

AWARENESS OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AMONG TEACHERS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND MATHEMATICS IN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY

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Abstract

The study was carried out to find out the extent of awareness and use of Emotional Intelligence (E.I.) among senior secondary school Teachers of English Language and Mathematics – the two most failed subjects in the Senior School Certificate Examination (S.S.C.E.) in Nigeria. The aim was to see whether E.I. was being used in these schools to reverse the ugly trend of poor students' academic achievement in the S.S.C.E. To achieve this objective, the descriptive survey design was used and three research questions were formulated to guide the study. The questionnaire was used to elicit the responses from 192 English Language and Mathematics Teachers sampled from 32 out of the 54 senior secondary schools of the Federal Capital Territory covering all the six Area Councils of Abuja. The instrument was validated by three experts and its reliability coefficient was calculated to be 0.79 using Cronbatch Alpha. Frequency count, percentage, tables and mean were used to analyze the data generated. The study revealed that awareness and use of E.I. were very low; and that E.I. was not on the school curriculum. The study recommended incorporating E.I. on the school curriculum, and training Teachers to use it and to maximize its benefits.

Key words: Academic achievement, awareness, emotional intelligence, intelligence,

Introduction

One of the most topical issues of discourse in the fields of Education and Psychology world over today is Emotional Intelligence (E.I.). The discourse on Emotional Intelligence tends to revolve around its definition and uses. While a school of thought to the discourse claims that Emotional Intelligence is a new found aspect of Intelligence, a second school of thought believes that it is subsumed in earlier definitions of Intelligence. Yet a third school of thought to the discourse avers that Emotional Intelligence has been clearly portrayed in existing definitions of Intelligence (Hein, 2005; Goleman, 1995; Mayer & Salovey, 1997).

An examination of the discourse would reveal that a common ground in the various views is that they all accept Emotional Intelligence as an aspect of Intelligence and the discourse is really about the scope of the concept of intelligence. The bone of contention in the discourse is thus the extent of coverage of the term intelligence (Sternberg, 2008).

The foregoing shows that scholars today still differ in their definition of intelligence just like the two exponents of Psychology Lewis Terman and Edward E. Thorndike differed in their definitions of intelligence in the 1921 American Symposium on Psychology. In the symposium Terman had defined intelligence as the ability to carry out abstract thinking while Thorndike saw it as the ability to learn and the ability to give good responses to questions (Detterman, 2006). A few other definitions that portray this divergence include Charles Spearman quoted in Olanike (2008) as having stated that intelligence meant the ability to perceive relationships. Olanike (2008) also posited that intelligence is "mental ability made up of a number of skills called cognitive skills." Earlier on, Sokan and Akinade (1994) had defined the term as "cognitive ability, mental ability." Moreover while Detterman (2006)

averred that the term meant “a general mental capability to reason, to solve problems, to think abstractly, to learn and understand new materials and profit from past experience,” Sternberg (2008) defined the concept as the “mental quality that consists of the abilities to learn from experience, adapt to new situations, understand and handle abstract concepts and use knowledge to manipulate one’s environment.”

An examination of the foregoing reveals that the first set of definitions of intelligence tends to be narrow in scope and could not contain anything significant on emotional intelligence. The last two definitions (Detterman, 2006 & Sternberg, 2008) however are broad and inclusive containing what has been defined as emotional intelligence. For Emotional Intelligence, according to Mayer and Salovey (1997) is the ability to monitor feelings – both one’s own and those of others to discriminate among them and to use this to guide our thoughts and actions. It involves identifying, understanding, using and regulating emotions. In the same vein, Goleman (1995) has posited that, emotional intelligence involves knowing one’s own emotions, managing them, motivating oneself, recognizing emotions in others and handling friendships. Emotional intelligence, therefore, could be said to be an important factor for success in life be it in career, in family life or in academic achievement.

Emotional intelligence has been found to account for higher ability to adapt and to get along successfully with people. It as well plays more significant role in general achievement in life than cognitive skills (Elias 2001). Moreover according to Habibah, Rahil, Maria, Samsela, and Tajularipin (2007), recent studies have shown that Emotional Intelligence is twice as important as intelligence quotient for outstanding performance. This has been further corroborated by Funderstanding’s (2008) research on brain-based learning which has shown that emotional intelligence is fundamental to effective learning and is a predictor of academic achievement. Emotional sensitivity, emotional memory, emotional processing and emotional hearing abilities can be positively developed with appropriate life experiences for great achievement. The developed nations have had this knowledge for some time now and have been working to maximize the benefits. Their schools and training institutions have incorporated emotional intelligence into their curricula so as to achieve their goals and objectives better. Harvard University, City Bank Group and Ford Motors all of the United States of America, and A G Siemens of Germany, according to Goleman, (1998) are a few examples of such organizations.

