

EMOTIONAL, SOCIAL, COGNITIVE INTELLIGENCE AND SOCIAL SUPPORT NETWORK AMONG YOUTHS

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ABSTRACT: *The aim of the current study was to investigate the relationship that exists among emotional, social, cognitive intelligence and social support network among youths. Correlational research design was adopted for this study. Three hypotheses were formulated to guide this study. The population consisted of all youths in Rivers State. A sample of 856 respondents was drawn from the population using cluster sampling technique. Four instruments were used for data collection. They included Emotional Intelligence Behavior Inventory (EQBI) by Akinboye, Multidimensional Scale for Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) by Gregory, et al., Tomso Social Intelligence Scale (TSQS), and Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS). Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient was used to test the hypotheses at .05 level of significance. Results indicated that emotional, social and cognitive intelligence demonstrated significant positive relationship with social support network among youths. Based on the findings, conclusion and recommendations were made.*

KEYWORDS-Emotional, social, cognitive intelligence, social support network and youths

INTRODUCTION

Social support network is viewed as an environment in which the stage for the exchange of support is set. Social support has been considered a protective factor in terms of development and adaptation of children and youths (DuBois, Felner, Brand, Adan & Evans, 1992). There are numerous benefits for youths having a strong social support network. Research revealed that social support has been useful when working to alleviate adolescent depression (Barrera & Garrison Jones, 1992), improving academic and behavioural adjustment (Dubow, Tisak, Causey, Hryshko & Reid, 1991), as well as aiding children and youth that have been labeled at risk. It was found that effects of stress are not as impactful for individuals who possess protective resources, such as social support, when compared to those who do not possess protective resources (Dumont & Provost, 1999).

Research further suggested that a social support system is beneficial in buffering the stress associated with illness and life changing events thus helping the recipient of the support to better cope with problems (Bliese & Britt, 2001; DeVries, Glasper & Detillion, 2003). Social support from families has been shown to help youths with identify formation and adjustments to their academic environment (Richman, Bowen & Woolley, 1997). The greater integration in a social network is associated with fewer mental and physical health problems (Miller &

Misher in Walker & Foley, 1973). According to Taylor (2007), people who believe that they belong to a social network of communication and mutual obligation, experience social support.

Research literature consistently suggests that social support (particularly through support groups and support events) can foster good psychological and physical health and more social support helps to promote better adjustment. Whereas lack of social support has been associated with risk for emotional problems, excessive worry, self-preoccupation and stress proneness (House, 1981). Studies have revealed that, social support can influence our health by making a person less likely to experience negative emotions (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Krause, 1986).

A number of studies shows that low levels of social support and of participation in social network are related to increase risk of coronary heart disease (Taylor, 2007) and clogging of arteries (Seeman, Lusiguolo, Albert, & Berkman, 2001). Social support also moderates the effect of life style incongruity on blood pressure (Thoits, 1986) and has been found to buffer the effect of stress on diastolic blood pressure responses (Grisset & Norvell, 1992). Studies on social support reveal that having close and supportive friends is valuable to emotional health and a sense of belongingness in supportive relationships is extremely important for emotional health and wellbeing (Scott, 2007). Research also show that support from family member provides encouragement and understanding, thereby helping individuals cope with family related stress (Austin, Saklofske, & Egan, 2005).

Emotional intelligence refers to the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves and for managing emotions well in us and in our relationships (Goleman, 1998). Studies (Austin, Saklofske & Egan, 2005; Brown Nesse, Vinokur & Smith, 2003) revealed significant positive association of social support, and social network size with subjective fatigue and emotional intelligence respectively. Similarly, Ciarrochi, Chan and Bajgar (2001) have found positive correlation between emotional intelligence and social support. Saarni (1999) found that people with high emotional intelligence would be better able to establish and maintain close personal relationships and social support, and people with close, supportive relationships would also have higher emotional intelligence.

