

## **Emotional Intelligence and Interpersonal skills Training as strategies for Fostering Psychological sense of Community among Teachers in Ogun State, Nigeria.**

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**Abstract.** The more psychological sense of community a group of teachers achieves, the better surrounding for personal learning of students and effective cooperation amongst colleagues. Yet a lot of teachers still manifest low Psychological sense of community with attendant consequences of devolving relationships, conflict with significant others in the school, poor delivery of teaching to the student, and low sense of belonging to the school. This study examined the effects of emotional intelligence (EI) and Interpersonal skills (IS) training on teachers' Psychological sense of community. The study adopted a pretest, posttest, control group quasi-experimental design with a 3x3x2 factorial matrix. One hundred and twenty-six secondary school teachers were randomly selected and randomly assigned to two treatment groups and a control group. Collective Teacher Efficacy instrument was used to put participants into groups while the Sense of Community Index-2 was used to collect pretest and posttest data. Findings revealed that the two treatment interventions have significant main effect on teachers' Psychological sense of community. It also revealed a no three-way interaction effects of treatment, collective efficacy and gender. It was concluded that secondary school teachers who demonstrate low Psychological sense of community could be assisted to develop better attitudes to school activities and improved sense of belongings to the school through emotional intelligence and Interpersonal skills training programmes.

**Keywords:** Psychological sense of Community; emotional intelligence training; Interpersonal skills training; Collective Efficacy.

### **1. Introduction**

Performance of students in secondary schools to a large extent depends on the productivity of teachers. Yet we have teachers that experienced job dissatisfaction, who do not communicate with one another on a deep and authentic level, and have low Psychological sense of community in school. The school is a community (Irwin & Fair, 2004) whose members are expected to actively engage in learning together from each other, construct knowledge in a collaborative way; work together, develop ideas, understand and tolerate each other diversities.

The more Psychological sense of community (soc) a group, for example, teachers achieves, the better surrounding for personal learning and effective co-operation. It is a climate where creativity can develop and flourish, interpersonal relationship evolves and improved students' performance (Carrington & Robinson, 2006; Royal & Rossi, 2006). A strong sense of community among teachers may facilitate instructional efforts and enhance their personal well-being. It could also benefit students' learning by aiding the development of clear and consistent goals for students and by encouraging teachers to work collaboratively-toward, and to take responsibility for, such goals (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995).

The satisfaction of Teachers' Psychological sense of community is an important indicator of potential successes when teachers deal with students in traditional versus virtual classes (Fair cloth & Hamm, 2011). Teachers' sense of community can make a major difference in their success and influences their commitment to school, and the value they place on learning activities (Ostermann, 2000; Goodenow & Grady, 2010).

Psychological sense of community lower rates of teacher absenteeism; influence teachers satisfaction with their work; achieves better surrounding for personal and group learning and effective co-operation; improves students well-being and (positive) mental health (Bateman, 2002); and teacher's higher social capital (interpersonal relation). That is, teachers are able to draw on knowledge capital (skills, competencies and knowledge) of others in the school (Royal & Rossi, 2006). Psychological sense of community can be summarized as individual feelings toward a group. It refers to how well teachers' needs are met; the degree to which they feel part of a group, how much influence they feel they have in the group, and the emotional conditions they share with students and colleagues (Mc Millan & Chaves, 1986).

Unfortunately, secondary school teachers in Nigeria experience and face challenges bothering on devolving relationship and conflict with significant others in the school. Also, teachers sometimes do not respect and appreciate the diversity of one another; do not attend to conflict with openness and honesty in order to contend with the growing complexity of the school environment. It has also been observed that many of them do not have a sense of belonging to the school, which has negatively affected their delivery of teaching to the students; job dissatisfaction and turnover intention (Akindele-Oscar, Adesoye & Ayodele, 2019). In Nigeria, there are many cases of teachers who faked illness or transportation hassles to cover up for their indifferent attitude towards their work and their poor psychological sense of community at work.

In recent years, there has been growing interest in emotional intelligence construct and its relevance in the school setting. The role of emotions in teaching learning situations had been extensively discussed in literature. For examples, emotional intelligence training may impact and is correlated with greater adaptability, adjustment, increased orientation, positive values, improved relationships, psychological well-being, professional effectiveness and creativity amongst workers (Akindele-Oscar & Tejumola; 2010; Dolev & Leshme, 2017; Kristen & Elizabeth, 2007; Akindele-Oscar, Adesoye & Ayodele, 2019). There is a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and sense of community (Ozbey, Sancam & Karduz, 2018). This may facilitate improve cooperation among teachers and students and improve instructional activities.

