
SOCIAL NETWORKING AND PARTICIPATION AS PREDICTORS OF TEACHERS EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN RIVERS STATE

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ABSTRACT: *The study investigated social networking and participation as predictors of teachers' emotional intelligence in public secondary schools in Rivers State. Two objectives, two research questions as well as two hypotheses were postulated to guide the study. The design for the study was correlational design. The population of the study comprised all the 16,743 public secondary school teachers in Rivers State out of which 376 teachers were sampled for the study through multi-stage sampling technique. Two questionnaires which were a 35-item questionnaire titled "Social Capital Investment Scale" (SCIS) as well as 40-item questionnaire titled Emotional Intelligence Scale" (EIS) were the instruments used for the collection of data for the study. The questionnaires were validated by three experts in the area of Measurement and Evaluation, Department of Psychology, Guidance and Counseling, Faculty of Education, University of Port Harcourt. However, for the reliability, Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the internal consistency of the questionnaires with reliability co-efficients of 0.76 and 0.83 for the sections of the independent variable and 0.96 for the dependent variable. The research questions were answered using Pearson Product Moment Correlation while the hypotheses were tested using z-ratio at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study showed that there was a positive relationship between social networking and teacher's emotional intelligence. Similarly, a positive relationship exists between social participation and teachers' emotional intelligence in public secondary schools in Rivers State. It was recommended that school administrators should endeavor to organize social activities among teachers, parents and students as often as possible to encourage teachers' participation and freedom of association should be promoted in order to strengthen social networking in these schools.*

KEYWORDS: Social Networking, Social Participation, Teachers, Emotional Intelligence, Secondary schools

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The teaching profession is one where no single individual can operate in isolation. The teacher as well as other non-teaching staff needs to collaborate effectively for the achievement of the goals and objective of education. This is why all teachers need to work hand-in-hand and under a smooth working condition for the overall good of all educational stakeholders. Furthermore, there are various ways through which the teacher and non-teaching staff can build a good working relationship which will culminate into the effective administration of the school system at all levels of education. Some of the ways this can be achieved is through social networking and social participation in the school. This goes a long way to promoting understanding in the school which

is known as emotional intelligence among teachers. Mishra and Laskar (2013:1) further opined that “emotional intelligence includes traits like self-awareness, social deftness, the ability to delay gratification, to be optimistic in the face of adversity, to channel strong emotions and to show empathy towards others”. Therefore, it is only when teachers build a good network across all activities taking place in the school and also participating actively in the various activities existing in the school that teachers can understand one another and work harmoniously for the actualization of the goals and objectives of education across all levels.

Social Networking and Teacher’s Emotional Intelligence in Public Secondary Schools

Networking is a concept that is generally used to relate to an interconnection between people and objects that share similar attributes. Social networking on the other hand is a form of relationship between people of different social class. This form of relationship may include family and kinship members as well as friends, co-workers and teacher, bosses and other people in authority. It refers to the extent to which people are able to build bridges of relationship across different strata in a society. According to Field (2010), social networking refers to the system of learning to co-operate with other people in a similar or different work environment to share information, ideas and other vital resources. The level at which a teacher or any employee is able to expand this network determines how well they are able to access and benefit from various network resources. It is the scope of relationship built by the employee that determines how well he or she is able to benefit from resources from other social groups.

Scholars in education have pointed out that investment in social network has a very high positive influence on bridging as a type of social capital and is negatively related to bonding social capital. This is because social networking helps people to build relationship with other people from different groups with distinct demographic variables. Similarly, the extent of social network built by an individual determines to a large extent the level of emotional intelligence since they are better equipped to understand the emotions and feelings of people in other social groups. The essence of building social networks is to ensure that an individual has a valuable stake in other sub-networks (cliques). This is very vital for access to information and resources in those sub-networks and this can help in drawing certain advantages from other locations. People who build good network with other sub-groups are better informed about events happening in other sub-groups and this contributes to their level of emotional intelligence. This explains why most teachers choose to engage in social activities outside their social, cultural and political group as this keeps them abreast with events in other areas.

