

# Influence of Emotional Intensity and Leadership Traits on Social Competency of Senior Secondary School Teachers in Oyo State

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**Abstract:** Today's school is often a complex social environment of confrontation, miscommunication, manipulation, hostility, and conflict. So much of what takes place in virtually all schools is grounded in the interrelationships of students and teachers but it seems that most relationships in our schools have problems. Therefore, this study investigated the influence of emotional intensity and leadership traits on social competency of senior secondary school teachers in Oyo State, Nigeria. Three hypotheses were formulated and tested in the study. The population consists of all senior secondary school teachers from where a sample of six hundred and thirty was purposively and randomly selected. Emotional Intensity Scale ( $r = 0.83$ ), Leadership Traits Scale ( $r = 0.81$ ) and Social Competency Scale ( $r = 0.80$ ) was adapted to collect data. Pearson Moment Product Correlation and Regression was used in the analysis. Results show that there is significant correlation between emotional intensity and social competency of senior secondary school teachers in Oyo State ( $r = 0.165$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Equally, a significant correlation exists between leadership traits and social competency ( $r = 0.116$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Moreover, the predictor variables, emotional intensity and leadership traits are also significant in predicting social competency ( $F = 13.041$ ;  $df (2,627)$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ) while the  $t$ -value of both ( $\beta = 0.164$ ,  $t_{(627)} = 4.226$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ); ( $\beta = 0.093$ ,  $t_{(647)} = 2.389$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ) strongly influence social competency of senior secondary school teachers in Oyo State. To cope with emotional demands, teachers require good emotional intensity as well as effective social competence as a leader. It is therefore recommended that school teachers should manage their emotions effectively for learning to take place.

**Key words:** emotional intensity, leadership trait, social competency, hostility, teachers

## 1. Introduction

Emotions are biological states associated with the nervous system brought on by neurophysiological changes variously associated with thoughts, feelings, behavioural responses, and a degree of pleasure or displeasure. As human beings, our emotions, as well as those of others around us, influence our conduct, attitudes, and thinking. In the same vein, others are being influenced by our emotions. Teaching is an emotional activity (Hargreaves, 1998, 2001), and as such, it carries with it our own emotional experience as well as that of those who surround us. However, emotion is often intertwined with mood, temperament, personality, disposition, creativity and motivation (Frijda, 2013). It is obvious that emotions have a lot of influence in students' learning process as found

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in the study of Pekrun, Goetz, Titz and Perry (2002) who investigated the impact of emotions upon learning and concluded that while negative deactivating emotions on the part of the teacher take a negative toll in the classroom, positive activating emotions render a positive effect on student learning.

This claim was also supported by Day & Leitch (2001) that opined that teachers are susceptible to the influence that emotions exert over them. It should be understood that not only is their work influenced by their emotions but also diverse aspects of their work influence their emotions. Emotions involved in teaching are varied as there is no agreed type of emotion present in professional duties beyond the general term of positive and negative emotions. In the analytical review of Frenzel (2014), emotions are the most prevalent in educational work and with what intensity, he found seven discrete emotions as against the most recent five postulated by Chen (2016). However, both authors agreed that there are combinations of diverse natures of emotions in teachers.

In the work of Hagenauer, Hascher and Volet (2015), emotions both positive and negative as generated by the interpersonal relationship between the teacher and the student, classroom discipline, as well as the student's engagement in classroom activities could be significant when experiencing the emotions of joy, anger and anxiety. Emotion is characterized by indices such as self-awareness, self-management and emotional stability. Self-assessment which is a component of emotional intelligence reflects the importance of recognizing one's feelings and how they affect performance. This is concerned with understanding the consequences of moods and emotions, and how they evolve and change over time. The variance in peoples' self-awareness explains the difference in understanding of how different situations, events, other people, and stimuli generate emotions. Therefore the concept of self-awareness is viewed as an important trigger for initiating relationships. Frenzel, Götz, Stephens, and Jacob (2009) describe the relationship that occurs between teacher emotions and student behavioral responses. Their model proposes that teachers' emotions, impacted by student behaviors, in turn influence instruction; thus continuing the cyclical effect in the impact of teachers' emotions on student behaviors and outcomes.

Self-management which is the ability to control and mitigate one's emotional response to others includes the choice of appropriate emotional reaction and the intensity of that reaction. In other parlance, it is associated with behavior and emotional cues from others. Invariably, self-management is the process of managing one's own beliefs, impulses, resources and disciplines. The interest in emotional stability in the work place rests on the belief that emotional intelligence plays an important role in innovation, efficiency, productivity, the development of talent, task accomplishment, to mention but just few. Goleman's (1998), framework of emotional competence is classified into two categories. First is personal competencies, which exposes how individual manages himself, this includes self-awareness, self-motivation and self-regulation. The second category is social competences; this explains how one manages his relationship which includes social awareness, social skills and emotional receptivity.

