

**SOCIOLOGICAL INFLUENCE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND
LEARNING STYLES ON SCHOOL ADJUSTMENT OF SENIOR SECONDARY
SCHOOL STUDENTS IN LAGOS, NIGERIA**

BY

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Abstract

Socio-psychological factors in human learning recognize man as a social and psychological being who learns when the learning situation takes cognizance of such. Such factors are both learner and environmental related. Content and process related factors are the key components. Instructional delivery, discipline and the very act of learning are key elements of the classroom. The sociology of the classroom refers to the classroom communal acts or social forces that are shared among classroom participants which facilitates or impedes learning. This study hence examined sociological influence of emotional intelligence and learning styles on school adjustment of senior secondary school students in Agege Local Government Area of Lagos State. Descriptive research design was adopted in the study. Two hundred and fifty SS II students constituted the study sample drawn from five selected senior secondary schools in the study area through stratified random sampling technique. A researcher-designed questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents. The instrument has a reliability coefficient of 0.82 when tested during the pilot study. Chi-square (χ^2) and One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistical tools were used to test the formulated hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings from the study revealed that there is a significant influence of emotional intelligence on school adjustment, there is a significant influence of learning style on school adjustment and age has a significant influence on school adjustment of senior secondary school students. Based on these findings, the study recommends that all stakeholders; teachers, parents, counsellors and the government involved in secondary education should rally round students to provide conditions that facilitate effective studying. Also, study skills and emotional intelligence skills should be imbibed in students so that students' academic performance, emotional intelligence and school adjustment can be greatly improved.

Key Words: Emotional Intelligence, Learning Style, school adjustment

Introduction

Schools are provided in every human society to serve the educational needs of the populace. Education is one of the social institutions with the school as its major organ. The tiers of schools in Nigeria and other societies are; the primary education, secondary education and tertiary education (Dosunmu, 2013). The primary and secondary schools provide general education while tertiary education is marked by specialization to serve the manpower needs

of the society. In all these, school adjustment especially at the lower levels is a critical factor in learners' achievement.

The transition from primary to secondary school particularly, has been observed as a challenge in the development of young students, as many are inadequately prepared for the psychological, emotional and social adjustment required to cope with the senior secondary school setting. The young students are confronted with adjustment challenges, ranging from adjusting to the new academic expectations, assuming responsibilities for the task of daily life and developing a new array of social relationships with peers and teachers. Adeyemo (2005) noted that transition from primary to secondary school is an adjustment and growth process issues that require some coping skills. Rim-Kaufman and Pinata (2009) had similarly observed that compared with the primary school setting, secondary school forms a dramatically different environment for children. While teacher-child interaction in primary school setting is mostly characterized by personal care, warmth, social and emotional support, teacher-child interaction in secondary school is more formal and academically oriented. In addition, from year to year, there are series of changes in teachers, classrooms, class rules and procedures, class management tactics, performance expectations, difficulty of works and peer relations. The school climate as well changes, These changes impose new demands on the young students such as greater independence from adults, autonomous adherence to routines, being alert and active for longer periods (Nelson, 2010). The combination of these changes and reduced social and emotional support from teachers pose some demanding and stressful challenges that may impede school adjustment. The students' success in negotiating through these challenges will predict their school success.

Generally, adjustment refers to reaction to the demands and pressures the environment impose on the individual (Okegbile, 2007). It is an act of establishing harmonious relationship with one's social and physical environment (Eze and Odo, 2007). School adjustment therefore, is a behavioural pattern that enables a student to get along with both the academic and social demands of the school setting (Arkoff, cited in Okegbike, 2007). School adjustment requires that students adjust both academically and socio-emotionally in the school environment (Bart, Hajani and Bar-Haim, 2007). School adjustment is a broad construct which consists of many different aspects such as academic achievement, school satisfaction, school engagement and pro social behaviour.