According to Granovetter as cited in Growiec, Growiec and Kamiński (2017), social network affects economic outcomes for three main reasons among which are; they affect the flow and quality of information, they are an effective source of reward and punishment, and they are therefore a context in which trust can emerge. Social capital in its broadest form helps to extend and boost the tie that exists among people who have different social orientations and attributes. When teachers spend time on social media platforms, attend social activities, exchange pleasantries with people within and outside the school and also contribute financially to social programmes, they are by implication investing and expanding their social network.

Over the years, social networking has been adopted by members of the public who build this network for various criminal activities. Patton, Eschmann, Elsaesser and Bocanegra (2016) pointed out that study from Chicago has revealed that youth use social networking platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to brag about violence, make threats, recruit gang members and to plan criminal activity known as Internet banging. This gives a clue of the huge benefit that teachers can benefit if they embrace social platforms as part of the resources for school administration. This was why AbdelKader and Elnakeeb (2017) opined that media use helps to improve strategic thinking and investigating skills, and creativity since it makes learning a more fun experience and it helps sitting in one place for a period of time which is beneficial to both teachers and students alike.

According to Bull, Thompson, Searson, Garofalo, Park, Young and Lee (2008:102) social media resources which can promote social networking in the school are sometimes not used because of challenges such as “school content must address specific learning objectives, many learning objectives are subject to time constraints and addition of technology can increase the complexity of classroom management”. These issues may complicate the use of social media among both teachers and students.

McCarroll and Curran (2013:3) while expatiating on the relevance of social networking for improved emotional intelligence stated that “social software is changing our relationship to knowledge since academics and researchers have readily adopted web technologies as a way of sharing knowledge and collaborating with others in a distributed, global learning environment”. The introduction of social networking in any formal organization makes it easy for group members to make contributions that will help the organization to move forward. Furthermore, McCarroll and Curran (2013:6) defended why social networking is indispensable in today’s school system especially among teachers and students when they pointed out that the school is characterized by:

1. Multi-tasking and parallel processing
2. Preference to learn from multimedia (pictures or video) rather than text.
3. Preference for interactive networked learning rather than individual study
4. Preference for experiential learning activities.
5. Non-linear learning.
6. Millennials have good visual-spatial skills, crave interactivity and seem to prefer teamwork.

The growth of the technological industry has made it easy for people both far and near to build a network both within and outside the same profession. “Devices such as smartphones and tablets have now become ‘doorways’ to the Internet offering ubiquitous anytime access to social networks and online learning content” (McCarroll & Curran, 2013, p. 9). Furthermore, Cramer and Hayes (2010) revealed that in the US alone, 93% of teens go online, 73% use social networking sites, 75% own a mobile phone, and 66% use text messaging as a result of the expansion in the technological market. This provides a good platform for teachers to use this advancement to improve on the teaching profession for a more robust emotional intelligence in schools.

Social Participation and Teacher's Emotional Intelligence in Public Secondary Schools

There is no teacher that can exist and function alone in a broad social setting like the school system. There are various activities that contribute to the smooth administration of the school. Teachers are assigned responsibilities from time to time that will contribute to the actualization of the goals and objectives of the school and the extent to which these objectives are achieved depends on individual's level of participation. The extent of individual involvement especially in group activities in the school is known as social participation. Khalili, Khalili and Inalo (2013) stated that:

Social participation can be defined as an organized process in which the society members participate with each other in a Conscious, voluntary and collective manner and with consideration of specific and certain goals which lead to sharing the resources of power (p. 3002). Social participation is defined as the involvement of people in political, social, cultural and economic life of the society which can have useful outcomes. There is no individual that can operate as an island and as long as people come together to interact as a group, members will be saddled with different responsibilities which they must carry out. The level at which individuals carry out the responsibilities given to them (social participation) determines to a large extent the level and quality of goal achievement.

Teachers' social participation includes being actively involved in groups, clubs or organizations such as sports Parents Teachers Association, clubs and other social groups. The level of a teacher's social participation to a large extent is determined by the teacher's ability to volunteer in carrying out duties that others may not be willing to accept. This in a long run enhances the wealth of knowledge acquired by the social participant.