Recognizing the uses of E.I. and employing it like it is done in the United States and Germany as seen in the examples cited above will be highly useful in Nigeria. This is especially so as academic achievement in all the educational levels in the country have been acknowledged to have fallen significantly. Student performance in the Senior School Certificate Examinations (S.S.C.E) for instance has remained very poor. The number of candidates who acquire 5 credits and above in subjects including English Language and Mathematics in the S.S.C.E. has remained under 20% for several years now. This is despite all the efforts so far made by all the major stakeholders to reverse this ugly trend (Ojerinde, 1998; Lassa 2000; Idakwoji, 2009; Madunagu, 2009; Falola, 2009). In a bid to turn these fortunes of the Education sector around, the major stakeholders especially the senior secondary school English Language and Mathematics teachers, whose students record the worst result in the S.S.C.E, could be sensitized on Emotional intelligence. They could use the knowledge to make their students perform better academically.

Statement of the Problem

Recent studies have shown that Emotional Intelligence plays more significant role in the achievement of success than cognitive skills; that it can be enhanced and that developed Nations

have been using it in their schools and training institutions so as to achieve their objectives better (Funderstanding, 2008; Goleman, 1998).

In Nigeria the poor performance of the education system has persisted despite the efforts to reverse the ugly trend. Poor student achievement in the public examinations, particularly the S.S.C.E. and most especially in English Language and Mathematics, has been unsettling. This is evident in the rate of achievement of the minimum standard for entry into the tertiary institutions that has remained under 20% for several years now (Idakwoji, 2009; Falola 2009).

Emotional intelligence would make students in Nigeria perform better in their studies and the examinations, and thus achieve the goals and objectives of the education system better. There is however, a dearth of literature on Emotional intelligence with respect to Nigeria and it is not certain that the major stakeholders are aware of it and that its benefits are being tapped. A research gap thus exists that needs to be filled through empirical investigation. The question then is: Are the major stakeholders in secondary school (the teachers) aware of emotional intelligence, and are they tapping its benefits?

Research Questions

- (i) What are the Teachers' perceptions of their students' academic achievement?
- (ii) What is the extent of awareness of emotional intelligence among the English Language and Mathematics Teachers?
- (iii) Do these Teachers employ emotional intelligence to make the students do better academically?

Methodology

Survey method was adopted for this study. This method involves the collection of data about a target population from a sample of the population and then generalizing the findings to the whole population (Jen, 2002).

Ninety six English Language Teachers and 96 Mathematics Teachers were randomly selected from 32 senior secondary schools that constituted the samples for the study. The population of the study comprised all the English Language and Mathematics teachers in the 54 senior secondary schools owned and run by the Government of the Federal Capital Territory (F.C.T.) Abuja. There was a total population of 228 English Language teachers and 220 Mathematics Teachers in the 54 senior secondary schools spread all over the six Area Councils of the Territory (Federal Capital Territory Education Resource Centre, 2012). Three teachers per school (one each for SS1, SS2 and SS3) for English Language and three teachers per school (one each for SS1, SS2 and ss3) for Mathematics were picked from each of the 32 senior secondary schools which were picked to selected location and school type (co-educational and non- co-educational).

