

## EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE OF STUDENT - TEACHERS IN RELATION TO THEIR FUTURE PRODUCTIVITY

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### Abstract

*Emotional intelligence can be defined as the ability to understand the emotions of oneself and others. Although there are many studies on emotional intelligence in the literature, there is limited number of studies focusing on student-teachers in relation to their future productivity. This study investigated the level of emotional intelligence of the student-teachers in relation to their future productivity in a Nigeria University. Three hundred and twenty one student-teachers selected randomly from Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Nigeria formed the sample. Emotional Intelligence Scales (EIS) developed by Goldman (1996) was adopted to collect data on student-teachers level of emotional intelligence. Data obtained were analyzed using t-test and one-way ANOVA. The findings revealed that the emotional intelligence of student-teachers was high. There was a significant difference between emotional intelligence of male and female student-teachers. An emotional intelligent student-teacher is likely to be high achiever and become more productive in future irrespective of gender. This implies that improving the emotional competencies of the student-teachers will help them to develop the same among their students.*

**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence, Student-teachers, University Students, Gender.

### Introduction

The essence of education worldwide is to assist individuals to maximize their potentials for optimal self and national development. Indeed, education generally is not only profitable but a prerequisite for meaningful and sustained national economy (Ezenwa & Yaki, 2013). Education is the process, which contributes to the natural and harmonious development of an individual. It assists individual to transfer the knowledge acquired in schools to real life situation in solving future problems and coping strategies to equip them for future challenges (Norton & Schell, 2001). The main aim of education is the all round holistic development of students. The role of teachers in the educational process which helps in making an individual a better individual cannot be overemphasized.

Teachers are the backbone of the educational institutions, without teachers, these institutes are considered the body without soul (Tahir, Rabbia & Saba, 2013). This is because they occupy an important position in the implementation of the school curriculum. They are the managers of the instructional activities within the school system. Probably this is the reason why Nigeria policy on education emphasized that no nation can develop above the quality of its teachers (FRN, 2009). A competent teacher should be able to relate subject content to practical life (Norton & Schell, 2001). Teachers are vital in ensuring quality students worthy in learning and character. There is no alternative to quality teachers if a nation is to achieve excellent performance in all sectors. Therefore, teachers must be equipped with sufficient knowledge, skills and awareness in order to carry out their jobs. One of the critical aspects involved in the development of a healthy, personally accountable and successful person is Emotional Intelligence (Lenka & Kant, 2012).

Emotional intelligence is a confluence of developed abilities to: know and value self; build and maintain a variety of strong, productive and healthy relationships; get along and work well with others in achieving positive results; and effectively deal with the pressures and demands of daily life and work (Maraichelvi & Rajan, 2013; Nelson & Low, 2003). Salovey and Mayer (1990) defined emotional intelligence as the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions. Similarly, Goleman (2010) defined the emotional intelligence as recognizing and managing feelings, self-action, the ability of understanding the others' feelings and to conduct the relationships. Thus, emotional intelligence in the academic and professional spheres contributes to

individual cognitive-based performance over and above the level attributable to general intelligence (Romanelli, Cain & Smith, 2006). Teachers and students with higher emotional intelligence displayed more positive social functioning in interpersonal relationship and are regarded by peers as prosocial, less antagonistic and conflictual (Brackett, Rivers & Salovey, 2011). These attributes improved social competence and quality relationships that could facilitate cognitive and intellectual development leading to better academic performance.

Individual with higher emotionally intelligence are persons who grew up in families emotionally sensitive, open to criticism, know how to express their feelings in different and effective ways, can share and discuss their feelings, aesthetics, morals, ethics, leadership, social, and are individuals with advanced level of knowledge related to problem solving and spiritual issues (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2004). Emotional intelligence is learnable and can be properly developed (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Hence, it is imperative to develop the emotional intelligence of student-teachers during pre-service years to enable them relate well with the students, avoid discourse, and establish better relationship with their colleagues. The emotional intelligence skills acquired by student-teachers will empower them, in generating particular emotional state to facilitate particular types of thinking, processes of emotional change in their classroom, and regulating their own emotion. Giving importance to cognitive intelligence as well as emotional intelligence, there will be positive developments in academic achievement and quality of life of the students (Marachelvi & Rajan, 2013; Chew, Zain, & Hassan 2013).

