

TEACHERS' EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AS INFLUENCING STUDENTS' READINESS TO LEARN SOCIAL STUDIES IN ILORIN SOUTH, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated teachers' emotional intelligence as a predictor of students' readiness to learn Social Studies in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Kwara State, Nigeria. The study adopted a correlational research design. The population comprised upper-basic secondary school students and their Social Studies teachers in both public and private schools. A sample of 300 students was selected using a multi-stage sampling procedure. Data were collected using a researcher-designed questionnaire validated by experts, with a reliability coefficient of 0.83. Descriptive statistics and regression analysis were used to analyse the data. Findings revealed that both male and female teachers possessed high levels of emotional intelligence, with no significant gender difference observed. Additionally, students demonstrated a high level of readiness to learn Social Studies, with 72.3% exhibiting high readiness. The study further found a significant relationship between teachers' emotional intelligence and students' readiness to learn Social Studies ($F = 127.61, p < 0.05$). Teachers' emotional intelligence accounted for 30% of the variation in students' readiness to learn. The study concluded that teachers' emotional intelligence significantly influences students' readiness to learn Social Studies. It was recommended that teachers should regularly engage in psychological assessments to maintain optimal emotional intelligence, while school administrators should provide support systems to ensure teachers' emotional well-being.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Student's Readiness, Teachers, Social Studies, Learning

Introduction

The study of Social Studies has gone through many developments and indeed Nigeria. The subject is offered at the pre-basic, basic, post basic and tertiary education level. Despite its attendant benefits like shaping individuals and making citizenry to be responsible, many students show complacency in its learning. It can be influenced by a host of factors, such as motivation, entry behaviour, learning environment, and teaching/learning strategies. Interactive classes garnished with the use of technology have proven to be a bait for true instructional practice. This shroud the usefulness of innovative and experiential pedagogical strategies that connect classroom learning with real-life civic experiences.

Many studies have pointed out the roles played in promoting students' readiness to learn Social Studies or citizenship-oriented subjects or disciplines. Yayi et al. (2025), for example, demonstrated that the use of virtual field trips significantly improved students' attitudes toward civic responsibility, which is closely linked to their readiness to learn. The study revealed that exposure to virtual experiential learning

environments enhances students' interest, participation, and overall preparedness for learning tasks. Such findings suggest that integrating digital tools into Social Studies instruction can aid positive learning readiness among students. Emotional intelligence has been found to also affect students' readiness to learn Social Studies.

Emotional intelligence (EI) could be likened to the ability to perceive, understand, regulate, and utilise emotions in oneself and others. Valente et al (2022) averred that presently in the four walls of formal education, teaching is seen as an inherently emotional practice, where teachers' emotional competencies significantly shape classroom climate and student engagement. This justifies the need for teachers' emotional intelligence as a predictor of students' readiness to learn citizenship education in subjects like Social Studies. Ryan and Deci (2024) further assert that teachers who help students' needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness foster better socio-emotional development, which is closely tied to learning readiness in their study on social-emotional learning (SEL).

In another study, Cihan and Dilekmen (2024) demonstrated that training teachers in emotional intelligence enhances their capacity to manage classroom interactions and integrate emotional awareness into teaching practices. Similarly, Karasneh et al. (2024) found that affective teaching approaches—such as empathy, patience, and emotional engagement significantly improve students' motivation and participation in Social Studies learning. Emotional intelligence has been found to contribute a bunch to students' cognitive engagement and learning readiness, as emotionally balanced learners are better able to process information and sustain attention (Younas et al., 2025)

Furthermore, Saad et al. (2025) found a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and students' readiness for online learning, indicating that emotional competence influences students' ability to adapt, focus, and persist in learning tasks. Although this study focused on students' EI, it implies that teachers' emotional competencies can similarly influence learners' readiness by shaping the learning environment. A study conducted among pre-service teachers in Ghana found that emotional intelligence significantly predicts academic-related outcomes, including self-efficacy and performance (Heliyon, 2024). Teachers with high EI are more likely to demonstrate adaptive teaching strategies, manage classroom stress effectively, and foster positive teacher–student relationships, all of which contribute to students' readiness to learn.

