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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN NNAMDI AZIKIWE UNIVERSITY, AWKA, ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT
The study was designed to determine the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement of undergraduate students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State. Three research questions were raised and two hypotheses were tested for the study. The study adopted correlational research design. The entire population of 164 students made up of (19 and 145 students in 200 and 300 level) respectivelyin the Department of Guidance and Counselling in Faculty of Education of the Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka were studied without sampling. The Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) developed by Wong and Law (2002) and Guidance and Counselling students' academic achievement scores in their year two and three were used for data collection. Cronbach Alpha method was used to establish the reliability of the instrument which yielded coefficients of 0.87. The researcher administered the instrument with three research assistants using direct method to the respondents. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that there is a high positive significant relationship existing between emotional intelligence and academic achievement of undergraduate Guidance and Counselling students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The study disclosed that a moderate positive but significant relationship exist between emotional intelligence and academic achievement of undergraduate Guidance and Counselling male and female students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The study concluded that, unundergraduate students need emotional intelligence to increase their problem-solving capabilities in order to succeed in their academics irrespective of academic and personal challenges in the university. It was recommended among others that, university counsellors should prepare undergraduate students not only for academic-related activities but also on emotional and social exercises to enable them have constructive interpersonal relationships with members of the their classes for healthy academic growth.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, Academic achievement, Undergraduate students

Introduction

One of the avenues of measuring the provision of qualitative education is through students' academic achievement in educational institutions. Academic achievement is an important goal in the educational process because it highlights the effectiveness of

instructional delivery in educational institutions. Academic achievement, according to Al-doulat (2018), is the knowledge gained by students during a stipulated learning period for a given group of educational subjects studied in a semester, session or academic year. In recent time, one of the most important factors for determining students' academic success or failure in educational institutions is emotional intelligence.

Emotional intelligence refers to people's self-perception of their emotional abilities and skills, personality characteristics and behavioural dispositions that influence their ability to cope successfully with environmental demands and pressures (Corina, 2011). According to Mayer and Salovey in Amalu (2018), emotional intelligence consists of five basic qualities such as self-awareness, managing emotions (self-regulation) motivating oneself (self-motivation), empathy and social skills. Self-awareness is the ability to monitor one's emotional state and to currently identify and names one's emotion (Bakhshi, Gupta & Singh, 2016). Managing emotion refers to the ability to control or re-direct disruptive impulses and mood and the propensity to suspend judgement, to think before acting (Chamundessari, 2013). Self-motivation is the passion to work for internal reasons that go beyond money and status. Empathy has to do with the ability to understand the emotional make-up of the people (Prabha, 2015). It is a skill in treating people according to their emotional reaction while social skill is the proficiency in managing relationship and building networks and an ability to find common ground and build rapport (Mestre & Barchard, 2014).

Emotional intelligence encompasses two sub-types of personal intelligence as described by Gardner in Prabha (2015) which are intrapersonal intelligence (the ability to access one's own feeling life) and interpersonal intelligence (the ability to read the moods, intentions, and desires of others). Since, emotional intelligence impacts one's thoughts, feelings and relationships (Corina, 2011), emotionally intelligent people are generally optimistic, flexible, realistic, and successful at solving problems and coping with stress without losing control (Malekari & Mohanty, 2011). One can infer that, the ability of an individual to comprehend his or her own emotions and that of others irrespective of differs circumstances is emotional intelligence.

Emotional intelligence is an important part of general education because it goes a long way in improving the problem solving skills of students within and outside the school environment. A student having good intelligence can adjust well in different situations and can solve problems related with daily life in his or her immediate environment (Aggarwal & Saxena, 2012). Developing emotional intelligence is a key to success in school and in life. Also, students with high emotional intelligence in educational institutions have better understanding of social work, psychological adjustment, peer relations, psychopathology and social competence (Chukwuka, 2014). Emotional intelligence is a combination of skills and capabilities that students need to survive in life. These skills are intertwined with their intellectual, emotional and social development.