### **Literature Review**

Effective learning takes place when students have an understanding of how to learn and this understanding requires emotional skills such as confidence, self-control, the ability to communicate, and the ability to cooperate with others. Many studies have found positive correlation between emotional intelligence and academic achievement. Khokhar and Kush (2009) found that high emotional intelligence brings about better quality of work performance.

The study conducted by Nelson and Low (2004) revealed the importance of emotional intelligence during transition period of high school graduates in the first year of college. They emphasized the importance of emotional intelligence skills as influencing variables in students' achievement and retention. Rode, Mooney, Arthaud-Day, Near, Baldwin, Rubin, and Bommer (2007) predicted that emotional intelligence was related to academic performance for two reasons. First, academic performance involves a great deal of ambiguity. Second, majority of academic work is self-directed, requiring high levels of self-management. Therefore, individuals with high emotional intelligence would perform better academically. Also, Hogan and Majeski (2004) found emotional intelligence a predictor in identifying academically successful and academically unsuccessful students during transition period.

Farooq (2003) conducted a study on effect of emotional intelligence on academic performance of 246 adolescent students. The result of the study proved that the students who score high on emotional intelligence specifically in the areas of interpersonal skills, intrapersonal skills, adaptability, general moods, and stress management skills tend to have good academic performance as compared to those who score low on these scales. However, comparison of both genders on academic performance revealed no significant differences.

Similarly, Holt (2008) assessed emotional intelligence and academic achievement in higher education, once found that 14% of variance in the GPA of college students was accounted for by emotional intelligence.

Abdullah (2006) conducted a study on Emotional Intelligence and Academic Achievement among University students in Kolej Matrikulasi Perlis. He found that some dimensions of emotional intelligence significantly predict academic performance of college students.

Singaravelu (2007) studied emotional intelligence of student teachers (pre-service) at primary level in Urdu region and found that emotional intelligence of student teachers was above average as the mean and standard deviation were found to be 33.46 and 946 respectively. It was observed that 68% of the student teacher had above average level of emotional intelligence.

Jones (2008) investigated how students' emotional intelligence could meet the expected graduate qualities highlighted by universities and the requirements of the profession. He concluded that students whose emotional intelligence levels were higher may enjoy success in the working environment, therefore providing students with the chance to develop and enhance emotional intelligence may directly impact on their future performance.

Nwadinigwe and Azuka-Obieke (2012) examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement among senior secondary school students. They revealed that there was a positive relationship between emotional intelligence skills and academic achievement such that developing emotional intelligence skills of a student would lead to the enhancement of his/her academic achievement.

Maraichelvi and Rajan (2013) examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic performance among final year undergraduate. They found that emotional intelligence competencies, such as ability to regulate one's feelings, problem solving, intrapersonal and interpersonal skills are highly germane to academic success.

However, some studies did not find significant relationships between emotional intelligence and academic success. Newsome, Day, and Catano (2000) investigated the relationship of emotional intelligence, cognitive ability, and personality with academic achievement. Emotional intelligence was measured using the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i), including the total EQ-i score and five EQ-i composite factor scores. None of the EQ-i factor scores, nor the total EQ-i score, was significantly related to academic achievement.

A study by O'Connor and Little (2003) assessed the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement, as measured by grade point average, in college students, using both self-report and ability-based measures of emotional intelligence. The results showed that emotional intelligence was not a strong predictor of academic achievement regardless of the type of instrument used to measure it.

Bastian, Burns, and Nettelbeck (2005) examined the relationships between emotional intelligence and a number of life skills (academic achievement, life satisfaction, anxiety, problem-solving, and coping ability). The participants consisted of 246 predominantly first-year tertiary students from a university in Australia. Participants completed three measures assessing emotional intelligence that were widely used and suitable for an Australian sample: Trait Meta Mood Scale, Assessing Emotions Scale, and the Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test. Correlations between emotional intelligence and academic achievement were not statistically significant.

