

**Teachers' Emotional Intelligence as a Tool for Achieving Classroom Participation
among Students in Secondary Schools in Rivers State**

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Abstract

The paper investigated teachers' emotional intelligence as a tool for achieving classroom participation among students in secondary schools in Rivers State. Three research questions were answered and three hypotheses tested in the study. Descriptive survey design was adopted in the study. The population of the study consisted of 8, 452 teachers from which 382 teachers were sampled using stratified random sampling technique. Data for the study was gathered using a 15 item questionnaire named "Teachers' Emotional Intelligence for Achieving Classroom Participation Questionnaire" (TEIACPQ). The face and content validation was determined by an expert in Measurement and Evaluation from the Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling, University of Port Harcourt while the reliability was estimated as 0.85 using Cronbach alpha statistics. There were 382 copies of questionnaire administered while 369 copies representing 96.6% were retrieved. Research questions raised were answered using mean and standard deviation while the hypotheses were tested using z-test at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the study showed that there was a low extent of teachers' emotional intelligence and that the teachers supported the students by promoting teamwork and showing empathy to the learners. Challenges to teachers developing emotional intelligence were also highlighted. It was recommended that the teachers should be exposed to professional training on emotional intelligence.

Keywords: Teachers' Emotional Intelligence, Classroom Participation, Students, Secondary School

Introduction

One of the factors that has hindered students' performance both in internal and external examinations is the participation of students in the classroom. Parents, students and the government have interests in good academic performance among students as this does not only justify the resources expended by them but also provides opportunity for progression at the

personal and societal level. However, the attitude of the teacher during teaching and learning can affect how students will participate in the classroom and this is why every teacher needs to be emotionally intelligent.

Emotional intelligence has to do with understanding how to manage one's emotion and the emotion of others. There is no doubt that some teachers allow their emotion to influence their teaching and this can have negative effect on students' classroom participation. Mortiboys (2015) advised that emotional intelligence should be developed and employed to complement with both the theoretical content and teaching pedagogy by teachers. Teachers must understand how they can manage their emotions so that better educational outcomes can be achieved. Some scholars such as Alghamdi (2014) have pointed out that students with high level of emotional intelligence are likely to record better academic achievement among their students Teachers must therefore acquire emotional intelligence skills as their behaviour can affect the performance of their students in the short and long run (Nwankwo & Agu, 2019). Teachers must therefore develop this competence to achieve higher students' participation in the classroom which is essential for improved academic performance.

Quality teaching and learning are instrumental to the achievement of educational goals and objectives both in the short and long run. For educational goals and objectives to be achieved in any school system, the teacher and students must interact properly within the classroom and this means that the teacher must do all he or she can to make the students active participants in the classroom as this will also affect the performance of the students in the long run.

However, it is common to see some students avoid some subjects in the school and become passive participants where necessary simply because of the emotional state of the teacher. This means that the emotional condition of the teacher rob-off on the quality of teaching and student interaction in the classroom and this has far-reaching consequences. Every teacher must therefore be emotionally intelligent to make any meaningful progress both in and outside the classroom.

The issue of emotional intelligence has existed for a very long time and as such should not be new to any teacher who is mindful about how his/her emotion can affect his/her teaching. Tok, Tok and Dolapcioglu (2013) asserted that Emotional intelligence (EI) was first studied by Thorndike within the framework of the concept of social intelligence where Thorndike explained social intelligence to mean the act of understanding and managing other people. However, emotional intelligence is more than just understudying others to managing one's emotion also. In a broader context, Emotional Intelligence (EI) is seen as the ability of being

able to encourage oneself in the face of frustration and staying positive and thinking in the right direction in the face of unpleasant occurrences (Nwankwo & Agu, 2019). People who are emotionally intelligent are able to remain in the right frame of mind and still discharge their duties without allowing their unpleasant situation to becloud their jostlement.

There are several characteristics that make emotionally intelligent people and Obilor and Uchendu (2020) mentioned that some of these attributes include the ability to show intelligence, empathy and emotions to enhance thought and understanding of interpersonal dynamics. When this is done, it becomes easy for the teacher to be able to relate with the students with the right tone that will make them actively involved in classroom activities. The teacher is not only learning to manage his or her own emotion alone but to also respond to the emotional need of the students.