Social awareness is the ability to perceive, understand and respond to the emotions and feelings of others and make them comfortable socially. It involves knowing others, their feelings, thinking patterns, viewpoints, targets, goals and facial expression and other non-verbal communications. Social competencies is the ability to manage relationships and building networks and ability to find common platform and support while emotional receptivity refers to the ability to accept and encourage the viewpoints of other with open mind and accept their emotions as well in addition to facilitating the inflow and outflow of emotions for encouraging their interpersonal repetitiveness. Having good emotional receptivity helps to produce best individuals who are personally and socially emotional competent and will enhance the individuals empathetic and sensitive senses to help others who

are in need. Teachers develop different strategies to regulate their emotions in the classroom, including changes in emotional valence, intensity or time course. For teachers, having stable emotional intensity is essential for success.

Emotional intensity is an innate trait, or a temperament. It means feelings of a wide spectrum of emotions in a more vivid and profound way than most people do, and this includes both positive and negative emotions— pain, distress, despair, fear, excitement, love, sadness or happiness. Teachers experience intense, emotion-laden interactions on a daily basis and have a great number of emotional demands placed on them during their professional careers (Baruch-Feldman, Brondolo, Ben-Dayana, & Schwartz, 2002; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Brouwers, Will, & Welko, 2001; Doudin, Curchod-Ruedi, & Baumberger, 2009; Hakanen, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2006; Steinhardt, Smith Jaggars, Faulk, & Gloria, 2011). The stress and emotional demands associated with the teaching profession can lead to emotional exhaustion, cynical attitudes about teaching, a reduced feeling of personal accomplishment, and lower job satisfaction (Day & Qing, 2009; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). As reported by Chang (2009, 2013) and Sutton and Wheatley (2003), the emotional effort involved in managing student-teacher relationships may prove exhausting for many teachers. Overall, to cope with emotional demands and safeguard their own wellbeing, teachers require good emotional intensity as well as effective social competency. Both of these factors need to be understood in the light of the specific context in which teachers are working.

Competence refers to a potential ability and a capability to function in a given situation. Competency focuses on one's actual performance in a situation. This means that competence is required before one can expect to achieve competency. Competence is the ability to perform a specific task, action or function successfully. Competencies are used to create unique standards within disciplines and specialties. This encompasses educators, learners, and practitioners (Babatunde & Ajijola, 2019). According to Verma, Parterson and Medves (2006), “competencies in education create an environment that fosters empowerment, accountability, and performance evaluation, which is consistent and equitable. The acquisition of competencies can be through talent, experience, or training.” Teachers’ Emotional competence refers to a person’s ability to regulate the intensity and expression of the emotions he or she feels (Gross, 2002; Gross & John, 2003; Lazarus, 2006). It is a multifaceted process encompassing a range of physiological, behavioural, and cognitive activities that enable individuals to modulate their experience and expression of positive and negative emotions (Chang, 2009). Good emotional competence ensures good-quality interactions with others in which teachers are constantly required to manage their own emotional displays as well as the emotions of their students (Gross, 2002).

Teacher’s competency enhances a teacher's ability to create an environment that is fair, understanding, and accepting of diverse students, ideas, experiences, and backgrounds. Teachers have been found to be the single most important factor influencing student achievement. It is only the teacher with good leadership traits that may emerge as socially skilled teacher. Teachers as effective leaders should have the necessary social skills to inspire and impact their students, allowing schools to run competently and smoothly. Curchod-Ruedi, Doudin, and Moreau (2010) found emotion regulation ability to be a function of the relationship between regulation of emotions experienced (e.g., controlling fear) and regulation of emotions displayed (e.g., concealing anger). Teachers with good emotion competence maintain the intensity of their manifest emotions, especially when negative or undesired, at a lower level than the emotions they actually experience in critical situations within the educational relationship.

Social competency is defined as the ability to handle social interactions effectively. In other words, social competence refers to getting along well with others, being able to form and maintain close relationships, and responding in adaptive ways in social settings. Previous studies conducted by Adediwura & Tayo (2007) and Adu & Olatundun (2007) reveal that different elements of teacher competence include teacher's subject knowledge, teaching skills, teacher attitude and teacher attendance. Moreover, leadership as a process places emphasis on social interaction and relationships. As a leader, the teachers may influence, motivate, communicate and energize their students to bring the best from them for the betterment of teaching-learning process.