Well-adjusted students usually value what they are learning, are positively involved in classroom activities and perform well academically. But poor school adjustment leads to poor academic performance, behavioural problems, discordant educational aspirations and sometimes school drop-out (Adhiambo, Odwar and Mildred, 2011). Various factors have been suggested as influencing students' adjustment to school. Among these are sociological variables like parental socio-economic status and family type as well as the students' characteristics such as emotional intelligence and learning styles. Emotional intelligence is the capacity to create positive outcomes in relationships with others and with oneself (Katyal and Awasthi, 2005).

Mayer (2010) popularized the construct of emotional intelligence as individuals' ability to perceive, express, use, understand, and regulate emotions in themselves and others. It can be defined as the capacity to monitor emotions in yourself and others, to discriminate among emotions, to understand messages in emotions, and to use energy in emotions for personal gains and fulfillment (Ogunyemi, 2008). In other words, it refers to the intelligent use of emotions to make them work for one by using them to help guide one's results. Ajayi (2011) defined emotional intelligence as the subset of social intelligence which 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. Emotionally intelligent persons are those individuals who focus on resolution but not on reasoning, because they possess optimistic and positive traits which enable them to do so (Abraham, 2012).

Emotional intelligence plays an integrated part in helping individuals to adjust to any situation. It has been posited that emotional intelligence is in levels of high, moderate and low, and children with higher emotional intelligence are more likely to perform better in tasks requiring socio emotional adjustment than those with low emotional intelligence skills. Richardson (2002) reported that high emotional intelligence among students is characterized by quality social relationship with peers and teachers, feeling of emotional security, exhibition of pro-social behaviours, longer retention in educational system and better academic performance. Also, Adeyemo (2005) reported that strengths of emotional intelligence (high, moderate and low) seem to have profound influence on the students' adjustment in transit from through schools, Students having moderate emotional intelligence were reported to perform averagely well in their academic and social endeavours in the school. Emotional intelligence may not be all that a student needs to be well adjusted in school as some may not even have enough of that. Preferred learning style of individual learner is another point of consideration.

There are various learning style models offering explanation for individuals' preferences to learning. These include Kolb's (1982) learning style model which is based on the experiential learning theory. Kolb identified and categorized learners under the following learning styles:

- Convergers, who are characterized by abstract conceptualization and active experimentation. Such learners are good at practical application of ideas and use of deductive reasoning to solve problems,
- Divergers: those who have tendency towards concrete experience and reflective observation, and are imaginative and always coming up with ideas and seeing things from different perspectives,
- Assimilators, those that learn more by abstract conceptualization and reflective observation. Such learners are capable of creating theoretical models using inductive reasoning,
- Accommodators combine concrete experience and active experimentation, and are good at experimenting, and doing things concretely instead of merely reading and studying them (Acharya, 2002).

Students interact with information differently, hence there are a variety of learning styles Learning is classified into:

- Visual (seeing graphs, charts, flow diagrams, drawings, diagrams, pictures, colored word accents, demonstrations etc.).
- Auditory (listening, interacting, discussing, speech, Reading writing - textual contents, reading books, word lists, writings, handouts) and
- Kinesthetic (physical touch, manipulating objects or materials) (Deal and Wampler, 2011).

Students learn more readily when they process information in their own natural and preferred ways. Reid (2008) defined learning style as individual's natural, habitual and preferred way(s) of absorbing, processing, and retaining new information and skills. Singh and Singh (2009) opined that a definite relationship exists between specific aspects of learning style and measured learning outcomes in terms of academic success. Since learning styles is predicted to influence academic achievements, there is likelihood of its positive influence on the overall students' school adjustment.

