

# Explanation of Social Relation Based on University's Psycho-Social Climate, Psychological Wellbeing Components, And Emotional Intelligence

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## ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to explain social relation based on psycho-social climate, psychological wellbeing components, and emotional intelligence among undergraduates of Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ogun State, Nigeria. The statistical population consisted of all undergraduates of Olabisi Onabanjo University. Participants were randomly selected with a multi-stage method. Finally a total of two thousand (2000) respondents participated in the study. The selection cut across all various levels in each faculty. The age range of the respondents is between 16-27 years with mean age of 21.37 and standard deviation of 8.33. The respondents consist of 1021 (52.4%) males and 926 (47.6%) females. Four validated instruments were used for data collection. The multiple regression method and correlation coefficient was used to analysis data. The result has established that psychological wellbeing (control of self and events, happiness, social involvement, self-esteem, mental balance, sociability), emotional intelligence and psychosocial climate were significant in explaining undergraduates' social relation. Also, It was found out that 18.6% of the total variance in students' social relation is accounted for by the combination of psychological wellbeing components, emotional intelligence and psycho-social climate of the university. This study concluded that when individual's sense about connection with a positive social context is 'ideal', he or she is more likely to exhibit appropriate social behaviours.

**Keywords:** Psycho-social climate, psychological wellbeing components, emotional intelligence, undergraduates

## Introduction

In all dealings in life, we come across people to contend with either at home, school, at work and/or public places such as markets, hostels, and so on. In trying to relate with them we require some behavioural skills or attributes to cope with these diversified people, we develop ideas about what they are like, whether we like them or not what they think of us and how they expect us to behave, based on the conclusion of our thought and their own actions, we dispose our reaction and action towards them, these type of acts, actions, practices or behavioural skills mutually oriented towards one another is referred to as social interaction (Baron 2002).

However, the nature and environment in which we live to a large extent determines the intensiveness and extensiveness of our interaction and interrelationship. In the words of Hammed (2003) "the greater the interpersonal interactions, the more a person becomes more human, better adjusted, and more exposed to increasing number of conflicts". The nature of social interaction among Nigerian youths, especially in our educational institutions varies as the individual member themselves. Also, numerous other factors such as personality, attitudes and environmental factors affect the totality of one's social interaction in many ways (Ayodele, 2014). At one extreme, these relationships can be personal and positive. This is the case when individual interact meaningfully, share mutual friendship and respect the dignity of the other. At the other extreme, the relationship can be personal and negative. This happens when individuals dislike one another, create tension and crisis for one another or try to humiliate the personality of one another (Limber, 2002, Rigby, 2002; Ayodele & Bello, 2008; Ayodele, 2014).

The learning environment is a community which may play an important role in the development of individual and his character (Aghai, 2009). The university climate is a key element in its efficiency. It has powerful implications in relation to the social and cognitive development of students. However, when people find a sense of belonging to an environment such as universities, their behavioral and academic problems are reduced (Gallay & Pong, 2004). If the learning and classroom environments do not have healthy psychosocial climate and learners do not experience this climate during the education years, it should not be expected that compatible people and healthy community will exist (Aghai, 2009).

Psycho-social climate of the educational institution is seen as one of the contextual variables that can influence students' social interaction. Ayodele, Aladenusi, and Bello (2014) summarized the studies of Decker, Dona, and Christenson, (2007); Hamre and Pianta, (2005) on psycho-social climate and concluded that a favorable psycho-social climate is formed by the positive faculty-student interactions. And that faculty-student interactions are characterized by more warmth and responsiveness, and by less anger and harshness, are linked to student's greater social competence, especially for students at risk.

Students need to be highly motivated to learn well in school, to recognize and use the social supports that can facilitate their learning, and to regulate their behaviours and manage their feelings. Researchers like

Rashedi and Abolmaali (2014) observed that the creation of the best scientific, social, economic and ethical performances of students depend on instructions that have proper content, appropriate methods, and noble and achievable goals. All these are embedded in the psychosocial climate of the university.