Erasmus, Eeden and Ferns (2022) pointed out that emotionally intelligent people must show self-knowledge, self-awareness, social sensitivity, empathy and ability to communicate successfully with others and this is important to win the attention of their audience in this case the student. According to Ekeh and Oladayo (2011), people's emotion receive expression as one interacts with his/her environment, especially with other human beings whether at home, workplace, in school or other social settings. Teachers in schools must therefore show a high level of emotional intelligence to communicate properly with their students in the classroom. There is no doubt that building the right emotional intelligence and mastering the art of emotional intelligence is demanding. It is a fact that without emotional stability, the teacher and students cannot achieve effective teaching and learning (Amaeze, 2017). However, most teachers either as a result of genetic factors, socio-cultural beliefs or organizational policy are unable to showcase this important skill which is needed for meaningful teaching and learning to take place in the classroom. Emotional intelligence according to Orim et al (2022) involves wellbeing, self-control, and sociality and all of these may also require training to build, which is often not available to teachers. This contributes to some of the challenges faced in today's educational environment.

There is a growing concentration of research on how teachers' emotional intelligence supports teaching and learning. Amaewhule and Nwogu (2019) investigated social networking and participation as predictors of teachers' emotional intelligence in public secondary schools in Rivers State. The study was designed using a correlational approach. The 16,743 public secondary school teachers in Rivers State who constituted the study's population included 376 teachers who were selected for the study using a multi-stage sampling technique. The

instruments utilized for the data collection for the study were two questionnaires: the 35-item "Social Capital Investment Scale" (SCIS) and the 40-item "Emotional Intelligence Scale" (EIS). The hypotheses were evaluated using z ratio at the 0.05 level of significance, and the research questions were answered using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The study's conclusions demonstrated a favorable correlation between teachers' emotional intelligence and social networking. Similarly, social engagement and emotional intelligence of teachers in Rivers State's public secondary schools are positively correlated.

The study by Okiridu and Agbam (2023) focused on teachers' emotional intelligence and quality delivery of business studies in junior secondary in Etche, Rivers State. There were 159 Business Studies Teachers from twenty-four (24) Public Secondary Schools in Etche, Rivers State who made up the study's population. The sample size for the study was the entire population. Data was gathered using tools called the Quality Delivery of Business Studies Questionnaire (QDBSQ) and Teachers Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQ). At 0.05 level of significance, Pearson Product Moment correlation (PPMC) was utilized to evaluate the hypotheses and provide answers to the study questions. The results showed that there is a somewhat favorable and substantial association between self-awareness and the quality of business studies delivered in junior secondary schools in Etche, Rivers State; there is also a relationship between self-regulation and the quality of business studies delivered in these schools.

On their part, Vipene and Okirigwe (2021) focused their study on the influence of emotional intelligence on senior secondary school teacher's job burnout in Rivers State. The research design used in the study was descriptive. 6956 senior secondary school teachers from Rivers State's three senatorial districts—Rivers East, Rivers South East, and Rivers West—made up the study's population. 1350 instructors, 583 of whom were male and 763 of whom were female, were chosen from the senatorial districts of Rivers State using a stratified sampling technique. The "Senior Secondary School Teachers Emotional Intelligence Job Burnout Questionnaire" (SSSTEIJBQ) was a self-structured questionnaire used as the data gathering tool. The z-test was used to assess hypotheses, while mean and standard deviation were used to answer research questions. The study discovered that a significant factor influencing secondary school teachers in Rivers State's job burnout is their level of self-awareness as emotional intelligence. The study also discovered that a significant amount of job burnout among secondary school teachers in Rivers State is influenced by teachers' self-regulation and social skill such as emotional intelligence.

Furthermore, Ogar, Ibok, Odey, Joseph, Unimuke and Ungie (2023) investigated emotional intelligence and mathematics achievement of underachieving high ability senior secondary school students in Calabar Education Zone, Cross River State, Nigeria. The survey design used in this study was correlational. Using the stratified random selection method, 400 Senior Secondary II students were chosen as a sample from public schools. The Mathematics Achievement Test (MAT) and the Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (EIQ) were the two tools used to gather the data. 0.05 level of significance, the hypotheses were assessed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The study's conclusions showed that the mathematics achievement of underachieving high ability senior secondary school pupils is highly correlated with their well-being, self-control, and sociability.

The study by Tok, Tok and Dolapcioglu (2013) investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence and classroom management approaches of primary school teachers in Turkey. The study's design was correlational. There were 233 primary school teachers from Turkey's central province of Antakya, located in Hatay city who made up the study's sample. The "Classroom Management Inventory" and the "Emotional Intelligence Scale" were the instruments utilized to gather the data for the study. The findings showed that, although having limited predictive value, emotional intelligence is a favorable predictor of teacher-centered classroom management. The teacher-centered classroom teaching strategy and the EI levels of primary school teachers are positively correlated, albeit at a low level. Additionally, research findings show that EI is a strong predictor of student-centered classroom management. The EI levels of primary school teachers and their student-centered classroom management strategies have a somewhat strong, positive correlation.

