

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHERS' INTERPERSONAL SKILLS AND STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE

Nonyem Ifediorah Okeke & Emerah Chinwe Nnenna.

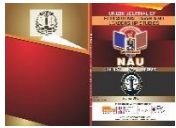
*Corresponding author: nonyemifediorah@gmail.com.

Department of Educational Foundations, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus, Anambra State, Nigeria.

ABSTRACT

The study examined the relationship between teachers' interpersonal skills and students' academic achievement in English Language in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State. Two research questions guided the study and two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted a Correlation research design. The population for the study consisted of 21,272 Senior Secondary SS II students in the 2024/2025 session from the 267 public secondary schools in Anambra State. The sample size for the study was 571 respondents which drawn from the population of 21, 272 SS II students in the 2024/2025 academic session. The study adopted stratified and simple random sampling techniques. The instruments for data collection was a structured questionnaires by the researcher, titled "Teachers' Interpersonal Skill Questionnaire (TISQ). This instrument was subjected to face validity by three experts, two from Educational Management and one from Educational Measurement and Evaluation, all from Faculty of Education, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus, Anambra State. The construct validity of the instrument was also established. Cronbach Alpha method was used to determine the reliabilities of the instruments. The reliability yielded coefficients of reliability yielded coefficients of 0.80 for emotional intelligent skill and 0.81 teacher-student relationship. The average reliability coefficient showed a value of 0.82 for teachers' interpersonal skill questionnaire which was considered highly reliable and adequate for the study. Five hundred and seventy-one (571) copies of questionnaires were administered by the researcher with six briefed research-assistants by direct administration and collected on the spot. The research questions were analyzed using Pearson product moment Correlation Coefficient while the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using test of significance of Pearson product moment Correlation Coefficient. After the analysis the following findings were made; there exists a moderate positive and significant relationship between emotional intelligent skill and students' academic achievement of students in Anambra State public secondary schools, there exists a moderate positive and significant relationship between teacher-student relationship and students' academic achievement of students in Anambra state public secondary schools. The government and school administrators should organize regular training programs to enhance teachers' interpersonal skills, focusing on empathy, teacher-student relationship and motivation of teachers. Also, teachers' interpersonal skills should be evaluated and included in their performance appraisal to encourage them to develop and maintain good relationships with students.

Keywords: Interpersonal skill, Students, Academic Achievement.



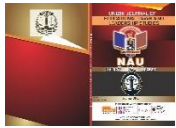
Introduction

Schools, colleges and universities have no worth without student. Students are most essential asset for any educational institute. The social and economic development of the country is directly linked with student academic achievement. However, the current educational problems of public interest lie on the poor level of student's academic achievement especially in public examination (Oluremi, 2020). Oluremi, gave credent to when he averred that the problem of underperformance among school children has persisted in many subject areas. The low academic achievement of students in most secondary schools in Anambra State could be attributed to low quality of teachers' variables/skills (Oluremi, 2020).

Academic achievement is defined as the measurement of students' success across the subjects taught which displays the learning outcomes accessed through performance, classroom test, assignment, output reports, research and major examinations (Owoeye & Yara, 2019). Ugwuanyi and Pietsch, (2024) Academic achievement refers to a student's success in meeting short or long-term goals in education. Operationally, the researcher defined academic achievement as a student's achievement and success in academic settings, typically measured by various indicators, such as: grades, test scores, results from standardized tests, quizzes, or exams. Despite repeated curriculum reviews and government interventions to improve English language instruction, the gap between expected and actual performance remains wide. The persistent low performance of SS II students in English language is particularly problematic because it means that many learners enter their final year (SS III) unprepared for national examinations. Many scholars have identified several factors, that can have effect on student's academic performance which may be teachers' variables, teachers' competence, teacher's interpersonal skills, teacher's qualification, school facilities etc. (Kim et al., 2018). This study focused on teacher's interpersonal skills and student's academic achievement in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Interpersonal skills are the tools people use to interact and communicate with one another in an organized environment. They are measures of how adept or how much skilled or proficient a person is at interacting with others. When conflicts arise, one uses one's interpersonal skills to resolve them. People learn interpersonal skills by interacting with family member, going to school, and socializing with their peers. Healthy interpersonal skills reduce stress, resolve conflict, improve communication, enhance intimacy, increase understanding, and promote joy through motivation.

