Emotional Intelligence and Learning Interest as Predictor for Academic Performance in Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba Kogi State

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Abstract

Poor academic performance in Nigerian Universities has triggered research interest in the academia. The study investigated the influence of emotional intelligence and learning interest on academic performance in Prince Abubakar Audu University Anyigba Kogi State Nigeria. Two purposes, research questions and hypotheses guided the study. The descriptive research design was used for the study. The population of the study consisted of 2024/2025 second year students of Prince Abubakar Audu University Anyigba Kogi State Nigeria numbering 10,438. The sample size for the study consisted of 143 students drawn from six departments in Prince Abubakar Audu University Anyigba Kogi State Nigeria. Multi-stage sampling was used to draw six departments from the entire departments in the university. Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (EIQ) and Interest Rating Scale (IRS) were the instruments used for data collection. Cronbach Alpha formula were used to determine the reliability of the instruments which yielded a reliability estimate of 0.65 for EIQ and 0.71 for IRS. Mean, and standard deviations were used to analyze the research questions and t-test was used to analyse the hypotheses raised for the study. The results revealed that positive emotional intelligent and learning interest predict positive academic performance in Nigerian Universities and the study recommend the assessment of candidate's emotional intelligence and learning interest as part of the citation for admission into Nigerian universities.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Learning Interest and Academic Performance.

Introduction

Education has proved overtime as a tool for human capital and national development and through the instrumentality of effective teaching, learning, practical, and scientific education. For the building of learning skills and character development, education remains and indispensable instrument for effective education, workability and human development be that as it may, there are psychological variables that may contribute to its effectiveness. Some of such psychological variables may be academic interest, emotional intelligence, self-concept, self-esteem and others (Ojonugwa, 2024).

Emotional intelligence is one's internal, regulative ability in relation to one's emotional variables such as temperament, interest, anger, sadness, fear, aggression, vengefulness or

resentfulness and others. Salvoy and Meyers in Romanelli, Cain and Smith (2006) define emotional intelligence as "a type of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions". The authors added to the definition of emotional intelligence as "the verbal and non-verbal appraisal and expression of emotion in the self and others in the utilization of emotional content in problem solving". Emotional intelligence requires one's control and management of emotional contents of fear, anxiety, sadness, aggression and others. It also entails the control and regulation of other's emotions.

According to Akor, Ojonugwa and Echeonwu (2024) "emotional intelligence is a psychological construct that requires one to have awareness of self and others around. It is the ability of a person to perceive himself and manage self as well as to understand and socialise with others around the environment". Emotional intelligence is the psychological control of human emotions such as sadness, anger, anxiety, happiness, joy, depression and others. It is one's ability to monitor, regulate and control one's emotions and that of others. Arias, Soto-Carballo and Pino-Juste (2022) emphasized "the role of emotions in the educational context. There is a relationship between one's emotions and educational performance and success in academics. There is need for psychological, emotional stability of students to propel and ventilate them to learn. Students need rational, emotional regulator for learning to take place. In the same way, teachers should be able to regulate their emotions for teaching to be effective. According to Shengyao, Xuefen, Jenatabudu, Samsudin, Chunchun, and Ishak (2024) "emotional intelligence, often known as EI refers to the human capacity to recognize, control and regulate emotions, which facilitates flexible thinking and comprehension of the significance and outcomes of emotions". It entails one's ability to regulate your temperament and other psychological emotions; it has to do with one's ability to control and regulate your temperament and to balance one's psychological emotions for effective social interaction and learning. Kaplan (2019) advocated for the value and measurement of emotional intelligence in the educational system. The author further noted that "emotional knowledge informs much of our understanding, and yet, it is rarely formally considered in school". The above calls for the recognition, consideration and measurement of emotional intelligence in school as it will poise the students on the recognition, control and regulation of the emotions for effective learning.

Emotional intelligence is ones capacity to manage ones emotional contents such as fear, happiness, anger, anxiety, depression and others. Salovey and Mayer in Brackett, Rivers, and Salovey (2011) defined emotional intelligence as '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" Salovey and Mayer further noted that emotional intelligence is "the sub-set 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."

Learning interest are often demonstrated in a commitment to rigorous inquiry, critical thinking, and intellectual curiosity, driving them to pursue advanced education, engage in scholarly discourse, and produce original research. Academic interest prompts individuals to delve deeply into their chosen area of study, seeking to understand its fundamental concepts, theories, and methodologies.

