



EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AS CORRELATE OF TEACHERS' INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN SOUTH EAST, NIGERIA



Ogwo-Agu, Jacinta Nkemejina,

Prof. Modebelu Melody Ndidi

&

Prof. Nnennaya Ibiam

Department of Educational Management,
Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike Nigeria.

Abstract

The study examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and teachers' instructional leadership in public secondary school in South East, Nigeria. The study adopted a correlational survey design. Two research questions and two null hypotheses formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance guided the study. The population of the study comprised 16023 male and female teachers in the 1140 public secondary schools in 21 education Zones in five states in the South Eastern States of Nigeria. The sample for this study comprised 381 teachers from all the five states in South East Nigeria. The sample is determined using Taro Yamen's 1973 formula, which is suitable for estimating population proportions with a specified degree of accuracy. The instrument for data collection were two sets of the researcher's self-developed questionnaire titled; "Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (EIQ) and Teachers' Instructional Leadership (TILQ)". The instruments for data collection were validated by three experts, two from the Department of Educational Management and one from Science Education, majored in Test and Evaluation all from Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike. Cronbach alpha statistic was used to determine the internal consistency of EIQ and TILQ which yielded an index of .62, and .81 for EIQ, and TILQ respectively. Five briefed research assistants helped in the administration and collection of the instruments. Data collected were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation to answer the research questions while linear Regression statistics was used to test all the null hypotheses. Based on the result of the analysis, the study finds that; teachers' self-awareness significantly to a positive very high extent correlate with teachers' instructional leadership in public secondary schools in South East; that teachers' conflict resolution management skills significantly to a positive high extent correlate with teachers' instructional leadership in public secondary schools in South East. Based on the findings of the study, the researchers recommended that Government should through the ministry of Education, organize regular training for teachers on the effective use of self-awareness while carrying out their instructional delivery and other duties.

Key Words: emotional intelligence, self-awareness, conflict resolution management, and teachers' instructional leadership

Introduction

The duties of a professional teacher involves lesson planning and delivery, curriculum/programme planning, student performance assessment, teaching environment management, management of student personnel services (Inamullah, 2020). The author further emphasised the need for teachers to be knowledgeable and skilled in these areas to effectively meet the needs of their students. On the contrary, learning experience can be hampered by the teacher's approach, particularly if the instructor does not show that learners are critical thinkers. In this disposition, instructional leadership plays a pivotal role. Teaching is a complex profession that requires a wide range of skills and competencies for effective instructional leadership.



Instructional leadership is action taken by an individual to promote students' learning. That is, the leadership that encourages educational achievement by making instructional quality the top priority of the school. It is the dynamic delivery of the curriculum in the classroom through strategies based on different leadership models to ensure optimum delivery (Vermunt et al, 2021). Instructional leadership refers to the ability of teachers to guide and motivate their students, and to create a positive learning environment (Leithwood et al, 2019). Instructional leadership incorporates within it skills of communication, professional development, school culture, data-driven decision-making, parent and community engagement; and moral and ethical leadership among others. This leadership role is critical to the success of any educational system, as it can affect student motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes. Effective instructional leadership is a function of teachers' Emotional intelligence (EI).

Emotional intelligence (EI) refers to the ability to understand and manage emotions in oneself and others. Emotional intelligence is defined as the ability to accurately perceive, understand, and regulate emotions in oneself and others. According to Salovey and Mayer (2019), emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive, use, understand, and manage emotions in positive ways to relieve stress, communicate effectively, empathise with others, overcome challenges, and defuse conflict. Emotional Intelligence has many components which include; self-awareness, conflict resolution management skills, teachers' self-efficacy, emotional awareness, emotional regulation, and empathy, self-awareness, self-regulation, self-efficacy, teacher motivation (Leow & De Souza, 2020). Teachers who possess high emotional intelligence are better able to communicate effectively and resolve conflicts.

Emotionally intelligent teachers are more likely to be effective instructional leaders as they are better equipped to understand and manage the emotions of themselves and others, which can create a positive learning environment that supports student engagement and achievement (West, et al, 2021). Kim, et al, (2020) stressed that teachers with high emotional intelligence are able to manage challenging situations, such as conflicts with students or colleagues, which can help them maintain a positive and supportive classroom culture. In view of this, Plata and García-Peñalvo (2020) posited that a strong emotional intelligence shares relationship with instructional leadership and the overall functioning of the school through effective communication with students, parents and other education stakeholders. Teachers who are emotionally intelligent are more likely to seek out feedback and support from colleagues and administrators which can improve their instructional practices and leadership skills. They may be able to adapt to changing educational contexts and initiatives, which can help them stay motivated and engaged in their work as instructional leaders. Teacher self-awareness as a surrogate of teacher emotional intelligence remains salient for discussion.