Teachers' interpersonal skills are broadly defined as those skills which a teacher needs in order to communicate effectively with the students or a group of people. Teachers' interpersonal skills, which are also identified as essential skills, are the critical skills a teacher uses to demonstrate interpersonal competence and organizational communication effectiveness which are essential for students' academic achievement. Corina (2021) defined interpersonal skills as those strategies a teacher uses to promote communication with the students. The components include; rapport, teacher care, humor, praise, motivation, emotional expression. However, the researcher adopted teachers' emotional intelligent skills and teacher-student relationship skills for the study.



Teachers' emotional Intelligent which is a psychological construct is the capability of a teacher to motivate, control impulse and delay gratification, to adjust one's mood and remove distress from swamping the ability to think, to empathize and to hope (Corina, 2021). It is the people's self-perception of their emotional abilities and skills, personality characteristics and behavioral disposition that influence their ability to cope successfully with environmental demands and pressures. Emotional intelligence is a complicated concept that encompasses a variety of cognitive, emotional, and interpersonal skills (Mancini et al. 2022) Shafait et al., (2022) stated that individuals who have developed high level of EI are able to recognize and regulate their own and others' emotions. Additionally, teachers with good emotional intelligent skill would be able to communicate with their students properly.

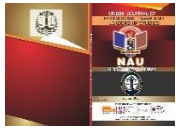
Teacher-student relationship skills concerns the quality of interaction between the teacher and the students that could lead to performance outcome. Relationship between the two sometimes, is largely provided by the teacher. A positive teacher–student relationship is identified with empathy, caring, involvement, trust, and respect. It is theorized that, in relational terms, for enhancing students' deep performance with teachers, teachers should be approachable, believe in all their students, be empathetic, be responsive to students' individuality, support students' autonomous, and be passionate about their profession (Mercer & Dörnyei, 2020).

When students attribute their academic success to effort/persistence or receive feedback that attributes their success to effort, they develop a higher self-efficacy and expectations for future skill development. Research evidence shows that effort makes a positive contribution to the prediction of academic achievement outcomes (Bouffard et al., 2018). However, this study tends to find out the relationship between teachers' interpersonal skills and students' academic achievement in English Language in public secondary schools in Anambra State. It is this gap in knowledge the study has fulfilled.

Statement Of Problem

English language is a compulsory subject in the Nigerian secondary school curriculum and a prerequisite for admission into tertiary institutions. Beyond being a subject of study, it also serves as the language of instruction for nearly all other subjects at the senior secondary school level. As such, students' proficiency in English language directly affects their overall academic achievement. Unfortunately, evidence from both internal and external examinations shows that public secondary school students in Anambra State continue to perform low in English language. This trend has raised serious concerns about the effectiveness of teaching and learning of the subject, especially among students in Senior Secondary Two (SS II) who are in a critical transition stage of their education.

Despite government policies and interventions aimed at improving English language instruction, the achievement gap continues to widen. Poor mastery of the language among SS II students suggests that by the time they reach their final year (SS III), many are already at a disadvantage and less prepared to achieve the credit passes required for further studies. This problem not only restricts students' educational and career opportunities but also threatens national development



goals that rely on producing graduates who are competent in communication, knowledge acquisition, and global competitiveness. Thus, the need to investigate teachers' interpersonal skills and students' academic achievement in English Language in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to examine teachers' interpersonal skills and students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. investigate the relationship between teachers' emotional intelligent skills and students' academic achievement in English in public secondary schools in Anambra State
2. establish the relationship between teacher-student relationship skills and students' academic achievement in English in public secondary schools in Anambra State