One of the advantages of social participation is that it contributes to building a high social network. The more people are involved in social activities, the more they gain idea about how to interact with people of different ideology. Involvement in social activities therefore promotes access to information in other groups. Furthermore, participation also helps to strengthen the bond that exists among group members. Teachers who are major participants in group activities usually have major influence on group members over time. This is because their involvement has helped them to understand their fellow workers and the work environment.

Peace and tranquility in the work place is another benefit derived by teachers who take time to invest in social capital. Such teachers enjoy a stress free work environment as a result of their peaceful co-existence with others. According to Gilbertson and Manning (2006), the level of social participation differs between men and women even in the same environment. This is because while women tend to quickly accept and own responsibilities; their male counterparts do not easily accept responsibilities except there is a mutual benefit accruing.

Social participation exists in different forms. It includes all activities where members are keenly involved in any activity that helps to build relationships. This includes developing a hobby such as writing, playing games, marketing etc. Social participation also includes participating in sporting activities, community activities, religious activities, health activities, political activities and trade union activities. There is no teacher who can excel in his or her profession without

engaging in one or more of these activities at one point or the other. “So many scholars consider freedom and equality of humans as the main characteristics of participation” (Khalili, Khalili & Inalo, 2013:3003)

The quality of social participation is revealed when the system exhibits some level of democracy. It is this freedom that promotes participation. Social participation has mutual benefit as it enhances the goals of the organization while also benefiting the group members. This includes the expansion of their level of emotional intelligence. Social participation exists at diverse levels based on the number of people involved such as micro or individual level, intermediate or institutional level and macro or societal level. Similarly, social capital can be classified based on the level of participation such as limited participation, regional participation and national participation. Scholars have also pointed out that social participation can be viewed as a formal participation which focuses on formal social contact involving activities that take place among people at a determined date and time. It was also revealed by educational scholars that social participation can also be informal such that people relate on the basis of unorganized activities which are temporal and can occur at unplanned hours. These various activities promote people’s ability to understand themselves as well as the people they relate with. Social participation no doubt helps to enhance our understanding of people and events within our environment. Teachers who take up role functions, contest for available social and political positions, they are investing to build their level of social participation whether within or outside the school.

There has been a widespread advocacy among educational scholars on whether gender influences the participation of teachers in school related activities. However, Şehitoğlu as cited in Göksoy (2014:173) stated that “gender differences do not play an important role in the levels of teachers’ participation in strategic decisions but on the other hand present differences about personnel services based on their rank”. On the contrary, Cengiz still in Göksoy (2014:172) revealed that “female teachers’ levels of participation in decisions taken at schools and the levels of perception regarding the barriers in their careers shows a meaningful relationship was observed between levels of participation in decisions taken regarding the administration of educational programmes, student resources and financial resources and levels of perception regarding the barriers in their careers”. This implies that school administrators must take gender differences into consideration when planning programmes that will require the participation of all teachers in order to enhance teachers’ level of emotional intelligence.

According to Mullins and Edem as cited in Omobude and Igbudu (2012:13), participation can exist across different levels among which are:

1. Technical level: Operational or processing level (the actual work, e.g. teaching)
2. Managerial level: Human resources (decision makers and management) and
3. Community level: The Environment.

The teacher as an employee of the school may not have the opportunity of fully participating at all levels in the school at the same time. However, this does not imply that he or she cannot be incorporated into the different levels to participate in the best interest of the school. Teachers’ participation at any of these levels will help in the actualization of any of the different types of social capital; bonding, bridging or linking which will help to enhance their emotional intelligence.

