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**INFLUENCE OF EMOTIONAL READINESS ON ECONOMICS EDUCATION
STUDENTS ACHIEVEMENT IN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NSUKKA**

Joseph C. Onuoha (PhD); Ezinne O. Idika; Chisom P. Agah
Department of Social science Education
University Of Nigeria, Nsukka

Abstract

The study examined the influence of emotional readiness on the achievement of Economics education students of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The study employed the Ex-post facto research design. The population of 41 first-year students, 20 second-year students, 20 third-year students and 34 final year students from the Department of Social Science Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka were used for the study. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire titled an Emotional Readiness Scale (AERS) and Students CGPA from the first year to the fourth year. Mean and standard deviation of means were used to answer research questions, while the Student's t-test was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.5 level of probability. Findings revealed that student's personality, motivation and gender influence academic achievement. Recommendations were made based on the findings.

Keywords: Emotional readiness, academic achievement, students' personality, motivation and gender.

Introduction

It is necessary for students to be emotionally balanced as this helps them to be relaxed, focused, have improved attention, be better prepared for classes and be actively engage in any task they are exposed to. Skouteris and McIntosh (2015) opined that students who are emotionally ready for school are likely to have a positive attitude in school. They are actively and willingly involved in classroom activities, engaging actively in learning, whereas, those who are not emotionally prepared for school, tend to be passive and reluctant to carry out classroom activities. In addition, emotionally

ready students often have a stable social and emotional state that enables them to make friends and integrate seamlessly with others. Such students, according to Skouteris and McIntosh (2015) adheres to instructions and rules, have the ability to manage emotions like frustrations and disappointments without becoming aggressive and withdrawn.

The Departments of Education United States identifies five domains of emotional readiness for school as follows; language and literacy development, cognition and general readiness, approaches towards learning, physical well-being and motor readiness, social and emotional readiness. These domains are intended to be interconnected and act as indicators of a student's ability to succeed in a school setting. Kutash, Duchnowski, & Green (2011); Meyers (2011); High (2008) and Sinmarie (2012) have also identified a number of factors that affect emotional readiness in a student as; family factor, pre-school experience, literacy skills, motivation, gender, attitude among others. For the purpose of this study, the researchers investigated the influence of gender, motivation and students' personality as factors contributing to students' emotional readiness, and their influence on academic achievement.

Gender is a state of being a male or a female. Alade (2014) referred to gender as distinguishing among other attributes the behaviour of males and females, it is fitting to assert that the behaviour of the male gender differs clearly from that of the female gender. Under the context of emotional readiness, suffice it therefore to say that the socio-cultural orientation of males being emotionally "tougher" than females in a way amplifies the assertion of Simon and Nath (2004) who posited that female students are more emotional than males when it comes to handling issues, and as such take longer time to adjust their emotional state should need to be. Thus, if gender plays a significant role in the emotional readiness of students to learn, it, therefore, means that gender by implication could affect academic achievement.

Statistics from the exams and records unit of the University of Nigeria Nsukka shows that in the past 6 years (2012 – 2017), students of Economics Education in the Department of Social Science Education, have performed poorly. This data reveals that during this period, only one student representing a meagre 0.71% of the 141 students admitted into the Department graduated with a First class, 15.60% graduated with a second-class upper division, while 46.10% graduated with a second-class lower degree. A further 30.50% and 7.80% graduated with third class and pass degrees respectively. Therefore, a staggering 83.69% of students admitted into Economics Education performed poorly as they graduated with 2nd Class Lower, 3rd class or pass (Examination and Records Unit, University of Nigeria, Nsukka).