As a rider, it is established that the importance of emotional intelligence becomes even more pronounced in Social Studies, as the subject is inherently value-laden and requires students to develop critical thinking, empathy, civic responsibility, and interpersonal skills. A study on future competencies in Social Studies teaching reiterated emotional and interpersonal skills as essential for effective instruction (Kizilgol & Kasapoglu, 2024). Teachers with high emotional intelligence are better prepared to facilitate discussions on sensitive social issues and to create an emotionally safe environment that encourages student participation. Studies indicate that monitoring and responding to students' emotional states can improve engagement and interaction, thereby enhancing readiness to learn (Nguyen et al., 2026). This suggests that teachers' ability to recognise and respond to emotional cues is crucial in fostering effective learning environments.

Emotional intelligence is positively associated with learning readiness and academic resilience among students. For example, Saad et al. (2024) found a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and students' readiness for online learning, suggesting that students with higher EI are more adaptable, motivated, and prepared for academic tasks. In a similar vein, Riaz et al. (2024) found that emotional intelligence strongly correlates with academic resilience, enabling students to cope with challenges and persist in learning activities. This is in agreement with Khongsankham et al. (2024), who emphasised that integrating social-emotional learning into classroom instruction fosters emotional competence and improves overall academic performance and engagement. These findings collectively highlight that emotional intelligence is a critical predictor of students' readiness and success in Social Studies learning environments.

An avalanche of studies in Nigeria showcased the role of EI in promoting positive educational and social outcomes. For example, research among secondary school students in Ilorin South Local Government identified a significant positive relationship between students' emotional intelligence and their academic performance (Musibau, 2025), suggesting that EI competencies may support learning processes such as motivation, emotional regulation, and classroom engagement. In another study, Amailo et al. (2024) revealed that undergraduates' emotional intelligence significantly predicted social adjustment outcomes, suggesting that EI remains a relevant factor for performance in both academic and social domains within Nigerian higher education.

Adegbenga and Hassan (2020) investigated the influence of EI on secondary school students' academic achievement in Lagos State and found a significant positive relationship between students' emotional intelligence and their academic performance, although gender differences in EI scores and achievement were not significant. Obialor et al. (2024) found that in the South East, emotional intelligence predicted academic achievement in Biology subjects, although the strength of the association was relatively low, indicating context-specific variability across academic domains. Aside academic performance or academic achievement, some studies have explored behavioural and psychological correlates. Abolakale and Lawal (2024) examined EI as a predictor of impulsive behaviour among Ilorin Metropolis secondary school students and confirmed that higher emotional competence relates to better regulation of impulsivity. Additionally, Ahmed et al. (2024) found that emotional intelligence, along with self-efficacy, predicts administrative effectiveness in secondary school leadership roles in Ilorin, suggesting that EI has utility for both student learning and school management outcomes. Researches on teacher emotional intelligence also exists but is limited. Olorisade's (2019) work in Ilorin investigated how teacher demographic characteristics (e.g., qualification, experience) relate to EI levels, finding significant differences based on these factors and generally high EI among teachers.

Windasari et al. (2024) explored emotional intelligence levels among Indonesian primary school teachers and compared EI scores across gender and teaching experience. No statistically significant differences in EI between male and female teachers occur, suggesting gender did not influence EI. Das (2024) investigated whether higher secondary teachers' emotional intelligence was independent of gender and teaching experience. Results revealed no significant gender effect on overall

emotional intelligence scores, suggesting that men and women had comparable EI levels. Nadaf et al. (2024) examined the impact of gender, age, and experience on emotional intelligence of secondary school teachers in India and found no significant differences by gender — male and female teachers showed similar EI scores. Dey and Roy (2022) surveyed secondary school teachers in India and found that female teachers exhibited higher EI than male teachers, suggesting a gender difference favouring women in emotional intelligence. There are variations in the results on the role gender plays in emotional intelligence. Despite these contributions, the literature reveals several notable gaps.