Social intelligence is the ability to perceive, understand, and engage in effective and appropriate social behaviors (Walker & Foley, 1973). According to Wong, Maxwell, and Meara (2005), people with higher levels of social intelligence and emotional intelligence are likely to be more successful in social relationships.

Studies examining the relationship between social support and cognitive ability have provided conflicting findings. Okabayashi, Liang, Krause, Akiyama and Sugisawa (2004) investigated the relationship between cognitive function and social support in 2200 adults in Japan over the age of 60 years. They found no relationship between social support and cognitive samples comprising only individuals with a spouse and children. However, people without a spouse were found to show less cognitive impairment if they received support from their children. Other studies have considered the relationship using longitudinal designs. Gurung, Taylor and Seeman (2003) conducted a longitudinal study of couples aged 70-79 years old, over an average period of twenty-three months. They reported that social support increased over this period. Cognitive ability at the two testing sessions was not predictive of either the emotional or instrumental (practical) support received.

However, this present study differs significantly from above reviewed studies. This study investigated relationship among emotional, social, cognitive intelligence and social support network among youths.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship among emotional, social, cognitive intelligence and social support network among youths in Rivers State.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to aid decision making in this study:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between emotional Intelligence and social support network among youths.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between social intelligence and social support network among youths.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between cognitive intelligence and social support network among youths.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The research design used for this study was correlational research design. It was used to establish the magnitude of relationship that exists among emotional, social, cognitive intelligence and social support network among youths.

Participants

Eight hundred and fifty six (856) youths were randomly selected for the study using cluster sampling technique. The youths were grouped according to their local government areas, and then a simple random sampling was conducted to select eight local government areas (clusters) for the study. Finally, one hundred and seven (107) youths were chosen from each cluster, totaling 856.

Instruments

Four instruments were used for data collection. They include Emotional Intelligence Behaviour Inventory (EQBI) by Akinboye, Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) by Gregory, Zimet and Colleagues, Tomso Social Intelligence Scale (TSQS), and Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS).

The Emotional Intelligence Behaviour Inventory (EQBI) was used to measure the degree of the participants' emotional intelligence. The EQBI consists of 17 items which were answered on a five point likert type scale ranging from 1 = Very Much Unable to 5 = Very Much Able. Higher scores indicated higher levels of emotional intelligence. The reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) for the scale was .88.

Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) was used to measure individual perceptions of social support. The MSPSS consists of 12 items describing three different subscales: Family Support (4 items), Friends' Support (4 items), and Significant Others' Support (4 items). Items scored are on a 7-point likert type scale such as: Very Strongly Disagree = 1; Strongly Disagree = 2; Mildly Disagree = 3; Neutral = 4; Mildly Agree = 5; Strongly Agree = 6; Very Strongly Agree = 7. Reliability internal consistency, Cronbach's alpha for the total scale has been shown to be .88 (Family = 0.91, Friends = 0.87 and Significant Others = 0.85).

Tromso Social Intelligence Scale (TSQS) was used to measure the degree of the participants' social intelligence. The scale includes three 7-item subscales of social intelligence: Social information processing ($\alpha = .80$), social skills ($\alpha = .79$) and social awareness ($\alpha = .72$). Each item describes a social ability or skill. A reliable composite social intelligence score was computed by averaging the 21 items ($M = 4.79$; $SD = .67$; $\alpha = .82$).

Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS) was used to measure the degree of the participants' cognitive intelligence. The assessment measures cognitive ability using a core battery of 10 unique subtests that focus on four specific domains of intelligence: Verbal comprehension, perceptual reasoning, working memory, and processing speed.

Method of Data Analysis
The data were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient to establish the relationship between the independent variables (emotional, social and cognitive intelligence) and the dependent variable (social support network). The hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance.

Results

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and social support network among youths.

Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient on Emotional Intelligence and Social Support Network among Youths

Variables	n	r	r-cal	r-cri	Remark	Decision
Emotional Intelligence	856	0.88	8.24	1.96	Significant	Rejected
Social Support Network						

Table 1 indicates that the relationship between emotional intelligence and social support network among youths was significant where $r = 0.88$. The r-calculated value of 8.24 was found to be greater than the r-critical value of 1.96, at .05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected based on decision rule. The finding of the study indicated that there was a strong positive relationship between emotional intelligence and social support network among youths.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between social intelligence and social support network among youths.

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient on Social Intelligence and Social Support Network among Youths

Variables	n	r	r-cal	r-cri	Remark	Decision
Social Intelligence	856	0.81	3.48	1.96	Significant	Rejected
Social support network						

Table 2 indicates that the relationship between social intelligence and social support network among youths was significant where $r = 0.81$. The r-calculated value of 3.48 was found to be greater than the r-critical value of 1.96, at .05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected, while the alternative hypothesis was retained. The finding of the study

indicated that there was a strong positive relationship between social intelligence and social support network among youths.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between cognitive intelligence and social support network among youths.

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient on Cognitive Intelligence and Social Support Network among Youths

Variables	n	r	r-cal	r-crit	Remark	Decision
Cognitive Intelligence	856	0.85	10.04	1.96	Significant	Rejected
Social support network						

Table 3 indicates that the relationship between cognitive intelligence and social support network among youths was significant where $r = 0.85$. The r-calculated value of 10.04 was found to be greater than the r-critical value of 1.96, at .05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis was therefore rejected, while the alternative hypothesis was retained. The finding of the study indicated that there was a strong positive relationship between cognitive intelligence and social support network among youths.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

It was hypothesized that there is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and social support network among youths. The hypothesis was rejected, since the r-calculated value of 8.24 was found to be greater than the r-critical value of 1.96, at .05 level of significance. The finding of the study indicated that there was a strong positive relationship between emotional intelligence and social support network among youths. This finding could be explained based on the premise that higher levels of emotional intelligence will facilitate youths' ability to cope and maintain their social integration into a group and the interconnectedness of those within the group. This present finding corroborates the works of Ciarrochi, Chan and Bajgar (2001) who found positive correlation between emotional intelligence and social support. Saarni (1991) also found that people with high emotional intelligence would be better able to establish and maintain close personal relationships and social support, and people with close, supportive relationships would also have higher emotional intelligence.

The second hypothesis which predicted that there is no significant relationship between social intelligence and social support network among youths was also rejected. This was done based on the fact that the r-calculated value of 3.48 was found to be greater than the r-critical value of 1.96, at .05 level of significance. The finding of the study indicated that there was a strong positive relationship between social intelligence and social support network among youths. The ability to understand social relationships, expectations of behavior, achieve social goals, and successfully influence the behaviours of others in a social setting (environment) may have necessitated this finding. This present finding lends credence to Wong, et al (2005) who earlier found that people with higher levels of social intelligence are likely to be more successful in social relationships.

Finally, the third hypothesis which predicted that there is no significant relationship between cognitive intelligence and social support network among youths was rejected, while the alternative hypothesis was retained. The hypothesis was rejected based on the fact that the r-calculated value of 10.04 was found to be greater than the r-critical value of 1.96, at .05 level of significance. The finding indicated that there was a strong positive relationship between cognitive intelligence and social support network among youths. This finding could be explained based on the premise that individuals of higher cognitive ability may possess more efficient life skills which would in turn lead to greater and more satisfactory social support network. This relationship would be consistent with that found by Okabayashi et al. (2004) and Seeman et al. (2001).

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, the findings elucidated that emotional, social and cognitive intelligence demonstrated significant positive correlation with social support network among youths. Based on the major findings, it is therefore recommended that the youths should develop a greater awareness and understanding of the various interaction involving variables that enhance their social support network. Furthermore, intervention strategies should be introduced to enhance emotional, social and cognitive intelligence among youths.

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