Interpersonal skills training remains crucial in today's conflict ridden educational environment, globally and nationally. It has been consistently ranked among the most important requirements for

success in the school settings (Porter & Mckibin, 2008). Interpersonal skills are the qualities and behaviours teacher uses to interact with colleague and students effectively while performing their job. It includes but not limited to effective communication, listening, positive attitude and deportment (Akindele-Oscar, Adesoye & Ayodele, 2019; Lim, 2019).

The moderating variables of this study are collective efficacy and gender. Collective teacher efficacy is a characteristic that has emerged as a significant factor in school productivity (Schechter & Tschannen-Moran, 2006). Research also suggests that enhance teacher collaboration and sense of community (working together) may predict greater collective efficacy (Voelkel & Chrispeels, 2017). Gender sometimes determines how individuals behave in the workplace. When gender effectively interact with one another, it creates a stronger organization (Hamilton, Jack & Hiden-Owen, 2003).

To achieve the objectives of the study the following research hypotheses were formulated and tested:

- There is no significant main effect of treatment on Psychological sense of community at work of participants.
- There is no significant interaction of treatment, Collective Efficacy and Gender on Psychological sense of community of participants.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Design and Participants

A pretest-posttest-control group quasi-experimental design with a 3x3x2 factorial matrix was adopted for this study. The population for the study comprised all teachers in public secondary school in Ogun State. A total of one hundred and Twenty-Six teachers from three public secondary school were randomly selected through stratified random sampling techniques from the three senatorial district. Forty-two teachers were randomly assigned to experimental group 1 and the group was randomly assigned to Emotional Intelligence training. Another forty-two teachers were randomly assigned to experimental group 2 and the group was randomly assigned to Interpersonal skills training. The remaining forty-two teachers were randomly assigned to Control group.

### 2.2 Instrumentation

#### 2.2.1 Collective Teacher Efficacy Instrument

This was developed by Gooddard and Hoy, (2001) and is made up of 21 items that measured the two

integrated dimensions of Collective efficacy: teaching competence and teaching task analysis. Participants responded on a four point rating scale ranging from 1-strongly agree to 4-strongly disagree. It has a co-efficient alpha of .71. Validity evidence for the scale, was demonstrated by a positive correlation with Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk-hoy and Hoy’s Trust-in-colleague scale (1998,  $r=.67$   $P<.001$ ) and additional divergent validity evidence was demonstrated by a negative correlation with Zielinski and Hoy’s (1983) Sense of Powerlessness Scale. Groups higher in collective efficacy were found to be similar groups with a greater sense of trust in their colleagues while differing with groups that have a greater sense of group powerlessness, demonstrating the distinctiveness of the collective efficacy construct.

**2.2.2 Sense of Community Index**

The sense of community index-2 was developed by chavis, Lee & Acosta (2008). It has been used in

numerous studies covering different cultures as well as many context. This SCI is based on a theory of sense of community present by McMillan and Chavis (1986) as a perception with four elements: Membership, Influence Meeting need, and a shared Emotional connection.

It is a 24 items scale on a four likert scale, and scoring ranges from 1-not at all to 4- completely. Sample items are; “I get important needs of mine met because I am part of this community”. The SCI-2 has a coefficient alpha of .94.

**2.3 Sampling Procedure**

The process of sampling of participants, allocation of participants to groups, and the groups to treatment and control, followed strict process of randomization. Experiment Group 1 was taught Emotional intelligence, the Experiment Group 2 was taught Interpersonal skills, while the control was taught a placebo.

**3. Results and Discussion**

**Table 1:** Estimates of Main Effect of Treatment on Psychological Sense of Community

Treatment Group	Mean	Std.Error	95% confidence interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Emotional Intelligence Training	62.344 <sup>a</sup>	1.489	59.377	65.310
Interpersonal skills Training	63.228 <sup>a</sup>	1.598	60.045	66.411
Control	51.477 <sup>a</sup>	1.643	48.205	54.751

The results in table 1 reveal that the participants in the Emotional Intelligence group had a mean score of 62.344 and standard error of 1.489. In Interpersonal skills group, the mean score was 63.228 and standard error was 1.598. The control group had a mean score of 51.477 and difference exists in the mean score of treatment the analysis of covariance was undertaken and the results presented in table 2.

