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Emotional Intelligence And Academic Achievements Of Pupils In Primary Schools In Calabar South Local Government Area Of Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the impact of emotional intelligence and academic achievements of pupils in primary schools in Calabar South LGA of Cross River State, Nigeria. The study was guided by four specific objectives and four corresponding research questions, focusing on the relationships between different components of emotional intelligence—self-regulation, Self-motivation, social skills and Self-awareness. A correlational research design was adopted, and data were collected using an Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (EIQ) and the Academic Achievement Test (AAT) from 2024 First School Leaving Certificate Examination (FSLCE). A stratified random sampling technique was used to select a sample of 300 pupils across public primary schools in the study area. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was employed to analyze the data. The findings revealed significant positive relationships between all four components of emotional intelligence and

	academic achievement, with social skills showing the highest correlation coefficient (r = .645, p < .05), followed by self-awareness (r = .601), self-motivation (r = .555), and self-regulation (r = .459). These results suggest that components of emotional intelligence significantly contribute to enhancing pupils' academic performances. The study underscores the importance of emotional intelligence as it equips pupils with the intrinsic motivation**,** resilience**,** social adaptability**,** and self-reflection necessary to manage academic demands effectively. It recommends that educators and policymakers integrate emotional intelligence into the curriculum, teachers should train the pupils on emotional literacy, Parents should be sensitized on the importance of nurturing their children's emotional intelligence at home through empathetic listening, encouragement of expression, and guided self-reflection.

Introduction

The desire for a high level of academic performance puts a lot of pressure on students, teachers and schools and in general the education system itself. In fact, it appears as if the whole education revolves round the academic performance of students, though various other outcomes are also expected from the system. The contemporary society cannot achieve its aim of economic growth, technological development and cultural advancement without harnessing the talents of its citizens (Kharazi & Peyman, 2017). There has been a fall in students' academic achievement in many subjects over the years as compared to other subjects in the school system. Evidence abounds that students have not been doing well in many subjects. Adeosun Adeosun & Okonkwo (2024) observed that the low standard is reflected in the large number of candidates who failed in examinations. Many likely factors may be responsible for these students' poor academic achievement. However, factors that influence students' academic achievement are not conclusively known and could be multivariate in nature.

In the 21st-century educational landscape, academic success is no longer solely determined by cognitive intelligence or intellectual ability. Increasingly, non-cognitive factors such as emotional intelligence (EI) have gained recognition as essential contributors to academic performance and overall student well-being. Emotional intelligence, a concept popularized by Goleman (1995), refers to an individual's capacity to recognize, understand, manage, and use emotions effectively in oneself and others. This construct plays a crucial role in shaping students' academic experiences, interpersonal relationships, and ability to handle stress.
The concept of emotional intelligence (EI) has evolved significantly over the past three decades. Initially introduced by Mayer and Salovey (1990) as the ability to monitor one's own and others' emotions to guide thinking and behavior.

In the Nigerian context, academic achievement remains a key determinant of students' future opportunities and societal mobility. However, many students struggle to meet performance expectations, often due to poor emotional regulation, low self-esteem, and limited coping strategies in the face of academic stress. While studies such as Adeyemo (2017) have hinted at the positive impact of EI on academic performance in Nigeria, empirical research in this area is still relatively sparse. As global educational systems shift toward holistic development, integrating emotional intelligence into the curriculum is becoming increasingly necessary. Both Local, State and Federal governments of Nigeria have made serious efforts at ensuring improvements in academic performance of students at all level by the establishment of the Universal Basic Education programmes (UBE) which is aimed at providing reading and writing materials, laboratory equipments, recruitment of qualified and competent teachers and so on. The provision of enabling environment for teachers and learners; such as good classrooms in quiet and serene environments to accommodate pupils, provision of competent teachers to facilitate the teaching and learning in more effective manner.

Statement of the problem

Academic achievement is often viewed as the ultimate measure of student success, and significant resources are invested in strategies to improve students' academic performance. Despite these efforts, many students underperform not due to a lack of intellectual ability, but because of emotional and social challenges that hinder their learning potential. The neglect of emotional intelligence as a critical component of learning continues to be a major oversight in many educational systems.