Interestingly, there is limited use of localised, context-sensitive instruments that capture the socio-cultural realities of Nigerian classrooms. This creates a need for empirical studies that examine teachers' emotional intelligence as a predictor of students' readiness to learn Social Studies in Ilorin, Nigeria, thereby filling both contextual and methodological gaps in the literature. This study, therefore, seeks to investigate the extent to which teachers' emotional intelligence predicts students' readiness to learn Social Studies in Ilorin, Nigeria. Despite growing global attention to emotional intelligence in education, empirical studies examining its relationship with students' readiness to learn in the Nigerian context remain scarce. Also, researches tend to occur in urban or specific regional contexts (e.g., Lagos, Ilorin, Edo State). Broader geographic sampling is needed to understand EI's role across Nigeria's diverse educational environments.

Theoretical Framework

This work is greatly influenced by Daniel Goleman's theory of emotional intelligence. The proponent made viral the idea that emotion-related competencies are also important, like intelligence quotients needed for self-actualisation; the top echelon of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Goleman defined emotional intelligence as a sum of the needed ingredients for individuals in relating to impulses and emotions. Notable among the rubrics are self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness (empathy), and relationship management (social skills). These skills can be learned, and they aren't static. The theorist posits that emotional intelligence can have a direct bearing on virtues like unity at work, doggedness, to mention a few. This ultimately can have an influence on one's productivity, relationship and attitude at work etc. While others may criticise Goleman for a lot of reasons, ranging from the classification of behaviours like motivation as intelligence, it is evident that a person's emotional intelligence could translate to some actions. This implies that emotional intelligence (EI) may affect readiness and attitude to learning Social Studies. Some stereotypes are that hard Mathematics and sciences are for the boys, while Social Studies are for the girls. It is not out of place to find out if a teacher's emotional intelligence could make students develop a passion for the subject of social studies. In Social Studies instruction, the disposition and emotional intelligence of the teacher will give students interest and zeal for instruction. Today, many people hate Mathematics because of the personality and teaching method of the teacher. I can say the teacher can greatly influence the students' readiness to learn Social Studies.

Research Objectives

- To determine if gender affects teachers' emotional intelligence.
- To assess students' readiness to learn Social Studies
- To explore the relationship between teachers' emotional intelligence and students' readiness to learn Social Studies.

Research Questions

Based on the objectives of this study, the following research questions guided this research:

- i. Will gender affect teachers' emotional intelligence?
- ii. What is the level of students' readiness to learn social studies?

Research Hypothesis

Hypothesis to be tested in this study was stated below in its null form:

H₀₁: emotional intelligence will not predict students' readiness to learn Social Studies.

Method

The study adopted a correlational type of descriptive survey research design to obtain relevant data directly from respondents in their natural setting. The population of the study comprised upper-basic secondary school students in both public and private schools in Ilorin South. According to a study by Ojo and Fasasi (2014), Ilorin South Local government has 17 public secondary schools. The number of private schools cannot be ascertained. Using 10 schools is very representative of the population. Till there no single updated record of the total number of students in the local government, rather many studies just sample a subset of students. Th target population was upper-basic two students and Social Studies teachers in the schools. From this population, a sample of 300 respondents was selected using multi-stage procedure. At the first stage, stratified sampling technique was used to classify the schools into public and private. Ten schools were selected each; public and private (20 schools). Simple random sampling technique was used to select 15 students from each school, Data for the study were collected using a researcher designed questionnaire with three sections. The first section centred on the characteristics of the respondents; the second section was on emotional intelligence while the third section focused on students' readiness to learn Social Studies. The validity of the instrument was ascertained by two experts in the Department of Social Sciences Education, University of Ilorin using face validity. A test-retest was used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument on a set of students that did not form part of the sample. A reliability index of 0.83 was derived after the second administration. For data analysis, completed questionnaires were coded and entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for processing. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts and percentages were used to analyse demographic data, while the mean was used to answer the research questions raised. Inferential statistics, specifically regression, was employed to test the study hypothesis.