On their part, Obilor and Uchendu (2020) focused on the influence of emotional intelligence on mathematics achievement of students of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The study used a descriptive survey approach with 380 SS2 students as the sample (163 urban students and 217 rural students). Data were gathered using a 20-item structured questionnaire called Influence of Emotional Intelligence on Mathematics Achievement of Students (IEIMAS). The study issues were addressed using the mean and standard deviations, and the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using the z-test analysis. The study's findings demonstrated the significant impact that emotional intelligence—which includes self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills—had on students' mathematical achievement in Rivers State's public secondary schools. These studies show that

teachers' emotional intelligence have some effect on the activities that teachers carry out within and outside the classroom.

Statement of the Problem

One of the most difficult roles played by teachers in the classroom is getting students to be active participants in the instructional delivery process. This is because, the extent to which students participate in classroom activities will influence their overall development. However, as a result of the difference in the characteristics of students, some teachers are caught in the web of understanding how to meet the varying needs of different learners in the same classroom and this sometimes occur because the teachers are not skilled enough in the art of emotional intelligence. The emotional intelligence of the teacher helps him or her to manage his/her emotion towards the students in the instructional process as well as get the students attention. The failure to achieve this goal eventually negates the achievement of outlined educational goals and objectives. The lack of emotional intelligence among teachers has therefore hindered students' participation and progression and the need to understand the intersection between these variables has continued to generate interest among educational managers and administrators and this informs this study as a means of providing empirical evidence about the connection between teachers' emotional intelligence as a tool for achieving classroom participation among students in secondary schools in Rivers State.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to investigate teachers' emotional intelligence as a tool for achieving classroom participation among students in secondary schools in Rivers State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. ascertain the extent of teachers' emotional intelligence as a tool for achieving classroom participation among students in secondary schools in Rivers State.
2. determine the ways in which teachers' emotional intelligence contributes to classroom participation among students in secondary schools in Rivers State
3. examine the barriers to teachers' emotional intelligence as a tool for achieving classroom participation among students in secondary schools in Rivers State

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in the study:

1. What is the extent of teachers' emotional intelligence as a tool for achieving classroom participation among students in secondary schools in Rivers State?

2. In what ways can teachers' emotional intelligence contribute to classroom participation among students in secondary schools in Rivers State?
3. What are the barriers to teachers' emotional intelligence as a tool for achieving classroom participation among students in secondary schools in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 5% significance level:

1. There is no significant difference between the mean score of male and female respondents on the extent of teachers' emotional intelligence as a tool for achieving classroom participation among students in secondary schools in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean score of male and female respondents on the ways in which teachers' emotional intelligence contribute to classroom participation among students in secondary schools in Rivers State
3. There is no significant difference between the mean score of male and female respondents on the barriers to teachers' emotional intelligence as a tool for achieving classroom participation among students in secondary schools in Rivers State

Methodology

The study utilized descriptive survey design while the population of the study was 8, 452 teachers in the public senior secondary schools in Rivers State out of which 382 teachers were drawn as sample for the study using stratified random sampling technique. The size of the sample was determined following the Taro Yamane minimum sample size determination formula. The instrument used for gathering data was a 15 item questionnaire titled "Teachers' Emotional Intelligence for Achieving Classroom Participation Questionnaire" (TEIACPQ). The questionnaire was responded to on a four point modified Likert scale of Very High Extent (VHE-4), High Extent (HE-3), Low Extent (LE-2) and Very Low Extent (VLE-1) for research question one and then Strongly Agree (SA-4), Agree (A-3), Disagree (D-2) and Strongly Disagree (SD-1) for research questions two and three. The face and content validation was determined by an expert in Measurement and Evaluation from the Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling, University of Port Harcourt. The reliability of the questionnaire was estimated as 0.85 using Cronbach alpha statistics. Out of the 382 copies of questionnaire distributed to the respondents by the researcher, there were 369 copies (171 males and 198 females) which represented 96.6% that were successfully retrieved and used for data analysis. The research questions raised were answered using mean and standard deviation while the hypotheses were tested using z-test at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Answer to Research Questions