A focus on Emotional readiness could be a good effort in addressing factors instrumental to this poor performance. Emotional readiness is those essential and foundational emotional skills that help one to handle challenges effectively and positively. Emotional readiness is essential for students to flourish in school. In other words, Emotional readiness, commonly referred to as resilience, is the ability to handle life's challenges and to find a way to thrive by showing good understanding and

maximizing one's strengths and weaknesses in the face of a problem (Igoe, 2017). According to Igoe (2017), it spans a wide range of seemingly clashing soft skills, such as communication, humility, confidence, empathy, doggedness and general maturity which unequivocally play a vital role in the academic performance of students. Nonetheless, emotional readiness is not just a critical part of academic success, but it's generally required by an individual to adapt and be able to navigate through life challenges. However, it is of great significance in the acquisition of knowledge and skills that ultimately determine later school success of a student (Igoe, 2017). Hence, this study is designed to explore the influence of Emotional Readiness on the academic achievement of Economics Education students at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

Statement of the Problem

Statistics from the Examination and Records Unit, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, shows that over the years, the academic achievement of students in Economics/Education option of the Department of Social Science Education, University of Nigeria Nsukka has been consistently poor. This poor academic achievement can in part be attributed to students' erroneous perception of Economics Education as just a theoretical subject, with little calculations, while in secondary school. This mindset is quickly stunned when they get to higher institutions because Economics becomes much more quantitative and fuller of calculations. This in a way alters the students' initial state of mind, thus affecting their emotional readiness towards the study of Economics. Some of these students' loose interest in the course, others become sad and/or lack fulfilment, while some dropout or change course altogether. These in a way render them unready to undertake studies in Economics Education and in turn contribute to the poor achievement which students as witnessed in the course over the years. Thus, the study tries to investigate the level of emotional readiness among male and female Economics Education students at the University of Nigeria Nsukka, as it affects their academic achievement.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to ascertain the influence of emotional readiness on academic achievement of Economics Education students of University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

Specifically, the study intends to determine:

1. influence of students' emotional readiness on the academic achievement of Economics Education students
2. influence of students' motivation on the academic achievement of Economics Education students.
3. influence of students' gender on the student's emotional readiness.

Corresponding author: ezinne.idika@unn.edu.ng: Phone: +2348038615947

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study;

1. What is the influence of students' emotional readiness on their academic achievement?
2. What is the influence of students' motivation on their academic achievement?
3. What is the influence of students' gender on their emotional readiness?

Research Hypothesis

A hypothesis was formulated for the purpose of this study and was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

H₀₁: Gender has no significant influence on the academic achievement of Economics Education students

Research method

The study adopted the Ex-post facto research design, which according to Nworgu (2014), is appropriate for studying such independent variables as gender, socio-economic status, origin among others which are non-manipulative and in which a researcher can only link responses or observations to some variables as causative agents. It was, therefore, considered appropriate by the researchers, to use the research design to determine how students' emotional readiness, motivation and gender influence students' academic achievement.

The population of the study includes the 115 Economics Education students from the first year to the final year at the University of Nigeria Nsukka. The students' enrollment was obtained from the course representatives of the various classes. The population of the study is manageable, as such no sampling was done.

The instrument for data collection was the researcher-developed questionnaire titled; Emotional Readiness Scale (AERS) and the Students CGPA from 1st to 4th year. The questionnaire consisted of two sections, namely, Sections A and B. Section A sought information on respondent bio-data while section B, consists of three clusters. Cluster 1 dealt with the influence of students' emotional readiness on their achievement in Economics. Cluster 2 dealt on the influence of motivation on the academic achievement of Economics Education students, and Cluster 3 dealt on gender influences on student's academic achievement in Economics Education. The items were developed accordingly from information acquired through the review of relevant literature.

Three experts from relevant areas of specialities namely, Psychology, Measurement and Evaluation, and Economics all in Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka validated the instrument. Thereafter, the final version of the instrument was developed in consideration of the suggestions and criticism made by these experts. The instrument was subjected to a trial test by administering it to twenty Economics/Education students from Nsukka College of Education, located outside the

study area to ascertain its reliability, of which a coefficient of internal consistency of 0.9 was established using Cronbach alpha.