Todd (2006) conducted a study to see the relationship between emotional intelligence and student-teacher performance. However, data, collected from the cooperating teacher and student teacher perspective did not reveal any statistically significant relationship.

Kavcar (2011) conducted a study on the impact of emotional intelligence on academic achievement. He found that there is a positive relationship at a weak level between total scores of emotional intelligence of students in business administration department and academic achievement. No significant relationship was observed between academic achievement and personal skills, stress management and general mood.

As regarding gender differences in emotional intelligence, psycho-educational research has demonstrated some degree of relation between the two; however, this relation has not been clearly established. The results of some studies indicate significant gender differences in emotional intelligence and those of others contradict the notion. Popular literature apparently suggests that men and women significantly differ in their styles of emotional intelligence. Women and girls are generally considered more caring and emotionally responsive than men and boys (Eisenberg, 1994). Goleman (1998), however, denies the idea that women are smarter than men regarding emotional intelligence and vice versa. This was supported in a study conducted by Abdullah (2006) that reported no difference in the emotional intelligence scores of male and female students. Maliha and Rehana

(2010) conducted a study on exploration of emotional intelligence among university students in relation to gender, age and academic achievement. They found no difference in the mean scores of male and female students except on stress management scale where male students scored higher than female students.

However, in a study conducted by Harrod and Scheer (2005) on 200 youths of age 16-19, revealed a significant difference in the scores of males and females on emotional intelligence with females reporting higher EI level. Similarly, the study of Katyal and Awasthi (2005) on adolescence of Chandigarh, showed females had higher EI scores, but the difference was not as significant to be conclusive. Adeyemo (2008) found a significantly higher emotional intelligence in female workers in different organizations than their male counterparts. Similarly, Mayer, Caruso, and Salovey (1999) and Mayer and Geher (1996) found that women are stronger than men.

Regarding age differences in emotional intelligence, the research shows little difference in emotional intelligence regarding age. For example, Balci-Celik and Deniz (2008) conducted a study on the difference in the EI levels of Turkish scouts and scouts from other countries with regard to age and gender. They found no gender difference in emotional intelligence, neither there was any difference in emotional intelligence regarding age. Birks, McKendree and Watt (2009) also did not find any significant correlation between age and emotional intelligence of healthcare students. In another study by Fariselli, Ghini and Freedman (2006) examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and age, showing a slight but significant positive correlation between them. They concluded that this correlation is very weak and there are more decisive factors that account for variations in emotional intelligence. Natalie & NexTech (nd), reported that emotional intelligence was not significantly associated with age.

However, Salami (2007) investigated the relationship of emotional intelligence and self efficacy to work attitudes of secondary school teachers in South Western Nigeria. Result indicated that emotional intelligence and self efficacy had significant relationship with work attitude. However, age, sex, and work experience had none. In another study, Sanchez-Nunez (2008) found that gender, age and qualification influenced the emotional intelligence of teachers. Also, Ogundokun and Adeyemo (2010) examined emotional intelligence and academic achievement using age, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as moderating variables. The results revealed that emotional intelligence, age and academic motivation were potent predictors mildly associated to academic achievement. Age was found to be a significant factor in learning.

In the reports of West African Examination Council and National Examination Council, it was described that students performance in science related subjects at senior secondary school level in Nigeria has been poor (WAEC, 2011; NECO, 2010). The causes of such could be attributed to teachers' low emotional intelligence skills. In spite of the studies reviewed, there is still need to further investigate the level of emotional intelligence to academic achievement in relation to gender and difference in Nigeria.

## **Objectives**

The present study investigated the emotional intelligence of student teachers in relation to their future productivity in a Nigeria university. It specifically examined the:

- (i). level of emotional intelligence of student teachers at University of Ilorin.
- (ii) differences in the level of Emotional intelligence between the groups regarding gender, and age range.

## **Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

- (i). What is the level of emotionally intelligence level of the student-teachers in a Nigerian University?
- (ii). Is there any difference between emotional intelligence of male and female students - teachers?

- (iii). Is there difference in the emotional intelligence of student-teachers based on their age range?

### Hypotheses

Based on the research questions 2 and 3, the following hypotheses were formulated:

- (i). There exists no significant difference between emotional intelligence of male and female students teachers  
 (ii). No significant difference exists among student teachers of different age range.