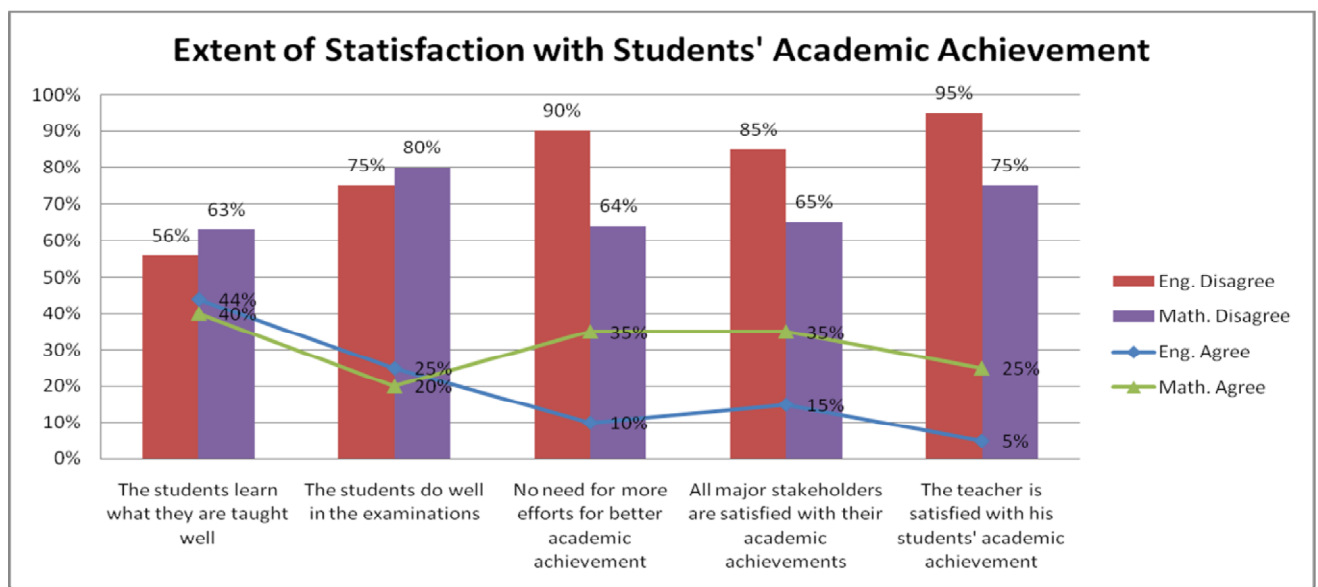
One questionnaire was administered to English Language and Mathematics Teachers. The questionnaire had two sections: A and B each. Section A was on the respondents' personal data while section B contained items on awareness of emotional intelligence. The items were development on a 4- point Likert scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree and respondents were required to indicate their choices with a (√). The questionnaire was face-validated by three lecturers in the University of Abuja. The reliability of the reviewed instrument was ascertained through a test-retest method with reliability co-efficient of 0.79 using Cronbatch's Alpha. The administration of the instrument was handled by the researcher and a Teacher from each of the sampled schools, and the return rate was 100%. The data collected were analyzed with the use of

descriptive statistics. Frequency count, percentage, cross tabulation, mean and charts were used to determine the extent of agreement or disagreement with the questionnaire items.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Teachers' Perception of Students' Academic Achievement

Item	English teachers				Math. teachers			
	Agree		Disagree		Agree		Disagree	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
The students learn the subject they are taught well	42	44	54	56	36	40	60	63
The students do well in the examinations	24	25	72	75	19	20	77	80
No need for more efforts for better academic achievement	10	10	86	90	34	35	61	64
All major stakeholders are satisfied with their academic achievements	14	15	82	85	34	35	62	65
The teacher is satisfied with his students' academic achievement	5	5	91	95	24	25	72	75
Mean		19.8		80.2		31		69.4



Data in Table 1 and Figure 1, shows that 56% of the English Language Teachers and 63% of Mathematics Teachers indicated that their students do not learn what they teach them well; a significant majority of 75% and 80% respectively of these groups of Teachers unanimously admitted that their students do not do well in the examinations. 90% and 65% of these two groups stated there was need for more efforts to make the students do better in their studies and examinations. A significant 82% of English Teachers and 65% of Math, Teachers indicated that all the major stakeholders were not satisfied with the students' academic achievement while an overwhelming

91% of English Teachers and 75% of the Math. Teachers were not satisfied with the students' academic achievement.

