

Emotional Intelligence and its Relationship with Emotional Well-Being and Academic Achievement among Secondary School Students in Keffi LGA of Nasarawa State

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between emotional intelligence, emotional well-being, and academic achievement among secondary school students in Keffi Local Government Area (LGA) of Nasarawa State. Correlational research design was employed. The study was guided by two research questions and two hypotheses, which were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The sample comprised 300 respondents selected from a population of 10,000 secondary school students. Data were collected using a self-developed questionnaire named “Emotional Intelligence and Academic Achievement Questionnaire.” The collected data were analyzed using simple percentages to answer the research questions and Pearson Product Moment Correlation to test the hypotheses. The study's findings indicated a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and emotional well-being among secondary school students in Keffi LGA. Additionally, a significant relationship was found between emotional intelligence and academic achievement among these students. The study

recommended that schools should enhance their counselling services to better support students' emotional well-being.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, emotional well-being, academic achievement, secondary school students, psychological resilience

Introduction

Emotional intelligence (EI) is a crucial concept in psychology. It is defined as the ability to recognize, manage, and regulate emotions, enabling flexible thinking and a deeper understanding of the meaning and impact of emotions (Nazari & Emami, 2012). Since the 1990s, extensive research has been conducted on emotional intelligence, exploring its potential links to psychological, educational and productive outcomes (Al-Qadri & Zhao, 2021; Bassey & Eyo, 2018). Ofoegbu et al. (2024a) noted that emotional intelligence is the ability to work with one's emotions instead of fighting them or running away. Drawing from the foundations of educational psychology and learning, these emotional skills are believed to have a positive relationship with academic success, acting as an essential tool in preventing academic failure (Howard et al., 2021). Moreover, by instilling a sense of responsibility and empowerment, youths become better equipped to contribute to sustainable development (Ofoegbu et al., 2024d).

The growing focus on Emotional Intelligence (EI) in education has highlighted that, alongside cognitive abilities, non-cognitive skills such as emotional regulation, empathy, and effective communication play a vital role in enhancing students' emotional well-being and academic success. Ofoegbu et al. (2025) identified several key characteristics associated with making academic success, including the pursuit of opportunities, a strong drive for achievement, adaptability, risk tolerance and management, creativity, resilience in the face of setbacks, an understanding of people's needs, and a commitment to lifelong learning. However, children naturally are expected to emit behaviours that involve sustained attention, focus and claim redisposition which would not generate tension and anxiety for them (Ofoegbu et al., 2023).

Furthermore, intelligence has been described as the ability to solve problem or create valued product. It is a bio-psychological potential to process information that can be activated in a cultural setting to solve problem or create products that are of value in a culture (Ofoegbu et al., 2024c). Although numerous studies have examined the significance of EI in various educational settings, there is a scarcity of research specifically addressing secondary school students in Nigeria, particularly in Keffi Local Government Area (LGA) of Nasarawa State.

This paper aims to address this gap by investigating the connection between EI, emotional well-being, and academic performance among secondary school students in Keffi LGA. Gaining a deeper understanding of how EI affects students' well-being and academic achievements can offer crucial insights for educators, parents, and policymakers focused on improving the educational experience in this region. The primary goal of university education is to foster the development of critical thinking, creativity and problem-solving abilities among students while equipping them with the requisite knowledge and skills for personal and societal advancement (Ofoegbu et al., 2025).

Adolescence is a period marked by significant developmental changes that can pose challenges to personal growth and emotional well-being. This stage is notably characterized by instability, as adolescents strive to establish their identity and achieve autonomy, which are essential aspects of their lives (Reina & Oliva, 2015). Emotionally, adolescents often tend to either withhold their problems and emotions or express them in an exaggerated manner. Therefore, fostering emotional intelligence and encouraging adolescents to reflect on and understand their emotions is crucial. Over the past three decades, there has been increasing interest in the study of emotions, leading to numerous investigations into emotional competencies and their influence in various areas (Fernández-Berroca et al., 2017).

In the early 1990s, the focus shifted to recognizing emotional, personal, and social factors as key predictors of life adaptation and success, advocating for a broader perspective on intelligence called emotional intelligence. This concept is defined as the ability to perceive, assess, and express emotions accurately, use emotions to facilitate thought, understand emotional information, and regulate emotions to support both emotional and intellectual development. Again, many students are losing interest in reading books, and carrying books around is gradually becoming old fashion since the advent of social media. Many lecturers complain of students' laziness in carrying out assignments given to them (Njoku & Ofoegbu, 2020).