### Methodology

The population of this study comprised of all the students in the Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin while the target population were 400 level students in the same faculty. Purposive sampling technique was used in selecting 400 level students because they had been taught micro-teaching course (EDU 311), and had undergone teaching practice experience. Four hundred and twenty student-teachers were randomly sampled for the studies. However, only Three hundred and twenty one returned completed research instruments. Student-teachers were drawn from eight Departments in the Faculty of Education, namely (i) Social Science Education, (ii) Educational Management, (iii) Counsellor Education, (iv) Arts Education, (v) Science Education, (vi) Human Kinetics, (vii) Educational Technology, and (viii) Health Education. Stratified random sampling technique was employed in selecting sample size in this study. The list of element in the Faculty of education was arranged into different strata based on gender (male & female) and age ranges between 16 – 19 years (Low), 20 – 23 years (Medium), and 24 year and above (high), then, the required number was randomly sampled from each stratum.

The research instrument employed in this study was the Emotional Intelligence Scales (EIS; Goldman, 1996). The EIS is a 21 item instrument and includes the following four subscales: Self-awareness (SA), Self -Management (SM), Social-Awareness (SA), and Relationship Management (RM).The response were measured on a 4-point likert scale (4 = Strongly Agree to 1 = Strongly Disagree). This EIS was designed to indicate the differences in individual reactions to various situations. Goldman (1996) reported good internal consistency reliabilities of the instrument.

### Results

Data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. The data obtained from the study were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Research Question one was analysed using frequency count and simple percentage, hypotheses one and two were tested using t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) respectively.

**Research Question 1:** What is the level of emotionally intelligence of student-teachers in Nigerian University? In answering research question one, frequency count and percentage was employed as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Emotional level of student-teachers in a Nigeria University**

Levels of emotional intelligence	Freq	Percentage
High	164	50.8
Medium	157	48.6
Low	0	0
Total	321	100%

The table 1 shows the level of emotional intelligence of student-teachers in a Nigeria University. It was observed that 50.8% of the student-teachers had high level of emotional intelligence, while 48.6% had medium level of emotional intelligence. No record for low level of emotional intelligence among the student-teachers. This implies that student-teachers emotional intelligence is high.



**Hypothesis One:** There exists no significant difference between emotional intelligence of male and female students-teachers.

To test this hypothesis, t-test statistics was employed as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Emotional level of male and female student-teachers**

Sex	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t-cal	p-value
Male	162	79.67	8.71	319	2.673	0.008
Female	159	82.28	8.78			

Table 2 shows the Emotional level of male and female student-teachers in a Nigerian University. From the table, it was found that the male student-teacher (mean = 79.67, SD = 8.71) mean ratings lower than that of the female student-teachers mean ratings (mean = 82.28, SD = 8.78). The mean rating of female student-teachers is significantly higher than the male student-teachers { $t(319) = 2.673, p = 0.008$ }. On this basis, Hypothesis 1 was rejected. Therefore, there is significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female student-teachers in favour of male student-teachers. This implies that male student-teachers have high emotional intelligence than their female counterparts.

**Hypothesis Two:** No significant difference exists between the age range of student-teachers and their emotional intelligence. To test this hypothesis, one way ANOVA was employed as shown in Table 3. This is to determine whether the age of student-teachers have any influence on their emotional intelligence.

**Table 3: ANOVA results of student-teachers emotional Intelligence based on age range**

Sources of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	149.751	2	74.876	.960	.384
Within Groups	24815.227	318	78.035		
Total	24964.978	320			

Table 4 shows one-way ANOVA results of the mean ratings of student-teachers between the ages of 16-19 years (Low), 20-23 years (Medium), and 24 year and above (High). From the table, the results revealed that there is a significant difference in the mean ratings of student-teachers in the three age groups { $F(2,318) = 0.960, P = 0.384$ }. On this basis, Hypothesis two is not rejected. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of student-teachers emotional intelligence based on age.