Evidence from global research suggests that students with high emotional intelligence are more likely to excel academically because they are better at managing stress, staying motivated, and maintaining positive relationships. However, in many Nigerian schools,

emotional and psychological support mechanisms are either inadequate or entirely absent, leaving students to navigate complex academic and social pressures on their own.

Despite isolated studies on EI and performance in Nigeria, the existing literature does not sufficiently address how various components of emotional intelligence relate to academic achievement across different educational levels. Furthermore, gender-related differences in emotional intelligence and their implications for learning outcomes have not been adequately explored in the local context. This study, therefore, soughed to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement of pupils in Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State Nigeria.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement of pupils in Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State Nigeria.

Specifically, the study soughed to;

1. Investigate self-regulation and academic achievement of pupils
2. Self-motivation and academic achievement of pupils
3. Social skills and academic achievement of pupils
4. Self-awareness and academic achievement of pupils

Research questions

The following research questions were stated;

1. How does self-regulation relate to academic achievement of pupils?
2. What is the relationship between self-motivation and academic achievement of pupils?
3. What is the extent of relationship between social skills and academic achievement of pupils?
4. What is the relationship between Self-awareness and academic achievement of pupils?

Statement of hypotheses

The following hypotheses were stated;

1. There is no significant relationship between self-regulation and academic achievement of pupils
2. Self-motivation and academic achievement of pupils have no significant relationship.
3. There is no significant relationship between social skills and academic achievement of pupils
4. Self-awareness and academic achievement of pupils have no significant relationship.

Literature Review

Self-regulation and academic achievement:

Self-regulated learning belongs to the psychology of learning contents. Understanding self-regulated learning is essential in today's academic and social world.

While most studies focused on the self-regulated learning (SRL) in primary, middle and high school students, little was known about the SRL in university students (Wang, 2020). Zimmerman and Schunk, (2018) define self-regulated learning in terms of self-generated thoughts, feelings, and actions, which are systematically oriented toward attainment of students' own goals. Self-regulated learning is a self-initiated action that involves goal setting and regulating one's efforts to reach the goal, self-monitoring(metacognition), time management, and physical and social environment regulation (Zimmerman, & Risemberg, 2017).

According to this position, a learner often changes and updates goals and plans while progressing through the task according to the feedback from monitoring, control and reaction processes. That means, self-regulated learners are purposive and goal oriented, incorporating and applying a variety of strategic behaviors designed to optimize their academic performance. A study by Alexander, (2021) determined the antecedent role of self-regulation skills in the student's academic achievement. A descriptive research design using concurrent mixed methods was employed to determine the influence of self-regulation on the academic achievement of the students. A total of 382 Grade 11 senior high school students of a private school in Cagayan de Oro City were the respondents of the study. The findings of the study revealed that reflection stood out as having a significant influence on their academic achievement. Furthermore, the student's overall self–regulation skills significantly influence their academic achievement. Students with higher self-regulation, especially in the area of reflection, have higher academic achievements. Self-regulation skills of reflection, planning, time management, and monitoring have various degrees of impact on academic achievement. It is recommended that teachers should design lessons and activities that prompt the students to engage in meaningful self-reflection, which can foster deeper understanding and improved performance.

Self-motivation and academic achievement:

Within the realm of higher education, self-motivation plays a pivotal role in shaping students' educational achievements and general state of being. In academic settings, motivation is commonly characterized as the internal force that compels individuals to participate in educational activities, persist in the face of difficulties, and attain their educational objectives (Fermin & Maria, 2019). This inherent drive not only guides behavior towards certain

