

MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES OF IMPROVING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AMONG LECTURERS AND STUDENTS IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study explored various management strategies of improving emotional intelligence among lecturers and Students in tertiary Institutions in Nigeria. The study used secondary data. The secondary data were collected from both print and online publication. The study concluded that capacity building programs, emotionally responsive pedagogy, effective counseling and mentoring systems, curriculum integration, and emotionally supportive institutional cultures are some of the management strategies to improve lecturers-students emotional intelligence in the tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Based on the findings, the study recommends implementation of structured capacity building programs, adoption of emotionally responsive pedagogy, strengthening of counseling and mentoring systems, integration of emotional intelligence into the curriculum, foster emotionally supportive institutional cultures, monitor and evaluate EI interventions and encourage research on emotional intelligence.

Keyword: Emotional intelligence, Tertiary institutions, Lecturers Students

1.0 Introduction

Emotional intelligence (EI), broadly defined as the ability to recognize, understand, manage, and effectively utilize emotions in oneself and others, has emerged as a critical factor in educational effectiveness and human relations within learning environments. In tertiary institutions, emotional intelligence plays a vital role in shaping the quality of interactions between lecturers and students, influencing teaching effectiveness, academic engagement, conflict management, and overall institutional climate. In the Nigerian context, where tertiary institutions operate within complex socio-economic, cultural, and academic pressures, the relevance of emotional intelligence among lecturers and students has become increasingly significant.

Nigerian tertiary institutions—comprising universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education—are characterized by diverse student populations, heavy academic workloads, limited resources, and evolving pedagogical demands. These conditions often heighten stress, emotional strain, and interpersonal tensions between lecturers and students. Reports of student disengagement, poor lecturer–student relationships, communication breakdowns, academic stress, and disciplinary challenges underscore the need for non-cognitive competencies such as emotional intelligence to complement intellectual and technical skills within the academic environment.

Despite the growing global recognition of emotional intelligence as a determinant of academic success, leadership effectiveness, and positive social behavior, its systematic development within Nigerian tertiary institutions remains limited. Teaching and learning processes have traditionally emphasized cognitive achievement and content mastery, often neglecting emotional awareness, empathy, self-regulation, and social skills. This gap has implications for classroom management, student motivation, mental well-being, and the creation of supportive learning environments that foster mutual respect and collaboration between lecturers and students.

Improving emotional intelligence among lecturers and students requires deliberate and context-sensitive strategies that address both individual and institutional dimensions. Such strategies may include capacity-building programs, emotionally responsive pedagogy, counseling and mentoring systems, curriculum integration, and the promotion of emotionally supportive institutional cultures. By strengthening emotional intelligence, tertiary institutions in Nigeria can enhance lecturer–student relationships, reduce conflicts, improve academic engagement, and support holistic development.

Against this backdrop, this study focuses on strategies to improve emotional intelligence among lecturers and students in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The study seeks to contribute to educational research and practice by highlighting the importance of emotional intelligence in higher education and by providing evidence-based insights into approaches that can foster emotionally healthy, productive, and inclusive academic communities.

2.0 Review of Literature

2.1 Concept of Tertiary Institutions

The National Policy on Education (FGN, 2014) described Tertiary Education as the education given after secondary education in Universities, Colleges of Education, Polytechnics, Monotechnics including those institutions offering correspondence courses. Ofojebe and Chukwuma (2015) describe it as the cornerstone of national development, as the skills and knowledge acquired serve as engines of productivity, innovation, wealth creation, and social well-being. Tertiary institutions is an organized social institution made up with stakeholders like the students, lecturers (academic staff), non-academic staff and researcher whose responsibilities are lecturing, organization of instructional resources, assessment of students, marking of students' scripts and projects supervision (Ogunode, & Adamu, 2021).

Tertiary education, also called post-secondary education, is any level of education pursued beyond high school, including undergraduate and graduate credentials. These credentials encompass certificates, diplomas or academic degrees. Tertiary education refers to specialized education in a specific field, taken on after finishing high school. Tertiary education is non-compulsory and provided in a specialist institution, usually a college, polytechnic or university. This form of education may be delivered virtually or at a distance (Top-hat, 2023). Tertiary education is an organized educational system that is consciously designed for manpower production, in-service

training and national development. Tertiary education is an education that advances teaching, research and community services for national development. Tertiary education is an education industry that is meant for the production of manpower and national development via implementation of teaching, research and provision of community services (Ogunode, 2025).