The instrument was administered to Economics Education students in University of Nigeria Nsukka, Enugu state. The direct delivery and retrieval methods were applied in the administration of the instrument to the one hundred and fifteen (115) respondents to ensure 100 per cent return of the instrument. The one hundred and fifteen instruments distributed were all collected back. The data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviations in line with each research questions. The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance using the t-test statistic. Responses with the mean score rating of 2.5 and above in the clusters that answered the research question on were annotated optimist while those less than 2.5 were referred to as pessimist. Similarly, in answering research question 2, motivated and unmotivated were used to denote respondents with mean score ratings of ≥ 2.5 and < 2.5 respectively in the clusters that answered research question 2.

Results

Results of this study are presented in tables in line with their research questions and the hypothesis that guided the study

Research Question One: What is the influence of Economics students' emotional readiness on their academic achievement?

Table 1: Emotional readiness and academic achievement in Economics

Students personality	Number of Students	Students mean	Standard Deviation
Optimistic	71	3.5	0.6292
Pessimistic	20	3.4	0.6163

Results in Table 1 shows that seventy-one (71) Economics education students are Optimist while twenty (20) Economics Education students are pessimist, based on their responses. The results showed that students who are optimist had mean CGPA of 3.5 with a standard deviation of 0.6292 while students who are pessimist had mean CGPA of 3.3 and a standard deviation of 0.6163. The results showed that students' who are optimists are within the class of 2¹ (second class upper) while students who are pessimist are within the class of 2² (second class lower). This implies that the student's personality such as optimism can influence the learning outcome of students and indeed their academic achievement.

Corresponding author: ezinne.idika@unn.edu.ng: Phone: +2348038615947

Research Question Two: What is the influence of motivation on student's achievement?

Table 2: motivation and students' academic achievement in Economics.

Students Motivation	Numbers of Students	Students mean	Standard deviation
Optimistic	71	3.5	0.6292
Pessimistic	20	3.4	0.6163

Table 2 shows that eighty-six (86) Economics Education students are self-motivated while six (6) students are unmotivated, based on their responses. The results showed that students' who are motivated had a mean CGPA of 3.7 and a standard deviation of 0.6532 while students' who are unmotivated had a mean CGPA of 3.2 and a standard deviation of 0.6144. The results showed that students' who are motivated are within the class of 2¹ (second class upper) while students' who are unmotivated are within the class of 2² (second class lower). This implies that self-motivation had a significant effect on the academic achievement of the students.

Research Question Three: What is the influence of gender on students' emotional readiness?

Table 3: Gender Influence on the emotional readiness of Economics students at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka

Student's Gender	Number of Students'	Students Mean CGPA	SD
MALE	30	3.4	0.5931
FEMALE	62	3.5	0.6474

Table 3 shows that thirty (30) of the respondents are of the male gender while sixty-two (62) are female. The results showed that male students had a mean CGPA of 3.4 and a standard deviation of 0.5931 while students' who are female had a mean CGPA of 3.5 and a standard deviation of 0.6474. The results showed that male students

are within the class of 2² (second class lower) while female students are within the class of 2¹ (second class upper). This implies that student's gender influences their academic achievement. To verify the finding, the hypothesis was tested.

Table 4: Independent t-test analysis of the influence of gender on the Economics Education students' CGPA

	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Students Gender	-920	90	.360	Not Significant

The results in Table 4 show that the 0.36 probability level obtained in the study is greater than the alpha level of 0.05 at 95% degree of freedom. Therefore, the difference between the mean CGPA scores of male students of Economics Education was not significantly different from those of their female counterpart. Thus, gender did not influence their academic achievement. Hence, the Null hypothesis was accepted.

