plans of the schools system. A student with improved self regulation is expected to dance to the tune and standards of the school system and as they also agree to his/her standards. Psychology Glossary (2017) reported that self regulation refers to our ability to direct our behaviour and control our impulses so that we meet certain standards, achieve certain goals, or reach certain ideals. In furtherance to this, Psychology Glossary stated that self regulation involves being able to set goals, mentoring one's behaviour to ensure that it is in line with those goals, and having the willpower to persist until goals are reached. The ability to self-regulate has been viewed as a desirable quality throughout history because of its positive effects on behavior and the acquisition of skills (Reid, 1993). Self regulation is supposed to be a house hold thing for students in their academic pursuit.

Every student is expected to effectively adopt and conform to the standards of the school in order to be part of the activities of the school. Any student that does not have self regulation may not be

able to adjust to school rules and regulations. Self-Regulation refers to the self-directive process through which learners transform their mental abilities into task related skills (Zimmerman, 2001). Zimmerman has been able to establish the fact that self regulation has to do with self direction which must be in the positive way. Self-regulation is the process of continuously monitoring progress toward a goal, checking outcomes, and redirecting unsuccessful efforts (Berk, 2003). Self regulation is very important in the academic and other achievements in that it helps to monitor a given task to a completion. In order for students to be self-regulated they need to be aware of their own thought process, and be motivated to actively participate in their own learning process (Zimmerman, 2001).

Self management refers to the ability to manage one's internal states, impulses and resources. Self-management is the ability to regulate distressing effects like anxiety and anger and to inhibit emotional impulsivity. It involves self-control (keeping disruptive emotions and impulse in check), trustworthiness (maintaining a standard of honesty and integrity, being sincere and faithful), conscientiousness (taking responsibility for personal performance), adaptability (flexibility in handling change or being fitted in with comfort in any environment or situation) and innovation, which is being comfortable with novel ideas, approaches, new information etc.

iii. **Self-motivation**:- This refers to the ability to be effectively turned to associative network arranged in a hierarchy of strength and importance in the individual which determines what goals one seeks. This explains that motivation may sustain the residual effect that propels one to achieve goals. It is the tendency that guides or facilitates reaching goals and enhances performance in any work place. Inherent in motivation are achievement drive (striving to improve or meet a standard of excellence), commitment (aligning with the goals of the group or organization), initiative (readiness to act upon opportunities and ability to do well when chance is given) and optimism-persistence in pursing goals despite obstacles and setback. Interpersonal competency is subdivided into the following:-

iv. **Empathy:** This means the ability to understand the emotional constituents of other people (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Empathy has to do with possession of skills in order to treat or relate with people according to their emotional status. Empathy is grossly engulfed in sympathy, and feeling of one's concern towards other people's condition and emotional experiences.

v. **Relationship Management or Social Skill**:- This refers to one's ability to manage and control one's emotions. It deals with social control of one self and that of others. It is necessary for managing relationship with others. Effective management and social relationship induces positive response from others (Teibowei, 2014). In a fundamental sense, the effectiveness of one's relationship skills brings on one's ability to influence the emotions of another person. That ability, in turn builds on other domains of emotional intelligence, particularly self-management and social awareness. Dhiman, Birbal and Bhim (2016) empirically found that students' emotional Intelligence affects home, school and peer adjustment.

They further found that, student with high emotional intelligence can take the challenges of life and make successful adjustment in life.

Statement of the Problem

Researches and personal experiences have shown that students who have adjustment problem find it difficult to cope with the school environment, teachers and colleagues. These students may end up changing schools, making wrong friends, lack concentration in the school, cry often times, remain moody, gloomy, solitary, and may not be able to fit into the school environment. Students who frequently change school because of adjustment problem or as a result of maladjustment are at the verge of not settling down for arduous academic activities. They expend most of their period locating their classrooms, searching for subject teachers, friends and above all trying to acclimatize with the new school environment. Students who project adjustment signs should be identified early before it metamorphoses

to a syndrome. Lack of conducive and friendly learning environment may not support effective learning though teaching may be going on.