2.2 Concept of Emotional Intelligence

The term emotional intelligence was created by two researchers, Peter Salavoy and John Mayer in their article “Emotional Intelligence” in the journal *Imagination, Cognition, and Personality* in 1990. It was later popularized by Dan Goleman in his 1995 book *Emotional Intelligence*. Emotional Intelligence (or EI) is the ability to: Recognize, understand and manage our own emotions and recognize, understand and influence the emotions of others. In practical terms, EI means being aware that emotions can drive our behavior and impact people (positively and negatively), and learning how to manage those emotions – both our own and others (IHHP 2022). Emotional intelligenc is the ability and capacity to effectively manage your emotion against hurting yourself and recognize how to manage other people’ motion well. Emotional intelligence is the ability to effectively manage, conceptualize, recognize, understand, and coordinate emotions, both one’s own and others in an institution to aid realization of institutional goals (Ogunode, Edinoh, & Salami, 2024). Emotional intelligence (aka EI or EQ for "emotional quotient") is the ability to perceive, interpret, demonstrate, control, evaluate, and use emotions to communicate with and relate to others effectively and constructively. This ability to express and control emotions is essential, but so is the ability to understand, interpret, and respond to the emotions of others. Some experts suggest that emotional intelligence is more important than IQ for success in life (Cherry, 2024).

Emotional intelligence is the ability to understand and manage one’s own feelings and as well perceive and respond to the emotions of others skillfully. It involves emotional awareness, empathy, and the ability to navigate social interactions effectively (Akinjobi, 2024). Emotional intelligence in this paper can be seen as the ability to understand and manage one’s own feelings and as well perceive and respond to the emotions of others skillfully. It involves emotional awareness, empathy, and the ability to navigate social interactions effectively. Emotional Intelligence is the capacity for intelligent emotion management. It is a set of learned skills and abilities that can predict positive outcomes at home, in school, and at work. People who have these are healthier, less depressed, more productive at work, and have better relationships. The modern world necessitates enhanced interpersonal relationships, mutual understanding, and workplace productivity (Abebe and Singh 2023). Emotional intelligence refers to how well a person can identify, control, and evaluate emotions, both in themselves and in others. Some researchers think these skills are genetic, but most believe they can be learned or at least strengthened. Virtually all agree it takes both a high emotional quotient (EQ) as well as a high IQ to be successful in life (JWU 2022). From the above, Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to perceive, understand, manage, and regulate one’s own emotions and those of others.

In Nigerian tertiary institutions, concerns regarding lecturers' and students' emotional intelligence have implications for teaching effectiveness, student engagement, and the quality of the learning environment. Emotional intelligence (EI) is increasingly recognized as a critical factor in academic success, interpersonal relationships, and overall institutional performance.

In tertiary education, both lecturers and students encounter complex emotional demands, including stress, academic pressure, interpersonal conflicts, and the need for collaboration. Low levels of emotional intelligence among lecturers may negatively impact teaching quality, classroom management, and mentoring capacity. Similarly, students with low emotional intelligence may struggle with academic performance, peer interactions, and coping with institutional challenges.

2.3 Theoretical Framework-Emotional Intelligence (EI) Theory by Daniel Goleman

Emotional Intelligence (EI) Theory, popularized by Daniel Goleman, explains how individuals recognize, understand, and manage their own emotions, as well as perceive and influence the emotions of others. Goleman identifies five key components of EI: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. The theory posits that emotional competencies are critical for effective interpersonal interactions, personal development, and organizational performance.

Applicability to the Topic

The EI Theory is highly suitable for the topic because it provides a framework for understanding how lecturers and students can enhance their interpersonal and intrapersonal abilities to foster a positive learning and teaching environment. In Nigerian tertiary institutions, managing emotional intelligence can:

- 1) Improve lecturer-student relationships, creating a supportive and productive classroom atmosphere.
- 2) Enhance communication and conflict resolution skills, reducing misunderstandings and industrial or interpersonal disputes.
- 3) Promote self-regulation and motivation, encouraging lecturers and students to engage more effectively in academic and research activities.
- 4) Strengthen empathy and social skills, enabling staff and students to navigate diverse cultural and social contexts in educational settings.

Relevance to Management Strategies

Applying EI Theory allows tertiary institutions to design targeted interventions, such as training workshops, mentoring programs, counseling services, and curriculum integration of emotional

intelligence concepts. These strategies equip lecturers and students with the skills to manage emotions constructively, enhancing overall academic performance, collaboration, and institutional development. This theoretical framework provides both a conceptual basis and practical roadmap for improving emotional intelligence in the context of Nigerian higher education.

3.0 Methodology

Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive and analytical research design complemented by document and literature review methods. The design is appropriate because it allows for a detailed exploration of management strategies aimed at improving emotional intelligence (EI) among lecturers and students in Nigerian tertiary institutions. The qualitative approach enables an in-depth understanding of existing practices, institutional interventions, and theoretical frameworks relevant to emotional intelligence development without relying on experimental procedures.