However, if they are deprived of the opportunity of working at any of these levels, building the level of the teachers' emotional intelligence will become difficult.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study was to investigate social networking and participation as predictors of teachers' emotional intelligence in public secondary schools in Rivers State. However, the specific objectives of the study were to:

1. examine the relationship between investment in social networking and teachers' emotional intelligence in public secondary schools in Rivers State.
2. determine the relationship between investment in social participation and teachers' emotional intelligence in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated for the study:

1. What is the relationship between investment in social networking and teachers' emotional intelligence in public secondary schools in Rivers State?
2. What is the relationship between investment in social participation and teachers' emotional intelligence in public secondary schools in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 5% level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between investment in social networking and teachers' emotional intelligence in public secondary schools in Rivers State
2. There is no significant relationship between investment in social participation and teachers' emotional intelligence in public secondary schools in Rivers State

METHODOLOGY

The design adopted for the study was correlational design. Population of the study was 16,743 public secondary school teachers in Rivers State while the sample for the study was 376 teachers who were selected through multi-stage sampling technique. Two questionnaires were used for the collection of data for the study and they were a 35-item questionnaire titled "Social Capital Investment Scale" (SCIS) as well as 40-item questionnaire titled "Emotional Intelligence Scale" (EIS). The questionnaires were validated by three experts in the area of Measurement and Evaluation, Department of Psychology, Guidance and Counseling, Faculty of Education, University of Port Harcourt. Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the internal consistency of the questionnaires with reliability indexes of 0.76 and 0.83 for the independent variable and 0.96 for the dependent variable. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to answer the research questions raised while z-ratio at 0.05 level of significance was used to test the hypotheses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Answer to Research Questions

Research Question One: What is the relationship between investment in social networking and teachers' emotional intelligence in public secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 1: Pearson product moment correlation co-efficient of the relationship between social networking and teachers' emotional intelligence in public secondary schools in Rivers State

Variable	n	r	Remark
Social Networking Emotional Intelligence	376	0.99	Strong positive relationship

Table 1 revealed that the value of the correlation co-efficient was 0.99. This implies that there is a strong positive relationship between social networking and teachers' emotional intelligence in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Question Two: What is the relationship between investment in social participation and teachers' emotional intelligence in public secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 2: Pearson product moment correlation co-efficient of the relationship between social participation and teachers' emotional intelligence in public secondary schools in Rivers State

Variable	n	r	Remark
Social Participation Emotional Intelligence	376	0.27	Fairly low positive relationship

Table 2 revealed that the value of the correlation co-efficient was 0.27. This implies that there is a fairly low positive relationship between social participation and teachers' emotional intelligence in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between investment in social networking and teachers' emotional intelligence in public secondary schools in Rivers State

Table 3: z-ratio of the relationship between investment in social networking and teachers' emotional intelligence in public secondary schools in Rivers State

Variable	n	df	z-ratio	z-crit.	Level of significance	Decision
Social Networking Emotional Intelligence	376	374	19.80	1.96	0.05	There is a significant relationship

Table 3 revealed that the value of the z-ratio was 19.80 while the z-critical value was 1.96. Therefore, since the z-ratio of 19.80 was more than the z-critical value of 1.96, the null hypothesis was rejected and the null hypothesis upheld that there is a significant relationship between social networking and teachers' emotional intelligence in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between investment in social participation and teachers' emotional intelligence in public secondary schools in Rivers State

Table 4: z-ratio of the relationship between investment in social participation and teachers' emotional intelligence in public secondary schools in Rivers State

Variable	n	df	z-ratio	z-crit.	Level of significance	Decision
Social Participation Emotional Intelligence	376	374	5.40	1.96	0.05	There is a significant relationship

Table 4 indicated that the value of the z-ratio was 5.40 while the z-critical value was 1.96. Therefore, since the z-ratio of 5.40 was more than the z-critical value of 1.96, the null hypothesis was rejected and the null hypothesis upheld that there is a significant relationship between social participation and teachers' emotional intelligence in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Social Networking and Teachers' Emotional Intelligence in Public Secondary Schools in Rivers State

The investment teachers make into social networking is very important for them to understand their work environment as well as other teachers within and outside the school. According to a study conducted by Oyewumi, Osinbanjo and Adeniji (2015), social networking predicts 60% of teacher's emotional intelligence. There is no better way for a teacher to understand the school system and how the school operates than building a network both horizontally and vertically in the school. This helps to promote the teachers understanding of the school as well as know certain hidden traits possessed by the teacher himself or herself. According to the study conducted by AbdelKader and Elnakeeb (2017), it is important for teachers to make investment into social networking by investing in the social media as this helps to promote the teachers emotional intelligence. AbdelKader and Elnakeeb (2017) pointed out that the more teachers invest in the social media, the higher their level of emotional intelligence. This is why some organizations both educational and non-educational have been advocating the use of social media among their staff as investment in such platform helps to promote the emotional intelligence of all employees.