Statement of the problem

The emotional and academic challenges experienced by secondary school students during adolescence can have a profound effect on their overall well-being and academic performance. Emotional intelligence (EI), defined as the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions as well as those of others, has been recognized as a critical factor in influencing both emotional health and academic success. Ofoegbu et al. (2024b) stated that the 21st century classroom has changed tremendously due to the entrant of COVID-19. Since its debut in the world system, the disease had not only posed a global

health pandemonium but had greatly challenged the educational sector. Research indicates that students with higher emotional intelligence generally demonstrate better emotional well-being and achieve higher academic performance. However, despite extensive global research on this topic, there is a scarcity of empirical evidence regarding the relationship between emotional intelligence, emotional well-being, and academic achievement among secondary school students in Keffi Local Government Area (LGA) of Nasarawa State.

Secondary school students in Keffi LGA face several challenges, such as academic pressure, emotional instability, peer influence, and socio-economic stress, all of which can adversely affect their emotional health and academic outcomes. The extent to which emotional intelligence helps students cope with these challenges and contributes to better emotional well-being and academic success in this local context remains unclear. The absence of locally relevant research on this topic makes it difficult to fully understand how emotional intelligence can be harnessed to enhance students' academic performance and emotional stability. This study seeks to fill this gap by exploring the relationship between emotional intelligence, emotional well-being, and academic achievement among secondary school students in Keffi LGA, Nasarawa State. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights into how emotional intelligence can be incorporated into educational and emotional development strategies to help students improve both their academic outcomes and emotional resilience.

Objectives of the study

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence, emotional well-being, and academic achievement among secondary school students in Keffi Local Government Area (LGA), Nasarawa State. The specific objectives are:

1. To determine the relationship between emotional intelligence and emotional wellbeing among secondary school students in Keffi LGA.
2. To examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement among secondary school students in Keffi LGA.

Research questions

To guide this study, the following research questions are posed:

1. What is the relationship between emotional intelligence and emotional well-being of secondary school students in Keffi LGA?
2. How does emotional intelligence relate to academic achievements of secondary school students in Keffi LGA?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are tested in this study:

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and emotional well-being of secondary school students in Keffi LGA.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement of secondary school students in Keffi LGA.

Methodology

This research utilized a correlational design to investigate the connections between emotional intelligence, emotional well-being, and academic achievements of secondary school students in Keffi LGA, Nasarawa State. This approach is suitable as it facilitates the analysis of the relationships among these variables without requiring direct manipulation (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

The target population included all secondary school students in Keffi LGA, with approximately 10,000 students enrolled in various schools according to the Nasarawa State Ministry of Education. A stratified random sampling technique was used to select a sample of 300 students from various secondary schools, ensuring diversity in terms of gender and socio-economic status (Fraenkel et al., 2019).

The instrument used for data collection was a self-developed questionnaire named Emotional Intelligence and Academic Achievement Questionnaire (EIAAQ) constructed to measure the research variables. Ethical approval was secured from the appropriate educational authorities, and informed consent was obtained from both parents and students. Trained research assistants distributed the copies of the questionnaire during school hours in a controlled setting to ensure clarity and reliability of the responses.

The data were analyzed using version 25 of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Simple percentages were used to answer the research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was adopted to test the hypotheses at .05 level of significance.

Presentation of results

Research question 1: What is the relationship between emotional intelligence and emotional well-being among secondary school students in Keffi LGA?

Table 1: Percentage scores on the relationship between emotional intelligence and emotional well-being among secondary school students in Keffi LGA

S/no	Item	Agree	%	Disagree	%
1	Students feel happy and content when they manage their emotions well	210	70	90	30
2	Students understanding their emotions helps them cope with stress	195	65	105	35
3	Students believe that emotional intelligence contributes to their well-being	180	60	120	40
4	Students find it easier to express their feelings when they are emotionally aware	225	75	75	25
	Average	-	68		33

From table 1, item 1 showed that 210 respondents representing 70% agreed that students feel happy and content when they manage their emotions well while 90 (37%) disagreed. On item 2, 195 (65%) of the respondents agreed that students' understanding of their emotions helps them cope with stress while 105 (35%) disagreed. On item 3, 180 (60%) of the respondents agreed that students believe that emotional intelligence contributes to their well-being while 120 (40%) disagreed. On item 4, 225 (75%) of the respondents agreed that students find it easier to express their feelings when they are emotionally aware while 75 (25%) disagreed.

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and emotional well-being of secondary school students in Keffi LGA.

The independent variable in this hypothesis is emotional intelligence while the dependent variable is emotional well-being of secondary school students. To test this hypothesis, emotional intelligence and emotional well-being of secondary school students were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis of the relationship between emotional intelligence and emotional well-being of secondary school students in Keffi LGA

Variables	$\bar{x}$	SD	r-value	Sig.
Emotional intelligence	36.11	3.13	0.930*	.000
Emotional well-being	21.53	1.59		

* Significant at .05, p-value = .000, N=300, df = 298

Result of the analysis as presented on Table 2 revealed that the calculated r-value of 0.930 is significant at .05 level of significance with 298 degree of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and emotional well-being of secondary school students was rejected. This result implied that emotional intelligence has a significant positive relationship with emotional well-being of secondary school students. The positive r implied that the higher the emotional intelligence, the higher the emotional well-being of secondary school students tends to be. On the other hand, the lower the emotional intelligence, the lower the emotional well-being of secondary school students tends to be.