objectives but also maintains the commitment and drive devoted to these pursuits over a period of time. University students' motivation can be impacted by several aspects, such as their personal inclination towards the subject matter, the perceived significance of academic achievement, and the support and acknowledgment they receive from the educational setting. There is a high correlation between emotional intelligence and academic success, as emotions have a significant impact on human (Resnick, & Klopfer, 2017). Based on the principles of learning and teaching psychology, evolutionary development, and the school of positive psychology, there is a significant association between emotional intelligence and mental processes, focus, and self-control in stressful situations (Thomas, 2016). Nevertheless, there is no consensus of opinion. An argument has been made by some academics that emotional intelligence plays a moderating function in personality variables that support more efficient approaches to school activities. Some studies argue that emotional intelligence has a moderating effect on academic achievement, but it is not the most significant predictor of it. Ultimately, more research indicates that the correlation is either absent or lacks statistical significance (Lindner et al., 2022). Hence, there is a lack of agreement among scholars regarding the role of emotional intelligence in regulating or predicting academic achievement. A separate empirical investigation conducted by Loi and Pryce (2023) examined the correlation between emotional intelligence, student well-being, mindful self-care, and academic burnout in university students. The study demonstrated that emotional intelligence has a favourable impact on well-being and mental self-care, while being adversely correlated with several aspects of academic burnout. Significantly, the study discovered that mindful self-care acts as a mediator between emotional intelligence and specific components of academic burnout, namely tiredness and effectiveness. Nevertheless, it did not act as a mediator in the connection between emotional intelligence and cynicism. These findings indicate that cultivating emotional intelligence and mindfulness-based stress reduction in students can enhance their overall well-being and serve as a safeguard against the negative consequences of academic burnout. These findings are consistent with the prevailing agreement in psychological research that emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in individual and group adaptation, hence enhancing mental well-being and academic achievement. Proficiently comprehending and controlling emotions are crucial aptitudes for successfully navigating the intricacies of social relationships and personal obstacles, both within academic environments and beyond.

Social skills and academic achievement:

Man being social animal – employs various means of expression of ideas, feelings and communication or interaction with others. These abilities are collectively known as social skills (Tabassum et al., 2024). More comprehensively, the social skills are defined as such

verbal and non-verbal communication skills which may help to interact with society (Kashif, 2023). These may range from the conversation to appearance, gestures, and body language (Tabassum, 2020a). Lozano-Peña (2021) further elaborate that social and behavioural skills are interconnected and sometimes overlapped with each other. According to them, the behavioural elements foster person's understanding and adaptability in various social contexts.

Kuranchie (2023) further asserted that the social skills enable a person to establish healthy social relationships, obtain better peer-support and acceptance, and facilitate transition to school. It was further elaborated that the social skills add to the emotional attachments, thus may make learning process more affective and productive (Devi et al., 2022; Pal Singh et al., 2023; Thompson, 2015). Therefore, the role of social skills to education has been declared as medium of meaningful learning process (Perzigian, 2018; Wells, 2015).

Rabia (2024) explores the relationship between social skills and academic performance among students of high schools in Punjab, Pakistan. Nine important social skills i.e., engagement with others, open mindedness, compound skills, task performance, emotional regulations, collaboration, self-regulations, ambiguity tolerance, and hierarchical relationship management – were studied to observe impact over the academic performance of the school students. Study employed a descriptive, survey research which involved a sample of 300 secondary school students from both public and private sector schools. A self-constructed questionnaire comprising 34 items was used for data collection. The data was analysed through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. Frequency, t-test and ANOVA were used for the data analysis. Findings indicated a significant impact of the social skills on academic performance of the students. Therefore, it was recommended that the integration of social skills instruction into the school curricula is essential to achieve better academic outputs.

Further probe into literature indicated various factors which accompany social skills. These factors include demographic factors (Tabassum & Akhter, 2020); individual differences (Carvalho, 2016); time management skills (Mukhtarova, 2017); role of teachers (OECD, 2020); and home environments (Iqbal et al., 2021; Sharma et al., 2021) of students.

Self-awareness and academic achievement:

Self-awareness is integral to positive growth and actualization across life domains. By enabling accurate self-appraisal, it steers people towards playing to their strengths and rectifying limitations. Self-knowledge motivates internally guided self-improvement. It boosts authentic functioning aligned with one's values, pursuits and evolving identity.