Teacher self-awareness refers to teachers' ability to accurately perceive and reflect on their own emotions, beliefs, values, strengths, and weaknesses. These include awareness of one's own teaching practices, beliefs about learning, and interactions with students, parents, and colleagues. Self-awareness is a key component of teachers' instructional leadership practices, and research such as Garcia and Anderson (2021) found that teachers with higher levels of self-awareness are more likely to engage in reflective practice, which is a crucial component of effective instructional leadership. Other researchers have also found that teacher self-awareness correlates with some aspects of instructional leadership. Song et al (2021) also found out that teacher self-awareness partially mediates the relationship between teacher leadership and instructional practices, suggesting that self-awareness is a critical component of teachers' instructional leadership. Self-aware teachers are able to acknowledge and address their limitations, recognize and respond to their emotions, and adapt their teaching to meet the needs of their students. Silverman (2022) contended that teacher self-awareness allows teachers to identify areas for growth, seek feedback from others, and implement strategies that support effective teaching and student learning. According to the author, self-awareness involves the capacity to attend to one's own feelings, thoughts, and behaviours, and to understand their origins and consequences. De Vos Vansteenkiste, and Goyvaerts (2020) argued that self-awareness is not a single trait but rather involves multiple dimensions, such as metacognition, self-knowledge, and reflection. Another construct of the emotional intelligence this study will look into is teachers' conflict resolution management.

Teachers' conflict resolution management refers to the process by which teachers, particularly those in instructional leadership roles, manage and resolve conflicts that arise within the school or classroom environment. Williams and Bond (2021) see it as the set of strategies used by teachers to manage conflicts in the school environment. These strategies aim to address conflicts before they escalate into more serious issues, such as violence or disruption of learning. Wainwright and Weaver in Ogwo (2025) defined teachers' conflict resolution management as the process of identifying, assessing, and resolving conflicts within the educational environment in order to maintain a positive, productive, and supportive learning environment for all stakeholders, including students, teachers, parents, and administrators. This definition emphasises the importance of teacher conflict resolution management not only for the individuals directly involved in the conflict but also for the overall school community. Teachers' conflict resolution management may involve conflicts between students, students to teachers, teachers and parents, or between different groups within the school community. The goal of teacher conflict resolution management is to find solutions that are acceptable to all parties involved and help to maintain a positive learning environment.

Statement of the Problem

Teachers play a critical role in shaping the educational outcomes of students, and their instructional leadership is an important factor in this process. Teachers' ability to guide, motivate and create a positive learning environment can significantly influence students learning. However, factors such as emotional intelligence, years of teaching experience, teachers' training and gender may influence teachers' instructional leadership. This then suggests that these indicators having been in place could improve teachers' instructional leadership since the teacher is the key implementer of the curriculum.

On the other hand, the obtainable situation to a high extent seems to indicate lack of level of emotional intelligence of teachers, instructional leadership model of teachers, years of teaching experience of teachers, teachers training and gender balance. The above situation seems to give rise to poor teachers' instructional leadership in secondary schools in South East, Nigeria.

Since teachers play a critical role in shaping the educational outcomes of students, it is important to investigate the extent to which these factors correlate with teachers' instructional leadership in secondary schools in the South East region. Therefore, the problem of this study put in a question form is: To what extent do emotional intelligence correlate with teachers' instructional leadership in senior secondary schools in South East, Nigeria?

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the extent emotional intelligence correlate with teachers' instructional leadership in public senior secondary schools in South East, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. ascertain the extent teacher self-awareness correlate with teachers' instructional leadership in public secondary schools
2. find out the extent teacher conflict resolution management skills relate to teachers' instructional leadership in public secondary schools

Research Questions

The following research questions was guided the study

1. What is the extent teacher self-awareness correlate with teacher instructional leadership in public secondary schools?
2. To what extent does teacher's conflict resolution management skills relate to teacher instructional leadership in public secondary schools?

