

## ***Social Intelligence Competencies and Academic Achievement of Secondary School Students in Rivers State of Nigeria***

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### **Abstract**

*This study examined social intelligence competencies and academic achievement of secondary school students in Rivers State of Nigeria. It was guided by two research questions and two hypotheses. A sample size of 1,427 students was drawn from a population of 42,767. The Social Intelligence Scale was used for data gathering. Factor analysis and Cronbach alpha were used to estimate validity and reliability of the instrument. Social Intelligence scale has  $r = .89$ . Regression Statistical model was employed for data analysis. All hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance. The finding showed that there was no linear relationship between social intelligence competencies and academic achievement ( $r = .06, P \geq .05$ ). The conclusion was drawn that social intelligence competencies do not support students' academic achievement. Based on the conclusion, recommendations were made for counselling professionals and educational psychologists to carry out training programmes that can help both the teachers and students to understand themselves better and to improve on their social intelligence skills which could improve the process of teaching and learning.*

**Keywords:** social, intelligence, competencies, academic, achievement

### **Introduction**

Education ought to assist in technological development of the nation. This, however, has not been achieved due to the decrease in the academic achievement of students in Nigeria. This is not far from the fact that students' behaviours are not only governed by environmental events such as socio-economic status of parents but also psychological events that can or cannot be expressed by students. The problem of poor academic achievement generally, whether in private or public schools, emotionally evokes sad and bitter feelings in both parents and students alike. One can deduce from the above, the agony and psychological state of education as evident in poor academic achievement. The highlight above shows that academic achievement among secondary school students has been associated with a variety of factors. However, in spite of the exhaustiveness of these determinants of academic achievement of students, there are still more areas of interest to be investigated, for instance in the area involving social intelligence and emotional intelligence. This becomes obvious with the continued interest of researchers and educational psychologists and also the attention of government, policy makers and planners as well as the rising concerns pertaining to mass failures of students in the Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) in Nigeria. Currently, there has been continuous decline in the academic achievement of students especially in secondary schools.

Goleman (2007) described social intelligence as interpersonal effectiveness which results in successful relationship with people. This means the ability of an individual to relate with others smoothly and successfully both at the verbal and non-verbal levels. This suggests that social intelligence is the ability to possess social skills that facilitate or produce desirable relationship with others. People who possess such social skills are able to interact freely both at the verbal and non-verbal levels thus facilitate and maintain cordial relationship with others anywhere they find themselves. Erkman (2010) viewed social intelligence as the ability to have and maintain positive relationship with others in any environment one finds himself. Adi (2011) added that socially intelligent students tend to be more assertive, and that one's level of social intelligence affects his/her level of awareness, the amount of information he/she receives, how he/she manages information, his connectedness and skills in relating with others which inadvertently affect one's success at school, workplace, among others. This implies that social intelligence is the act of having and retaining positive relationship with oneself and with others. Learning about oneself and others boosts maintaining effective relationship with them.

Abdullah, Elias, Uli and Mahyudin (2010) investigated the relationship between social intelligence (SI), University adjustment on academic performance of university year one students in a public university. The participants were randomly selected for the study. The study was correlational design and data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings showed that there is significant and positive relationship between students' social intelligences, their overall university adjustment, social adjustment, personal-emotional adjustment, student's attachment and academic achievement. Cobb (2008), using a sample of 101 volunteer school teachers, found no significant relationship between social intelligence and job performance. Instruments consisted of a researcher designed demographic survey, the Job Descriptive Index (JDI) and Social Intelligence Self Report Scale. Data analysis done using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) revealed that there was no significant relationship between social intelligence and job performance.

Social Awareness can be referred to as one's ability to immediately sense others' feelings and the ability to understand their thought in order to get into more complicated social situations. Social awareness cluster includes primal empathy (the ability to detect or sense the emotions of another person), attunement (attention that goes beyond empathy which enhances quality rapport). Social facilitation, which is the second broad category of social intelligence, refers to the ability to simply sense how another feels or knowing what they think or intend that facilitates successful communication. Social facility which builds on social awareness allows smooth and effective communication. Social facility also includes synchrony which means interacting effectively at the non-verbal level, and self-presentation is the way of presenting oneself in ways that make a desired impression, self-control (the ability to "control and mask" the expression of emotions), influence (shaping the outcome of social interactions using self-control) and concern (caring about others' needs and acting accordingly). Working on the influence of social intelligence on

achievement among secondary school students, Gage (2004) came up with results showing that students whose scores are high on social awareness and social facilitation had higher scores on test.