Emotional intelligence and academic achievement is important for students irrespective of their gender because they shape their perception about relationship patterns within the school environment and in the larger society. Gender refers to effects or influences that relate to one being a male or female. According to Singh (2010), gender refers to a socio-cultural construct that connotes the differentiated roles and responsibilities of men and women in a particular society. The numerous pressures peculiar among undergraduate male and female students' demands that they must have some level of emotional intelligence to see through their academic endeavours. Irrespective of gender, students with high emotional intelligence are more likely to adopt positive self-reflection, better interpersonal and time-management skills in dealing with life challenges while students with low emotional intelligence are more likely to engage in

self damaging behaviours that might affect their academic success and relationship with others within and outside the school environment. Against this background, the study sought to determine the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement among undergraduate students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Universities are traditionally focused on cognitive and linguistic intelligence, with less attention given to other types of intelligence. Students' academic achievement has been explained mainly in terms of their cognitive ability. Indeed, cognitive ability does not actually gives the complete picture of the intelligence of an individual student because an educated student must be able to handle cognitive and non-cognitive tasks. While students are expected to critically engage with the theory and practice of their academic courses, there is need to develop their minds in perceiving and understanding their own emotions and that of others effectively. Therefore, the problem of the study is that undergraduate students' inability to control their emotions could negatively affect their attitudes and interest towards academic engagements in universities. Again, there seems to be hardly any evidence of relevant scientific (empirical) studies in the area of this study, which have examined how emotional intelligence correlates with academic achievement of undergraduate students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. This is the problem that this study sought to solve.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement of undergraduate students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka?
2. What is the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement of male undergraduate students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka?
3. What is the relationship emotional intelligence and academic achievement of female undergraduate students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka?

Null Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. The relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement of undergraduate students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka is not significant.
2. There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement of male undergraduate students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.
3. There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement of female undergraduate students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Research Method

Correlational research design was adopted for the study and was conducted in Nnamdi Azikiwe University located in Awka, Anambra State. The population of the study comprised 164 undergraduate students consisting of 19 male and 145 female guidance and counselling students in 300 level of the 2020/2021 academic session. The entire population was studied without sampling since population was manageable. The study adapted Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (2002) for determining the emotional intelligence of students. Students' academic achievement scores on (GCE 311, Crime and Delinquency in 300 level) were used to measure the academic achievement of the research population. One measurement and evaluation expert and the experts from Guidance and Counselling all in the Faculty of Education in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka validated the adapted Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale used for the study. The results of GCE 311 had undergone

moderation for public use making the instrument valid for this research work. Hence, there were no validation procedure on the students' academic achievement scores used for this study.

The reliability of the adapted Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale was determined using Cronbach alpha statistic which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.0.91.

The researchers employed the services of one research assistant who assisted with the administration and collection of the research instrument used for the study. In addition, the researchers with the permission of the Head of the Department of Guidance and Counselling, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka collected the results of the students in (GCE 311, Crime and Delinquency in 300 level) which were used for the study. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to answer the research questions and employed in testing the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. In answering the research questions, the coefficients of correlation were classified into the form of relationship they exhibit:

Very High correlation	± 0.80 – 1.00
High correlation	± 0.60 – 0.80
Moderate correlation	± 0.40 – 0.60
Low correlation	± 0.20 – 0.40
Very Low correlation	± 0.00 – 0.20

In testing the hypotheses, a hypothesis with p-value lesser than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$) was rejected while a hypothesis with p-value greater than 0.05 was accepted. Data were analyzed using Pearson correlation in Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 23.0.

Presentation of Results

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement of undergraduate students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka?

Table 1: Pearson r on emotional intelligence and academic achievement of students

N	r	Remark
164	0.93	Very high positive relationship

Table 1 shows that there is a very high positive relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement of undergraduate Guidance and Counselling students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement of male undergraduate students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka?

Table 2: Pearson r on emotional intelligence and academic achievement of male students

N	r	Remark
19	0.42	Moderate positive Relationship

Table 2 indicates that there is a moderate positive relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement of male undergraduate Guidance and Counselling students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Research Question 3: What is the relationship emotional intelligence and academic achievement of female undergraduate students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka?

Table 3: Pearson r on emotional intelligence and academic achievement of female students

N	r	Remark
145	0.97	Very high positive relationship

Table 3 reveals that there is very high positive relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement of female undergraduate Guidance and Counselling female students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Testing the Null Hypotheses

Null Hypothesis 1: The relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement of undergraduate students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka is not significant.