Innocent (2024) explored the influence of self-awareness on secondary school chemistry students' academic achievement in Calabar Education Zone, Cross River State, Nigeria. Guided by two research questions and hypotheses, the study adopted an Ex-post facto design. The population was made up of all secondary school two (SS2) chemistry students in Calabar Education Zone totaling 2,375. A total of 364 (174 males and 190 females) students selected through proportionate stratified random sampling method constituted the sample. Self-awareness Questionnaire (SAQ) and Chemistry Achievement Test (CAT) were used to collect data. The reliability of SAQ using Cronbach's Alpha analysis gave the reliability estimate of 0.74 while the reliability coefficient of CAT determined using Kuder Richardson formula-20 was 0.93. Research questions were answered with mean and standard deviation whereas the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 significance level using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Findings indicated that self-awareness significantly influences chemistry students' academic achievement. Furthermore, the findings showed that self-awareness has no significant influence on chemistry students' academic achievement by gender. It was recommended among others that there is a need for teachers to support their students to develop self-awareness for enhanced academic achievement.

Nwadinigwe, and Azuka-Obieke (2022) investigated the impact of emotional intelligence on academic achievement of senior secondary school students in Lagos, Nigeria. The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement among senior secondary school students. A sample of 156 participants randomly selected from three senior secondary schools was used. The schools were randomly assigned to the two treatment conditions (emotional intelligence training techniques) and control group. Questionnaire and achievement test were employed to generate data for the study. Two research hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The hypotheses were tested using descriptive statistical method, analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) and Pearson product moment correlation coefficient statistics. The study revealed that there is a positive relationship between emotional intelligence skills and academic achievement such that developing emotional intelligence skills of a student will lead to the enhancement of his/her academic achievement. Thus, there is the need to inculcate the development of emotional intelligence skills into the school curriculum. This is considered important because of its impact in improving the academic achievement of students. The findings of this study may assist stakeholders in the education sector in developing a better understanding of the effects of emotional intelligence on the academic achievement of senior secondary school students.
Musinguzi et al. (2024) found that self-awareness has significant impact on students' academic success. Similarly, Khuan and Lin (2021) reported that self-awareness was a good predictor of students' academic achievement. Other related studies have explored the

influence of self-awareness on other students' learning outcomes such as self-concept (Özek & Ferraris, 2020), mental health (Cho, 2023), and wellbeing (Dubey, 2024). Moreso, self-awareness has been associated with organizational leadership (Da Fonseca et al., 2022), communication ability (Li et al., 2022), and job satisfaction (Alferaih, 2022).

Methodology

The correlational research design was considered suitable for the study. Stratified random sampling technique was adopted in the study. 40% of primary schools were sampled for the study. Simple random sampling technique was used to select the number of students in each school sampled for the study. A total sample of 300 respondents were selected from 3,472 pupils and 2 public primary Schools from 7 public primary Schools were sampled for the study. Two instruments were used for data collection in this study. They are the Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (EIQ) and the Academic achievement Test (AAT) To ascertain the reliability of the instrument; Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient was used in establishing the reliability of each of the sub-scales.

Results

The result is presented in hypothesis by hypothesis.

H_{O1}: There is no significant relationship between self-regulation and academic achievement of pupils. The independent variable is self-regulation while the dependent variable is academic achievement of pupils. The items used in measuring this hypothesis were derived from questionnaire items 1-5 of Section B and items 1-20 of Academic Achievement Test. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Analysis test statistic was employed in testing the hypothesis for this study. The result is presented in Table 1.

The result of the analysis in Table 1 revealed that self-regulation produced a mean score of 10.22 with a standard deviation of 3.21 while academic achievement of pupils produced a mean score of 15.92 with a standard deviation of 3.08. The result further revealed that the calculated r-ratio of .459 obtained with a p-value of .001 at 298 degrees of freedom met the condition required for significance at .05 level. Based on this, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between self-regulation and academic achievement of pupils was rejected indicating that there is no significant relationship between self-regulation and academic achievement of pupils.