Scope of the Study

The study focuses on lecturers and students across Nigerian tertiary institutions, including universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education. Emphasis is placed on strategies that promote self-awareness, empathy, self-regulation, motivation, and social skills—key components of EI. The study also considers institutional initiatives, such as training programs, mentoring, counseling services, emotionally responsive pedagogy, and curriculum integration of emotional intelligence principles.

Target Population

While the study relies on secondary data, it conceptually engages perspectives of the following groups:

- 1) Lecturers, whose emotional intelligence influences teaching effectiveness, classroom management, and mentoring relationships
- 2) Students, whose EI affects learning outcomes, peer interactions, and academic resilience
- 3) Academic administrators and institutional leaders responsible for designing and implementing EI programs
- 4) Counseling and support staff who facilitate emotional and psychological development

Sources of Data

Data are obtained primarily from secondary sources, including:

- 1) Peer-reviewed journals and books on emotional intelligence, education psychology, and higher education management
- 2) Reports and policy documents from tertiary institutions and regulatory bodies (e.g., National Universities Commission, NBTE)
- 3) Case studies and best practice reports from national and international education systems
- 4) Training manuals, workshop reports, and program evaluation documents on EI development

Data Collection Technique

A systematic literature and document review approach is employed. Relevant materials are identified through academic databases, institutional repositories, government archives, and official publications. Inclusion criteria focus on relevance to emotional intelligence, management strategies, educational outcomes, and institutional practices.

Method of Data Analysis

Data are analyzed using thematic and content analysis. Key themes include:

- 1) Induction and capacity-building programs for lecturers
- 2) Counseling, mentoring, and peer-support systems for students
- 3) Integration of emotional intelligence into teaching, learning, and assessment practices
- 4) Institutional policies promoting emotionally supportive environments

Monitoring and evaluation of EI interventions

The analysis synthesizes these themes to determine how management strategies can enhance emotional intelligence and, consequently, improve academic performance, interpersonal relationships, and institutional effectiveness.

Analytical Framework

The study is guided by Daniel Goleman's Emotional Intelligence Theory, which emphasizes self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills as foundational elements of emotional competence. This framework informs the analysis of strategies that can be implemented to develop these competencies among lecturers and students in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Ethical Considerations

The study adheres to ethical research standards by ensuring proper acknowledgment of all sources, maintaining objectivity in analysis, and using publicly available and credible information. No personal or confidential data are involved.

Limitations of the Method

The reliance on secondary data may limit direct insights from lecturers and students in specific institutions. However, the extensive use of credible academic sources, policy documents, and institutional reports ensures reliability and strengthens the relevance of findings.

4.0 Result and Discussion on Strategies to Improve Emotional Intelligence among Lecturers and Students in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria

Capacity-Building Programs on Emotional Intelligence

Capacity-building programs represent a foundational strategy for enhancing emotional intelligence among lecturers and students in Nigerian tertiary institutions. These programs include workshops, seminars, short courses, and professional development trainings designed to improve self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and interpersonal skills. For lecturers, EI-focused capacity building can strengthen classroom management, improve lecturer–student relationships, and enhance instructional delivery (Suleman, Hussain, Syed, Parveen, Lodhi & Mahmood 2019; Tyagi, & Gautam, 2017).. For students, such programs foster emotional self-control, stress management, resilience, and effective peer interaction. In the Nigerian context, where academic pressure, limited resources, and socio-economic stressors are prevalent, structured EI training can help both lecturers and students cope better with emotional challenges. Institutional partnerships with psychologists, educational counselors, and non-governmental organizations can further support the sustainability of such programs. Regular capacity-building initiatives contribute to the development of emotionally competent academic communities, thereby improving teaching effectiveness and learning outcomes (Abebe, & Singh, 2023; Akinjobi, 2024).

Emotionally Responsive Pedagogy

Emotionally responsive pedagogy emphasizes teaching approaches that recognize and respond to the emotional needs of learners while fostering a supportive learning environment. This strategy encourages lecturers to adopt learner-centered methods, empathetic communication, inclusive classroom practices, and constructive feedback mechanisms (Tyagi, & Gautam, 2017; Tsagem & Bello 2022). By acknowledging students' emotions and backgrounds, lecturers can promote trust, engagement, and motivation. In Nigerian tertiary institutions, emotionally responsive pedagogy is particularly important due to diverse student populations, cultural differences, and varying levels of academic preparedness. Lecturers who demonstrate empathy, patience, and emotional

sensitivity help students feel valued and understood, which positively influences academic performance and emotional development. This pedagogical approach also enables students to model emotional intelligence through respectful interaction, collaboration, and reflective learning (Ogunode, et al 2024; JWU 2022).