Psychological well-being is a multi-dimensional concept, which describes positive and negative emotions, worries and stress, life-satisfaction and optimism. Psychological wellbeing serves as an umbrella term for many constructs that assess psychological functioning (Girum, 2012). Psychological well-being is about lives going well. It is the combination of feeling good and functioning effectively. Sustainable well-being does not require individuals to feel good all the time; the experience of painful emotions (e.g. disappointment, failure, grief) is a normal part of life, and being able to manage these negative or painful emotions is essential for long-term well-being. Psychological well-being is, however, compromised when negative emotions are extreme or very long lasting and interfere with a person's ability to function in his or her daily life (Huppert, 2009).

Psychological well-being is the overall satisfaction and happiness or the subjective report of one's mental state of being healthy, satisfied or prosperous and broadly to reflect quality of life and mood states (Dzuka & Dalbert, 2000). Psychological well-being refers to living life in a full and deeply satisfying manner (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

One of the major variables that in recent time has attracted a lot of significance in the academic literature emotional intelligence (EI) or perceived emotional intelligence (Fernández-Berrocal & Extremera 2008; Mabekoje & Ogunyemi, 2003; Ogunyemi, 2008; Shulman & Hemenover 2006). Emotional intelligence describes the ability, capacity, or skill to perceive, assess, and manage the emotions of oneself, those of others and of groups (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). The construct has also been described as the ability to recognize the meanings of emotions, relationships, to reason and solve problems (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2000; Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 1999; 2002).

Researchers like Fernandez-Berrocal and Ruiz (2008), Austin, and Minski (2003) reported that emotional intelligence has been found to be associated with outcomes such as life satisfaction, social network size, and quality. EI has also been shown to positively predict higher emotional adjustment (Berking et al. 2008), social interaction with active coping and positive rethinking (Gohm & Clore 2002), and negative relations with passive coping or intrusive thoughts (Ramos et al. 2007; Salovey et al. 2002), as well as emotional clarity and repair Salguero and Iruarrizaga 2006; Salovey et al. 1995; Thayer et al. (2003).

In the last two decades, several studies have been conducted on the factors affecting social interaction, this include-bonds of healthy attachment in the parent-child relationship, trust, empathy and other friendship skills (Kelly, 2009; Laible, Carlo and Raffaelli, 2000) fathers' support, predicted lower levels of aggressive behaviours among preadolescents (Harper, Brown, Arias, and Brody, 2006) fathers' comforting and acceptance of their children's emotional distress (Roberts, 1994) Empathy (e.g., life satisfaction) and interaction profile (e.g., positive relations with others), (Daniel, 2009) cognitive and affective empathy (Darrick, 2003) and empathy and intellectual ability (Farrington, 2002), but till date no study have been conducted to explain social relation based on university's psycho-social climate, psychological wellbeing components, and emotional intelligence. Hence, this study was set out to fill such gap.

## Research Questions

1. What is the relationship among the variables of the study (social relation, psycho-social climate, psychological wellbeing components, and emotional intelligence)?
2. University's psycho-social climate, psychological wellbeing components, and emotional intelligence will not significantly explain undergraduates' social relation?

## Methodology

### Design

This study employed descriptive survey design of an ex-post-facto in which the existing status of the independent variables were only determined during data collection without any manipulation of the variables by the researchers.

### Sample

A total of two thousand (2000) respondents participated in this study. To achieve this, stratified random sampling technique was used to stratify the faculties of Olabisi Onabanjo University Ago – Iwoye in Ogun State, Nigeria, into four – Arts, Education, Management Sciences, and Social Sciences. From each of the faculty, five hundred (500) undergraduates were randomly selected. This selection cut across all various levels in each faculty. The age range of the respondents is between 16-27 years with mean age of 21.37 and standard deviation of 8.33. The respondents consist of 1021 (52.4%) males and 926 (47.6%) females.

### **Instrumentation**

Four validated instruments were used for data collection apart from the personal attributes scale as shown hereunder. Personal attributes in the study were gender (male and female), school location (urban and rural), and parents' socio-economic status (high, average, and low).