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between teachers' emotional intelligent skills and students' academic achievement in English in public secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria?
2. What is the relationship between teachers-student relationship skills and students' academic achievement in English in public secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

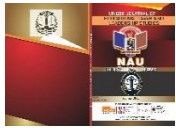
The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between teachers' emotional intelligent skills and students' academic achievement in English in public secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria
2. There is no significant relationship between teachers-students relationship skills and students' academic achievement in English in public secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria

Research Methodology

This chapter is concerned mainly on the method or procedure used for the research. It includes area of the study, research design, population of the study, sample and sampling technique, instrument for data collection, validation of the instrument, reliability of the instrument and method of data analysis.

This study was carried out in Anambra State which is one of the 36 States of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Located in the South-Eastern part of Nigeria, Anambra State comprises six Education Zones (Aguata, Awka, Otuocho, Nnewi, Ogidi and Onitsha) and 21 Local Government Areas namely: Aguata, Orumba North, Orumba South, Anaocha, Awka North, Dunukofia, Njikoka, Awka South, Ekwusigo, Ihiala, Idemili North, Idemili South, Oyi, Onitsha North, Onitsha South, Ogbaru, Anambra East, Anambra West, and Ayamelum with 268 public secondary schools



(Anambra State Post Primary School Services Commission, 2024). The research design for this study is descriptive survey.

The population for the study consisted of 21,272 Senior Secondary SSII students in all Public secondary schools in the six Education Zones in 267 Anambra State, Public Secondary Schools. (Post Primary Schools Service Commission (PPSSC), Anambra State, 2024). The sample of the study comprised of 571 SSII students as respondents. Taro Yamane's formula was used to calculate the sample size. Also size of 571 is about 4% of the population. According to Sukhov et al. (2020), for large populations, a sample size of 4% or more is generally considered sufficient to provide reliable estimates.

The instruments for data collection were a structured questionnaire by the researcher, the instrument was titled "Teachers' Interpersonal Skills Questionnaire (TISQ)". Then, SSII students' English scores were collected from the classes of the sampled students and used for the academic achievement assessment. Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used to test the research questions and test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. In answering the research questions, the coefficient (r) and the size of the relationship was interpreted using the interpretation of correlation coefficient based on Schober *et al.* (2018) as shown:

±0.00 to 0.09	=	Negligible Correlation
±0.10 to 0.39	=	weak Correlation
±0.40 to 0.69	=	Moderate relationship
±0.70 to 0.89	=	Strong relationship
±0.90 to 1.00	=	Very strong relationship.

Result and Analysis of Data

This chapter presents the results and analysis of influence of principals' management practice on teachers' job performance as well as the decision on hypothesis.

Research Question 1: What is the extent of relationship between emotional intelligent skill and academic achievement of students in Anambra State public secondary schools?

Table 1: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient analysis on the extent of relationship between emotional intelligent skill and academic achievement of students in Anambra state public secondary schools.

Correlations		emotional skill	intelligent	Students academic	Remark
emotional intelligent skill	Pearson Correlation	1		0.69**	
	Sig.(2-tailed)			0.00	
	N	524		524	Moderate positive relationship
students' academic achievement	Pearson Correlation	0.69**		1	
	Sig.(2-tailed)	0.00			
	N	524		524	

**Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level(2-tailed).

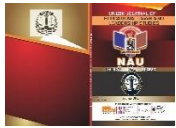


Table1 presented an analysis showing that there existed a moderate positive relationship between emotional intelligent skill and academic achievement of students in Anambra state public secondary schools. This deduction comes as a result of the 'r' having a positive value, $r=0.69^{**}$ and $n=524$. Hence, the study concluded that there is a moderate positive relationship between emotional intelligent skill and academic achievement of students in Anambra state public secondary schools.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligent skill and academic achievement of students in Anambra State public secondary schools.