Some students are out from school because of ugly experiences they had either from their teachers or from their colleagues hence were unable to manage such situations. If the adjustment problem of these children is not handled with immediate and frantic measures, the future of our young stars, posterity and this great nation will be bleak and hence more social vices. The researchers are bothered on whether emotional intelligence is a predictor of school adjustment among JSS students in Rivers State, Nigeria. Therefore the problem of the study is to ascertain if emotional intelligence is a predictor of school adjustment challenges among JSS Students in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are as follows:

i. Investigate the extent emotional intelligence (self-regulation, self-awareness, empathy, motivation and social skills) jointly predict school adjustment among JSS students in Rivers State, Nigeria.

ii. Determine the extent emotional intelligence (self-regulation, self-awareness, empathy, motivation and social skills) independently predict school adjustment among JSS students in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in this study.

i. To what extent does emotional intelligence (self-regulation, self-awareness, empathy, motivation and social skills) jointly predict school adjustment among JSS students in Rivers State, Nigeria?

ii. To what extent does emotional intelligence (self-regulation, self-awareness, empathy, motivation and social skills) independently predict school adjustment among JSS students in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

i. Emotional intelligence (self-regulation, self-awareness, empathy, motivation and social skills) jointly do not significantly predict school adjustment among JSS students in Rivers State, Nigeria.

ii. Emotional intelligence (self-regulation, self-awareness, empathy, motivation and social skills) independently do not predict school adjustment among JSS students in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Methodology

The study adopted a correlational research design. The population of the study comprised all the 27,386 (13,331 male and 14,055 female) students in the 275 public junior secondary schools in the 3 senatorial zones of Rivers West, East, and South spread across the 23 Local Government Areas. (Source: Rivers state Universal Basic Education Board, Emis Unit School Statistics, and Junior Secondary Enrolment by Gender by Class as 2016/2017). The sample size of the study comprised 439 (225 male and 214 female) public junior secondary school students one (JSSI) in the 35 schools in the sampled 6 Local Government Areas in Rivers State, Nigeria. The Taro Yamenen's minimum statistical determinant gave the minimum sample size as 394. The multi-stage sampling approach was used to arrive at the various sub-units of the population. The schools were clustered into 3 senatorial zones and 23 Local Government Areas. 40% of the 23 L.G.As gave 6 L.G.As, with the constituent 35 schools and 3,652 (1,871 male and 1,781 female) students using stratified random sampling technique. Finally, the stratified random sampling technique using 12% was used to draw the sample size of 439 (225 male and 214 female) students from 3,652 (1,871 male and 1,781 female) students. The face, construct and content validities were ensured. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of Emotional Intelligence Scale was 0.70 while the School Adjustment Scale was 0.75. Multiple and linear regression were used to answer the research questions while the Anova and t-test associated with multiple and linear regression were used to test the null hypotheses.

Results

Research Question One: To what extent do emotional intelligence (self-regulation, self-awareness, empathy, motivation and social skills) jointly predict school adjustment among JSS students in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Table 1a: model summary of multiple regression analysis on the joint prediction of emotional intelligence on school adjustment

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.318a	.101	.091	11.17635

Table 1a shows that emotional intelligence has a very low positive relationship of 0.318 with school adjustment. The coefficient of determinism of 10.1% shows the extent emotional intelligence predicts school adjustment of secondary school students in Rivers State, Nigeria. The remaining 89.9 was accounted for by other variables apart from emotional intelligence.

Hypothesis One

Emotional intelligence (self-regulation, self-awareness, empathy, motivation and social skills) jointly do not significantly predict school adjustment among JSS students in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Table 1b: Anova associated with multiple regression on the joint prediction of emotional intelligence on school adjustment

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	6189.113	5	1237.823	9.910	.000a
	Residual	54835.813	439	124.911		
	Total	61024.927	444			

Table 1b revealed that mean square for regression and residual variables are 6189.113 and 54835.813 respectively. With degrees of freedom of 5, and 439, the F calculated value is 9.910. F,(9.910), df (5,439), p>0.000. The ANOVA associated with multiple regression showed that p value is greater than the significant value of 0.000. By implication, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant joint contribution of emotional intelligence (self-regulation, self-awareness, empathy, motivation and social skills) on school adjustment among JSS students in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Research Question Two: To what extent do emotional intelligence (self-regulation, self-awareness, empathy, motivation and social skills) independently predict school adjustment among JSS students in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Hypothesis Two