Results

Table 1: Characteristics of Respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Students' Gender		
Male	138	46.0
Female	162	54.0
Total	300	100.0

Result in table 1 shows 300 students took part in the study with 46.0 as male while 54.0 are females. Hence, the females are more in the study.

Answering of Research Questions

Research Question 1: Will gender affect teachers' emotional intelligence?

Table 2: Emotional Intelligence Possessed by Male and Female Social Studies Teachers in Ilorin South

S/N	My Social Studies Teacher	Male Teacher		Female Teacher	
		Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D
1	Builds positive relationship with students	3.1	0.85	3.18	0.87
2	Shows enthusiasm and persistence always	3.20	0.79	3.20	0.84
3	Is always calm in difficult situations	3.13	0.81	3.14	0.83
4	Is willing to make sacrifices to cater for his students need	3.08	0.79	3.03	0.87
5	Is attentive to emotional cues of students	2.86	0.82	2.95	0.91
6	Acknowledge and reward students' accomplishments	3.02	0.86	2.97	0.89
7	Relates well with students despite their diverse background	2.83	0.85	2.86	0.91
8	Foster open communication and stays receptive to good and bad behaviour	3.0	0.82	2.98	0.86
9	Foster a friendly and open relationship	2.95	0.82	2.96	0.84
10	Draws all students into active and enthusiastic participation	2.90	0.74	2.87	0.81
Grand Mean		3.02	0.81	3.01	0.86

Key: Low Level=0.00-2.49 High Level: 2.50-4.00

The result in table 2 shows the emotional intelligence possessed by male and female teachers in Ilorin South. As displayed in the table, the emotional intelligence possessed by male and female teachers was high with a mean of 3.01 for male and 3.01 for females which are both numerically greater than benchmark of 2.50. This implies that gender differences do not affect the emotional intelligence of teachers because both genders have high emotional intelligence.

Research Question 2: What is the level of students’ readiness to learn social studies?

Table 3: Level of Students’ Readiness to Learn Social Studies in Ilorin South

Level of Readiness	Cut Off Range	Frequency	Percentage
High	26-40	217	72.3
Low	10-25	83	27.7
Total		300	100.0

Table 3 shows 27.7% of the sampled students have low level of readiness to learn Social Studies while 72.3% of the students have high level of readiness to learn Social Studies. This clearly indicates that the readiness to learn Social Studies by students in Ilorin South is very high.

Hypothesis Testing:

H₀₁: Emotional intelligence will not predict students' readiness to learn Social Studies.

Table 4: Regression Analysis on the Relationship Between Teachers’ Emotional Intelligence and Students’ Readiness to Learn Social Studies in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Ilorin, Kwara State

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Regression	917.415	1	917.415		
Residual	2142.372	298	7.189	127.61	0.00
Total	3059.787	299			

a. Dependent Variable: Students’ Readiness to Learn Social Studies

b. Predictors: (Constant), Teachers’ Emotional Intelligence

*P<0.05

Results in Table 4 indicate that teachers’ emotional intelligence significantly correlated with students’ readiness to learn Social Studies in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Ilorin, Kwara State as seen in the degree of freedom of 1 and 298, with F-ratio of 127.61 that is significant at p = 0.00. On the basis of the results, the null hypothesis was not accepted which means that there was significant relationship between that teachers’ emotional intelligence and students’ readiness to learn Social Studies in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Ilorin, Kwara State. The percentage of variation in students’ readiness to learn Social Studies as accounted for by teachers’ emotional intelligence is presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Model Summary on the Relationship Between Teachers’ Emotional Intelligence and Students’ Readiness to Learn Social Studies in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Ilorin, Kwara State