Study conducted by Ali and Aliyu (2015) pointed out that when teachers make investment in social networking, it also affects the performance of their students. When teachers invest in social networking, it gives them an opportunity to rapport freely with their students and this in turn affects their performance. These students freely interact with their teachers hence gaining deeper knowledge, skills and attitude from their teachers. In addition, it will not be out of place to infer that when teachers invest more in social networking, individual and group performance will also be enhanced both within and outside the school.

Nowrouzi and Bakhtyari (2009) pointed out that the age and gender of a teacher affects their level of investment in social networking. This position agrees with the findings of other related studies which have revealed that female teachers invest more in social networking than their male counterparts. This may explain why it is said that female teachers have a higher level of emotional

intelligence than male teachers. This may not be far from the fact that it is mostly female teachers that invest in social media and other social platforms such as cultural activities than the male teachers. These studies have therefore supported the position of this study that investment in social networking helps to promote emotional intelligence to a very great extent.

Networking in the school among teachers is very important for improvement of their emotional intelligence. According to the outcome of the study carried out by Godabe (2016), there is a difference in the emotional intelligence of teachers in rural and urban areas and this is largely due to their ability to network either through social media or direct contact. Social networking therefore plays an important role in enhancing the emotional intelligence of teachers in secondary schools both in rural and urban schools.

Social Participation and Teachers' Emotional Intelligence in Public Secondary Schools in Rivers State

The finding of the study has revealed that investment in social participation has a fairly low relationship with teachers' emotional intelligence. This position is accurately supported by the findings of the study carried out by Khalili, Khalili and Inalo (2013) where they pointed out investment in social capital such as social participation only has a moderate impact on an organization. The reason for low relationship between social participation and emotional intelligence may not be far from the fact that there are various modern technological devices that teachers use to participate or involve themselves in school activities which does not really have a deep influence on their level of emotional intelligence. The investment in social participation therefore has a low relationship with the emotional intelligence of the teacher.

However, a related study conducted by Shahidul, Karim and Mustari (2015) revealed that when there is a high extent of social participation from the family and the school, it helps to promote the educational aspiration of students. The implication of this is that the impact of investment in social participation is better felt when there is a massive investment in the area of social participation from all educational stakeholders. According to the findings of the study conducted by Orluwene and Wachiku (2014), emotional intelligence greatly predicts teachers' job performance. Teachers who fail to invest in social participation hence have a low level of emotional intelligence and this in return affects the job performance of teachers.

The low impact of social participation investment on the emotional intelligence of teachers also brings to the fore the need for school administrators to introduce social participation techniques that will help to promote the emotional intelligence of teachers. For example, it was pointed out from the findings of the study carried out by Adetayo and Kiadese, (2010) that when parents and teachers participate actively in the school, it predicts the performance of students under their care. This same situation also affects the teacher's relationship with one another. Therefore, while some teachers participate in school activities through technological devices, other teachers participate in school activities by proxy. These situations contribute to the reasons why investment in social participation continues to influence to a low extent the emotional intelligence of teachers.

CONCLUSION

The following conclusion was made based on the findings of the study:

It was concluded that social networking has a strong positive relationship with teachers' emotional intelligence in public secondary schools in Rivers State while social participation has a low positive relationship with teachers' emotional intelligence in the study area.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

1. School administrators need make effort to encourage frequent social activities among teachers, parents and students. This will help to ensure that all stakeholders mingle together and also participate in school activities for better emotional intelligence.
2. There is need for the government to also compel school administrator to ensure that teachers are not deprived of their rights of association and assembly. This will help to ensure that teachers network well with others in the industry and also improve on their service delivery.

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