Table 2: Test of Significance of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient on relationship between emotional intelligent skill and academic achievement of students in Anambra State public secondary schools.

Correlations				
		emotional intelligent skill	students' academic achievement	Decision
emotional intelligent skill	Pearson Correlation	1	0.69**	Significant
	Sig.(2-tailed)		0.00	
	N	524	524	
students' academic achievement	Pearson Correlation	0.69**	1	
	Sig.(2-tailed)	0.00		
	N	524	524	

**Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The result of the test of significance of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient from Table 2 above showed a significant relationship between emotional intelligent skill and academic achievement of students in Anambra State public secondary schools. With $r=0.69^{**}$ $n=524$ and $p\text{-value}=0.00$. Since $p\text{-value}$ (0.00) is less than 0.05, the study rejects the null hypothesis and do not reject the alternative hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligent skill and academic achievement of students in Anambra State public secondary schools.

Research Question 2: What is the extent of relationship between teacher-student relationship and academic achievement of students in Anambra State Public Secondary Schools?



Table3: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient analysis on the extent of relationship between teacher-student relationship and performance of students in Anambra state public secondary schools.

Correlations		Teacher-student relationship	students' academic achievement	Remark	
Teacher-student relationship	Pearson Correlation	1	0.41**	Moderate relationship	positive
	Sig.(2-tailed)		0.00		
	N	524	524		
students' academic achievement	Pearson Correlation	0.41**	1		
	Sig.(2-tailed)	0.00			
	N	524	524		

**Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 presented an analysis showing that there existed a moderate positive relationship between teacher-student relationship and performance of students in Anambra state public secondary schools. This deduction comes as a result of the 'r' having a positive value, $r = 0.41^{**}$ and $n = 524$. Hence, the study concluded that there exist, a moderate positive relationship between teacher-student relationship and performance of students in Anambra state public secondary schools.

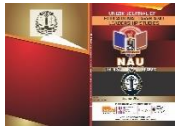
Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between teacher-student relationship and performance of students in Anambra state public secondary schools.

Table 4: Test of Significance of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient on relationship between teacher-student relationship and performance of students in Anambra state public secondary schools.

Correlations		Teacher-student relationship	students' academic achievement	Decision
Teacher-student relationship	Pearson Correlation	1	0.41**	Significant
	Sig.(2-tailed)		0.00	
	N	524	524	
students' academic achievement	Pearson Correlation	0.41**	1	
	Sig.(2-tailed)	0.00		
	N	524	524	

**Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The result of the test of significance of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient from Table 4 above showed a significant relationship between teacher-student relationship and performance of students in Anambra state public secondary schools with $r = 0.41^{**}$, $n = 524$ and $p\text{-value} = 0.00$. Since $p\text{-value} (0.00)$ is less than 0.05, the study rejects the null hypothesis and do not reject the alternative hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between teacher-student relationship and performance of students in Anambra state public secondary schools.



Summary of the Findings

The study findings are summarized as follows:

1. There exists a moderate positive and significant relationship between emotional intelligent skill and academic achievement of students in Anambra State public secondary schools.
2. There exists a moderate positive and significant relationship between teacher-student relationship and performance of students in Anambra state public secondary schools.

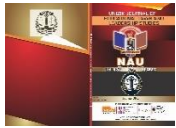
Discussion of Findings

Findings from the study on the relationship between emotional intelligent skill and students' academic achievement of students in Anambra State public secondary schools showed a moderate positive and significant relationship between emotional intelligent skill and students' academic achievement of students. Findings showed that emotional intelligent are exceedingly essential for the students' academic achievement of students in public secondary schools in Anambra state. These findings are as a result of students agreeing to a high extent that their teacher can recognize when they are feeling stressed during lessons, provide opportunities for them to develop their emotional intelligence, recognize how their feelings affect their performance.