Research question 2: How does emotional intelligence relate to academic achievements among secondary school students in Keffi LGA?

Table 3: Percentage scores on the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievements among secondary school students in Keffi LGA

S/no	Item	Agree	%	Disagree	%
1	Students use positive thinking as a strategy to enhance their academic achievements during challenging tasks	190	63	110	37
2	Students in Keffi LGA are aware of their emotions and how these affect their academic achievements	180	60	120	40
3	Students agree that emotional intelligence helps them manage academic stress effectively	230	77	70	23
4	Students agree that higher emotional intelligence contributes to better academic outcomes	250	83	50	17
Average		-	98		2

From table 3, on item 1, 190 respondents representing 63% of the students use positive thinking to enhance their academic achievements. This high percentage demonstrates a strong tendency toward optimistic coping strategies, which contribute positively to emotional well-being and resilience. Positive thinking enables students to handle challenges more effectively, resulting in better academic and social outcomes. On item 2, 180 respondents representing 60% of students indicated that they are aware of their emotions and how these feelings influence their academic achievements. This reflects a high level of self-awareness among the participants, which is a crucial element of emotional intelligence. On item 3, 230 respondents representing 77% of students believe that emotional intelligence helps them manage academic stress. The ability to manage emotions is critical for coping with academic pressures and social interactions. Schools may benefit from providing additional support and resources focused on emotional regulation strategies to help students who may find it challenging. On item 4, 250 respondents representing 83% of students agreed that higher emotional intelligence contributes to better academic outcomes.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievements of secondary school students in Keffi LGA.

The independent variable in this hypothesis is emotional intelligence, while the dependent variable is academic achievement of secondary school students. To test this hypothesis, academic achievements of secondary school students were correlated with emotional intelligence using Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis of the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievements of secondary school students in Keffi LGA

Variables	$\bar{x}$	SD	r-value	Sig.
Emotional intelligence	36.11	3.13	0.851*	.000
Academic achievement	21.48	1.81		

* Significant at .05, p-value = .000, df = 298, N=300

The result of the analysis as presented in Table 4 revealed that the calculated r-value of 0.851 is significant at .05 level of significance with 298 degree of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievements of secondary school students was rejected. This

result indicated that emotional intelligence has a significant positive relationship with academic achievements of secondary school students. The positive r implied that the more positive emotional intelligence is, the higher academic achievements among secondary school students tend to be. On the other hand, the lower the emotional intelligence, the lower the academic achievements among secondary school students tend to be.

Discussion of the findings

The finding from hypothesis one revealed that there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and emotional well-being among secondary school students in Keffi LGA. The implication of a positive relationship between the variables is that the higher the students' emotional intelligence, the more likely they are to experience emotional well-being.

The findings from hypothesis two led to the rejection of the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievements of secondary school students in Keffi LGA. This outcome indicates a significant relationship between students' emotional intelligence and their academic achievements.

These findings are consistent with previous research, such as Mayer et al. (2016) who identified emotional intelligence as a key factor in managing emotions, thereby enhancing academic performance. Also highlighted was the role of emotional intelligence in helping students manage stress, concentrate on tasks, and develop positive interactions with peers and teachers, all of which are crucial for academic success. The ability to regulate emotions, empathize with others, and cope with academic stress seems to positively impact students' motivation and learning outcomes. Conversely, students with lower emotional intelligence may face challenges in emotional regulation, which can hinder their academic performance.

Conclusion

The analysis indicated a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and emotional well-being among secondary school students in Keffi LGA. This finding reinforced the notion that emotional intelligence is essential for maintaining emotional health, as students with higher emotional intelligence tend to enjoy better emotional well-being. These results align with the current literature highlighting the role of emotional intelligence in enhancing mental health and wellbeing. Consequently, it is advisable for educational programmes to integrate emotional intelligence training to support the overall development of students.

Recommendations

In view of the research findings, the researchers made the following recommendations:

1. Educators should undergo training in emotional intelligence to effectively incorporate it into their classroom practices. This training can enable teachers to foster supportive learning environments that promote the emotional and social development of students.
2. Schools should enhance their counselling services to support students' emotional well-being. Counsellors can be instrumental in offering guidance and resources to students facing emotional challenges, which in turn can improve their overall academic performance.
3. Schools should involve parents in initiatives focused on emotional intelligence.
4. Further research should be undertaken to examine the long-term effects of emotional intelligence training on academic achievement and emotional well-being. Longitudinal studies can offer valuable insights into the development of emotional intelligence over time and its influence on students' future success.

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