Table 4: Significant of Pearson r on emotional intelligence and academic achievement of students

N	Cal.r	df	Pvalue	Remark
164	0.93	162	0.000	S

S - Significant

In table 4 it was observed that at 0.05 level of significance and 162df, the calculated r 0.93 with Pvalue 0.000 which is less than 0.05, the first null hypothesis is not accepted. Therefore, the very high positive relationship existing between emotional intelligence and academic achievement of undergraduate Guidance and Counselling students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka is significant.

Null Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship existing between emotional intelligence and academic achievement of male undergraduate students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Table 5: Significant of Pearson r on male students' emotional intelligence and their academic achievements

N	cal. r	df	P-value	Remark
19	0.42	17	0.000	S

S = Significant

Table 5 indicates that at 0.05 level of significance and 17df, the calculated r of 0.42 with p-value 0.000 which is less than 0.05, the second null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, the relationship existing between emotional intelligence and academic achievement of male undergraduate Guidance and Counselling students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka is significant.

Null Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship existing between emotional intelligence and academic achievement of female students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Table 6: Significant of Pearson r on female students' emotional intelligence and their achievement

N	cal.r	df	P-value	Remark
145	0.97	143	0.000	S

S = Significant

Table 6 shows that at 0.05 level of significance and 143 df, the calculated r of 0.97 with p-value 0.000 which is less than 0.05, the third null hypothesis is not accepted. Therefore, the relationship existing between emotional intelligence and academic achievement of female

undergraduate Guidance and Counselling female students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka is significant.

Discussion of findings

Outcome of the study disclosed that very high positive relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement of undergraduate Guidance and Counselling students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Finding of this study is in line with Fallahzadeh (2011) and Chukwuka (2014) which reported a strong and positive relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement of students. This implies the higher the undergraduate Guidance and Counselling students' emotional intelligence, the higher they attain academic success in the university. The fact that emotional intelligence helps undergraduate students to regulate one's felling, problem solving, intrapersonal and interpersonal skills may be highly germane to their achievements on courses in the university. The result of this study agrees with the findings of Ramana and Devi (2018) which discovered a very high and positive relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement of students on the premise that students with sound knowledge of emotions are more capable of concentrating on problem solving skills which increases their cognitive abilities. The very high and positive relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement of undergraduate Guidance and Counselling students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka could be attributed to the fact that they have developed strong self-control in response to academic stress in the university which gives them the ability to choose a positive attitude to their academic goals.

Findings of the study also disclosed that there is moderate, positive significant relationship existing between emotional intelligence and academic achievement among male undergraduate Guidance and Counselling students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The finding is in tandem with Brouzos, Misailidi and Hadjimattheou (2014) who discovered emotional intelligence have a positive and significant relationship with the academic achievement of male students. This implies that male undergraduate Guidance and Counselling students have high emotional intelligence and this in turn make them get very serious with their studies. The study corresponds with Joshi, Srivastava and Raychaudhuri (2012) who reported a moderate, positive and significant relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement among male undergraduate students. The finding of this study does not support Saksena (2018) who reported no significant relationship exists between emotional intelligence and academic achievement among male students.

Findings of the study further disclosed that there is very high, positive significant relationship existing between the emotional intelligence and academic achievement of female undergraduate Guidance and Counselling students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The finding of this study correspond with the result of the findings of Saksena (2018) who reported very high positive and significant relationship exists between emotional intelligence and academic achievement among female students. This implies female undergraduate students are more interested in the management of their emotions to avoid academic failure in the university. This finding is in agreement with Ramana and Devi (2018) who reported that there is very high, positive and significant relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement among female students. Perhaps, female undergraduate Guidance and Counselling students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka are being able to monitor their own and others' feelings and emotions, and they use it to guide to attain good grade in their academics.

Conclusion

The study concludes that there is a very high, positive and significant relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement among undergraduate students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the researcher made the following recommendations:

1. University educators should prepare undergraduate students not only for academic-related activities but also on emotional and social exercises to enable have constructive interpersonal relationships with members of the public within and outside the school system.
2. The guidance counselors in the university should be working closely with students to assist them in maintaining good emotional intelligence and high academic achievement in the university.
3. Management of tertiary institutions should improve the conditions of learning in order to improve the overall academic achievement of students alongside their emotional intelligence skills so as to achieve greater height in their academic endeavours.

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