Table 1: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Analysis of the relationship between self-regulation and academic achievement of pupils (N= 300)

Variables	$\bar{X}$	SD	r	p-value
Self-regulation (x)	10.22	3.21		
			.459	.001
Academic achievement (y)	15.92	3.08		

*Significant at 0.05 level; df= 298

H_{O2}: Self-motivation and academic achievement of pupils have no significant relationship. The independent variable is self-motivation while the dependent variable is academic achievement of pupils. The items used in measuring this hypothesis were derived from questionnaire items 6-10 of Section B and items 1-20 of Academic Achievement Test. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Analysis test statistic was employed in testing the hypothesis for this study. The result is presented in Table 2.

The result of the analysis in Table 2 revealed that self-regulation produced a mean score of 9.87 with a standard deviation of 3.01 while academic achievement of pupils produced a mean score of 15.92 with a standard deviation of 3.08. The result further revealed that the calculated r-ratio of .555 obtained with a p-value of .000 at 298 degrees of freedom met the condition required for significance at .05 level. Based on this, the null hypothesis which stated that self-motivation and academic achievement of pupils have no significant relationship was rejected indicating that self-motivation and academic achievement of pupils have a significant relationship.

Table 2: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Analysis of the relationship between self-motivation and academic achievement of pupils (N= 300)

Variables	$\bar{X}$	SD	r	p-value
Self-motivation (x)	9.87	3.01		
			.555	.000
Academic achievement (y)	15.92	3.08		

*Significant at 0.05 level; df= 298

H_{O3}: There is no significant relationship between social skills and academic achievement of pupils. The independent variable is social skills while the dependent variable is academic achievement of pupils. The items used in measuring this hypothesis were derived from questionnaire items 11-15 of Section B and items 1-20 of Academic Achievement Test.

Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Analysis test statistic was employed in testing the hypothesis for this study. The result is presented in Table 3.

The result of the analysis in Table 3 revealed that self-regulation produced a mean score of 11.11 with a standard deviation of 4.01 while academic achievement of pupils produced a mean score of 15.92 with a standard deviation of 3.08. The result further revealed that the calculated r-ratio of .645 obtained with a p-value of .000 at 298 degrees of freedom met the condition required for significance at .05 level. Based on this, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between social skills and academic achievement of pupils was rejected indicating that there is no significant relationship between social skills and academic achievement of pupils.

Table 3: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Analysis of the relationship between social skills and academic achievement of pupils (N= 300)

Variables	$\bar{X}$	SD	r	p-value
Social Skills (x)	11.11	4.01		
			.645	.000
Academic achievement (y)	15.92	3.08		

*Significant at 0.05 level; df= 298

Ho_4: Self-awareness and academic achievement of pupils have no significant relationship. The independent variable is self-awareness while the dependent variable is academic achievement of pupils. The items used in measuring this hypothesis were derived from questionnaire items 16-20 of Section B and items 1-20 of Academic Achievement Test. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Analysis test statistic was employed in testing the hypothesis for this study. The result is presented in Table 4.

The result of the analysis in Table 4 revealed that self-regulation produced a mean score of 13.89 with a standard deviation of 3.88 while academic achievement of pupils produced a mean score of 15.92 with a standard deviation of 3.08. The result further revealed that the calculated r-ratio of .601 obtained with a p-value of .000 at 298 degrees of freedom met the condition required for significance at .05 level. Based on this, the null hypothesis which stated that self-awareness and academic achievement of pupils have no significant relationship was rejected indicating that self-awareness and academic achievement of pupils have a significant relationship.

Table 4: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Analysis of the relationship between self-awareness and academic achievement of pupils (N= 300)

Variables	$\bar{X}$	SD	r	p-value
Self-awareness (x)	13.89	3.88		
			.601	.000
Academic achievement (y)	15.92	3.08		

*Significant at 0.05 level; df= 298

Discussion of Findings

Self-regulation and academic achievement of pupils:

The findings from hypothesis one revealed a statistically significant and moderately positive relationship between self-regulation and academic achievement of pupils. This suggests that pupils with higher self-regulation skills tend to perform better academically than those with lower self-regulation abilities. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected.

These findings align with a wide body of recent empirical research that emphasizes the importance of self-regulated learning (SRL) in academic contexts. Zimmerman and Schunk (2018) assert that self-regulated learning, which involves goal-setting, strategic action, self-monitoring, and reflection, significantly influences students' ability to engage meaningfully in academic tasks. Pupils who possess these skills are better equipped to manage their time, concentrate, and cope with academic challenges—ultimately leading to improved academic performance.