Leadership as an important part of our life has both social and emotional dimensions. At schools, for instance, teachers have to be in a social interaction that necessitates adaptation to the social environment. Today's school is often a complex social environment of confrontation, miscommunication, manipulation, hostility, and conflict. So much of what takes place in virtually all schools is grounded in the interrelationships of its students, and all teacher relationships have problems (Pamela, 2010). These interactions involve the work that is done, the goals that are set, and the decisions that are made. Hence, it is quite necessary to keep an eagle's eye and gather information about emotional intensity of the teachers and adequate measures must be taken for the improvement of emotional intensity for the development of social competency of teachers. Leadership is the process of influencing the activities of an individual or group in efforts toward goal achievement in a given situation. The qualities of a person to fill all over knowledge in leading a group or a team and can perform well even in critical situation to bring the output can be called as leadership traits (Sousa, 2008). Without effective leadership, teachers of an organization often quickly degenerate into argument and conflict, because they each see things in different ways and lean toward different solutions. Leadership traits therefore play an important and very significant role in developing social competency of teachers. It is with this burden that the researcher had undertaken to investigate the influence of emotional intensity and leadership traits on social competency of senior secondary school teachers in Oyo State, Nigeria. Three hypotheses that were formulated and tested in the study are:

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between emotional intensity and social competency of senior secondary school teachers in Oyo State, Nigeria

H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant relationship between leadership traits and social competency of senior secondary school teachers in Oyo State, Nigeria.

H<sub>03</sub>: There is no significant influence of emotional intensity and leadership traits on social competency of senior secondary school teachers in Oyo State, Nigeria.

## **2. Methodology**

Descriptive research method was adopted for this study. The three variables that were investigated in the study include Emotional intensity and Leadership traits as the independent variables and Social competency as dependent variable. The population consists of all the Senior Secondary School teachers in Oyo State. There are 324 secondary schools in Oyo State with 11,732 teachers. Purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used to sample six hundred and thirty teachers across all the eight educational zones and schools in Oyo State that participated in the study. An eligibility criterion for participation in the study is that a teacher must be teaching only in the senior secondary classes.

Three instruments: Emotional Intensity Scale, Leadership Traits Scale and Social Competency Scale were used for data collection. The instrument was adapted from Rayer & Thamodaran (2020), and revalidated using

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Karl Pearson product moment correlation. The correlation coefficient for Emotional Intensity Scale (EIS) is 0.83, Leadership Traits Scale (LTS) with 0.81 and Social Competency Scale (SCS) with 0.80. The instrument was administered by the researcher with the assistance of eight research assistants. Data collection took a period of eight weeks. Data collected was analyzed using Pearson Moment Product Correlation and Regression analysis.

### 3. Results

Table 1 present the correlation between Emotional intensity and Social competency of senior secondary school teachers in Oyo State. From the table, it is inferred that the p value is less than 0.05 and hence the null hypothesis is accepted. This implies that there is significant correlation between emotional intensity and social competency of senior secondary school teachers in Oyo State. The results from correlation analysis revealed that there is significant correlation between emotional intensity and social competency of senior secondary school teachers in Oyo State. The reason may be that the teachers learn to retort emotionally, yet concurrently and purposefully apply their knowledge about emotions and their expression to relationships with their students and with their peers, so that they can negotiate interpersonal exchanges and normalize their own emotional experience. This shows that the teachers were able to manage their emotions without transferring the aggression to their students. For that, emotional intensity of teachers is a must. Teachers' use of this developing emotional intensity within social processes in schools contributes to success in interacting with their students and with their peers. In turn, successful relationship with them is a foundation for the development of social competency.

**Table 1 Correlation Between Emotional Intensity and Social Competency of Senior Secondary School Teachers in Oyo State**

Variable	N	Social Competency	
		r-Value	P-Value
Emotional intensity	630	0.165	0.000**

\*\* Significant at  $P < 0.05$

Table 2 presents the correlation between Leadership traits and Social competency of senior secondary school teachers in Oyo State. From the table, the p-value is less than 0.05 and hence the null hypothesis is accepted. It shows that there is significant correlation exists between leadership traits and social competency of higher secondary teachers. This result provides clear evidence that leadership traits and social competency of senior secondary teachers is positively correlated. It clearly indicates that social competency is critically important for effective leadership because social competence is the ability to handle social interactions effectively. And also social competence refers to getting along fit with others, being able to form and keep up close rapports, and responding in adaptive ways in social settings. So the social competence is one of the most important competences required for triumphant performance of the teaching profession by teachers. The teachers who are having good leadership traits are know how to build rapport quickly and effectively, to develop good, strong relationships with others, whether peers or students. So the study conveys that the teachers who are having more social competency may exhibit good kind of leadership traits at social settings.