Emotional intelligence (self-regulation, self-awareness, empathy, motivation and social skills) independently do not predict school adjustment among JSS students in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Table 2: t-test associated with linear regression on the independent prediction of emotional intelligence on school adjustment

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	27.449	3.981		6.895	.000
	selfregulation	.404	.080	.238	5.067	.000
	selfawareness	.190	.083	.114	2.282	.023
	Empathy	-.033	.093	-.017	-.352	.725
	motivation	-.076	.081	-.047	-.938	.349
	socialskills	.182	.084	.110	2.174	.030

Table 2 revealed that self-regulation predict school adjustment more in the positive direction with a standardized beta coefficient of .238, also, self-awareness predicts school adjustment in the positive direction with a standardized beta coefficient of .114 and social-skills predicts school adjustment with a standardized beta coefficient of .110 while motivation and empathy predict school adjustment in the negative direction with a negative standardized beta coefficients of -.047 and -.017 respectively. It was found that self-regulation, self-awareness and social-skills with their various t-values of 5.067, 2.282 and 2.174 are significant at .000, 0.23 and .030 when subjected to critical probability level of 0.05. While empathy and motivation showed no statistical significance with t-values of -.352 and -.938 at calculated probability level of .725 and .349 when subjected to critical probability value of 0.05. Therefore, self-regulation, self-awareness and social-skills significantly predict school adjustment independently in secondary schools in Rivers State while empathy and motivation do not.

Summary of Findings

The findings of this study are summarized as shown below:

  i. It was found that emotional intelligence (sel-regulation, self-awareness, empathy, motivation and social skills) jointly significantly predicted 10.1% of school adjustment among JSS students in Rivers State, Nigeria.

  ii. It was found that self-regulation, self-awareness and social skills which are components of emotional intelligence independently significantly predicted school adjustment among JSS students in Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

The discussion of findings of this study is shown below:

Emotional Intelligence and School Adjustment

It was found that the coefficient of determinism of 10.1% shows the extent emotional intelligence predicts school adjustment among secondary school students in Rivers State, Nigeria. There is a significant joint contribution of emotional intelligence (self-regulation, self-awareness, empathy, motivation and social skills) in predicting school adjustment among JSS students in Rivers State, Nigeria. Dhiman, Birbal and Bhim (2016) revealed that Emotional Intelligence affects students' adjustment. Thus, student with high emotional intelligence can take the challenges of life and make successful adjustment in life. Adeyemo (2016) in his study showed that there is a significant relationship between levels of emotional intelligence and adjustment. Contrary to the finding, Sawhney and Kaur (2016) found no significant difference in the emotional intelligence and adjustment.

It was revealed that self-regulation predict school adjustment more in the positive direction with a standardized beta coefficient of .238, also, self-awareness predicts school adjustment in the positive direction with a standardized beta coefficient of .114 and social-skills predicts school adjustment with a standardized beta coefficient of .110 while motivation and empathy predict school adjustment in the negative direction with a negative standardized beta coefficients of -.047 and -.017 respectively. Self-regulation, self-awareness and social-skills significantly predict school adjustment independently in secondary schools in Rivers State while empathy and motivation do not. Adeyemo (2016) indicated that the levels of emotional intelligence are significantly related to adjustment. Punia and Sangwan (2011) found that dimensions of emotional intelligence had significant positive relationship with adjustment of children.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it was concluded that emotional intelligence significantly jointly predicts school adjustment among secondary school students in Rivers State. Moreso, self-regulation, self-awareness and

social-skills independently significantly predict school adjustment while empathy and motivation do not independently predict school adjustment in secondary schools in Rivers State.

Recommendations

Considering the findings of this study which revealed that:

i. Emotional intelligence showed a joint statistical significance with school adjustment, therefore, the school administrators should include emotional intelligence measure as one of the criteria for junior secondary school admission.

ii. Self-regulation, self-awareness and social skills should receive more emphasis when addressing the students since they are significant in school adjustment.

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