These findings are in line with that of Corina (2021) that explored the role of the emotional intelligent of the teacher and its impact on the rapport between teacher and student, and student achievement and engagement. According to their results, teachers with high emotional intelligence had a more profoundly favourable effect on student-teacher relationships and the connection between teacher work engagement and student academic achievement than instructors with low emotional intelligence. The students' learning of emotional intelligence abilities, the students' academic success, and the functional interaction between the emotionally intelligent instructor and the student are all mediated by one another.

Findings from the study on the relationship between teacher-student relationship skill and students' academic achievement of students in Anambra state public secondary schools showed a moderate positive and significant relationship between teacher-student relationship skill and students' academic achievement of students. This finding could be attributed to responses to what extent teacher's role in class affects student's academic achievement. They responded that their teacher provides a genuine interest in getting to know them as individuals, use humor to build rapport with them, their teacher does not ridicule them in front of other students.

This finding is in line with that of Nabaasa and Rutaro (2023) who in a study assessed the relationship between teacher-student relationships on the academic achievement of UCE students in Kyamate secondary school, Ntungamo Municipality. Results showed that there is a strong positive relationship between teachers' specifications, students' involvement, classroom environment and academic achievement of UCE students as these were evidenced by correlation coefficients(r) of 0.830, 0.687 and 0.804 respectively that were statistically significant since the p value ($0.000 < 0.01$). Similarly, Anakwue (2021) examined student-teacher relationship and academic achievement of secondary school students in Cross River State. The findings from the



results revealed that students-teacher relationship had positive significant influence on students' academic achievement. It is therefore concluded that student-teachers relationship influences academic achievement of senior secondary school students in Cross River State. The two studies are similar because they discussed teacher-student relationship. However, while the former study examined student-teacher relationship and academic achievement of secondary school students, the current study examined teacher-student skills and students' academic achievement in English.

Recommendations

1. School administrators should provide support and resources to help teachers develop their interpersonal skills, such as mentoring programs or workshops.
2. Teachers should communicate in a clear, effective and straightforward language to explain complex concepts.
3. Ministry of education should come up with innovative strategies aimed at training and re-training teachers of secondary schools in teacher-student relationship skill for effective students' academic achievement of students
4. Further studies should be conducted to explore the specific aspects of interpersonal skills that have the most significant impact on student academic achievement

REFERENCES

- Assali M., A., and Riskus A. (2023). Review of Literature on Teacher Emotional Intelligence and Its Impact on Student-Teacher Rapport. *Migration Letters*; pp. 605-628. www.migrationletters.com
- Bouffard. T., Boisvert, J., Vezeau, C., & Larouche, C. (2018). The impacts of goal orientation on self-regulation and performance among college students. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 65, 317-329.
- Corina, N. (2021). The emotional intelligence of college and university presidents: An exploratory study. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 1(11), 1- 7.
- Kim, K. R., & Seo, E. H. (2018). The relationship between teacher efficacy and students' academic achievement: A meta- analysis. *Social Behavior and Personality: an international journal*, 46(4), 529-540
- Mancini, G., Roberta B., Elena T., and Federica A. (2022). Emotional intelligence: Current research and future per-spectives on mental health and individual differences. *Frontiers in Psychology* 13: 1049431.
- Mercer, S., and Dörnyei, Z. (2020). *Engaging language learners in contemporary classrooms*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Oluremi, O.F. (2020). Enhancing educational effectiveness in Nigeria through teacher's professional development. *European Scientific Journal*, 9(28), 422-431.
- Shafait, Z., and Jiayu H. (2022). Nexus of Emotional Intelligence and Learning Outcomes: A Cross-Country Study of China and Pakistan Higher Educational Institutes. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 19: 16215.
- Ugwuanyi, C. S., & Pietsch, M. (2024). Promoting Leadership for Learning in Nigeria: The Interplay of Leadership Mastery Experience and Leader Self-Efficacy. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 1–21.