Summary of findings

The following constitutes the findings of the study:

1. Students who are optimistic of success in their studies had results that are within the class of 2:1 (second class upper) while those students who are pessimist are within the class of 2:2 (second class lower). This implies that a positive mental attitude had a significant influence on the students' academic achievement.
2. Students who are self-motivated had a mean CGPA of 3.7 (second class upper) and a standard deviation of 0.6532 while those who lack self-motivation had a mean CGPA of 3.2 (second class lower) and a standard deviation of 0.6144. This implies that self-motivation influenced the academic achievement of the students.
3. Male students had a mean CGPA of 3.4 which is second class lower division and a standard deviation of 0.59 while their female counterpart had a mean CGPA of 3.5 which is second class upper division and a standard deviation of 0.65 but the difference was not significant. This implies that student's gender had no significant influence on the academic achievement of students of Economics Education.

Discussion of findings

Corresponding author: ezinne.idika@unn.edu.ng: Phone: +2348038615947

Influence of students' personality on their academic achievement.

The findings of this study as presented in Table 1 showed that students' personality had a significant influence on the academic achievement of the students, whereby those who are optimistic of passing the course had significantly higher CGPA than those who are pessimistic. It is believed that optimism enables students to develop positive and progressive mentality with perceived capacity to find routes to set objectives (pathways thinking), and the motivation to use those routes (agency thinking) (Snyder, Harris, Anderson, Holleran, Irving & Sigmon, 1991). The findings made in the present study agrees with the report of Beard, Hoy and Woolfolk (2009), who noted that academic optimism is a factor that influences academic achievement. Optimism is a positive belief and confidence in succeeding in a given task.

Influence of students' motivation on their academic achievement.

Results of this study as presented in Table 2 reveals that students who are self-motivated performed better as judged by their CGPA compared to the students who lack self-motivation. This implies that student's motivation influences their academic achievement. This agrees with the findings of Oriahi (2009) which showed a very strong positive correlation between students' motivation and their academic achievements. Review of The study by Oriahi concluded that motivation of students is paramount for academic success. Similarly, Muhammad and Garba (2014) observed that students who are highly motivated in mathematics recorded significantly higher academic achievement than those who are lowly motivated. The findings made in this study suggest that students' academic achievement in Economics can be enhanced if the students are self-motivated. Studies have shown that motivation remains a vital recipe for proper learning and achievement, students who are motivated put in more time in their studies (Pintrich, 2003; Pintrich & Schunk, 2002), thus, are more likely to successfully complete their study programs. The unmotivated students lack the drive to go on when things do not work out fine and are easily discouraged and more predisposed to drop out (Vallerand & Bissonnette, 1992).

Influence of students' gender on their Academic Achievement in Economic Education.

The results of this study as presented in table 3, showed that although the male students' had a mean CGPA of 3.4 which is second class lower division with a standard deviation of 0.5931 while students' who are female had a mean CGPA of 3.5 which is second class upper division with a standard deviation of 0.6474, the difference was not significant. Research findings on the influence of gender on students' academic achievement vary. Statistically, significant gender differences in students' self-concept and academic performances were reported by Kiiru and Ngumi (2017), among Secondary school students in Kangema constituency, Murang's County, Kenya. The study established that female students rank more on positive self-concept than male

students. However, with regard to academic performance, it was established that male students performed better in academics compared to the female students

Conclusion

The study investigated the influence of emotional factors on academic achievement of Economics education students of the University of Nigeria Nsukka. From the findings of the study, the researchers conclude that Economics Education student's emotional readiness related factors that significantly influenced the academic achievement of the students.

Recommendations

In line with the findings made in the study, the following were recommended to improve students' emotional readiness in the course of studying Economics Education in the University:

1. Guidance and counselling services should be provided by school managements where students can access when they are in need of emotional advice.
2. Time to time emotional rating scale should be administered quarterly to students to ascertain their emotional level at all time, thus prior advice should be given when there are cases of emotional instability.
3. Seminars and symposiums should always be organized by university authorities to advise and encourage students on the importance of associating with good friends and peer groups while undergoing a university programme, as this can affect their academic performance.

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