Hypotheses

The following Null hypotheses (Ho) was tested at 0.05 level of significance:

H0₁: Teacher self-awareness does not significantly correlate with teachers' instructional leadership in public secondary schools.

H0₂: Teacher conflict resolution management skills do not significantly correlate with teacher instructional leadership in public secondary schools.

Theoretical review

This study is built on Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Theory by James Comer, Timothy Shriver and Roger Weissberg (1960)

The theory of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is not pinned down to a single author, but was rather developed from the work of team of researchers and educators. These researchers include James Comer, Timothy Shriver and Roger P. Weissberg in 1960. This theory focuses on the development of social and emotional skills, such as empathy, self-awareness, and self-regulation. This theory could be relevant to your research on teachers' instructional leadership because it may help to explain how teachers' emotional intelligence and conflict resolution skills impact their ability to create a supportive and nurturing learning environment for their students.

Methodology

The study adopted a correlational survey design. Nabaz in Ogedi (2021) noted that correlational research determines to what degree a relationship exists between two or more variables. The population of the study comprised 16023 male and female teachers in the 1140 public secondary schools in 21 education Zones in five states in the South Eastern States of Nigeria. The sample for this study comprised 381 teachers from all the five states in South East Nigeria. The sample is determined using Taro Yamen's 1973 formula, which is suitable for estimating population proportions with a specified degree of accuracy. The instrument for data collection were two sets of the researcher's self-developed questionnaire titled; "Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (EIQ) and Teachers' Instructional Leadership (TILQ)". The instruments for data collection were validated by three experts, two from the Department of Educational Management and one from Science Education, majored in Test and Evaluation all from Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike. Cronbach alpha statistic was used to determine the internal consistency of EIQ and TILQ which yielded an index of .62, and .81 for EIQ, and TILQ respectively. Five briefed research assistants helped in the administration and collection of the instruments. Data collected were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation to answer the research questions while linear Regression statistics was used to test all the null hypotheses.

Results

Research Question 1

What is the extent teachers' self-awareness correlate with teachers' instructional leadership in public secondary schools?

Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the Relationship between teachers' self-awareness and teachers' instructional leadership in public secondary schools

Variables		TSA	TIL
TSA	Pearson correlation	1	.884
	Sig. (2 tailed)		.019
	N	362	362
	R ²	0.781	
TIL		78.1%	
	Pearson Correlation	.884	1
	Sig. (2 ailed)	.019	
	N	362	362

TSA= Teachers' self-awareness, TIL = Teachers' Instructional Leadership



The results on table 1 revealed a correlation coefficient (r) of .884 which is positive and within the coefficient limit of ± 0.80 and above indicating strong, positive and a very high extent correlation. This however implies that teachers' self-awareness positively and to a very high extent correlate with teachers' instructional leadership in public secondary schools in South East. The results also showed that the coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.781 indicates that the variance observed in teachers' instructional leadership in public secondary schools in South East is accounted for by the teachers' self-awareness.

Hypothesis 1

Teachers' self-awareness does not significantly correlate with teachers' instructional leadership in public secondary schools.

Table 2: Simple linear regression Analysis of teachers' self-awareness and teachers' instructional leadership in public secondary schools

Variable	Term	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.	Decision
TSA	Regression	10,194.117	1	10,194.117	126.288	.019	S
TIL	Residual	29059.400	360	80.721			
	Total	39253.517	361				

S = Significant at $P < 0.05$

The result on table 2 show a p-value of .019 which is less than the alpha value of 0.05. This means that the null hypothesis which stated that teachers' self-awareness does not significantly correlate with teachers' instructional leadership in public secondary schools in South- East Nigeria is rejected. Therefore, teachers' self-awareness significantly correlate with teachers' instructional leadership in public secondary schools.

Research Question 2

To what extent does teachers' conflict resolution management skills relate to teachers' instructional leadership in public secondary schools?

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the Relationship between teachers' conflict resolution management skills and teachers' instructional leadership in public secondary schools

Variables		TCM	TIL
TCM	Pearson correlation	1	.732
	Sig. (2 tailed)		.008
	N	362	362
	R^2	(0.536) 53.6%	
TIL	Pearson Correlation	.732	1
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.008	
	N	362	362

TCM= Teachers' Conflict Resolution Management Skills, TIL = Teachers' Instructional Leadership

The results on table 3 revealed a correlation coefficient (r) of .732 which is positive and within the coefficient limit of ± 0.60 -0.80 indicating strong, positive and a high extent correlation. This however means that teachers' conflict resolution management skills positively and to a high extent correlate with teachers' instructional leadership in public secondary schools in South East. The results also showed

that the coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.53.6 indicates that approximately 54% of the variance observed in teachers' instructional leadership in public secondary schools in South East was accounted for by the teachers' conflict resolution management skills.