Similarly, Alexander (2021) found that students with strong self-regulatory skills especially in the area of reflection—achieved significantly higher academic results. In his study of senior high school students, self-regulation components such as time management, metacognitive monitoring, and goal-setting were found to contribute positively to academic achievement. These findings echo the current study, particularly in the context of basic education.

Additionally, Wang (2020) in a meta-analysis of SRL studies found that while self-regulation is frequently studied at the primary and secondary levels, its impact is universal and remains consistent across different age groups and educational levels.

However, not all scholars agree on the strength or consistency of this relationship. For instance, Webster and Hadwin, (2014) suggest that self-regulation may not uniformly predict academic achievement across all subject areas or student populations. They argue that while self-regulation improves learning outcomes in theory-based or project-based subjects, its

impact may be less pronounced in structured, teacher-driven settings where learners have limited autonomy.

Self-motivation and academic achievement of pupils:

The analysis of Hypothesis Two revealed a statistically significant and moderately strong positive correlation between self-motivation and academic achievement of pupils. This finding suggests that as pupils' self-motivation increases, their academic performance also improves. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected.

This result supports a growing body of literature that emphasizes the foundational role of self-motivation in determining learners' engagement, persistence, and academic success. Zimmerman and Schunk (2018) emphasize that motivation, particularly intrinsic motivation, is a critical driver of self-regulated learning, which in turn influences academic performance. Self-motivated pupils are more likely to set personal learning goals, persist in the face of difficulties, and take ownership of their academic progress.

Similarly, Chang and Tsai (2023) found that emotional intelligence significantly influenced learning motivation and, by extension, academic achievement among university students, especially in online learning contexts. Their model showed that motivated learners, particularly those driven by internal goals and confidence in their capabilities, tend to achieve better results.

Adeyemo and Adeleye (2019) also found that self-motivation mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic performance, showing that students who are emotionally aware and self-motivated are more likely to perform well academically. This reinforces the notion that motivation bridges emotional understanding and scholastic success. Moreover, Pintrich (2020) identified self-motivation as a key phase in his self-regulation model, specifically in the forethought and planning stage, where learners decide what to study, why it matters, and how to approach it. Motivation, especially when internally driven, sets the cognitive and emotional framework for successful learning.

In the Nigerian context, Babajide and Amosu (2019) found a significant positive influence of emotional and motivational factors on students' achievement in Physics, recommending emotional and motivational literacy as part of teacher development programs. Their findings resonate with the current study, which similarly highlights the importance of psychological readiness and motivation in influencing academic outcomes among pupils.

Despite strong empirical support, some researchers argue that the influence of self-motivation on academic achievement is context-dependent

Social skills and academic achievement of pupils:

The analysis revealed a statistically significant and strong positive correlation between **social** skills and academic achievement of pupils. This means that pupils with stronger social skills—such as empathy, cooperation, communication, and the ability to form positive relationships—tend to perform better academically. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected. This finding is consistent with growing empirical evidence that highlights the role of social-emotional competencies in fostering academic engagement and success.

According to Goleman (1998), social skills are an essential component of emotional intelligence, encompassing the ability to manage relationships effectively, resolve conflict, and collaborate with others. These skills are crucial within classroom settings where peer interaction, teacher rapport, and group-based learning frequently occur.

Durlak et al. (2011) conducted a meta-analysis of school-based social and emotional learning (SEL) programs and found that interventions focused on improving social skills led to significantly higher academic performance, improved attitudes toward school, and reduced emotional distress. Their findings affirm the current study's result that social competence contributes positively to learning outcomes.

Despite strong support, not all researchers agree on the strength or universality of the relationship between social skills and academic achievement. Ogunyemi and Adebayo (2019) suggest that in resource-limited or teacher-centered environments—common in many developing countries—social skills may have less influence on academic success, especially when academic achievement is assessed primarily through standardized cognitive tests.