- 1. Well-Being Manifestation Measure Scale (WBMMS):** WBMMS was used to measure psychological well-being. This scale was developed by Masse, Poulin, Dassa, Lambert, Belair, & Battaglini (1998) and consists of 25-items with subscales. The six subscales of the WBMMS are: control of self and events, happiness, social involvement, self-esteem, mental balance, and sociability. An overall Cronbach's alpha of 0.93 was reported for the scale and a range of 0.71 to 0.85 on the subscales (Masse, Poulin, Dassa, Lambert, Belair, & Battaglini, 1998).
- 2. Perceived emotional intelligence (PEI):** The Trait Meta-Mood Scale (TMMS) developed by Salovey et al. (1995) was used to assess PEI. The scale is a five-point Likert scale designed to assess how people reflect upon their moods and manage their emotions and feelings. Examples of the items of the scale are (1) "I pay a lot of attention to how I feel", "I am usually very clear about my feelings", "No matter how badly I feel, I try to think about pleasant things". The scale was found to be suitable for Nigerian samples (Mabekoje, 2012). TMMS has shown adequate psychometric properties in adolescent population with a Cronbach's alpha of .81 in this study.
- 3. University's Psycho-social climate questionnaire (UPSCQ):** A UPSCQ was used to measure the Psycho-Social Climate of the University (PSCU). It was a modified form of the psycho-social climate of classroom made by Michaud et al. (1990). UPSCQ assesses two dimensions: perception and expectation. In this research only perception was assessed. The reliability of internal consistency of this test, for the dimension of perception, was about 0.68 and specialists emphasized its content validity.
- 4. Interpersonal Scale (IPS):** The interpersonal scale is a 10-item sub-scale of the sense of competence scale (SCS) developed by Janosik, Creamer and Cross (1987), designed to elicit data about one's interpersonal and intellectual competencies. The items are scored on a four-point scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4). The reliability coefficient for the 10-item interpersonal sub-scale was .79. Using the Cronbach's alpha model, the reliability coefficient for the SCS was calculated at .78 (Janosik, et. al, 1987). Azeez (2007) reported a linear relationship between the scale and intellectance and emotional intelligence ( $r = .79$ ). His report provides evidence of validity of the scale in the Nigerian environment.

### **Administration of the Instruments**

The researcher and three (3) other colleagues administered the measuring scales, which guarantee confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents. The researcher with the help of the research assistants explained all aspects of the questionnaire to the respondents. However, it took the researcher a period of four weeks to administer and retrieve the distributed measuring scales. Meanwhile, out of 2000 copies of questionnaire administered in the selected tertiary institutions, 1947 were adequately filled and valid for the purpose of the study. Thus, 97.4% success of questionnaire administration and retrieval was achieved.

### **Data Analysis**

The data collected through the questionnaires was analyzed using simple percentages and frequency counts for demographic information about the respondents, while research questions were tested using correlation coefficient and Multiple Regression methods. However, all the research questions generated for the study were tested at 0.05 alpha levels.

### **Results**

Results on table 1 show significant positive correlations between social relation and: control of self and events ( $r = .32, p < .05$ ), happiness ( $r = .41, p < .05$ ), social involvement ( $r = .37, p < .05$ ), self-esteem ( $r = .40, p < .05$ ), mental balance ( $r = .35, p < .05$ ), sociability ( $r = .39, p < .05$ ), emotional intelligence ( $r = .43, p < .05$ ) and psychosocial climate ( $r = .47, p < .05$ ).

**Table 1: Correlation matrix of psychological wellbeing components across other variables in the study**

SN		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Control of self and events	-							
2	Happiness	.43**	-						
3	Social Involvement	.38**	.50**	-					
4	Self-esteem	.31**	.43*	.35**	-				
5	Mental Balance	.33*	.47**	.33**	.38**	-			
6	Sociability	.35**	.39**	.40*	.27**	.32**	-		
7	Emotional Intelligence	.41**	.47**	.39**	.30**	.43**	.38**	-	
8	Psychosocial Climate	.40**	.45**	.43**	.31**	.39**	.43**	.21**	-
9	Social relation	.32**	.41**	.37**	.40**	.35**	.39**	.43**	.47**