They may immerse themselves in literature, attend lectures, and participate in discussions to gain a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter (Donelly, 2020). Interest according to Ojonugwa (2018) "is pupils drive and inward push to get a particular work done. Interest is "one's personal passion and curiosity generated internally that is highly sustained by the passion towards a particular object and activity until improved goal is achieved" Schiefele in Ojonugwa (2022) noted that "interest is a persuasive variable that relates individual's desires to learning activities and objects. It is also "long-term desire toward learning activities, objects and knowledge"

Statement of the Problem

Experience has shown that impatience and disinterest in a chosen field of study present significant challenges within the university system in Nigeria. Students often find themselves assigned to disciplines that do not align with their interests, as some are compelled to pursue areas of study due to a lack of available admission slots in their preferred fields. This situation can lead to considerable emotional distress among students.

Frustration, fear, hatred, depression, and anxiety are prevalent among university students today, largely due to parental pressure to pursue specific fields of study and the limited availability of admission in their desired programs. This scenario contributes to a diminished focus and lack of enthusiasm for their chosen academic disciplines. It is this context that has inspired this research into the relationship between emotional intelligence, learning interest, and academic performance in Nigerian universities.

Purpose of the Study

The following purposes have been generated for this study:

1. To find out the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic performance in Prince Abubakar Audu University Anyigba Kogi State Nigeria.

2. To investigate the relationship between learning interest and academic performance in Prince Abubakar Audu University Anyigba Kogi State Nigeria

Research Questions

The following research questions have been raised for this study:

1. What is the significant relationship between emotional intelligence and academic performance in Prince Abubakar Audu University Anyigba Kogi State Nigeria?

2. What is the significant relationship between learning interest and academic performance in Prince Abubakar Audu University Anyigba Kogi State Nigeria?

Methodology

The research employs a correlation research design as a type of descriptive research design. The correlation research design is employed when the researcher does not directly alter the independent variables, either because those alterations have already occurred or because they cannot be manipulated at all. The study's population includes all secondary school students located in Abuja Metropolis, Abuja FCT, Nigeria. A multi-step sampling method was used to select participants for the study. Initially, the state was segmented into strata based on LGAs employing the stratified random sampling method. Secondly, the Gwagwalada area council within the FCT was selected using a straightforward random sampling method.

Thirdly, eighteen students from every secondary school were selected randomly from the area council. A total of one hundred eighty-one (181) students from public secondary schools participated in the study. The content validity method utilized cross-examination and validation to evaluate the instrument's effectiveness in achieving its objectives. The study employed the test-retest reliability coefficient. Following the pre-test, the tools were reviewed, and any required adjustments were implemented prior to the final implementation. The tool was considered sufficiently reliable for the investigation due to its computed reliability coefficient, which was 0.72. The information gathered for this research was examined with the statistical techniques of simple percentage and Pearson moment correlation coefficient (PPMC).
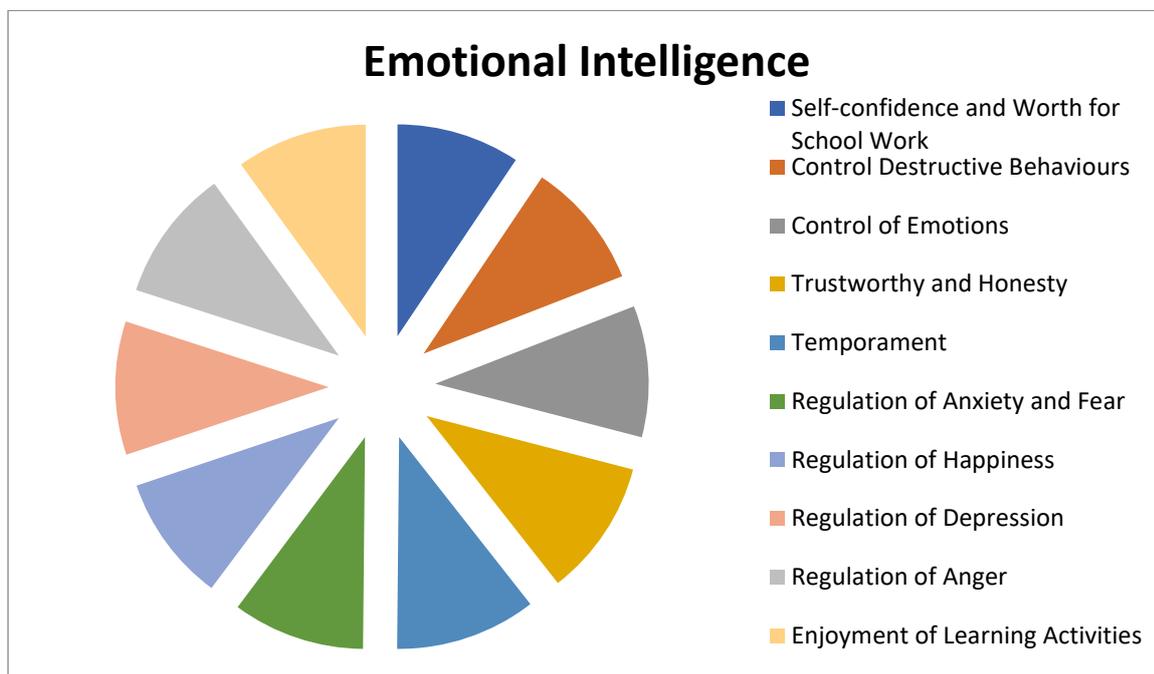
Results