Another observable trait, age, has been reported to have significant influence on school adjustment. Patel (2013) reported that younger students outperformed their peers and overall scores while older students achieved at a higher level than the younger ones. Alfonseca (2011) reported that as students become older, the correlation between age and school adjustment increases. According to Cuthbert (2015), schools provide equalizing experiences, and thus the longer students stay in the schooling process, the more the impact of age on student school adjustment increase. The school indeed is a powerful equalizer as the sociology of the school reveals that it brings together, learners from diverse family backgrounds, with different social and psychological characteristics like gender, intellectual endowments or affective behavior and teach them under the same classroom situation. Against this background, this study examined the influence of emotional intelligence and learning styles on school adjustment of senior secondary school students in Lagos metropolis

Statement of the Problem

The goal of the school is to educate learners which involves the impartation/ acquisition of knowledge, skills and societal values. For optimal results, the learners must be well adjusted. As learners transit through the educational levels they encounter diverse school adjustment challenges. The ability of a learner to maintain a balance in this direction would optimize his or her learning potentials and outcomes. Regrettably, research has shown that a large chunk of learners at the various levels of the school system and particularly the secondary level are battling with underachievement for various reasons. Such ranges from personal characteristics, family background, and other school related factors. The problem of school adjustment is a serious one.

Poor students school adjustment has been associated with anti--social behaviourál consequences such as bullying, violence, cultism, rape, and poor students' relationship. In

recent years, there has been growing concern for the increasing level of these anti-social behaviours among Nigerians students, which point to poor students' adjustment in the school.

Furthermore, school adjustment challenges would negate whatever effort being put in by the home and the school to maximize learning and keep its victim in a state of perpetual academic struggle. Research has posited several factors to impact school adjustment. This study particularly examined the influence of emotional intelligence and learning styles on school adjustment of senior secondary school students in Lagos metropolis.

Purpose of the Study

Specifically, the study seeks to:

- i. ascertain the influence of emotional intelligence on school adjustments of senior secondary school students.
- ii. determine the influence of students' learning styles on school adjustment of the senior secondary school students.
- iii. determine the influence of age on students' school adjustment.

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses guided the study.

1. There is no significant influence of emotional intelligence on school adjustment among senior secondary school students.
2. There is no significant influence of learning styles on school adjustment of senior secondary school students.
- 43 Age has no significant influence on school adjustment of senior secondary school students.

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Research Methodology.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised of all Senior Secondary School Two (SS II) students in public senior secondary schools in Agege Local Government Area of Lagos State. SS II students were considered most appropriate for the study because they are not in the terminal class and are not burdened with the pressure of preparing for external examinations.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample size for this study comprised two hundred and fifty respondents drawn from five schools in the study area. Through stratified sampling technique, fifty respondents were selected from each of the schools giving a total of two hundred and fifty respondents. The

stratification made it possible for all the students to be represented adequately. The age of the participants ranged between 13 and 19 years.

Research Instrument

The instrument used in data collection was a self-structured questionnaire titled “Influence of Emotional Intelligence and Learning Styles on School Adjustment Questionnaire (IEILSAQ)”. The questionnaire consisted of two sections: A and B. Section ‘A’ contained the bio-data of the respondents while section ‘B’, consisted of items that bothered on the variables of the study – emotional intelligence, learning styles and school adjustment. Section B adopted the format of the 4-point Likert scale. It had four optional responses of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The instrument was validated and its reliability established in a pilot study by test retest and was found to have a reliability coefficient of 0.82.

Administration of Instrument/ Method of Data Analysis

With the cooperation of the teachers, the questionnaires were administered to the respondents in the selected schools. The questionnaires were filled immediately and collected upon completion, and then collated for data analysis Chi-square and One -Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used to test the formulated hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Hypothesis One: There is no significant influence of emotional intelligence on school adjustment among senior secondary school students.

Table 1: Chi-square (χ^2) Analysis of Influence of Emotional Intelligence on School Adjustment among Secondary School Students

Variables	N	\bar{X}	LS	Df	χ^2_{cal}	χ^2_{tab}	Remark	Decision
Emotional Intelligence	250	21.37	0.05	27	34.18	20.11	Significant	H ₀₁ Rejected
School Adjustment		23.04						

Evidence from Table 1 revealed that χ^2 calculated (34.18) was greater than χ^2 tabulated (20.11) given 27 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This shows that there is a significant influence of emotional intelligence on school adjustment among senior secondary school students.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant influence of learning styles on school adjustment of senior secondary school students.