Table 2: Teachers' Extent of Awareness of Emotional Intelligence

Item	English teachers				Math. teachers			
	Agree		Disagree		Agree		Disagree	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Heard about emotional intelligence	33	34	63	66	24	25	72	75
Read about emotional intelligence	24	25	72	75	22	23	74	77
Studied emotional intelligence	19	20	77	80	17	18	79	82
Emotional intelligence has much to do with teachers and their students	30	31	66	69	20	21	76	79
Emotional intelligence is relevant to academic achievement	12	13	84	88	30	31	66	69
Mean		24.6		75.6		23.6		76.4

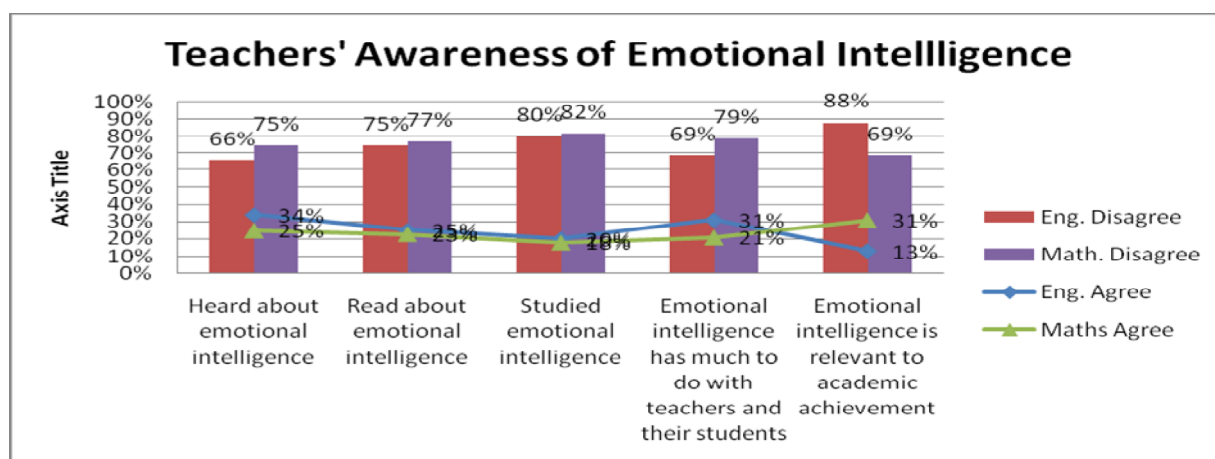


Figure 2: Teachers' awareness of emotional intelligence

Data presented in Table 2 and Figure 2 above show that 66% of the English Language Teachers and 75% of the Math. Teachers had not heard about Emotional Intelligence. Those who had not read about it were even more – 75% and 77% respectively; while an overwhelming 80% and 82% respectively had not studied it. A significant majority, 69% of the one and 79% of the other said it had nothing significant to do with them and their students. More –over, a sizeable 88% and 69% of the English and Math Teachers respectively stated it was irrelevant to academic achievement. The extent of awareness of emotional intelligence among both the English Language and Mathematics Teachers is very low.

Table 3: Teacher's use of emotional intelligence with their students

Item	English teachers				Math. teachers			
	Agree		Disagree		Agree		Disagree	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Have exposed the students to some materials on emotional intelligence	19	20	77	80	28	29	68	71
Have taught the students some materials on emotional intelligence	14	15	82	84	24	25	72	75
Have employed emotional intelligence in interaction with students	31	32	65	65	29	30	67	70
Have used emotional intelligence to make the student achieve better academically	29	30	67	70	29	30	67	70
Emotional intelligence is on the school curriculum	10	11	86	90	5	6	91	94
Mean		21.6		77.8		24		76