Research Question One: What is the significant relationship between emotional intelligence and academic performance in Prince Abubakar Audu University Anyigba Kogi State Nigeria?

Item	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
I am aware of my self-confidence and worth for school work	2.80	0.81	Accepted
I keep my destructive behaviours under check in school	2.91	0.80	Accepted
I am able to control my emotions in my reaction to issues in school	3.00	0.75	Accepted
I trustworthy and honest with my school work	3.11	0.75	Accepted
I manage my temperament when I am offended	3.09	0.77	Accepted
I control my anxiety and fear for school works	3.21	0.75	Accepted
I am happy and confortable with new ideas and learning	2.89	0.85	Accepted
I manage depression with school work	3.05	0.76	Accepted
I manage my anger in my relationship with teachers and students	3.01	0.86	Accepted
I enjoy school work and other learning activities	2.97	0.75	Accepted
Ground Mean and Standard Deviation	**3.00**	**0.78**	**Accepted**

Result in table one, indicated that the regulation of self-confidence and worth for school work, control destructive behaviours, control of emotions, trustworthy and honesty, temperament, anxiety and fear, happiness with new ideas and learning, depression are related to sound and positive academic performance in Prince Abubakar Audu University Anyigba Kogi State. The mean ratings fall between 2.10 and 3.49 this is the range of criteria for accepting an item.
Research Question One: What is the significant relationship between emotional intelligence and academic performance in Prince Abubakar Audu University Anyigba Kogi State Nigeria?
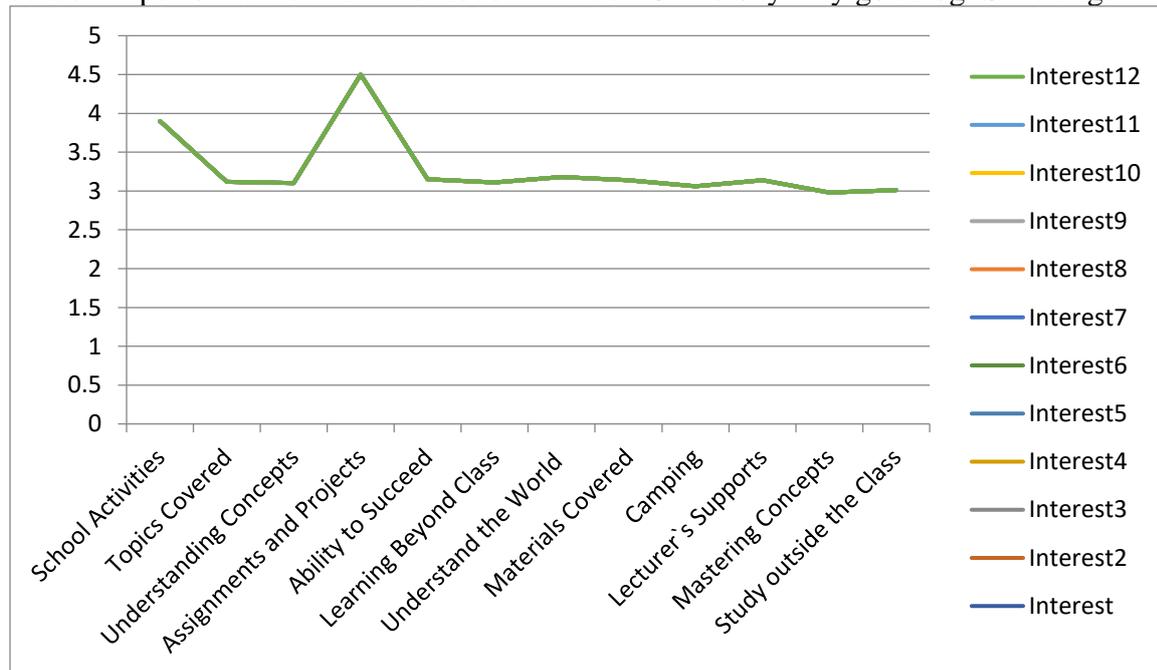
Research Question Two: What is the significant relationship between learning interest and academic performance in Prince Abubakar Audu University Anyigba Kogi State Nigeria?