Table 2: ANOVA Analysis of Influence of Learning Styles on School Adjustment Among Secondary School Students

Learning Styles	N	\bar{X}	SD	
Visual learners	79	18.99	2.68	
Auditory Learners	117	22.62	3.43	
Kinesthetic Learners	54	16.87	1.97	
Sources of variation	Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Mean of square	F-ratio
Visual learners	82.42	1	82.42	3.21
Auditory Learners	114.20	1	114.20	4.04
Kinesthetic Learners	51.33	1	51.33	3.81
Within Groups	4130.34	246	28.29	
Total	4378.29	249		

* Significant at 0.05; df= 1 & 246; critical F = 3.05

Evidence from Table 2 showed that a calculated F-value of 3.21 resulted as the influence of visual learning styles on school adjustment of senior secondary school students. This calculated F-value of 3.21 is significant since it is greater than the critical F-value 3.05 given 1 and 246 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Table 2 also shows that a calculated F-value of 4.04 resulted as the influence of auditory learning styles on school adjustment of senior secondary school students. This calculated F-value is significant since it is greater than the critical F-value of 3.05 given 1 and 246 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Table 2 further shows that a calculated F-value of 3.81 resulted as the influence of kinesthetic learning styles on school adjustment of senior secondary school students. This calculated F-value is significant since it is greater than the critical F-value of 3.05 given 1 and 246 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. The comparison shows that auditory learners significantly adjust better in school, followed by visual learners and kinesthetic learners. Consequently, the hypothesis was rejected. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a significant influence of learning styles on school adjustment of senior secondary school students.

Hypothesis Three: Age has no significant influence on school adjustment of senior secondary school students.

The hypothesis was tested using one-way analysis of variance statistics. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 4.

Table 3: One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA showing difference due to age on the influence of school adjustment of senior secondary school students

Age	N	\bar{X}	SD
13 - 14	18	23.26	4.28
15 – 17	188	21.09	5.99
18 and above	34	19.62	4.83

Sources of variation	Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Mean of square	F-ratio
Age	311.74	2	155.87	4.62
Within Group	5927.22	247	50.66	
Total	6238.96	249		

* Significant at 0.05; df= 2 & 197; critical F = 3.05

Table 3 shows that a calculated F-value of 4.62 resulted as the difference due to age on the influence on school adjustment of senior secondary school students. This calculated F-value of 4.62 is significant since it is higher than the critical F-value of 3.05 given 2 and 247 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. The hypothesis was rejected. The comparison shows that adolescents from 15 – 17 years and 18 years and above significantly adjust better in school than 13 – 14 years old students. Consequently, the hypothesis was rejected. Thus, was concluded that age has a significant influence on school adjustment of senior secondary school students.

Discussion of Findings

Hypothesis one which stated that there is no significant influence of emotional intelligence on school adjustment among senior secondary school students was rejected. Findings from the study showed a significant influence of emotional intelligence on school adjustment among senior secondary school students. The reason for this finding could be because emotional intelligence is one of the psychological factors that can predict students' adjustment to school. Emotional intelligence is an individual's ability to monitor one's own and other people's emotion and use them appropriately. This finding supports Adeyemo, (2005) who found that there was a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and school adjustment of the students. It was also found that the strength of emotional intelligence, defined in terms of high, moderate and low significantly impacted on the adjustment of the students in transition. Ramalingan (2006) also reported that emotional intelligence skills and competencies are essential to success and that significant positive relationships exist between emotional intelligence and adjustment among higher secondary school students.