Similarly, Johnson and Johnson (2017) argue that the development of social skills does not automatically translate into better academic performance unless intentionally integrated into the learning process. In schools where group work and collaborative learning are not practiced regularly, the benefit of social skills on academic achievement may be minimal. Boekaerts (2016) also cautions that certain high-performing students may prefer independent learning styles and may not rely heavily on social interaction to excel. In such cases, social skills may not be a major contributing factor to their academic success.

Self-awareness and academic achievement of pupils:

The analysis of data yielded a moderately strong positive correlation between self-awareness and academic achievement of pupils. This statistically significant result indicates that pupils who possess higher levels of self-awareness tend to perform better academically. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. This finding supports contemporary psychological theories and empirical research that recognize self-awareness as a fundamental element of emotional intelligence and academic success. According to Goleman (1998), self-awareness is the foundation of emotional intelligence. It enables individuals to recognize their emotions, thoughts, strengths, and limitations, and how these factors influence their behavior and decisions. In the academic context, this awareness fosters goal-setting, self-monitoring, and effective decision-making, all of which enhance learning outcomes.

Zimmerman and Schunk (2018) highlighted self-awareness as a precursor to self-regulated learning, which is essential for academic success. Their model suggests that students who are aware of their learning preferences, cognitive abilities, and emotional responses are more likely to adapt strategies that lead to improved academic performance. A recent study by Tang and He (2024) supported these findings by demonstrating that self-awareness positively influences academic motivation and self-efficacy. Students who clearly understand their internal states are better able to manage academic stress, stay focused, and pursue academic goals persistently.

Similarly, Chang and Tsai (2023) noted that self-awareness enhances online learning performance by helping learners identify distractions, regulate emotional reactions, and take responsibility for their learning behavior. This aligns with the present study, especially in environments where independent study is emphasized. In the Nigerian context, Adeyemo and Adeleye (2019) found that self-awareness, as part of emotional intelligence, significantly predicted academic motivation and achievement among college students. They emphasized that emotionally aware students tend to show higher levels of self-discipline, attentiveness, and academic resilience.

Despite widespread agreement, some scholars caution against overestimating the role of self-awareness in academic achievement. For example, Boekaerts (2016) argued that while self-awareness is a valuable trait, it must be coupled with behavioral regulation and motivation to meaningfully impact learning outcomes. Merely being aware of one's emotions or limitations may not translate into academic success without intentional effort to act on that awareness.
Additionally, Siswanto (2024) pointed out that self-awareness alone may not significantly predict academic performance in highly structured or test-driven educational systems, such as those found in many developing countries. In such contexts, the rigid nature of assessments

and limited room for self-directed learning may diminish the impact of self-awareness on academic achievement. Okonkwo and Nwachukwu (2019) further argued that in under-resourced Nigerian schools, where teacher-centered instruction dominates and learners have minimal autonomy, the practical benefits of self-awareness might be limited unless supported by structural reforms and teacher training programs that promote learner-centered education.

Conclusion

Based on the results of this study, it is concluded that emotional intelligence—particularly in the domains of self-regulation, self-motivation, social skills, and self-awareness—plays a significant and positive role in shaping pupils' academic performance. The implication is that cognitive ability alone is not sufficient to guarantee academic success. Emotional intelligence competencies equip pupils with the intrinsic motivation**,** resilience**,** social adaptability, and self-reflection necessary to manage academic demands effectively. Thus, educational systems and stakeholders must recognize the importance of emotional and social development in addition to intellectual training.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are made:
In view of the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Integration of Emotional Intelligence in Curriculum:

Curriculum developers should embed emotional intelligence training—particularly self-awareness, social skills, and self-regulation—into primary education syllabi through storytelling, group activities, and reflective exercises.

2. Teacher Training on Emotional Literacy

Teachers should be trained through continuous professional development programs to recognize and support the emotional and social needs of their pupils in the classroom.

3. School-Based Emotional Intelligence Programs:

School administrators should implement structured emotional intelligence programs, such as peer mentoring, emotional literacy workshops, and cooperative learning strategies, to enhance pupils' EI competencies.

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