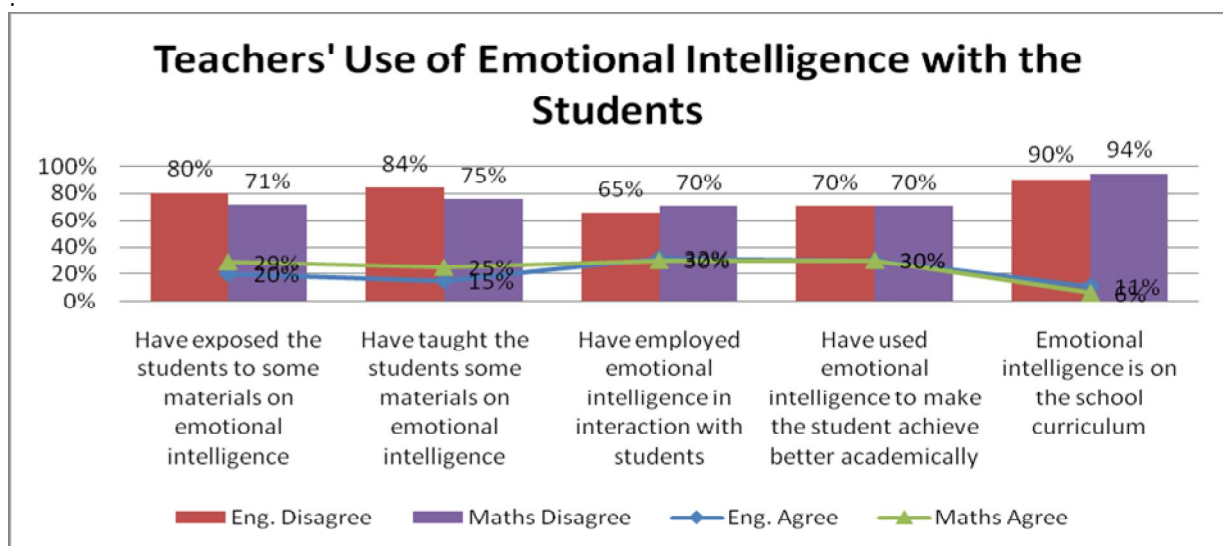


Figure 3: Teachers' use of emotional intelligence with the students

Table 3 and Figure 3 present data on the positions of English and Mathematics Teachers on the extent of their use of emotional intelligence in the school. A sizeable majority of the respondents – 80% of the English Language Teachers and 71% of Mathematics Teachers revealed they had not exposed the students to any material on emotional intelligence. A significant majority – 82% and 75% respectively of both groups of the respondents had not taught the students any material on E.I. and over 67% of both groups of respondents had not used it to make their students do better academically. More-over, over 90% of both groups of the respondents unanimously confirmed that emotional intelligence is not on the school curriculum.

Discussion of the Results

The findings of the study reveal that the Teachers who according to Ukeje (1995) and Lassa, (1998) are central in every teaching and learning situation, strongly confirmed students poor performance in English Language and Mathematics and as well the high dissatisfaction of all the major stakeholders with it.. This finding is a corroboration of several studies such as Idakwoji, (2009) and

Falola, (2009) which display the dissatisfaction of major stakeholders with students' academic achievement and made recommendations to reverse the situation. The Teachers who according to Afe, (2002) are the society's weeping dog for every failure in the school, would be ready to adopt proper ways or use effective tools that would ensure better academic achievement by the students. However the extent of awareness of emotional intelligence among these Teachers was very low. The study shows that a great majority of the Teachers were not aware of emotional intelligence as a tool for better academic achievement. Their education and training had not exposed them to it. Maybe the poor level of awareness is not limited to the teachers, management itself might not be aware of the power of this tool. The fact that EI is not on the school curriculum and that school management had not exposed the Teachers to any training on it may be pointers to society-wide low level of awareness on it. The Teachers were thus ill - equipped to access and apply the aid that would remedy the educational ill; they did not use emotional intelligence in their interaction with the students. This finding is in agreement with Amoo, (2000) who found out that Government was responsible for some problems besetting teaching in the schools by not providing enough basic amenities and proper learning environment. It has been revealed that Government has not properly equipped the teachers as it purposed to do in the National Policy on Education, 2004 (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004). The foregoing is also in agreement with the finding of Idakwoji (2008) which showed that insufficiency of qualified Teachers as well as inadequate training and retraining were factors that contributed to poor student academic achievement in secondary schools. The policy provision for the training and retraining of Teachers as contained in the National Policy on Education 2004 (F.R.N., 2004) is recognition of the cardinality of this factor in the achievement of the educational goals and objectives.

Conclusion

This study has revealed that the senior secondary school English Language and Mathematics Teachers were dissatisfied with their students' low academic achievement and were ready to take steps to improve on it; however they were not using emotional intelligence to address the situation like it is done in most of the developed world. Their extent of awareness of emotional intelligence was low.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and the necessity to turn around the fortunes of the education sector, particularly the poor senior secondary school students' academic achievement in their studies and examinations, the following suggestions have been made:

- (i) Government should put emotional intelligence on the curriculum of the schools so that the teachers will learn it and teach it to their students.
- (ii) School management together with the other relevant government agencies should immediately organize workshops and conferences so as to expose the Teachers to emotional intelligence and similar current developments in education.
- (iii) Talks on the significance of emotional intelligence should occasionally be given to Teachers and students at assemblies and similar gatherings.
- (iv) Teachers should regularly use materials on emotional intelligence in their interactions with the students.
- (v) Government should be quick to copy into the country such good knowledge and information that can be used to overcome our challenges.

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