## Discussion

The results from research question one indicated that 50.8% student-teachers had high emotional intelligence while 48.2% had medium emotional intelligence. This implies that emotional intelligence of student-teachers in a Nigerian University is high. These results are consistent with the existing research literature (Nelson & Low, 2004; Rode et al, 2007; Nwadinigwe & Azuka-Obieke, 2012; Maraichelvi & Rajan, 2013, etc.).

These results are in line with the outcomes of the study conducted by Holt (2008) who found that 14% of variance in the GPA of college students was accounted for by emotional intelligence. Khokhar and Kush (2009) found that high emotional intelligence brings about better quality of work performance. Jones (2008) found that students who emotional intelligence levels were higher may enjoy success in the working environment. Farooq (2003) who found that the students who score high on emotional intelligence specifically in the areas of interpersonal skills, intrapersonal skills, adaptability, general moods, and stress management skills tend to have good academic performance as compared to those who score low on these scales.

It also supports the findings of Singaravelu (2007) who found that emotional intelligence of student-teachers in Pondicherry region was 68%. This finding supports the opinion of Maliha and Rehana (2010) who asserted that Emotionally intelligent of individuals tend to lead happier and more

productive lives. At school, they show better academic performance and maintain a healthy classroom atmosphere in which learning becomes easier.

In line with the common belief that women are more apt in emotional skills, this study revealed significant difference in emotional intelligence of male and female student-teachers. These results are in agreement with the results of study conducted by Adeyemo (2008), Harrod and Scheer (2005), Katyal and Awasthi (2005) and Mandell and Pherwani (2003) who found that female respondents significantly differ on emotional intelligence scores than male counterparts. However, this result contradicts the findings of Abdullah (2006) and Maliha and Rehana (2010) reported no difference in the emotional intelligence scores of male and female students. The justification for this result is based on the fact that self-report and performance based measures of emotional intelligence provides different information. Sanchez-Nunez, Fernandez-Berrocal, Montanes and Latorre (2008) asserted that difference in emotional intelligence on the basis of gender may be attributed to the socialization and emotional teachings of girls and boys in childhood. They contend that girls receive wider spectrum of emotions from parents than do boys which make the former more adept at recognizing and expressing emotions.

The results from hypothesis two revealed no significant difference among student-teachers based on age range. This study does not corroborate with the common belief that age brings about more social and emotional intelligence (BarOn, 2006). The result is in line with the outcome of the studies conducted by Salami (2007), Harrod and Scheer (2005), Balci-Celik and Deniz (2008) and Birks, McKendree and Watt, (2009) who reported that age differences does not affects emotional intelligence. The possible explanation for this result may be accounted with the level of students (adult). Assuming emotional intelligence of children, adolescent and adults were investigated, there may be difference.

## **Conclusion**

This study was conceptualized to explore the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement of the students of Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Nigeria. Moreover, the relationship of gender and age with emotional intelligence has been examined. In the light of this study it can be said that student-teachers in a Nigerian university had high emotional intelligence. Gender may be important factors in Emotional Intelligence development of a person. However, female student-teachers had high emotional intelligence than their male counterparts. Meanwhile, age difference has no influence on emotional intelligence of student-teachers.

## **Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made based on the findings:

- (i) Development of better emotional competencies in university students may bring better educational outcomes in terms of improved academic performance, healthier personality development and greater success in work field. As university graduates are supposed to enter in practical life after completing their study, emotional intelligence can produce essential life skills related to effective team work, leadership and management that are helpful in the world of work.
- (ii) There is need to improve on the emotional competencies of the male student-teachers, which will in turn helps them to develop the same among their students. Inspirational subjects can be used in developing an appreciation of the beautiful and sublime emotions in life. Religious beliefs and an abiding faith in God help in tolerance and stability of emotions. They should be sublimated through constructive activities. Sports, games, debates, dramatics, and other co-curricular activities will be of immense value. Skill, confidence and involvement in work as well as a good sense of humour are basic to emotional intelligence. Therefore, work ethics and balanced work and healthy living standard must be emphasized in the curriculum.

## Limitations

This study was limited to the students of faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Nigeria and the randomly selected samples of male and female students were not proportionate to respective populations. These aspects may limit the generalizability of the findings, however, this study provides basis for further exploration in the field of emotional intelligence which requires a great deal of research.

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