\*p<.01, \*\*p<.05

The result presented in Table 2 below showed that when psychological wellbeing components put together yielded a coefficient of multiple regression (R) of .431 and a multiple correlation square of .186. This shows that 18.6% of the total variance in students' social relation is accounted for by the combination of psychological wellbeing components, emotional intelligence and psycho-social climate of the university. The table also indicates that the analysis of variance of the multiple regression data produced an F-ratio value (11.185) and T-value (5.907) significant at 0.05 level. The results further revealed that emotional intelligence ( $\beta = .147$ ;  $t = 3.008$ ); psychosocial climate ( $\beta = .209$ ;  $t = 3.494$ ); control of self and events ( $\beta = .081$ ;  $t = 3.123$ ); happiness ( $\beta = .121$ ;  $t = 2.123$ ); social involvement ( $\beta = .076$ ;  $t = 1.801$ ); self-esteem ( $\beta = .082$ ;  $t = 2.001$ ); mental balance ( $\beta = .138$ ;  $t = 2.895$ ) and sociability ( $\beta = .093$ ;  $t = 1.987$ ) can positively predict the undergraduates' social interaction of the sampled population.

**Table 2: Prediction of undergraduates' social relations based on psychological wellbeing components, emotional intelligence, and psychosocial climate**

	Predictors	B	$\beta$	T	Sig
Psychological Wellbeing	Emotional Intelligence	.132	.147	3.008	.023
	Psychosocial Climate	.158	.209	3.494	.007
	Control of self and events	.073	.081	1.843	.000
	Happiness	.100	.121	2.123	.041
	Social Involvement	.085	.076	1.801	.000
	Self-esteem	.077	.082	2.001	.011
	Mental Balance	.123	.138	2.895	.000
	Sociability	.091	.093	1.987	.037
<b>Multiple R = .431; Multiple R<sup>2</sup> = .186; Stand error estimate = 3.179; F = 11.185; T = 5.907</b>					

## Discussion

This study was conducted to explain social relation based on psycho-social climate, psychological wellbeing components, and emotional intelligence among undergraduates of Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ogun State, Nigeria. In this regard, the findings showed significant positive correlations between social relation, psychological wellbeing (control of self and events, happiness, social involvement, self-esteem, mental balance, sociability), emotional intelligence and psychosocial climate.

The outcome of this study further revealed that psychological wellbeing (control of self and events, happiness, social involvement, self-esteem, mental balance, sociability), emotional intelligence and psychosocial climate were significant in explaining undergraduates' social relation. It was found out that 18.6% of the total variance in students' social relation is accounted for by the combination of psychological wellbeing components, emotional intelligence and psycho-social climate of the university. The results further revealed that psychological climate is a potent factor in explaining social relations among undergraduates. This might be as a result of the fact that the more open and better the psychological climate of the university, the better the wellbeing of the students who are the primary consumer of the services rendered by the university. It will also improve the quality of life, which will be reflected individual's ability to recognize the meanings of emotions, relationships, to reason and solve problems. This is in tandem with the findings of Mousavi, Mousavi, Mousavi, and Hakimifar (2015) that if the relations in the University and its interactions will be positive and the climate will be appropriate and

favourable to students' spirit and interests, the students will attend school more satisfied and appropriate context will be provided for collaborative group activities of students. Also, this finding lend credence to that of Gali and Yang (2004) who showed that in friendly and flexible social climate, people are self-motivated to participate.

### Conclusion and Implication of the Study

This study has established that psychological wellbeing (control of self and events, happiness, social involvement, self-esteem, mental balance, sociability), emotional intelligence and psychosocial climate were significant in explaining undergraduates' social relation. The accurate predictability of all the predictor variables on the criterion variable has important implications for adolescents' psychosocial development and mental wellbeing.

It is believed that when individual's sense about connection with a positive social context is 'ideal', he or she is more likely to exhibit appropriate social behaviours. Also, since positive social experiences are associated with general well-being, which generally contribute to public health – physically, emotionally, medically and so on, there is a great need to a better future for our future generations (young people) by creating enabling environment for the total development of the students.

Since, students' academic need is not only the major services students expect to find satisfactory in schools, social and emotional needs are also of equal importance. As such, there is a need for the institution's executive management team to stop paying "lip service" to the overall development of the students in our schools. To accomplish these tasks, educational institutions should strive to listen to their students and gather their feedback regarding items such as academics, admissions, rules and policies, facilities, and registration, as well as their socio-emotional needs.

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