**Table 2 Correlation Between Leadership Traits and Social Competency of Senior Secondary School Teachers in Oyo State**

Variable	N	Social Competency	
		r-Value	P-Value
Emotional intensity	630	0.116	0.000**

\*\* Significant at  $P < 0.05$

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Table 3 presents the influence of emotional intensity, leadership traits and social competency of senior secondary school teachers in Oyo State. From Table 3, the index of predictability (R) is 0.197 and the percentage variance accounted by the variables emotional intensity and leadership traits ( $R^2$ ) in predicting social competency is 3.9%. The obtained F value, 13.041 with degrees of freedom (2, 627) is greater than the table value 3.85 at  $P < 0.05$  level of significance. This suggests that the predictor variable variables, emotional intensity and leadership traits are also significant in predicting social competency. This implies that the independent variables accounted for 13% of the variance in the dependent variable. The joint effect of emotional intensity and leadership traits help to predict social competency of senior secondary school teachers in Oyo state ( $F = 13.041$ ;  $df (2,627)$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ).

**Table 3 Influence of Emotional Intensity and Leadership Traits on Social Competency of Senior Secondary School Teachers in Oyo State**

Multiple R = 0.197 R Square = 0.039 Adjusted R Square = .013 Standard Error = 13.910					
Analysis of variance					
Source of Variance	SS	Df	MS	F	Sig
Regression	1280.726	2	640.363	<b>13.041</b>	<b>000**</b>
Residual	67909.669	627	190.757		
<b>Total</b>	<b>69190.395</b>	<b>629</b>			

Table 4 shows the beta value of each of the predictor variables in relation to social competency of senior secondary school teachers in Oyo State. The  $\beta$  coefficients of the variables emotional intensity and leadership traits in the development of the regression equation for social competency are 0.164 and 0.093 respectively. It is evident from the table that emotional intensity is a significant predictor of social competency. The beta value 0.164 denotes that for every unit of social competency, emotional intensity can predict 16.4%. The beta value 0.093 denotes that for every unit of social competency, leadership traits can predict 9.3%. And also the t-values for emotional intensity and leadership traits are ( $\beta = 0.164$ ,  $t_{(627)} = 4.226$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ); ( $\beta = 0.093$ ,  $t_{(647)} = 2.389$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ) which indicate that both strongly influenced the social competency of senior secondary school teachers in Oyo State.

**Table 4 Relative Contribution of Predictor Variables on Criterion Variable**

Model	Unstandardized coefficient		Standard coefficient	T	Sig
	B	Std Error	$\beta$		
Constant	58,929	3.083		19.112	0.000
Emotional intensity	.118	.028	.164	4.226	0.000
Leadership trait	.009	.004	.093	2.389	0.017

The reason may be that emotions are an integral part of “classroom life” and are experienced in teacher-student interactions quite often. When the teachers and students from the different cultures have a different appraisal of a classroom event, they will experience different emotions. Emotions influence teacher-student interactions and shape the classroom atmosphere (Meyer & Turner, 2007). Teachers’ effective emotional skills may contribute to their good relationships with students. Emotional experience and expression are very important for the quality of the entire educational process in the classroom, quality of teacher – pupil interactions, and the classroom atmosphere. Emotionally intense teachers may have a capacity for compassion,

empathy, and sensitivity in relationships; they show strong emotional attachments to people, places, and things. So they may strategically apply their knowledge about emotions and their expression to relationships with others, so that they can negotiate interpersonal exchanges and regulate their emotional experiences.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The study investigated emotional intensity, leadership traits and social competency of senior secondary school teachers in Oyo State. The study revealed the potency of the predictor variables on dependent variable which are considered significant. The main findings of the present study firstly regard the importance of the intensity and leadership traits with which the teachers feel emotions, the effects of which may be assessed using a simple indicator such as the emotional intensity elicited by stressful events and leadership traits with which they relate with their students. In the light of this connection, it is pertinent to encourage teachers to avoid certain emotions while attempting to express others. The results permit us to affirm that we should promote positive emotions to the exclusion of negative ones but at least not in all situations. It seems necessary then that the teacher needs to have a special ability that permits them to know in which situation each emotion should be used for social competency. The result also shows how a high percentage of teachers deliberately attempt to intensify positive emotions and reduce negative emotions in an effort to achieve the most effective teaching. Nevertheless, the most appropriate strategy is not to hide negative emotions, but rather present them openly in a manner adequate and consistent with the situation. This strategy should be encouraged among teachers so as to sustain social competency in schools.

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