Research Question One: What is the extent of teachers' emotional intelligence as a tool for achieving classroom participation among students in secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores on the Extent of Teachers' Emotional Intelligence as a Tool for Achieving Classroom Participation among Students in Secondary Schools in Rivers State

S/No	Items	Male Respondents n=171		Female Respondents n=198		Mean Set	
		Mean \bar{X}_1	SD	Mean \bar{X}_2	SD	X \bar{X}	Decision
1	It is easy to control being angry when students make mistakes in class	2.44	0.85	2.47	0.92	2.46	Low Extent
2	Teachers assist students to solve their classroom problems	2.57	0.78	2.60	0.85	2.59	High Extent
3	I am aware of my weaknesses as a teacher	2.45	0.84	2.42	0.95	2.44	Low Extent
4	Teachers have cordial relationship with one another	2.50	0.81	2.55	0.87	2.53	High Extent
5	It is easy to sacrifice for other members of the school to be happy	2.40	0.88	2.48	0.92	2.44	Low Extent
Grand Mean and Standard Deviation		2.47	0.83	2.50	0.90	2.49	Low Extent

Table 1 revealed that items 2 and 5 with mean scores of 2.45 and 2.40 existed to a low extent from the response of the male teachers while the same set of items with mean values of 2.42 and 2.48 also existed to a low extent from the responses of the female teachers. This decision follows the criterion rule established in the study while other items with mean scores greater than 2.50 existed to a high extent. However, item 2 had the greatest mean set score of 2.59 meaning that assisting students to solve their classroom problems was the greatest emotional intelligence displayed by the teachers. The grand mean score of 2.47 from the male teachers and 2.50 from the female teachers implied that their emotional intelligence was low and slightly high respectively. However, generally, the mean set score of 2.49 indicated that there is a low

extent of teachers' emotional intelligence as a tool for achieving classroom participation among students in secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Question Two: In what ways can teachers' emotional intelligence contribute to classroom participation among students in secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores on the Ways Teachers' Emotional Intelligence Contributes to Classroom Participation among Students in Secondary Schools in Rivers State

S/No	Items	Male Respondents n=171		Female Respondents n=198		Mean Set	
		Mean \bar{X}_1	SD	Mean \bar{X}_2	SD	X \bar{X}	Decision
6	The teacher is able to assist the students overcome stress during learning	2.42	0.87	2.81	0.83	2.62	Agreed
7	Emphasis is placed on teamwork among members of the classroom	2.75	0.76	2.88	0.80	2.82	Agreed
8	Students are assisted to develop social skills which are essential for classroom interaction	2.44	0.85	2.90	0.79	2.67	Agreed
9	Teacher shows empathy when students have learning difficulty	2.80	0.73	2.92	0.78	2.86	Agreed
10	Teacher maintains healthy communication with members of the class	2.74	0.77	2.79	0.84	2.77	Agreed
Grand Mean and Standard Deviation		2.63	0.80	2.86	0.81	2.75	Agreed

Table 2 indicated that items 6 and 8 were disagreed by the male teachers following the decision rule while the other items were agreed and all the items were also agreed by the female teachers. However, item 9 had the highest mean set score of 2.86 implying that the teachers showed empathy to promote classroom participation among students. The grand mean score of 2.63

and 2.86 from the male and female teachers align with the mean set score of 2.75 to show that the respondents averagely agree with the items raised as ways teachers’ emotional intelligence contribute to classroom participation among students in secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Question Three: What are the barriers to teachers’ emotional intelligence as a tool for achieving classroom participation among students in secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores on the Barriers to Teachers’ Emotional Intelligence as a Tool for Achieving Classroom Participation among Students in Secondary Schools in Rivers State

S/No	Items	Male Respondents n=171		Female Respondents n=198		Mean Set	
		Mean \bar{X}_1	SD	Mean \bar{X}_2	SD	X \bar{X}	Decision
11	Some teachers are resistant to change which can hinder the development of emotional intelligence	2.78	0.74	2.88	0.80	2.83	Agreed
12	There are teachers who suffer from genetic factors that make it difficult to relate with others	2.90	0.66	2.98	0.75	2.94	Agreed
13	Socio-cultural orientation of the teacher is a bane to developing emotional intelligence	2.76	0.75	2.77	0.85	2.77	Agreed
14	The behaviour of other members of the school hinders teachers from being emotionally intelligent	2.83	0.71	2.80	0.84	2.82	Agreed
15	School policy is a barrier to teachers emotional intelligence	2.85	0.69	2.88	0.82	2.87	Agreed
Grand Mean and Standard Deviation		2.82	0.71	2.86	0.81	2.84	Agreed