Hypothesis 2

Teachers' conflict resolution management skills does not significantly correlate with teachers' instructional leadership in public secondary schools.

Table 4: Simple linear regression Analysis of teachers' conflict resolution management skills and teachers' instructional leadership in public secondary schools

Variables	Term	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.	Decision
TCM	Regression	10069.394	1	10069.394	129.173	.008	S
TIL	Residual	28062.910	360	77.953			
	Total	38132.304	361				

S = Significant at $P < 0.05$

The results on table 4 shows a p-value of .008 which is less than the alpha value of 0.05. This means that the null hypothesis which stated that teachers' conflict resolution management skills does not significantly correlate with teachers' instructional leadership in public secondary schools in South- East Nigeria is rejected. Therefore, teachers' conflict resolution management skills significantly correlate with teachers' instructional leadership in public secondary schools.

Findings of the study

1. teachers' self-awareness significantly to a positive very high extent correlate with teachers' instructional leadership in public secondary schools in South East,
2. teachers' conflict resolution management skills significantly to a positive high extent correlate with teachers' instructional leadership in public secondary schools in South East,

Discussion of the findings

The discussion of the study was done according to the research questions and the hypotheses that guided the study.

Teachers' self-awareness and instructional leadership in public secondary schools

The findings of the study revealed that teachers' self-awareness significantly to a positive very high extent correlate with teachers' instructional leadership in public secondary schools in South East. These however, implies that an increase in teachers' self-awareness also leads to an increase in the teachers' instructional leadership in public secondary schools. The results also showed that the variance observed in teachers' instructional leadership in public secondary schools in South East was accounted for by the teachers' self-awareness. The results indicated that the respondents agreed that teachers being aware of their strengths and weaknesses, being aware of the impacts of their emotions and behaviours on their students, being aware of the impact of their teaching practices on their students' learning engagement as well as reflecting regularly on their instructional practices among others have a very high positive relationship with instructional leadership in public secondary schools. The corroborated Kucukoglu (2020) who in a similar study found that teachers with higher self-awareness were more likely to engage in effective instructional leadership practices such as providing feedback and setting learning goals. The results equally agreed with Karamad et al., (2020) who argued that education systems need teachers who are highly self-aware in the modern era. The result further supported Nazif (2021) who concluded that self-awareness can influence instructional leadership by enabling teachers recognize their own limitations and seek support and professional development opportunities to address them.

Teachers' conflict resolution management skills and instructional leadership in public secondary schools

The results from the study indicated that teachers' conflict resolution management skills positively and to a high extent correlate with teachers' instructional leadership in public secondary schools in South East. The results implies that an increase in the teachers' conflict resolution management skills brought about an increase in teachers' instructional leadership in public secondary schools. Specifically, the respondents agreed that teachers' conflict resolution management skills such as de-escalating conflicts between students in a calm and professional manner, maintaining composure and professionalism when dealing with challenging or disruptive behaviours in the classroom as well as communicating with students and colleagues even when there are disagreement or conflicts among others, correlate to a high extent with teachers' instructional leadership in public secondary schools. It was also found from the study that teachers' conflict resolution management skills significantly correlate with teachers' instructional leadership in public secondary schools. The results agreed with Goldberg (2020) who maintained that effective conflict resolution management skills are vital for instructional leaders, as they can help to minimize disruption and maximize productivity in the classroom. It equally supported Guajardo-Sanchez (2019) who noted that conflict resolution skills are essential for instructional leaders, as they can help create a collaborative and cooperative school culture that supports students learning and development.

Recommendations

From the findings and conclusions drawn from the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Government should through the ministry of Education, organize regular training for teachers on the effective use of self-awareness while carrying out their instructional delivery and other duties.
2. Conflict resolution management should be integrated into the curriculum of Teacher training institutions to enable every teacher become equipped with the necessary Conflict resolution management skills for resolving conflicts in the classroom and school at large.

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