Item	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
How interested are you in participating actively in school activities?	3.09	0.72	Accepted
How interested are you in the topics covered in your school activities?	3.12	0.83	Accepted
To what extent do you find understanding concepts important for your future?	3.10	0.84	Accepted
How interested are you in working on assignments and projects in school?	3.15	0.75	Accepted
How confident are you in your ability to succeed in school?	3.09	0.72	Accepted
How interested are you to learn more about different courses beyond what is taught in class?	3.11	0.78	Accepted
How much do you feel that learning in school increase your interest helps you better understand the world around you?	3.18	0.84	Accepted
How interested are you in the material covered in all courses?	3.14	0.87	Accepted
Exploring nature through thinking and camping trips	3.06	0.73	Accepted
How much do you perceive your lecturer's support in helping you succeed in chemistry?	3.14	0.82	Accepted
How much do you believe that mastering concepts benefits you academically?	2.98	0.78	Accepted
How motivated are you to study outside of class?	3.01	0.77	Accepted
Ground Mean and Standard Deviation	**3.61**	**0.78**	**Accepted**

Results in table two, revealed that student`s interest in school activities, topics covered, understanding concepts, working on assignments and projects, ability to succeed, learn more about different courses beyond what is taught in class, better understand the world around you, lecturer's support, mastering concepts and study outside of class is related to academic performance in Prince Abubakar Audu University Anyigba. The mean ratings fall between 2.20 and 3.49. This is the range of criteria for accepting an item.

Research Question Two: What is the significant relationship between learning interest and academic performance in Prince Abubakar Audu University Anyigba Kogi State Nigeria?

Discussion of Findings

The result of this study indicated that there is significant relationship between emotional intelligence and academic performance in Prince Abubakar Audu University Anyigba Kogi State Nigeria. The above result is in line with the research work of Akor, Ojonugwa and Echeonwu (2024), who reported that "teacher educators exhibited knowledge and it's use in some of the areas of emotional intelligence for curriculum development for teacher education." The above result is in line with the research work of Mohamad and Jais (2016) who worked on emotional intelligence and job performance and reported that "self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, empathy, and social skills of emotional intelligence as having a greater impact on teachers' job performance". The result of this research work is also in line with the research work of Hun and Fitzgerald (2013) who worked on "the relationship between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership" and reported that there significant relationship between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership. The results of this study is also in line with that of Brackett, Rivers, and Salovey (2011) who worked on "emotional intelligence: Implications for Personal, Social, Academic, and Workplace" and reported a significance relationship between emotional intelligence and personal, social and academic workplace. The result of this study is also in line with the research work of Oparaji (2021) who worked on "emotional intelligence as correlate of academic achievement of students in

mathematics in public secondary schools" and reported that "there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and students' activities in Mathematics and students' academic achievement in Mathematics". The result of this study is also in line with the work of Itahari and Pradeep (2023) who reported "a positive presentation of both emotional intelligence and operations in commercial banks."

This study reported a significant relationship between learning interest and academic performance in Prince Abubakar Audu University Anyigba Kogi State Nigeria. This is in line with the study of **Ojonugwa, D.S,** Igbo J.N, Apeh, A.H, & Ndukwu, C.E. (2020) who reported that differentiated instruction improved the interest of students in mathematics. The report of this study is also in line with the research work of Ojonugwa**, D. S** (2022) cooperative instructional strategy on mathematics interest and achievement in primary school in Abuja FCT

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study expresses the fact that there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence, learning interest and academic performance in Prince Abubakar Audu University Anyigba Kogi State Nigeria. The above assertion connotes that there is the need to check and measure as criteria for admission the emotional intelligence and learning interest of candidates who intend to study in Nigerian universities.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were raised based on the findings of this study:

1. The government consisting of federal, state, and local governments should consider the need to check and measure as criteria for admission the emotional intelligence and learning interest of candidates who intend to study in Nigerian universities.

2. The school psychologist and counselors should consider seminars and workshops in schools and our society on emotional intelligence and learning interest f or candidates who intend to study in Nigerian universities.

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