Table 3 pointed out that all of the items responded to by the male and female teachers had mean scores that were above the criterion mean score of 2.50 used for decision making and were all agreed. However, the highest mean set score of 2.94 from item 12 showed that there are genetic factors which make teachers not to be emotionally intelligent and this constitutes a huge challenge. The grand mean values of 2.82 from the male teachers and 2.86 from the female teachers as well as the average mean set score of 2.84 all showed that the respondents averagely agreed with the items as the barriers to teachers’ emotional intelligence as a tool for achieving classroom participation among students in secondary schools in Rivers State.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference between the mean score of male and female respondents on the extent of teachers’ emotional intelligence as a tool for achieving classroom participation among students in secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 4: Summary of z-test Analysis on the Difference between the Mean Score of Male and Female Respondents on the Extent of Teachers’ Emotional Intelligence as a Tool for Achieving Classroom Participation among Students in Secondary Schools in Rivers State

Variable	N	Mean	SD	df	z-cal.	z-crit.	Level of Significance	Decision
Male Respondents	171	2.47	0.83					
				367	0.33	1.96	0.05	Accepted
Female Respondents	198	2.50	0.90					

Table 4 showed that the estimated value of z-cal. of 0.33 was less than the table value of z-crit. of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and 367 degrees of freedom and as such, the null hypothesis was accepted meaning that there is no significant difference between the mean score of male and female respondents on the extent of teachers’ emotional intelligence as a tool for achieving classroom participation among students in secondary schools in Rivers State.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference between the mean score of male and female respondents on the ways in which teachers' emotional intelligence contribute to classroom participation among students in secondary schools in Rivers State

Table 5: Summary of z-test Analysis on the Difference between the Mean Score of Male and Female Respondents on the Ways in Which Teachers' Emotional Intelligence Contributes to Classroom Participation among Students in Secondary Schools in Rivers State

Variable	N	Mean	SD	df	z-cal.	z-crit.	Level of Significance	Decision
Male Respondents	171	2.63	0.80					
				367	2.74	1.96	0.05	Rejected
Female Respondents	198	2.86	0.81					

Table 5 indicated that the estimated value of z-cal. of 2.74 was more than the table value of z-crit. of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and 367 degrees of freedom and as such, the null hypothesis was rejected indicating that there is a significant difference between the mean score of male and female respondents on the ways in which teachers' emotional intelligence contribute to classroom participation among students in secondary schools in Rivers State.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant difference between the mean score of male and female respondents on the barriers to teachers' emotional intelligence as a tool for achieving classroom participation among students in secondary schools in Rivers State

Table 6: Summary of z-test Analysis on the Difference between the Mean Score of Male and Female Respondents on the Barriers to Teachers' Emotional Intelligence as a Tool for Achieving Classroom Participation among Students in Secondary Schools in Rivers State

Variable	n	Mean	SD	df	z-cal.	z-crit.	Level of Significance	Decision
Male Respondents	171	2.82	0.71					
				367	0.51	1.96	0.05	Accepted
Female Respondents	198	2.86	0.81					

Table 6 revealed that the estimated value of z-cal. of 0.51 was less than the table value of z-crit. of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and 367 degrees of freedom and as such, the null hypothesis was accepted showing that there is no significant difference between the mean score of male and female respondents on the barriers to teachers' emotional intelligence as a tool for achieving classroom participation among students in secondary schools in Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

The findings from the study showed that there is a low extent of teachers' emotional intelligence as a tool for achieving classroom participation among students in secondary schools in Rivers State and that there was no significant difference between the mean score of male and female respondents on the extent of teachers' emotional intelligence as a tool for achieving classroom participation among students in secondary schools in Rivers State. This agrees with the finding of the study by Tok, Tok and Dolapcioglu (2013), which also reported a low level of teachers' emotional intelligence which was though significant. The findings of the study showed the extent of the teachers' emotional intelligence and from the result of the study, there is a low extent to which the teachers are able to manage their anger. There is no doubt that as teachers, there are various issues that can result to anger in and out of the classroom and in some cases, the behaviour of the students can be annoying. These teachers may find it difficult to manage such anger especially when the teacher is not seeing improvement in the learning outcome of the students and this may be natural but is also an indication of low emotional intelligence among the teachers. However, the teachers responded to a high extent that they are willing to assist the students solve any problem that they have. The teachers responded to a low extent that they are aware of their weakness and this is sometimes so especially when other teachers are the ones who complain about the attitude of their colleagues who do not see anything wrong in their attitudes. The study showed that there was a high extent to which the teachers maintain cordial relationships and this may explain the reason why it is easy to see each other's weakness. The teachers indicated that there is a low extent to which they are able to sacrifice for others' happiness. This result shows that although the teachers have areas of intelligence emotionally, it is still below what can create a positive impact on the learners and improve on students' participation in the classroom.