Social adaptation, the third category of social intelligence, refers to the adjustment of individual and group behaviour to conform to the prevailing system of norms and values in a given society, class, or social group. Social adaptation is significant when social changes affect important aspects of life; such changes include migration, changes in age etc. The individual may not be able to cope with life, or to achieve his objectives within prescribed norms. Consequently, deviant behaviour, including unlawful behaviour, frequently results. The failure of certain individuals to adapt, combined with specific unfavourable situations, may adversely affect the individual's conduct. Punia and Sangwa (2011) studied social intelligence and social adaptation of school children. 120 children were randomly selected for the study. Social intelligence scale and Adjustment inventory for school students were used for data collection. To calculate statistical inference, frequency and percentages, Z-test and correlation coefficient were employed. Their results indicated that social intelligence had significant positive relationship with adjustment of school children.

This study was based on the humanistic theory of social intelligence. The theory views the concept from the way students view themselves. One thinks of himself as a worthwhile human being who is capable of a satisfying life. Students are socially intelligent and function well if they see themselves realistically. Those who see themselves as worthwhile students have more interpersonal effectiveness which results in successful relationship with others, and so more effective in the workplace and at school. Humanists and existentialists stress the effect that self- acceptance has on their self-concept and behaviour of students.

### **Research questions**

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What is the relationship between social intelligence and academic achievement of senior secondary school students in Rivers State?
2. What is the relationship among social intelligence competencies (social awareness, social facilitation, and social adaptation) and academic achievement of senior secondary school students in Rivers State?

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance to guide the study:

**Ho1:** There is no significant relationship between social intelligence and academic achievement of senior secondary school students in Rivers State.

**Ho2:** There is no significant relationship among social intelligence competencies (social awareness, social facilitation, and social adaptation) and academic achievement of senior secondary school students in Rivers State.

**Methodology**

This study adopted a correlational research design. A correlational study is one that seeks to establish the existence or otherwise of a relationship between two variables (Isangedighi, 2012). From a population of 42,767 male and female senior secondary school II students, a sample size of 1,428 male and female students was drawn using proportionate stratified sampling technique. The participants responded to 1,428 copies of the questionnaire titled Social Intelligence Scale. Social Intelligence Scale (SIS) consists of 17 items designed to elicit information on what respondents sense about others and what they do with that awareness. The average scores of each student’s academic records were used as indicators to measure the dependent variable of academic achievement for each participant in the secondary school involved in this study. The research instruments were scored on 4 point Likert Scale of Strongly Agreed (4), Agreed (3), Disagreed (2), and Strongly Disagreed (1).

The reliability coefficient was established by Cronbach Alpha method to estimate the items’ internal consistency. The reliability coefficient for Social Intelligence Scale has  $r = .89$ . This means that the instrument is adequately reliable and suitable for data collection in this study. The data generated from the research instrument were analyzed using Regression Statistics. All hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance.

**Presentation of results**

**Research question 1:** What is the extent of relationship between social intelligence and academic achievement of secondary school students in Rivers State?

**Ho1:** There is no significant relationship between social intelligence and academic achievement among secondary school students in Rivers State.

In order to answer research question 1, simple regression was computed. The result of the data analysis is presented in table 1.

**Table 1:** Regression analysis of the relationship between social intelligence and academic achievement among secondary school students

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	r	r <sup>2</sup>	r <sup>2</sup> adjusted	Sig
Regression	1552.69	1	388.17					
Residual	131264.5	1427	92.25	2.32	.11	.10	.11	.04
Total	132817.2	1428						

Table 1 shows that the computed Simple Correlation Statistic produced an output  $r = .11$ . It revealed that there is a positive linear relationship between social intelligence and academic achievement of secondary school students in Rivers State of Nigeria. The finding is that there exists a positive linear correlation between social intelligence and

academic achievement of secondary school students. This provides an answer to research question 1.