Hypothesis Two which stated that there is no significant influence of learning styles on school adjustment among senior secondary school students was rejected. Findings revealed a significant influence of learning styles on school adjustment among students. The reason for this finding could be because each person has a particular approach to learning with which he or she feels most comfortable. In other words, students learn more readily when they process information in their own natural and preferred ways. Learning styles give general direction to

learning behaviour and school adjustment. Understanding one's learning styles can help the learner adjust well in school. This finding is in line with Singh and Singh (2009) who reported a significant positive relationship between learning styles and students' adjustment. Also, Punia and Sangwan (2011) asserted that students with multiple learning styles tend to gain more and obtain higher scores with better school adjustment compared to those who rely solely on one style.

Hypothesis Three which stated that age has no significant influence on school adjustment of senior secondary school students was rejected as findings from the study indicated that age has a significant influence on school adjustment of senior secondary school students. This finding is in line with Noor-Azniza and Jdaitawi (2009) who found that older students have higher school adjustment than younger ones. Laidro, Pullman, and Allik (2007) reported that age is a contributing factor that moderates relationships with academic success. Agwagah and Harbor-Peter (2014) reported that little differences are identified between males and females in school adjustment at ages 9 through 13 years but at age 17. However, Nada (2013) in his study concluded that the negative relationship between age and school adjustment remains constant over time.

Conclusion

This study established after a critical examination that emotional intelligence and learning styles significantly influenced school adjustment of senior secondary school students. This implies that students that have high or moderate levels of emotional intelligence are likely to have quality social relationship with peers, and teachers, feel emotionally secure, exhibit pro-social behaviours, and perform better academically, while those that have low emotional intelligence are likely to cope poorly in school, exhibit aggressive behaviour and perform poorly academically. This also implies that learning styles are strong factors on the students' school adjustment, academic and socio emotional performances in the school. This study concludes that the success of students requires the dedication and commitment from the students as well as the teacher. It is therefore important for the teachers to remember the effect that emotions have on learning and school adjustment. Emotional intelligence affects each student's ability to learn and adjust in school and other social settings.

However, with the proffered recommendations in the study duly implemented, the problem of influence of emotional intelligence and learning styles on school adjustment of senior secondary school students would be addressed.

Sociological Implications

This study has clearly shown that relationships exist among emotional intelligence, learning styles and students' school adjustment. This has some social relevance especially to all stakeholders in child socialization. The various agents of socialization particularly the family and the school should focus on imbuing emotional intelligence skills in children in their socializing function for better outcomes. Emotional intelligence in students is characterized among others by quality school relationship with peers and teachers. This when extended to

the larger society would enhance social cohesion and integration needed to achieve unity in diversity.

More so, more than ever before an average Nigerians would need a good measure of emotional intelligence to deal with the increasing social problems such as security challenges, increase in suicide rate etc. Furthermore, good school adjustment fostered in learners through emotional intelligence skills and result-oriented learning styles would enhance the quality of learning outcomes. When our educational institutions turn out topnotch graduates, the society is positively impacted as they would more efficiently drive national development.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proffered:

1. There is a need for policy initiatives aimed at creating general awareness among stakeholders in educational enterprise about the importance of training teachers and students for emotional competence since such training may facilitate successful students' school adjustment.
2. Learning styles always change with age, thus, teachers are recommended to constantly monitor adult students' perceptions of classroom life.
3. Some studies in literature had indicated that a combination of all the learning styles could produce more effective learning outcome. For this reason, students should try to identify their learning styles strength and also try to use different learning styles.
4. Teachers should also help their students to understand their learning style preferences and make use of such to develop life-long learners.
5. School administrators need to provide various learning materials which can bring diversity in the classroom by employing visual, auditory and kinesthetic materials such as use of technology and students' project writing and presentation among other methods.
6. All stakeholders; teachers, parents, sociologists, counsellors and the government involved in secondary education should strive to provide conditions that facilitate effective studying.
7. There should be effective implementation of proper counselling in the secondary school to assist both troubled students and other normal students in taking some challenging life decisions. Also, counselors should develop programmes that will help students build efficient and effective learning styles and positive attitudes towards learning, in an early stage of their studies.

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