Responses from the teachers showed that they agreed on the ways teachers' emotional intelligence contributes to classroom participation among students in secondary schools in Rivers State. The study also showed that there was a significant difference between the mean score of male and female respondents on the ways in which teachers' emotional intelligence

contribute to classroom participation among students in secondary schools in Rivers State. The teachers sampled for the study agreed that there are several ways that their emotional intelligence can contribute to better participation among their students. The teachers agreed that they are able to assist their students overcome stress and this is essential especially where the learners are children and can easily get fatigued during learning. However, while the female teachers helped in managing stress, the male teachers disagreed which means that the female teachers are likely able to assist students manage stress more than their male counterparts who may not be patient with the learners during classroom instruction. The teacher must be able to assist them overcome stress and be active participants in the activities taking place in the class. The teachers also pointed out that they assist the learners to engage in team work. This can happen when the teacher creates teams during teaching and learning and also participate in the activities of these teams which creates bonding and participation during learning. According to Ogar, Ibok, Odey, Joseph, Unimuke and Ungie (2023), this results to students performing above par. This may explain why the teachers also agree that they assist their learners to build social skills but this is more pronounced among the female teachers who agreed to this than the male teachers who disagreed. Similar study by Amaewhule and Nwogu (2019) agreed that social networking contributes to emotional intelligence which is also beneficial to the teacher and students. The respondents however agree that they show empathy which Obilor and Uchendu (2020), identify as essential for developing emotional intelligence, and they also revealed that they engaged in healthy communication as ways of supporting their learners to engage in active and participatory classroom activities.

In the findings of the study, the respondents agreed on the barriers to teachers' emotional intelligence as a tool for achieving classroom participation among students in secondary schools in Rivers State. The result of the study equally showed that there was no significant difference between the mean score of male and female respondents on the barriers to teachers' emotional intelligence as a tool for achieving classroom participation among students in secondary schools in Rivers State. There are challenges that teachers face in building emotional intelligence and from their responses, some teachers are resistant to change and this may make it difficult for them to build the needed emotional intelligence. This may be so because according to a study by Vipene and Okirigwe (2021), teachers who are emotionally intelligent experience burnout, which some teachers may not want to experience. The respondents also agreed that there are teachers who suffer from genetic factors that make it difficult for the teachers to develop emotional intelligence. There is no doubt that some teachers suffer from

hereditary interference which may make it difficult to show emotional intelligence but this must be managed so that it won't interfere with their activities in school. This explains why Okiridu and Agbam (2023), agreed that teachers must show some sense of self-awareness to build the emotional intelligence that will improve their service delivery. The teachers also agreed that socio-cultural orientation, behaviour of other members of the school and the policy of the school can also hinder the teachers from building the needed emotional intelligence. This means that assisting teachers to build emotional intelligence will require the support of all stakeholders and this will in turn contribute to active classroom participation when the teacher and students interact in the classroom and this is important for better educational outcomes.

Conclusion

Based on the findings from the study, it was concluded that there was a low extent of teachers' emotional intelligence and there are several barriers to teachers building the emotional intelligence that will support classroom participation among students. The male and female teachers did not differ in their opinion scores and this means that they share similarity in their extent of emotional intelligence and factors hindering them from developing the required emotional intelligence but a difference existed in ways they deploy emotional intelligence to support students' classroom participation. This means that similar interventions for correcting this experience will be helpful to all the teachers at a time except in cases where they differ in their opinion where personalized interventions may be required.

Recommendations

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

1. Teachers in these schools need to be exposed to professional training on emotional intelligence as this will assist them not only in the discharge of their teaching responsibilities but also on how to interact productively with other school stakeholders.
2. Character test should be considered as one of the requirements for the recruitment of teachers as this is essential in ensuring that only teachers who are emotionally intelligent or those who have the capacity to do so are employed as this will also affect the quality of teaching activities taking place in the classroom.
3. The counselling section in these schools should be made as functional as possible as those with emotional challenges will need to consult such services in handling any challenge that may want to affect the quality of service that they deliver in the school.

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