**Table 2:** Univariate Analysis of covariance for main Effect of Emotional Intelligence, Interpersonal Skills and control Groups on participant psychological sense of community.

	Sum of squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Contrast	1895.829	2	947.914	15.180	.000
Error	4620.813	74	62.443		

The result in Table 2 revealed an unvaried F- ratio of 15.180 that is significant beyond the .05 level. The null hypothesis which stated that there is no significance main effect of treatment on participant’s psychological sense of community was therefore rejected. These results implied that EI and Is training programmes could serve as effective interventions in fostering teacher’s psychological sense of community

**Table 3:** Analysis of covariance of the Interaction Effects of Treatment, Collective Self Efficiency and Gender on Participants’ Psychological Sense of Community.

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	9689.964 <sup>b</sup>	19	509.998	8.167	.000
Intercept	1316.402	1	1316.402	21.082	.000
TWPRE	122.216	1	122.216	1.957	.166
PSYPRE	1820.804	1	1820.804	29.159	.000
GROUP	1895.829	2	947.914	15.180	.000
COSELF	272.305	2	136.153	2.180	.120
GEN	179.951	1	179.951	2.882	.094

GROUP *COSELF	221.417	4	55.354	.886	.476
GROUP * GEN	1.388	2	.694	.011	.989
COSELF * GEN	147.506	2	73.753	1.181	.313
GROUP *COSELF* GEN	426.811	4	106.703	1.709	.157
Error	4620.813	74	62.443		
Total	345193.000	94			
Corrected Total	14310.777	93			

b. R Squared = .677 (Adjusted R Squared = .594)

Result in table 3 indicated that there was a significant effect of treatment on participants psychological sense of community ( $F(2, 74) = 15.186$   $P < .05$ ). There were no significant main effect of collective efficacy ( $F(2, 74) = 2.180$   $P > .05$ ) and gender ( $F(1, 74) = 2.882$   $P > .05$ ) on participants psychological sense of community. The result however revealed no significant two –way interaction effects of treatment and collective self –efficacy ( $F(4, 74) = .886$   $P > .05$ ). Also, no significant two –way interaction between treatment and gender ( $F(2, 74) = .011$   $P > .05$ ) on participants psychological sense of community. No significant two –way interaction effects of collective self efficacy and gender ( $F(2, 74) = 1.181$ ;  $P < .05$ ) on participants psychological sense of community was found. Also, the results showed that no three –way interaction effects of treatment collective self – efficacy and gender ( $F(4, 74) = 1.709$   $P > .05$ ) participant psychological sense of community.

#### 4. Discussion

The study investigated the effect of emotional intelligence and interpersonal skill training programmes in fostering skills the psychological sense of community of secondary school teachers. It also investigated whether collective efficacy and gender could interact with interventions (emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills training programmes). The results showed a significant main effect of treatment on participant psychological sense of community in Nigeria.

These finding confirmed the efficacy of the intervention training programmes (Emotional Intelligence and Interpersonal Skills) for attitudinal change and improved sense of belongings to the school by secondary school teachers. These finding is in agreement with the ones reported by (Ozbey, Sancam & Karaduz 2018, Akindele Oscar, Adesoye & Ayodele, 2019 and Dolev & Jeshem 2017) who confirmed the significant influence of emotional intelligence training on teachers’ professional effectiveness, improved cooperation among teachers and students and sense of community. Our findings also confirmed porter & Ndokibbin (2008) report that interpersonal skills ranked among most important requirements for success in the school setting. The

results also showed no three –way interaction effects of treatment, collective efficacy and gender on teachers’ psychological sense of community. This means that one, or two –way interactions do not differ significantly across the level of the third variable (treatment).

#### 5. Conclusion

This study has revealed the importance of emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills training programmes on teachers’ psychological sense of community. It is therefore recommended that teachers’ need to continuously seek and embrace trainings that could positively influence their commitment to the school, knowledge capital and their feelings towards colleagues and students. All the aforementioned would help better psychological sense of community amongst teachers and ultimately facilities school performance and teachers’ subjective wellbeing.

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