Counseling and Mentoring Systems

Effective counseling and mentoring systems play a critical role in developing emotional intelligence among lecturers and students. Counseling services provide structured support for managing stress, academic anxiety, interpersonal conflicts, and emotional challenges. Mentoring systems, on the other hand, create opportunities for guidance, role modeling, and emotional support through formal and informal relationships (Ogunode et al 2024). In Nigerian tertiary institutions, strengthening counseling units and mentoring frameworks can help address emotional and psychological issues that often go unnoticed. Lecturers who serve as mentors can guide students in emotional self-management, goal setting, and social skills development. Similarly, peer mentoring initiatives promote emotional awareness, empathy, and shared responsibility among students. Well-resourced counseling and mentoring systems thus contribute significantly to emotionally healthy academic environments (Özgenel, & Mert, 2019; Otor, & Jato, 2023).

Curriculum Integration of Emotional Intelligence

Integrating emotional intelligence into the curriculum is a strategic and sustainable approach to EI development in tertiary institutions. This involves embedding EI concepts, skills, and activities into general studies courses, teacher education programs, leadership training, and discipline-specific curricula. Curriculum integration ensures that emotional intelligence is treated as a core competency rather than an optional skill (Suvarna, 2015; Ramana, & Devi, 2018). In Nigeria, curriculum-based EI education can equip students with lifelong emotional and social skills relevant to both academic and workplace contexts. For lecturers, curriculum integration enhances awareness of the emotional dimensions of teaching and learning. Assessment methods such as reflective journals, group projects, and experiential learning activities further reinforce EI development. This strategy promotes holistic education by balancing cognitive achievement with emotional and social competence (Peláez-Fernández, Mérida-López, Sánchez-Álvarez & Extremera 2021; Özgenel, & Mert, 2019).

Promotion of Emotionally Supportive Institutional Cultures

The promotion of emotionally supportive institutional cultures is essential for sustaining emotional intelligence development among lecturers and students. An emotionally supportive culture is characterized by mutual respect, open communication, inclusiveness, fairness, and psychological safety. Institutional policies and leadership practices that prioritize staff and student wellbeing contribute to such a culture (Pandey, Gupta, Pandey, & Giri, 2019; JWU 2022). In Nigerian tertiary institutions, emotionally supportive cultures can be fostered through

participatory governance, staff welfare initiatives, student support services, and conflict-resolution mechanisms. When institutional leaders model emotional intelligence in decision-making and interactions, it sets a positive example for the entire academic community. Supportive institutional cultures encourage emotional expression, collaboration, and collective responsibility, thereby enhancing emotional intelligence across all levels (Wang 2022; Rogowska & Meres 2022).

4.1 Conclusion and Recommendations

The improvement of emotional intelligence among lecturers and students in Nigerian tertiary institutions requires a comprehensive and multi-dimensional approach. The study concluded that capacity-building programs, emotionally responsive pedagogy, effective counseling and mentoring systems, curriculum integration, and emotionally supportive institutional cultures are some of the management strategies to improve lecturers-students emotional intelligence in the tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance emotional intelligence among lecturers and students in Nigerian tertiary institutions:

1. Implement Structured Capacity Building Programs

Tertiary institutions should develop and institutionalize regular training and professional development programs focused on emotional intelligence for lecturers and administrative staff. These programs should emphasize self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills, equipping staff to manage classroom dynamics effectively and foster positive student relationships.

2. Adopt Emotionally Responsive Pedagogy

Lecturers should integrate emotionally responsive teaching methods into their instructional practices. This includes recognizing students' emotional states, adapting teaching approaches to meet diverse learning needs, and creating an inclusive environment that encourages active participation and engagement.

3. Strengthen Counseling and Mentoring Systems

Institutions should establish or reinforce counseling centers and mentoring programs that provide emotional and psychological support for both students and staff. Mentors should be trained to guide mentees in developing coping strategies, interpersonal skills, and self-management techniques essential for academic and personal growth.

4. Integrate Emotional Intelligence into the Curriculum

Academic programs should include content or modules that explicitly teach emotional intelligence skills, such as communication, conflict resolution, stress management, and teamwork. This will ensure that students acquire practical EI competencies alongside their academic knowledge.

5. Foster Emotionally Supportive Institutional Cultures

Tertiary institutions leadership should promote an institutional culture that values emotional well-being, collaboration, and mutual respect. Policies should encourage open communication, recognition of achievements, and initiatives that build a sense of community, reducing stress and improving overall institutional climate.

6. Monitor and Evaluate EI Interventions

Institutions should establish mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of EI-related initiatives. Regular evaluation can help identify gaps, inform improvements, and ensure that interventions align with the evolving emotional and academic needs of both lecturers and students.

7. Encourage Research on Emotional Intelligence

Tertiary institutions should support and fund research on emotional intelligence within academic communities. Evidence-based findings can guide policy formulation, enhance teaching and learning practices, and ensure continuous improvement in developing emotionally competent lecturers and students.

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