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.55	0.30	0.30	2.68

Results in Table 5 reveal that independent variable of teachers' emotional intelligence accounted for 0.30 representing 30% of the variation in students' readiness to learn Social Studies in Ilorin Local Government Area, Ilorin, Kwara State, with adjusted R-square of 0.30 and a standard error of the estimate of 2.68. The observed 30% variation in students' readiness to learn Social Studies as accounted for by teachers' emotional intelligence means that variables not considered in this study accounted for 70% of the variation in students' readiness to learn Social Studies in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Ilorin, Kwara State.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study revealed that gender does not significantly influence teachers' emotional intelligence. Both male and female Social Studies teachers demonstrated high levels of emotional intelligence, suggesting that emotional competencies such as empathy, self-regulation, and relationship management are not gender-dependent. This may be partly due to the teachers being trained in educational psychology which makes them understand the behaviour of the students. This finding aligns with studies by Nadaf et al. (2024) and Das (2024), which reported no significant gender differences in emotional intelligence among teachers. However, it contrasts with Dey and Roy (2022), who found higher emotional intelligence among female teachers. The implication is that teachers' emotional intelligence in Ilorin South may be shaped more by professional experience and training than by gender. The finding of Dey and Roy (2022) may be so because females are seen as passionate, caring and more tolerable than men. This may account for the finding of Dey and Roy

The study also found that students in Ilorin South exhibit a high level of readiness to learn Social Studies. This suggests that learners are cognitively, emotionally, and behaviourally prepared to engage in Social Studies instruction. This high level of readiness may be attributed to improved teaching approaches, increased awareness of the subject's relevance, and possibly the integration of interactive and experiential learning strategies, as highlighted in earlier studies such as Yayi et al. (2025). The result supports existing literature that emphasises the role of engaging pedagogical practices in enhancing students' motivation and preparedness for learning.

Furthermore, the study established a significant relationship between teachers' emotional intelligence and students' readiness to learn Social Studies. This indicates that teachers who effectively manage their emotions and respond to students' emotional needs are more likely to create supportive classroom environments that enhance students' engagement and willingness to learn. This finding is consistent with Saad et al. (2024) and Younas et al. (2025), who reported that emotional intelligence contributes to improved learning readiness and academic resilience. The regression analysis further showed that teachers' emotional intelligence accounts for 30% of the variation in students' readiness to learn, highlighting its substantial predictive power while also indicating that other factors contribute to learning readiness. One limitation experienced in the study is the overall, the findings underscore the importance of emotional intelligence in teaching, particularly in Social Studies, where interpersonal relationships, values, and emotional engagement are critical. Teachers' ability to foster a positive emotional climate enhances students' readiness, participation, and overall learning outcomes.

Conclusion

The study concluded that gender differences does not in any way affect the emotional intelligence of teachers as both genders have high emotional intelligence. Readiness to learn Social Studies by students in Ilorin South is very high. This means that students are eager to learn Social Studies devoid of any obstacles. There was a significant relationship between teachers' emotional intelligence and students' readiness to learn Social Studies in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Ilorin, Kwara State. A teacher's emotional intelligence is a factor in determining how ready students are to the learning of Social Studies. This study has contributed to the field of Psychology as well as Social Studies by addressing variables that can affect readiness of students to learn. Administrators can easily diagnose learning problems associated with bad emotional intelligence of teachers. However, the study is limited in terms of locale. Further research can be extended to the whole of the state and a combined response of the students and teachers can be used at future studies.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- i. Teachers should be encouraged to take psychological tests at recruitment point.
- ii. School administrators should exempt teachers from teaching whenever they report they are not psychologically balanced. A day off may be given to them.

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