The table also indicates that the calculated  $F = 2.32$ ,  $df (1, 1427)$ , and  $P < .05$  level of significance. The null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative holds true. Therefore, the finding is that students' social intelligence has significant relationship with their academic achievement in secondary schools involved in the study. The conclusion is drawn that social intelligence has a significant relationship with students' academic achievement. The  $R^2$  adjusted value of .11 shows that 11% amount of variance in academic achievement was accounted for by social intelligence in secondary schools in Rivers State.

**Research question 2:** What is the extent of relationship between social intelligence competencies (social awareness, social adaptation, social facilitation) and academic achievement of secondary school students in Rivers State?

**Ho2:** There is no significant relationship between social intelligence competencies (social awareness, social facilitation, and social adaptation) and academic achievement among secondary school students in Rivers State.

In order to answer research question 2, a multiple regression was computed. The result of the data analysis is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Multiple Regression Analysis of Social intelligence competencies (social awareness, social facilitation, and social adaptation) and academic achievement among senior secondary school students in Rivers State

Source	SS	DF	MS	F	R	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> adj	Sig
Regression	394.85	3	135.13	2.13	.06	.03	.02	.16
Residual	132422.4	1423	92.93					
Total	132817.2	1426						

Table 2, shows that the computed Multiple Correlation Statistic produced an output  $R = .06$ . It revealed that there is a positive correlation among social intelligence competencies (social awareness, social facilitation, social adaptation) and academic achievement of secondary school students in Rivers State of Nigeria. The finding is that there exists a positive linear correlation between social intelligence competencies and academic achievement of secondary school students. This provides an answer to research question 2.

In testing hypothesis 2, the table indicates the calculated  $F = 2.13$ ,  $df (1, 1426)$ ,  $P \geq .05$  level of significance. The null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, the finding is that students' social intelligence competencies have no relationship with academic achievement in secondary schools. The conclusion is drawn that social intelligence competencies have no significant relationship with students' academic achievement.

### **Discussion of the findings**

The results of analysis on the relationship between social intelligence and academic achievement among senior secondary school students in Rivers State showed that there was no significant positive linear relationship among social intelligence competencies but a relationship was found between social intelligence and students' academic achievement. This means that many students whose scores are high on social intelligence earn high scores on academic achievement, while some whose scores are low on social intelligence competencies earn low scores on academic achievement. This result indicates that social intelligence plays a vital role in academic achievement of students in Rivers State.

Previous researchers which examined social intelligence and academic achievement are consistent with these findings. For instance, the study carried out by Abdullah, Elias, Uli and Mahyudin (2010) investigated the relationship between social intelligence (SI), University adjustment on academic performance of university year one students in a public university. Findings showed that there is significant and positive relationship between students' social intelligences, their overall university adjustment, social adjustment, personal-emotional adjustment, student's attachment and academic achievement. This finding also agrees with Punia and Sangwan (2011) who studied social intelligence and social adaptation of school children. Their results indicated that social intelligence had significant positive relationship with adjustment of school children.

The finding however disagrees with the findings of Singh (2007) who found no significant difference in social intelligence between low creative and high creative adolescents and between high creative boys and high creative girls. More so, Cobb (2008) found no significant relationship between social intelligence and job performance.

### **Conclusion**

As a result of the findings in this research study, it is concluded that social intelligence correlates with academic achievement of students in Rivers State; that there was no significant positive linear relationship between social intelligence competencies (social awareness, social facilitation, and social adaptation) and academic achievement of students in Rivers State.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the result of the research findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Based on the result that there is significant linear relationship between social intelligence and academic achievement, it is recommended that measures of social intelligence be included in the process of teaching and learning that would help students develop independent thinking ability and to admit psychological problems, if need be, and be able to ask for help for solutions to academic problems.
2. Schools should liaise with professional counselling psychologists through the Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON) to establish counselling units in all schools so as to carry out training programmes; and also counselling psychologists should be involved in this activity that can help both the teachers and students understand

themselves better and improve on their social intelligence skills which also could improve the process of teaching and learning.

3. Social facilitation training should be carried out from time to time to enable students improve on their social facility competence.

4. Reward mechanisms should be put in place to encourage students that are high in the social intelligence competence scale so as to spur others to improve.

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